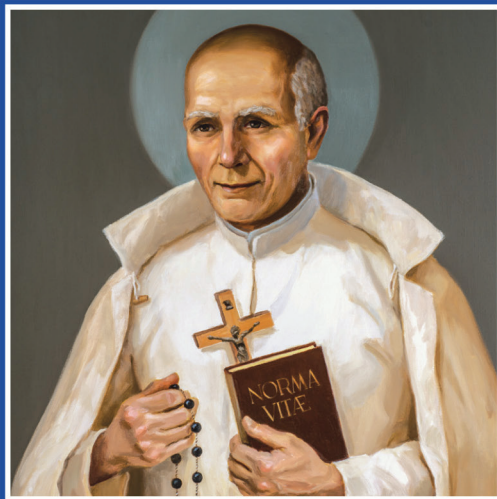


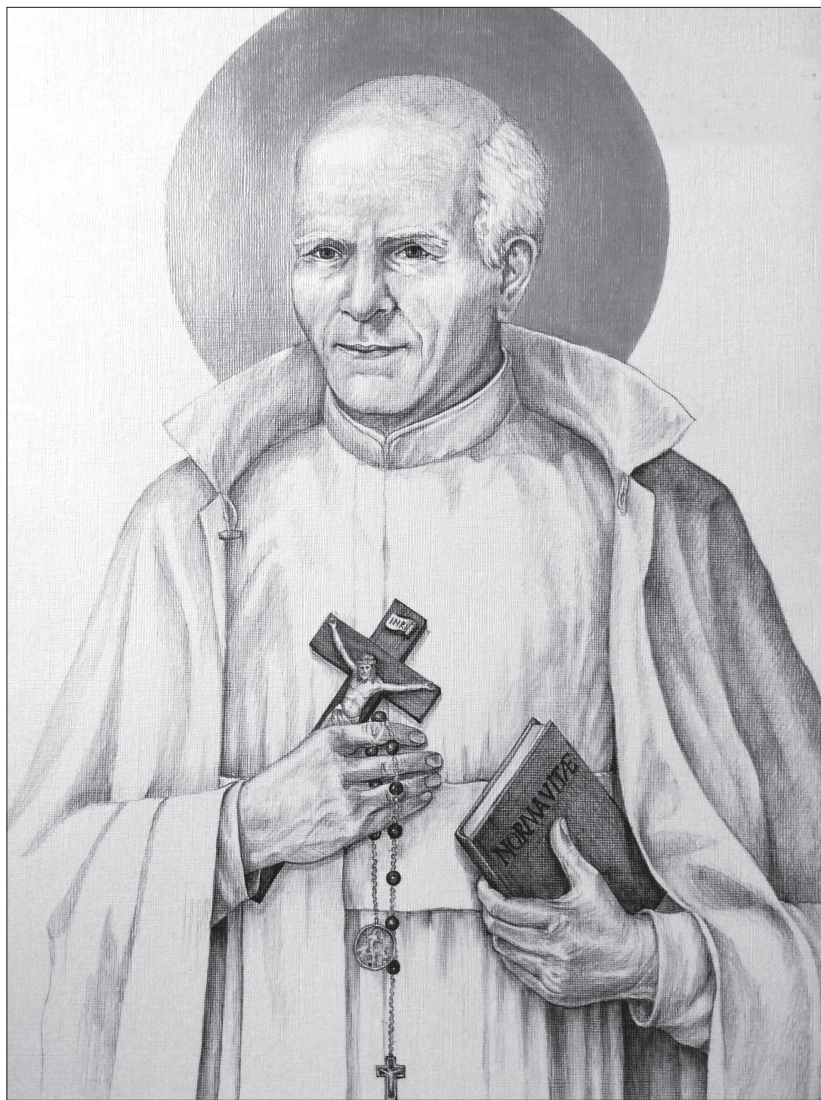
Saint Stanislaus Papczyński

SELECTED WRITINGS



PROMIC

SELECTED
WRITINGS



Saint Stanislaus Papczyński

SELECTED WRITINGS

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PROMIC

WARSAW – POLAND



MARIAN
HERITAGE
STOCKBRIDGE, MA, USA

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FOREWORD

The release of the *St. Stanislaus Papczyński: Selected Writings* in English is an excellent way to celebrate the 350th Jubilee of the religious community he founded: the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. The author of these writings was an educated Pole, an expert in his native language, yet most of his written works — in fact, all of his surviving works — were written in Latin. This was because — firstly — as a man of the Church, a professor of rhetoric and the author of one of the most important books in that field (*Prodromus Reginae Artium*, a textbook on rhetoric, which was reprinted during his lifetime as many as four times), he wrote in the language of the Church, that is, in Latin. Secondly, although in following his directives the religious community he founded had to conduct the work of evangelization and catechesis among the poor and simple people, he realized that cultures were shaped by the upper classes, which used Latin, the language then accepted by all circles of power both ecclesial and secular, as well as by the intelligentsia and commercial classes. English has undoubtedly become such a language in our day. Thus, the release of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary's writings in English is a fitting effort in fulfilling our Founder's desire to reach, with the Gospel and Catholic doctrine, all spheres of public life, especially those that may influence the lives of other people.

The author of the works included in the present publication lived some centuries ago, so someone may question the logic of publishing these works today. This question is relevant inasmuch as it leads to an answer that gives us an immediate understanding of these writings' timeless value for the Church and human patrimony. First of all, regardless of when a particular person lived, human life itself carries a lasting value. Children perfectly and spontaneously understand this after the death of a parent. And

this is precisely the case of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński's spiritual sons, members of the Congregation of Marian Fathers that he founded, and all the people around the world who participate in and live out the charism of this Congregation. For them, his spiritual heritage has ageless importance. Furthermore, as the Church — in the person of Pope Francis — proclaimed Fr. Stanislaus a saint of the Catholic Church, he became for all a model of a life of faith, hope, and love. He also became a universal advocate of all the faithful, which finds confirmation in countless testimonies of his intercession in extremely difficult matters not only in Poland or the United States but also in Brazil, Rwanda, Cameroon, Ukraine, Philippines, Kazakhstan, Belarus, etc. Therefore, making his writings available to the larger public creates an opportunity to familiarize them with the way he lived out his faith, his manner of thinking, and his understanding of the Gospel, in addition to his witness to the Christian life, due to which the Church raised him to the altars. Reading the works of saints not only broadens our horizon of faith, but most of all, supplies an interpretation of the Gospel. In this sense, St. Stanislaus' work entitled *Inspectio Cordis* has a special meaning, because it is a meditation on the Word of God connected to a specific day. His other works of a similar nature, such as *The Crucified Orator* or *The Suffering Christ*, are dedicated to biblical meditation on the Passion of Christ. His *Mystical Temple of God* is a complete spiritual treatise on God's plan for man, who was created as His mystical temple and who — thanks to cooperation with God's grace — grows more in awareness of it and in holiness. What is more: all of St. Stanislaus' written works are marked by his experience of God's merciful love and his desire to share his faith with others, so that the whole Church may become holy and without blemish (cf. Eph 1: 4).

The translation of the presently published work involved the effort of many people, especially Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC, who had previously translated and published shorter works of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński. I would like to express my gratitude to all of the translators, proofreaders, and trans-

lation consultants whose names are mentioned in the editorial note. Thanks to their joint effort, this translation has been created, which will serve future generations, both of the spiritual sons of St. Stanislaus, as well as all those interested in the spirituality and history of the Church. However, the book *St. Stanislaus Papczyński: Selected Writings* was created mainly thanks to the determination of Andrew Mączyński, MIC, who defined the concept of this publication, as well as supervised the production. The publication appeared thanks to him and the enormous work of Patrick Lynch, MIC, and Marina Batiuk, who collected both the previously as well as recently translated works and those revised by different people and supplied them with appropriate introductions, either new or previously existing. In addition, Patrick Lynch, MIC, worked diligently to verify the English translations with the original Latin of St. Stanislaus. Many English-speaking people, especially from the areas where the Congregation of Marian Fathers is present, have been long waiting for this publication. I am thinking particularly of the countries in Asia. Expressing my gratitude to all those who participated in the preparation for the release of *St. Stanislaus Papczyński: Selected Writings*, I can confidently say that their work will bear great fruit, both spiritual and cultural. Surely, no less grateful will be the people who read this book. I entrust everyone to the Immaculate Mother of the Lord, in the favorite words of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński: *Immaculata Virginis Mariae Conceptio, sit nobis salus et protectio!*

Andrzej Pakuła, MIC
Superior General of
the Congregation of Marian Fathers

In Rome, on March 25, 2021

A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

The *Selected Writings* of St. Stanislaus Papczyński represents a collection of nearly all the written works of the Marian Founder translated into English. The works omitted in this English translation include the majority of Stanislaus' work on the art of rhetoric (*Prodromus Reginae Artium*), and also two panegyrics. In the case of *Prodromus*, certain excerpts were included because of their aesthetic and spiritual value, but the rest was omitted due to size constraints and the fact that a detailed manual of rhetoric would not be of interest to most readers. The panegyrics were omitted because the complexity of St. Stanislaus' Baroque Latin renders them unable to be satisfactorily expressed in English. These works are best studied in the original Latin by those to whom it is of interest.

Two important events led to the release of this book. First, there was the desire to commemorate Fr. Stanislaus' canonization, which took place on June 5, 2016 in the Vatican. Second, in 2020 there was the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation of Marian Fathers (December 11, 1670). These events occurred at a time when the Congregation had been slowly changing its national profile, from a community living and serving mainly within the circles of Polish-Lithuanian culture to one that has a field of influence in Africa, Asia and Oceania and naturally, English-speaking cultures. Since English is now used in the Congregation at a level on par with the Polish language, an urgent need arose to provide the new generations of English-speaking Marians with source materials on the history and spirituality of the Congregation to ground them in their Marian identity.

Although we know that Fr. Papczyński wrote works in Latin and Polish, the only surviving works are Latin texts. Alongside the release of his *Selected Writings*, a critical edition is being prepared of all the Marian Founder's writings in their original Latin:

Sanctus Stanislaus Papczyński, Scripta Collectanea. The work of translating this collection into English, which took almost a decade, was completed by a team of several people (members of the Congregation and one lay person). The translation work was initiated by the late Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC. However, the entire collection of St. Stanislaus' works, which we present here, would have never been finalized had it not been for the dedicated work of Patrick Lynch, MIC, of the youngest generation of Marians, who began studying classical and ecclesiastical Latin at the age of 13 and continued his studies for the next 7 years as a student in the Classical Liberal Arts Academy. Not only did Patrick Lynch, MIC, personally translate many texts from Latin, but he also performed editorial work on the entire collection. Likewise a special recognition goes to a group of young Marians, spiritual sons of St. Stanislaus who were involved in the work of the final editing and proofreading of this collection. They undertook this task with great zeal, dedication, and professionalism. Our deep gratitude also goes to the following additional persons who participated at various stages in the work of translating and editing this publication: Richard Drabik, MIC; Martin Rzeszutek, MIC; Marina Batiuk; Joseph Romagnano; and Robert Stackpole.

Selected Writings was translated into English mainly from the critical editions of St. Stanislaus' writings in Latin, previously prepared and released by Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC, who also provided them with erudite introductions. The translation of St. Stanislaus Papczyński's works into Polish, released in Warsaw in 2016 under the title of *Pisma Zebrane*, was sometimes used as a point of reference for the English translation.

The collection of works included in this book does not follow chronological order. First comes the *Rule of Life*, being the most characteristic of the spirituality of Fr. Papczyński and the Congregation of Marian Fathers, which he founded. Subsequent works are arranged according to size of the text, from the longest to the shortest. The *Appendix* at the end of the book contains three documents that were not written by Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński. They are the *précises* of the Marian Founder's letters, drawn up

by the Congregation for Bishops and Religious in Rome. Each of these documents has been given an introduction explaining its contents, the circumstances of its composition, and its significance. These introductions were borrowed from *Pisma Zebrane*, the above-mentioned Polish translation of St. Stanislaus' writings.

In addition, *Selected Writings* contains the *Calendarium* of St. Stanislaus' life, expanded to cover the events related to his canonization and the list of his written works and bibliographies. These were also borrowed from the Polish and critical Latin editions.

Because St. Stanislaus used the Latin Vulgate for his quotations of Scripture, we have found it best to make use of several English translations of the Bible in order to allow us to be as faithful as possible to the meaning intended by Stanislaus in his original quotations, while also making the translation as readable as possible. The English Bible translations quoted throughout these works are the Revised Standard Version: Catholic Edition, the New American Bible, and the Douay-Rheims. Sometimes a direct translation from the Vulgate was also used.

The present publication has been long awaited not only by the English-speaking Marians and scholars of religious history and spirituality, but also by a large group of venerators of our saint, whose fame and holiness — already established during his lifetime — continues to spread today. However, the publication of this collection of writings in English has a special meaning for his spiritual sons, the Marians. Grasping the Founder's charism, and by extension the Marian heritage, is not possible without studying his writings. These were previously available as a complete volume only in Polish. The translated texts presented in this volume are the fruit of the research recommended by the Conciliar Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis* (No. 2): "Therefore let their founders' spirit and special aims they set before them as well as their sound traditions — all of which make up the patrimony of each institute — be faithfully held in honor." This publication will be a new source of knowledge for anyone interested in the spirituality or history of the Church, especially concerning the 17th century.

Offering this collection of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński's writings, we wish to encourage his venerators and all readers to embark on the path of holiness. This was the goal to which Fr. Stanislaus subordinated his legislative and pastoral activities and his writings. According to him, man is a mystical temple of God (*templum Dei mysticum*), and this temple must be holy. The model of holiness is Christ Himself and His Immaculately Conceived Mother. May St. Stanislaus Papczyński's attitude find its eloquent manifestation in one of the last instructions he addressed to his spiritual sons in his second Testament: "I leave the portrait of my Person to the curious to be looked at, whereas the life of my Lord Jesus Christ to be imitated" (No. 9). We trust that the study of St. Stanislaus Papczyński's writings hereby presented will contribute to the strengthening of faith, hope, and love in those individuals striving for holiness throughout the world.

Andrew R. Mączyński, MIC

Vice-Postulator of the Marian Father's
Canonization Causes in North America and Asia,
project coordinator

Stockbridge — September 17, 2021
320th Anniversary of the Death
of St. Stanislaus Papczyński

KALENDARIUM OF LIFE AND INDEX OF WRITTEN WORKS of St. Stanislaus Papczyński

Kalendarium of Life

Childhood and Youth

- 1631** [May 18] He was born in Podegrodzie to Tomas Papka and his wife Zofia (nee Talikowska).
- 1640-1643** He attended the parish school in Podegrodzie and completed his first year of grammar (*Infima*).
- 1643** He continued schooling in Nowy Sącz and completed his second year of grammar (*Media*).
- 1646** In May, he left for a school in Jarosław, where he studied from the middle of May until the end of July.
- 1646** For several weeks, he continued his education at the Jesuit College in Jarosław.
- 1646-1649** He traveled to Lvov and tried to enter the Jesuit College, but failed; to support himself, he obtained a tutoring position and later fell seriously ill; miraculously healed in 1649, he returned to Podegrodzie.
- 1649-1650** He attended the Piarist school in Podoliniec and completed his third year of grammar (*suprema*).
- 1650-1651** He went to the Jesuit College in Lvov, where he completed his course of poetics and started rhetoric; he left the city because of the outbreak of war.
- 1652-1654** He continued his education at the Jesuit College in Rawa Mazowiedka, where he completed his course of rhetoric, the high school program and two years of philosophy.

The Piarist Period

- 1654** [July 2] He entered the Piarist novitiate in Podoliniec (Slovakia).

- 1655** In the second year of novitiate, he studied theology at the St. Anthony College of the Reformed Franciscans in Warsaw.
- 1656** For his spiritual director he composed *Secreta Conscientiae ad Reverendum Patrem N.N. Poloniae V[icarium] meum in Spiritualibus Magistrum* (*Secrets of Conscience*), of which two excerpts survived to our times.
- 1656** [July 22] He made simple vows in the Piarist Order.
- 1658-1660** Br. Stanislaus taught rhetoric at the Piarist College in Podoliniec.
- 1660-1662** He taught rhetoric at the Piarist College in Rzeszow.
- 1660** [December 18] Bishop Stanisław Sarnowski ordained him to the diaconate in the parish church in Brzozów near Rzeszów.
- 1661** [March 12] Bishop Stanisław Sarnowski ordained him to the priesthood in Brzozów near Rzeszów.
- 1663-1667** Father Stanislaus fulfilled in Warsaw the duties of teacher, confessor, preacher, moderator of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Grace, and prefect at the college.
- 1663** Father Stanislaus published in Warsaw his *Prodromus Reginae Artium sive Information Tyronum Eloquentiae* (*Messenger of the Queen of Arts*).
- 1664** Father Stanislaus published in Warsaw his *Doctor Angelicus, in sui Ordinis Varsaviensi Basilica, pro nostris laudatus a P. Stanislao a Iesu Maria, Clericorum Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum Sacerdote* (*Angelic Doctor*).
- 1667** *Panegyris Lyrica Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Domino D. Joanni Gembicki Dei et Sedis Apostolicae Gratia Episcopo Plocensi deca tata per P. Stanislaum a Iesu Maria Clericorum Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum Anno 1666* (*Lyrical Panegyric*) was released in Warsaw.
- 1667** [October 20] Shortly before departing for Rome at the order of the Superior General, Fr. Stanislaus wrote his *Protestatio Romam abeuntis* (*Declaration of the One Departing for Rome*).
- 1668** The Superior General sent Fr. Stanislaus from Rome to Nikolsburg (Mikolov, Moravia) from whence he returned to Warsaw.

- 1669** Following the directive of his superiors, he composed *Panegyricus Augustissimo Principi Michaeli Korybuth Divinitus Electo Regi Poloniae, Lithuaniae, Russiae, [...] Magno Duci, debitae subiectionis et observantiae causa a Regio Collegio Varsaviensi Clericorum Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum Consecratus* (Panegyric for the Most Venerable Prince Michał Korybut) on the latter's being elected as king; the work was published in Warsaw the same year.
- 1669** *Triumphus sine originali macula conceptae Magnae Virginis, nova methodo, celeberrime adornatae* (Triumph of the Great Virgin Conceived without Sin) appeared in print as an introduction to the book by D.K. Kochanowski, *Novus Asserendae Immaculatae Conceptionis Deiparae Virginis Modus*, Cracoviae 1669, pp. XVIII-XIX.
- 1670** In January, Fr. Stanislaus was imprisoned first at the religious house in Podoliniec and then moved to Prievidza in Slovakia; set free three months later, on March 22 he returned to Kazimierz, where he placed himself under the protection of the local bishop, Andrzej Trzebicki.
- 1670** *Orator Crucifixus sive Ultima Septem Verba Domini nostri Iesu Christi, totidem piis discursibus exposita per R. P. Joannem Papczyński, Presbyterum Polonum* (The Crucified Orator) was released in Krakow.

Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers

- 1670** [December 11] Fr. Stanislaus received from Fr. Michael Kraus, Vicar Provincial, the papal dispensation to leave the Piarist Order; at the same time and in the presence of the same persons, he also made the act of *Oblatio* (Self-Offering), declaring his intention to found the Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception of the Most B.V.M.
- 1671-1673** Father Stanislaus served as a chaplain to the Karski family in Lubocza, where he put on a white habit and

composed *Norma vitae* (*The Rule of Life*) for the future Marians.

- 1671** Either in Lubocza or Krakow, due to controversies related to his departure from the Piarists, Fr. Stanislaus composed his *Apologia pro egressu e Scholis Piiis* (*Apology for His Departure from the Order of Pious Schools*).
- 1673** At the advice of Fr. Franciszek Wilga, a Camaldolese, and with permission from the Bishop Ordinary Stefan Wierzbowski, on September 30 Fr. Stanislaus arrived at the Korabiew Forest, where he became the Superior of a community of hermits living according to his *Norma Vitae*; during the inspection (on October 24), Bishop Jacek Świcicki, the Archdeacon and Judicial Vicar of Warsaw issued a decree ratifying the first monastery of the Marian Fathers.
- 1675** Father Stanislaus traveled to Krakow to publish in print his *Templum Dei Mysticum quod in Homine Christiano demonstravit R. P. Stanislaus a Iesu Maria Presbyter Polonus* (*Mystical Temple of God*).
- 1675** Residing at the monastery in Korabiew Forest, Fr. Papczyński composed his *Fundatio Domus Recollectionis* (*Founding of the House of Recollection*), in which he described the beginnings of the Marian community.
- 1677** The Polish Diet (Sejm) approved the founding of the Institute of Marian Hermits in the Korabiew Forest.
- 1677** The Marians received the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle in Nowa Jerozolima (New Jerusalem — now Góra Kalwaria), to which Fr. Stanislaus moved from the Korabiew Forest.
- 1677-1682** Staying in Góra Kalwaria, Fr. Stanislaus completed and prepared for publication his collection of meditations and conferences, which he entitled *Inspectio Cordis, Stanislai a Iesu Maria Congregationis Immaculatae Conceptionis Clericorum Recollectorum, ex Scholis Piiis Praepositi — Recollectiones pro Dominicis et Festis totius anni et Menstruis exercitiis tumulturaria [= tumultuaria?] opera consutatae* (*Contemplating with the Heart*).

- 1679 [April 21] Bishop of Poznań, Stefan Wierzbowski canonically established the Congregation of Marian Fathers in the Diocese of Poznań.
- 1684 In June, Fr. Stanislaus convoked the first General Chapter in the Korabiew Forest.
- 1690 Father Stanislaus published in Warsaw his *Christus Patiens, Septem Discursibus Quadragesimali Paenitentiae accomodatis, Devotae Piorum considerationi Propositus per Patrem Stanislaum a Iesu Maria Sacerdotem Polonum* (*The Suffering Christ*).
- 1690 Father Papczyński traveled to Rome, seeking papal approval for the Marian institute, but fell ill and returned to Poland without attaining his goal.
- 1692 [Dec. 9] Being seriously ill with a possibly fatal outcome, Fr. Stanislaus composed his *Testamentum [primum]* (*First Testament*).
- 1698 In the fall, Fr. Papczyński dispatched Fr. Joachim Kozłowski to Rome to seek papal approbation for the Marian Institute.
- 1699 [September 21] The Holy See approved the Marian Order which, upon accepting *Regula decem beneplacitorum BVM* (*The Rule of the Ten Virtues of the B.V.M.*) and being incorporated into the Order of the Franciscan Friars, became a religious order of solemn vows.
- 1699 [October 15] The Marians received a third foundation in Goźlin.
- 1699 Pope Innocent XII sent a letter (a brief) to Francis Pignatelli, Apostolic Nuncio in Poland, commanding him to receive the solemn vows of the Marians.
- 1701 Feeling his death approaching, Fr. Stanislaus wrote his *Testamentum [alterum]* (*Another Testament*).
- 1701 [June 6] Fr. Stanislaus made his solemn profession of vows before the Apostolic Nuncio in Warsaw and on July 5, at the Cenacle of the Lord, he received the religious profession of his confreres.
- 1701 [September 17] Fr. Stanislaus died in Góra Kalwaria and was buried in the Church of Our Lord's Cenacle.

Beatification and Canonization Process

- 1705** The first biography of Fr. Papczyński, composed by Fr. Mansueto Leporini, OFMRef, and entitled *Vita Fundatoris Congregationis Polonae Ordinis Immaculatae Conceptionis BVM* [*Life of the Founder*] appeared.
- 1754** The Servant of God Casimir Wyszyński wrote Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński's biography entitled *Vita Venerabilis Servi Dei Patris Stanislai a Iesu Maria*.
- 1764** On December 20, the Commonwealth Coronation Diet of King Stanislaus August proposed *Wniesienie się ad Curiam Romanam o kanonizację i beatyfikację Stanisława Papczyńskiego* [*A Petition to the Roman Curia for the Canonization and Beatification of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński*].
- 1767** [June 10], The first session of the *Information Process* in Poznań in the matter of the beatification of Fr. Stanislaus of Jesus Mary Papczyński opened in Warsaw.
- 1769** Conclusion of the diocesan process and deliverance of its documents were sent to the Holy See.
- 1775** [July 15] The Sacred Congregation of Rites issued a decree approving Fr. Papczyński's written works.
- 1775** Issuance of the last document in the ongoing process and the pause in the process.
- 1953** Continuation of the process.
- 1992** [June 13] Promulgation of the *Decree on the Heroic Virtues* of Fr. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński.
- 2006** [December 16] Pope Benedict XVI confirmed the decree of the Congregation for the Causes of Canonization, recognizing a miracle through the intercession of the Servant of God Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński.
- 2007** [September 16] Beatification of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński in Lichen, Poland, performed on behalf of Pope Benedict XVI by H.E. Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone, the Secretary of State of the Holy See.
- 2016** [January 21] Pope Francis confirmed the decree of the Congregation for the Causes of Canonization, recognizing

a miracle through the intercession of Blessed Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński.

- 2016** [March 15] Pope Francis, together with the cardinals assembled for the usual consistory, made a decision approving the canonization of Blessed Stanislaus Papczyński.
- 2016** [June 5] At St. Peter's Square in the Vatican, Pope Francis solemnly canonized Blessed Stanislaus Papczyński.

Chronological Index of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński's Extant and Lost Written Works

The following list of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński's extant and lost writings was compiled on the foundation of research conducted by Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC. He relied mainly on the decree issued by the Congregation of Rites, which had examined the compliance of Papczyński's teaching with the doctrine of the Catholic Church as part of his beatification process. He also used other historical testimonies. Thanks to this, we know that in the year of issuance of the decree *Super eorum examine, revisione et approbatione*, that is, in 1775, some of Fr. Papczyński's written works, which did not survive to this day, were still in existence. On the other hand, some writings of the Marian Founder — including letters and documents — of whose existence we know but not their titles, or whose contents are only known to us in a fairly general and approximate manner, have been grouped into subsections. A detailed list of lost documents, which includes a brief description of their titles, content and sources confirming their existence, can be found in the doctoral dissertation of Fr. C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, and the *Positio*.¹

¹ Cf. K.J. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Stanislaus a Iesu Maria Papczyński O.IMM., CONC. (1631–1701). Magister studii perfectionis*, Romae 1963, p. 146nn and *Positio*, pp. 580–586.

Surviving Works

1. Two excerpts from *Secreta Conscientiae ad Reverendum Patrem N.N Poloniae V[icarium] meum in Spiritualibus Magistrum*, 1656, in *Vita Venerabilis Servi Dei Patris Stanislai a Jesu Maria [...] composita per Patrem Casimirum Wyszyński*, 1754, § 18, 20; manuscript, Archives of the Marian Postulator; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 1-4.

2. *Professio votorum simplicium*, Varsaviae 22 VII 1656, critical Latin edition: *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 5-9.

3. *Prodromus Reginae Artium sive informatio tyronum eloquentiae*, Varsaviae 1663; Varsaviae 1664; 1665; Cracoviae [ca. 1669]; critical Latin edition: Varsaviae 2001.

4. *Doctor Angelicus, in sui Ordinis Varsaviensi Basilica, pro nostris laudatus a P. Stanislao a Jesu Maria, Clericorum Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum Sacerdote*, Varsaviae 1664; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Norma Vitae et alia Scripta*, Varsaviae 2001 pp. 65-98.

5. *Letter to the Procurator General of the Piarist Fathers in Rome* [Warszawa, Jan. 16, 1666], critical Latin editions: *Positio*, pp. 81-82.

6. *Panegyris Lyrica Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Domino D. Joanni Gembicki Dei et Sedis Apostolicae Gratia Episcopo Plo-censi decantata per P. Stanislaum a Jesu Maria Cler. Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum Anno 1666 (Lyrical Panegyric)*, Varsaviae, 1667; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Norma Vitae et alia Scripta*, Varsaviae 2001, pp. 99-116.

7. *Protestatio Romam abeuntis (Declaration of the One Departing for Rome)* [Varsaviae, Oct. 20, 1667], critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 11-20.

8. *Panegyris Augustissimo Principi Michaeli Korybuth Divinitus Electo Regi Poloniae, Lithuaniae, Russiae, [...] Magno Duci, debitae subiectionis et observantiae causa a Regio Collegio Varsaviensi Clericorum Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum Consecratus (Panegyric for the Most Venerable Prince Michal*

Korybut), Varsaviae 1669; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Norma Vitae et alia Scripta*, Varsaviae 2001, pp. 117-146.

9. *Triumphus Sine originali macula conceptae Magnae Virgini, nova methodo, celeberrime adornatae*, 1669, in D.K. Kochanowski, *Novus Asserendae Immaculatae Conceptionis Deiparae Virginis Modus* (Cracoviae 1669), s. XVIII-XIX; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Norma Vitae et alia Scripta*, Varsaviae 2001, pp. 147-154.

10. *Orator Crucifixus sive Ultima Septem Verba Domini nostri Jesu Christi, totidem piis discursibus exposita per R. P. Joannem Papczyński, Presbyterum Polonum* (*The Crucified Orator*), Cracoviae 1670, critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, Varsaviae 1998.

11. *Letter to Fr. Cosmas Chiara, SP, Superior General of the Order of Pious Schools* [Cracoviae, 22 XI 1670], critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 21-24.

12. *Oblatio (Self-Offering)* [Casimiriae ad Cracoviam, 11 XII 1670]; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 25-30.

13. *Apologia pro egressu e Scholis Piis* (*Apology for the Departure from the Institute of Pious Schools*) [Cracoviae? Luboczae?, 1671?], critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 31-73.

14. *Templum Dei Mysticum quod in Homine Christiano demonstravit R. P. Stanislaus a Iesu Maria Presbyter Polonus* (*Mystical Temple of God*), Cracoviae 1675; Varsaviae 1741 ; 1747; critical Latin edition: Varsaviae 1998.

15. *Fundatio Domus Recollectionis* (*Founding of the House of Recollection*) [In Eremo Corabieviensi 1675 (?)]; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 75-96.

16. *Inspectio Cordis, Stanislai a Iesu Maria Congregationis Immaculatae Conceptionis Clericorum Recollectorum, ex Scholis Piis Praepositi — Recollectiones pro Dominicis et Festis totius anni et Menstruis exercitijs tumulturaria [= tumultuaria?] opera*

consutatae (Examination of the Heart) [1677-1685 (?)], Library of the Major Seminary in Lublin, manuscript copy, 523; critical Latin edition: Varsaviae 2000.

17. *Letter to Fr. Alexis Armini, S.P., Superior General of the Order of Pious Schools* [March 23, 1688], critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 97-105.

18. *Christus Patiens, Septem Discursibus Quadragesimali Paenitentiae accomodatis, Devotae Piorum considerationi Propositus per Patrem Stanislaum a Jesu Maria Sacerdotem Polonum (The Suffering Christ)*, Varsaviae 1690, critical Latin edition: Varsaviae 1998.

19. *Letter to the Marians in the Korabiew Hermitage* [Neo-Jerosolymae, 19 Aprilis 1690], critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 107-111.

20. *Letter to the Order of Friars Minor* [Romae, III/IV 1691], critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 113-116.

21. *First Testament (Last Will)* [Neo-Jerosolymae, 9 Decembris 1692], critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 117-122.

22. *Norma Vitae Religiosae Congregationi B.V.Mariae Sine labe Conceptae Eremitarum Marianorum fidelibus defunctis praecipue militibus et peste sublati Suffragantium Proposita et ab Eminentissimo et Reverendissimo Domino Domino Leonardo Cardinali Colloredo ex Commissione Sacrae Congregationis Regularium et Episcoporum Correcta Romae Anno Domini 1694 (The Rule of Life)*, manuscript A LIX, Archives of the Archdiocese of Lublin; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Norma Vitae et alia Scripta*, Varsaviae 2001, pp. 11-64.

23. *Letter to the Marians in Both Houses* [16 IV 1695]; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 123-125.

24. *Litterae ad P. Ioannem Foci, S.P., Superior General of the Order of Pious Schools* [Neo-Jerosolymae, 17 Februarii 1696],

critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 127-129.

25. *Another Testament* [1699-1701], critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 131-142.

26. *Ordinances for the Korabiew Hermitage* [1701?]; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 145-149.

27. *Profession of Solemn Vows* [6 VI 1701]; critical Latin edition: C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, *Scripta Historica*, Varsaviae 1999, pp. 143-144.

Lost Writings

I. Printed works:

1. *Prodromus Rhetoricus sive Institutiones Rhetoricae*, Varsaviae 1665. This was the third edition of *Prodromus Reginae Artium sive Informatio Tyronum Eloquentiae* (*Messenger of the Queen of Arts*), which appeared under a different title.

2. Addressed delivered to Prince Lubomirski as well as addresses “*de singulari, eoque illibato ab originis labe conceptu B.V. Mariae.*” in A. Horanyi, *Scriptores Piarum Scholarum*, P. II (Budae 1809), p. 460.

3. *Norma vitae*, Varsaviae 1687. This was the first printed edition of *Norma Vitae* (*The Rule of Life*).

II. Manuscripts:

1. *Boleslaus*, 1655. Possibly, a panegyric in honor of Fr. Boleslaus Opatowski, a Piarist, composed for his feast day.

2. *Secreta Conscientiae ad Reverendum Patrem N.N. Poloniae V[icarium?] meum in Spiritualibus Magistrum*, 1656 (?); NB: today we know two excerpts from this work.

3. *Regina Artium*, 1658. A textbook on rhetoric.

4. *Natalis Hieronymi Lubomirski*, 1660. A panegyric composed and delivered in Rzeszów.²

5. *Sol Theologorum de S. Thoma*, or: *Sol Theologorum*, S. Thomas ca. 1663-1667. Most probably, this is a sermon delivered at the Dominicans' Church in Warsaw between 1663 and 1667.

6. *Apologia pro Summa Paupertate*, ca. 1663-1669. Short work of ascetic character, treating the issue of poverty, proper to the Piarists' spirituality.

7. *Nauka życia duchownego*, after 1677. A book in Polish, containing most probably conferences that Fr. Papczyński delivered to the Dominican Sisters in Góra Kalwaria, whom he served as a spiritual director.

8. *Institutiones beatae vitae*. This work was mentioned without any detailed description in the *Protocullum* of the monastery in Balsamão.

9. *Documenta religiosa*. This work was mentioned without any detailed description in the *Protocullum* of the monastery in Balsamão.

10. Works on rhetoric, including fifteen various writings concerning eloquence, addresses delivered before the princes of the Lubomirski family, and four works entitled: *Poesis sacra*, *Opuscula poetica*, *Poesis Lyrica*, *Epigrammata*.

11. Works on theology and ascetics, including nine notebooks concerning moral theology, memoirs entitled *Memorial donorum*, *illuminationum*, etc., speeches on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, recommendations addressed to the Marians and referring to the preservation of poverty (January 12, 1694), recommendations for good use of time, various speeches, sermons, meditations and prayers related to the spiritual life.

12. Documents, including polemic writings concerning the conflict between the Jesuits and the Piarists in Warsaw in 1667-1669, a promise of *deponendi habitu* [deposition of the habit] (of December 10, 1670).

² Bogdan Kupis assumes that it is the same panegyric, which was included in the *Messenger of the Queen of Arts* [cf. B. Kupis, *Niedoceniony podręcznik retoryki Stanisława Papczyńskiego (1631-1701)*, Warszawa-Lublin 2006, pp. 154-159.

13. Several letters, including eight letters to the Superior General of the Pious Schools (1667-1670); two letters to the Piarist Provincial Superior (1668-1669); four letters to Fr. Michael Kraus SP, (1665–1670); various letters to the Piarists in Poland, one letter to Br. Jerome Wolski, SP (1668); two letters to the Piarist clerics in Kazimierz (ca. February 1, 1670, and April 1, 1670); two letters to the Bishop of Cracow (December 1669 and April 1670); a letter to the Superior General of the Pious Schools, ca. January 1, 1671; a letter to the General Chapter of the Pious Schools (1671); a request to the Provincial Chapter of the Pious Schools in Poland (1676); a letter to the pastor at Sieciechowice of January 15, 1671; a letter to the Holy See from February 16, 1671; a letter to the Trzciński family (1677?); a letter to the house Superior of the Korabiew Forest after 1677; a letter of recommendation for his confreres dispatched to Rome of January 3, 1696; letters to unknown recipients and bishops.

Prepared by Andrzej Pakuła, MIC

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

General Abbreviations

f.	<i>folium</i> — indicates a page of the original manuscript
ms.	<i>manuscript</i>
pp.	<i>paginæ</i> — pages of a book
r	<i>recto</i> — the front of a manuscript page
s.a.	<i>sine anno</i> — unknown year of publication
s.l.	<i>sine loco</i> — unknown place of publication
s.n.	<i>sine nomine</i> — unknown name of author or translator
s.v.	<i>sub verbo</i> — under the word (dictionary reference)
v	<i>verso</i> — the back of a manuscript page
vol.	<i>volumen</i> — volume

Bibliographical Abbreviations

AAP	Archives of the Archdiocese of Poznań – Collection: <i>Acta Processum Sacrorum (APS)</i> .
AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicæ Sedis</i> , Comm. Off., Roma 1909.
AC	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , Trans. Henry Chadwick, Oxford University Press, Oxford — New York 1992.
ACE	Ambrosius, <i>Commentaria in Evangelium sec. Lucam</i> : Opera III, Romæ 1579.
ADO	Ambrosius, <i>De Officiis</i> , in: <i>Opera Omnia IV</i> , Romæ 1582.
AMS	Augustine, <i>Meditations, Soliloquies and Manual</i> , Taurini 1929.

<i>APost.MIC</i>	Archivum Postulationis Generalis CC. Marianorum, Romæ (Via Corsica 1).
<i>APS</i>	See <i>AAP</i> .
<i>BHL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina antiquæ et mediæ ætatis</i> , 2 voll., Bruxelles 1898-1901; Suppl., 1911.
<i>BHM</i>	E.M. Berens, <i>A Hand-Book of Mythology: Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome</i> , Charles E. Merrill Co., New York 1894.
<i>BLS</i>	Alban Butler, <i>Butler's Lives of the Saints</i> .
<i>BR</i>	<i>Breviarium Romanum</i> , ex decreto SS. Concilii Tridentini Restitutum ... Recognitum, Taurini-Romæ 1952.
<i>BS</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sanctorum</i> , I-XIII, Roma 1961-1970.
<i>BSV</i>	<i>Biblia Sacra</i> , ed. Vulgatæ, Ratisbonæ 1929.
<i>BT</i>	<i>Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu (Biblia Tysiąclecia)</i> , Eds. Augustyn Jankowski et al., 5 th ed., Pallottinum, Poznań 2002.
<i>BW</i>	<i>Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu (Biblia Jakuba Wujka)</i> , Trans. Fr. Jakub Wujek, SJ, 3 rd rev. ed., Wydawnictwo Apostolstwa Modlitwy, Kraków 1962.
<i>CCC</i>	Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2 nd ed., USCCB, Washington 2000.
<i>CCD</i>	<i>A New Testament revision of the Challoner-Rheims version</i> , Eds. Catholic Scholars under the patronage of the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1950.
<i>CCE</i>	<i>Catechismus Catholicæ Ecclesiæ</i> , Città del Vaticano 1997.
<i>CChrL</i>	<i>Corpus christianorum seu nova Patrum collectio. Series Latina</i> , Turnhout 1954.
<i>CChrM</i>	<i>Corpus christianorum seu nova Patrum collectio. Continuatio Mediævalis</i> , Turnhout 1971.
<i>Choy.</i>	[Dominicus Choynacki, SP], <i>Brevis Collectio, De introductis Scholis Piis in Poloniam, et earum incre-</i>

- mento, tam in hoc, quamin inclyto Hungariae Regno*, Ms. (1775), Archives of the Piarists [APC], Krakow, Pijarska Street.
- CLCE** Cornelius à Lapide, *Commentaria in Quattuor Evangelia*, 4 voll., ed. 5-a, Taurini-Romæ 1941.
- CLD** *Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin-English and English-Latin*, rev. ed., Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York 1955.
- CO** Stanislaus Papczyński, *The Crucified Orator or The Seven Last Words of Our Lord Jesus Christ explained in as many pious reflections by the Venerable Father John Papczyński, a Polish priest*, in: *Selected Works of St. Stanislaus Papczyński*, Marian Heritage — PROMIC, Stockbridge — Warsaw 2021.
 [(English translation of *Orator Crucifixus*, as published in this book.)]
- ConstSP** *Constitutiones Congregationis Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum, in: Clericorum Regularium Scholarum Piarum I. Constitutiones cum Notis. II. Regulæ et Ritus Communes, ...*, s.l. 1768.
- CP** Stanislaus Papczyński, *Christus Patiens*, Institutum Historicum Marianorum, Varsaviæ 1998.
- CV** *Biblia Sacra: Juxta Vulgatam Clementinam — Plurimis Consultis Editionibus Diligenter Præparata a Michaele Tvvedale*, Editio Electronica, Published with approbation by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Londini 2006.
- CWTA** St. Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila*, Trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, 3 voll., ICS Publications, Washington, DC, 1976, 1980, 1985, 1987, 2012.
- DIP** *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, 8 voll., Edizioni Paoline, Roma 1973-1988.
- DRB** *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version — With Annotations and References by Bishop Richard*

- Challoner*, 1899 Maryland ed., John Murphy Company, Baltimore 1899.
- EC** *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 15 voll., New York 1907-1913.
- ECat** *Enciclopedia Cattolica I-XII*, Ente per l'Enciclopedia Cattolica e per il Libro Cattolico, Città del Vaticano 1948-1954.
- EGC** Giuseppe Calasanzio, *Epistolario di San Giuseppe Calasanzio*, Ed. Leodegario Picanyol, SP, 9 voll., Editiones Calasancianæ, Roma 1950-1956.
- EI** *Enciclopedia Italiana*, 35 voll., Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1929-1949.
- EK** *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, 6 voll., Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1973-1993.
- EKość** *Encyklopedia Kościelna*, Ed. M. Nowodworski, 33 voll., Warszawa 1873-1933.
- FC** *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, 1- voll., Fathers of the Church, Inc., New York 1947-1961; The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC, 1962-.
- FDR** Stanislaus Papczyński, *Fundatio Domus Recollectionis...*, ca 1675: *Positio*, pp. 358-368.
- FLL** Ægidio Forcellini, et al., *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*, 6 voll., Typis Seminarii, Patavii 1864-1920.
- GAM** General Archives of Marian Fathers, Rome (Via Corsica 1).
- GFGH** Gregory the Great, *Gregory the Great: Forty Gospel Homilies*, in: *Cistercian Studies Series*, Trans. David Hurst, vol. 123, Cistercian Publications, Inc., Kalamazoo, MI, 1990.
- HW** Stanislaus Papczyński, *Historical Writings*, in: *Selected Works of St. Stanislaus Papczyński*, Marian Heritage — PROMIC, Stockbridge — Warsaw 2021.

- [(English translation of *Scripta Historica*, as published in this book.)]
- IC** Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*.
- IC crit. ed.** Stanislaus Papczyński, *Inspectio Cordis*, Institutum Historicum Marianorum, Varsaviae 2000.
[(This is the Latin critical edition of *Inspectio Cordis*.)]
- Jarra** Stanisława od J.M. Papczyński, *Mistyczny Kościół Boży*, Trans. Eugeniusz Jarra, Stockbridge 1965.
- LCG** Luigi Lippomano, *Catena in Genesim ex authoribus ecclesiasticis ... connexa*, Parisiis 1546.
- LH** *Liturgia Horarum iuxta ritum Romanum. Officium divinum ex decreto sacrosancti oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum*, 4 voll., Città del Vaticano 1972.
- LHE** *The Liturgy of the Hours: According to the Roman Rite*, English Trans. Prepared by ICEL, 4 voll., Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York 1975.
- LM** *Lectionary for Mass, Vol. I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and the Saints*, 2nd typical ed., Catholic Book Publishing Co., New Jersey 1998.
- LThK** *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 10 voll., Eds. Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner, Freiburg i. Br. 1957-1965.
- LV** *The Holy Bible translated from the Latin Vulgate and diligently compared with other editions in divers languages*, Burns and Oates Ltd., Publishers to the Holy See, London 1964.
- MIR** *Missale Romanum: Ex Decreto Ss. Concilii Tridentini Restitutum Summorum Pontificum Cura Recognitum*, Editio VII juxta Typicam Vaticanam, Benziger Brothers, Inc., New York 1953.
- MR** *Martyrologium Romanum Gregorii papæ XIII jussu editum ...*, Eds. H. Delehay et al., Taurinum 1939.³

³ A newer version of The Roman Martyrology was used for the translation in *Inspectio Cordis*, and it is abbreviated as “RM”.

- NAB** *Saint Joseph Edition of The New American Bible*, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York 1992.
- NCE** *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 19 voll., McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York 1967-1996.
- NV** Stanislaus Papczyński, *Norma Vitæ Religiosæ Congregationi B.V. Mariæ Sine labe Conceptæ Eremitarum Marianorum ... Proposita et ab Em.mo et Rev.mo Domino D. L. Cardinali Colloredo ... Correcta Romæ A.D. 1694*, Manuscript copy (1694-98): *Positio*, pp. 450-483.
- OC** Stanislaus Papczyński, *Orator Crucifixus sive Ultima Septem Verba Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Institutum Historicum Marianorum, Varsaviæ 1998.
- Pawłowski** D. Pawłowski, *Vita P. Gasparis Družbicki Poloni SI*, Cracoviæ 1670.
- PEK** *Podręczna Encyklopedia Kościelna I-XLIV*, Eds. Z. Chelmicki et al., Warszawa 1904-1916.
- PG** *Patrologiæ cursus completus, Series Græca I-CLXI*, Ed. J.P. Migne, Paris 1857-1866.
- PL** *Patrologiæ cursus completus, Series Latina I-CCXVII*, Ed. J.P. Migne, Paris 1878-1890.
- Positio** *Posnaniensis Beatificationis et Canonizationis S.D. Stanislai a I.M. Papczyński ... Positio super Introductione Causæ et super Virtutibus ...*, Romæ 1977.
- PP** *Copia Publica Transumpti Processus Ordinaria auctoritate in Curia Posnanien. Constructi super fama sanctitatis vitæ, virtutum et miraculorum Servi Dei Stanislai Papczyński ...*, Manuscript, APost.MIC, Romæ.
- PSB** *Polski słownik biograficzny*, Eds. P.A.U.-P.A.N., I- voll., Kraków 1935-.
- RL** Stanislaus Papczyński, *The Rule of Life: Proposed to the Religious Congregation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Conceived Without Stain of Sin, or the Marian Hermits ... and corrected by the Most Eminent and*

- Reverend Lord Leander Cardinal Colloredo ... In Rome, in the Year of the Lord 1694*, in: *Selected Works of St. Stanislaus Papczyński*, Marian Heritage — PROMIC, Stockbridge — Warsaw 2021.
- [(English translation of *Norma Vitæ*, as published in this book.)]
- RM** *The Roman Martyrology*, Ed. J. B. O'Connell, The Newman Press, Westminster 1962.
- RSV** *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version*, 2nd Catholic ed., Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2006.
- RThom** *Revue thomiste: Revue doctrinale de théologie et de philosophie*, Paris, Saint-Maximin, Toulouse 1893-1946, 1947-.
- Sawa** *Mistyczna świątynia Boga, którą w chrześcijaństwie ukazał kapłan polski Czcigodny Ojciec Stanisław od J.M. etc.*, Trans. s.n., s.a., wyd., Kraków 1675.
- SC** Stanislaus Papczyński, *The Suffering Christ: In Seven Meditations, adapted to the penance of Lent, [and] given to the faithful for fervent reflection by Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, a Polish priest*, in: *Selected Works of St. Stanislaus Papczyński*, in: *Selected Works of St. Stanislaus Papczyński*, Marian Heritage — PROMIC, Stockbridge — Warsaw 2021.
- [(English translation of *Christus Patiens*, as published in this book.)]
- SH** Stanislaus Papczyński, *Scripta Historica P. Stanislaus Papczyński*, Institutum Historicum Marianorum, Varsaviæ 1999.
- SLL** Ambrosius Calepinus, *Septem Linguarum Calepinus: Hoc Est Lexicon Latinum*, 2 voll., Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii 1758.
- SLP** Florian Bobrowski, *Słownik łacińsko-polski*, 2 voll., Wydanie Adama Zawadzkiego, Vilnius 1841-1844.
- TDM** Stanislaus Papczyński, *Templum Dei Mysticum*, Institutum Historicum Marianorum, Varsaviæ 1998.

- VW** *Vita Venerabilis Servi Dei Patris Stanislai a Iesu Maria Qui Congregationem Religiosorum Marianorum Immaculatæ Conceptionis Beatissimæ Virginis Mariæ ..., in Suffragium Animarum Purgatorii instituit, Composita per Patrem Casimirum Wyszyński, eiusdem Congregationis Marianæ ExPræpositum Generalem (1754), Manuscript 1772 — APost.MIC.*
- WEP** *Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna I-XIII, Warszawa 1962-1970.*



NORMA VITA
Religiosa Congregationi
B. V. MARIAE

Sine labe Concepta
Eremitarum Marianorum fide-
bus defunctis praecipue Militibus
et peste sublati Suffragantium

Proposita
et ab Eminentissimo et Rmo Dno Dno
Lucio Cardinali Colloredo
ex Commissione Sacrae Congregatio-
nis Regularium et Episcoporum
Correcta

Roma Anno Dni 1694to.



[†] Præfatio Informatoria

Congregationem Immaculatæ Conceptionis hanc,
de qua te informamus Lector benevolentissime, in Stra-
tim Premitico placuit pientissimo Aristoteli Stephano
Wierzbouio, Poznaniensi Episcopo, et Nominato Ar-
chiepiscopo Sine mensi, laudabiliter vitam perfuncto,
canonice erigere; tum Sanctissimo Domino Nostro D.
Innocentio Papa XI felix recordationis certis In-
dulgentijs atq; Confraternitate dotare; Serenissimo de-
mum atq; Invictissimo Principi Joanni tertio, feli-
cissimo Regi Polonia cum uniuersa Rep. Polona
in Comitibus Generalibus 1677 Varavia celebratis
probare, et in perpetuam assumere protectionem. Sim-
iliter Eremitas in tripliâ differentia olim fuisse et
nunc esse docet in guar. regul. eruditissimus P.
Emmanuel Rodericus Lusitanus Minoritand Ob-
seruantia notus Theologus: Alij enim sunt (in-
quit ille) Serbita per mundum euntes: Alij dicun-
tur Anachorita seu Solitarij, tertij dicuntur Co-
nobita. Inter quos omnes illi, qui profitentur
vitam religiosam in Ordine viuendi approbato à
Papa, aut ab Episcopo (quod notandum censuerim)
habentes Superiorem, nihil habere possunt proprium
et inter personas Ecclesiasticas computantur. Euan-
dere

RULE OF LIFE

Proposed to
THE RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
CONCEIVED WITHOUT STAIN OF SIN,
OR THE MARIAN HERMITS,
assisting the faithful departed,
especially soldiers and those who died of pestilence,

and corrected by
the Most Eminent and Reverend
Lord Leander Cardinal Colloredo,
member of the Commission
of the Congregation for Regulars and Bishops

In Rome,
in the Year of our Lord 1694

Translated by
Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC
Edited by
Patrick Lynch, MIC

INTRODUCTION

Title and Aim of This Work

Norma Vitae (NV), or *Rule of Life*, is presented here in its final version of 1694-1698; the full title reads: *Norma Vitae Religiosae Congregationi B. V. Mariae sine labe Conceptae Eremitarum Marianorum¹ fidelibus defunctis praecipue Militibus et peste sublati Suffragantium Proposita et ab Eminentissimo et Reverendissimo Domino Lucio [Leandro²] Cardinali Colloredo³ ex Commissione Sacrae Congregationis Regularium et Episcoporum Correcta*. The NV is a legislative document intended as a rule or constitution of the Congregation of Marian Fathers, founded in 1670. The by-laws contained in the NV regulate, both spiritually and practically, the entire life of the Marian Fathers, and are intended for the sanctification of the members and the achievement of the community's goals.

Composition and Contents

The *Rule of Life*, which consists of an *Informative Preface* and nine chapters, stipulates the means that the community's members were to use in order to contribute to the greater glory of God and their own growth in perfection through their lifestyle and work. The *Rule* specifies what the Marians were to do daily

¹ It was only in 1699 — thanks to receiving papal approval — that the Marians ceased to be a “society,” bound merely by simple vows, and were no longer called “Marian hermits.” They became an “Order” (Ordo), bound by solemn vows and free from the legal status of hermits; cf. *Positio*, pp. 537-557.

² The Latin manuscript erroneously gives his name as “Lucio,” probably because the letter accompanying the corrected text of the NV only gave his name with the first initial L.

³ Leandro Colloredo (1639-1709) became a cardinal in 1684. He served on various Vatican committees and Congregations during the pontificates of Popes Innocent XI and Innocent XII; cf. *Positio*, p. 459, footnote 1.

and hourly in order to fulfill the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity by following ascetic disciplines and counsels in the spirit of love, mortification, and inner recollection. Therefore, the *Rule* contains elements of both a religious institute's rule and of a constitution, and for that reason, Fr. Papczyński, who strove to obtain papal approval for his Order, did not consider choosing any of the rules already existing and approved by the Holy See. It seems that his original concept was for the Marian Fathers to have only constitutions, approved by the Holy See, instead of a rule (according to the principle *constitutiones pro regula*).

It is true that an addition was introduced later into the *Rule's* text, obligating the Marians to observe the *Rule's* regulatory precepts along with the *Rule of St. Augustine*;⁴ however, it seems that the Marians have never been formally bound by the said *Rule*. The addition was made to strengthen the Marian Order's legal position within the Church by demonstrating that their way of life was in accordance with the *Rule of St. Augustine* and that the *NV's* spiritual kinship with that *Rule* best suited the Marians and had, therefore, all the qualities necessary for receiving the Holy See's approval as *constitutiones pro regula*. Indeed, the *NV* contains such an ample spiritual doctrine, so many ascetic principles in the spirit of the Gospel and the Tradition of the Church, that it is comparable with the early religious rules indicated by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 as the only rules upon which future religious congregations were to be based.

Authenticity of the Text, Its Source and Subsequent Editions

It has been generally accepted that the author's name is not displayed on the cover of the constitutions of a religious congregation. The same principle applies here: Father Papczyński was not named as the author either on the book's cover nor within the contents. However, there is no doubt as to his authorship, for which there are proofs both internal (the book's style), and

⁴ Cf. *Rule of Life*, Chapter I, §1.

external. Only once did St. Stanislaus Papczyński refer to the *NV* as *leges meas*, or “my laws,” but further confirmation of his authorship may be found in the writings of various authors and in the entire Marian tradition.⁵

The exact date of Fr. Papczyński’s first creating the *NV* is unknown. For the first time, it was mentioned as a finished work around October of 1672, when the holy Father Founder presented the *NV* to Krajewski, the first candidate to his Congregation. Thus, we may assume that the work was completed probably after December 11, 1670, (the day, when — during his *Oblatio* — St. Stanislaus first spoke of his desire to found a Congregation of Marian Fathers) and shortly after his arrival at Karski’s court in September 1671. Later, he had to make certain alterations of the text so that it would conform to the Statutes imposed by Bishop Świącicki in the Korabiew Hermitage. These Statutes commanded the hermits to obey the prescripts set forth in the *NV* and named Fr. Papczyński the community superior. As a result, the original *NV*, which was supposed to describe — as we may assume — an active, apostolic Congregation, had to be adapted to the life of the “Marian hermits.” Presumably, after further alterations of the text, this *NV* version appeared in print in 1687.

The 1687 edition of the *NV* was submitted to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Religious, where it was “corrected” by Cardinal Colloredo in 1694. In 1698, this version was prepared for print under the *imprimatur* of Bishop Popławski. The *Informative Preface* by Fr. Papczyński was also added at that time. In the end, the decision to print the 1694-1698 version was canceled, since after the death of Bishop Witwicki on March 4, 1698, the Marians renewed their efforts to obtain papal approval of their Congregation. In case of a successful outcome, it would have been necessary to adopt the *NV* to the new legal status of the Marian Institute prior to sending it to print.

⁵ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 451-552, where it is explained that the objections to his authorship are groundless.

The 1694-1698 manuscript has survived to our times and was included in the *Positio* (pp. 450-483), along with other 1687 versions of the text, given in the footnotes. The 1694-1698 version of the *NV* also became the basis for the critical edition, published as: Stanislaus Papczyński, *Norma Vitae et alia Scripta*, Varsaviae 2001 (*NVS*).⁶ The present translation of the *NV* is based on this text. Sources used by Fr. Papczyński for composing the *Rule of Life*, and proof of the authenticity of its text, are given in the critical edition,⁷ which also explains the arrangement and scholastic method used for the current edition of the *NV*.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the *Rule of Life* no longer legally binds members of the Congregation of Marian Fathers, which was renovated in 1909. However, it remains a valuable expression of the Marian spirituality of the Founder and of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC

⁶ *NVS*, pp. 27-64.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-24.

Informative Preface¹

1. This Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, about which we provide to you, most benevolent reader, this information, was canonically erected in the eremitical status² by Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski, Ordinary of Poznań and Archbishop-elect of Gniezno, who has laudably passed through this life. The Congregation was endowed with certain indulgences and a Confraternity by the Most Holy Father Pope Innocent XI of happy memory,³ and it was approved and assumed in perpetual protection by the most august and invincible Prince John III, most happily reigning King of Poland⁴ together with the whole Polish Republic in the General Diet celebrated in Warsaw in 1677.⁵

¹ This Preface was written by St. Stanislaus Papczyński, probably in 1697 when the Marians were getting the *Rule of Life* ready for publication. In fact, on February 20, 1698, they obtained the necessary *imprimatur* from Bishop N. Popławski, but the text was not printed, because after the death of Bishop Witwicki (March 4, 1698), the Marians decided to try once again to obtain pontifical approval for their Institute (the present *Norma Vitae* would have had to be updated if this effort were to meet with success).

² The date of the canonical erection: April 21, 1679. See the text of the document in *Positio*, pp. 392-400.

³ The reference is made to the *breve* “Cum sicut accepimus” of March 20, 1681. This was the first pontifical recognition of the Marians. In fact, it is difficult to see in the *breve* of the indulgences the asserted concession of a Confraternity of the Marians. It is true that the text contains the phrase “Confraternity of the Faithful,” but it seems that it crept into it only by the inadvertence of the one who was writing the *breve*. Nonetheless, Bishop Wierzbowski (and the Marians) concluded from this phrase that the Holy See gave permission to establish a Confraternity. Accordingly, from that time on, the Marians started to erect the “Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception Assisting the Souls of the Faithful Departed” at their own churches; cf. below, Ch. VII, n. 8. See the text of the *breve* in *Positio*, pp. 404-409.

⁴ Saint Stanislaus speaks here about King John Sobieski (1674-1696).

⁵ The document of the Approval is published in *Positio*, pp. 376-378.

2. [...] the life of Hermits ... is approved in the status of penitents [...]. Hence, they do not need any approval, once they are admitted juridically and canonically by the Ordinary of the place.

[...] The one who has embraced this [eremitical] status, especially in some Congregation of Hermits approved at least by a Bishop, and has made the profession [of the vows] in it, may not change this status, unless he has been dispensed by the Roman Pontiff at the request of the Superior of the said Congregation on account of the most just and grave reasons involving harm to the third party. Such declaration was made by the Sacred Penitentiary in 1691 when it was consulted by a certain Superior of this kind of Hermits.⁶ Such Hermits, once they stay in small monasteries, are not included among those who are prohibited to receive new houses,⁷ and those who live in a Congregation may have a way of life approved by a Bishop. [...] And nobody can doubt that the same may be ordained with the title of Poverty or Congregation (whichever is more favored in Rome).

3. These things have been prefaced briefly in order to inform those who feel and speak unfavorably about the present Institute, partly because of ignorance, partly due to bad information. If they will look with more a kindly eye into the few chapters that follow, and which are proposed for observance for these Marian Hermits, certainly they will be more benevolent towards them, who seek or desire nothing else besides God and His glory, the honor of the Virgin, the salvation of souls and their own, and to assist the dead. For the rest, although this Congregation is erected in the public status of Hermits, it does not insist so much on solitude as to consider unmeritorious for itself to sometimes engage also in spiritual services for the neighbors — as far as it is

⁶ Most probably the Preface makes reference here to Fr. Stanislaus himself, who was in Rome in 1691. He wanted to obtain such a declaration from the Holy See, because he hoped that it would help to stop the desertion of members from his Institute, who in increasing number were taking advantage of the opinion of some moralists according to whom any confessor could absolve a religious from simple vows. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 514–515.

⁷ Maybe because of the contrary opinion the Marians were not able to accept some foundations offered to them; cf. *Positio*, pp. 531–532.

lawful — without doing harm to anybody else. Nor does it absolutely request the eremitical title in order to make itself equal to anybody. In truth, it is convinced that it should venerate each of the most holy, ancient, and pious Orders and all Institutes to such an extent as to profess itself the last of all and recommend itself humbly to their protection and charity.

4. From all these things, each one can conclude that this present Institute of Marians Hermits, founded in the status approved by Canon Law, does not need any other approval.⁸ For when the Superior General applied to the Holy Apostolic See for its confirmation,⁹ the whole affair was first examined for almost a year by the Apostolic Nunciature in Poland. Then, on the basis of its information, the matter was also discussed for a longer time in Rome. Finally, the answer came, through the aforesaid Cardinal,¹⁰ that it is enough for the Institute to have the approval of the Ordinary of the place and this *Rule of Life*, which has been studied by His Eminence with utmost assiduity and corrected with the highest of wisdoms.¹¹ Such an answer is contained in the authentic letter of His Eminence directed to the Superior and his companions,¹² the letter which has been presented to and accepted by the present Bishop of Poznań.¹³

⁸ This fact is stressed by Fr. Stanislaus, because some people claimed that the Marians, without a Pontifical approval, had no right to exist as a religious Institute.

⁹ Fr. Stanislaus made a double petition in this sense in 1692; cf. *Positio*, pp. 515-519.

¹⁰ He speaks here about Cardinal Leander Collaredo, whose name figures on the front page of the *Rule of Life*.

¹¹ It is impossible for us to know the extent of the corrections made in the *Rule of Life* by Cardinal Collaredo because we do not know if the text presented by Fr. Stanislaus for approval was exactly that of 1687. Hence it is possible that Fr. Stanislaus himself is responsible for some differences between the *Norma Vitae* of 1687 and that of 1694.

¹² This letter is no longer available to us, not even in a copy.

¹³ He speaks here about Bishop John Stanislaus Witwicki, Ordinary of Poznań (1687-1698).

CHAPTER ONE

The Aim of the Community and Admission to It

1. Since no community can exist except under the guidance of laws, nor would it be possible for one to live without law in this earthly existence: because of this, you, who have been gathered together in one society and enclosed in monasteries under the governance of one Superior, will strive to observe these very few Statutes (over and above the *Rule of St. Augustine*),¹ for your inner peace and the security of your consciences.

2. First, consider diligently and assiduously what the aim of your Congregation is. [It is] the one that all the Orders have in common with you: the greater increase of God's glory, and care for your own salvation combined with serious striving for perfection. What does it profit a man, teaches the Savior, "if he gains the whole world, but suffers the loss of his own soul" (cf. Mt 16:26)? But lest you remain without work in the Vineyard of the Lord (cf. Mt 20:31), to the utmost of strength you will promote devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God, and with utmost zeal, piety and fervor assist the souls of the faithful

¹ This reference to the *Rule of St. Augustine* is a real mystery to us. The fact is that the 1687 edition of the *Rule of Life* did not contain this parenthetical reference. Was it one of the "corrections" made by Cardinal Colloredo? Probably not, because he said that it was enough for the Marians to observe the *Rule of Life* (cf. *Informative Preface*, no. 4). Father Stanislaus himself in no other document or writing speaks about the *Rule of St. Augustine* as a possible or actual Rule binding the Marians. But we cannot exclude the possibility that he decided to adopt this Rule (at least as a spiritual orientation) towards the year 1697, as he was preparing the publication of his own *Rule of Life*, in order to strengthen the position of his Institute (which was still being accused of insufficient ecclesiastical approval). This kind of "spiritual" (and not juridical) adoption of the *Rule of St. Augustine* (which was one of the four Rules approved by the Holy See since 1215) did not bring with itself Pontifical approval of the Marians, but at least it gave them the semblance of an Institute firmly rooted in the sound religious tradition of the Church.

departed subjected to expiatory pains — especially the souls of soldiers and those who died of pestilence.

3. Since the contemplative life is not binding you so strictly, although you are founded in the eremitical status, those gifted with such talents will not be prevented from humbly helping pastors in their church work, if they would be called upon by pastors, and have previously obtained faculties from the Ordinaries and the Superiors.²

4. Those seeking to enter your Society should be well known to you, or at least they should have been recommended. They should, as well, present letters of legitimate birth. They should come with the intention of living their life in a more perfect way, of accommodating their conduct to the norms, of striving toward the goal of their vocation; entangled by no censures, debts, or lawsuits.

5. In the education of novices, let the Apostolic Constitutions³ be followed, nor let novices be judged fit for the profession of vows and the oath of perseverance before they have been proven in every kind of mortification, prayer, penance, interior silence, or in zeal for all other virtues. Let them know that having made profession, the way of deserting their vocation is perpetually blocked (except to go to a stricter observance of an approved Order, with the permission of the Superior of the Congregation and with Apostolic dispensation).⁴ If anyone is found incorri-

² While the Marians are still called “Hermits” by reason of their juridical status as hermits, which proved to be the only way to bring about their canonical foundation within the structure of the Church, right from the beginning, Fr. Stanislaus tried to free himself and his religious from the restrictions imposed upon their apostolic activity by the eremitical status. Thus, he succeeded in having the right of the Marians to external pastoral activity recognized even in this *Rule of Life*. It is a rather timid formulation, but we know that in the last decade of the 17th century the Marians were already *de facto* a full-fledged *active* Institute, with members engaged in extensive missionary and pastoral work outside their own monasteries

³ This refers to Clement VIII’s constitution *Cum ad regularum*, 1603.

⁴ This declaration was intended to counteract the growing phenomenon of desertion from the ranks of the Marians. We can easily understand how difficult it was to observe this austere and strict *Rule of Life* and how, after the initial period of spiritual zeal, the temptation to give up this kind of strict life came to the minds of quite a number of Marians. Father Stanislaus knew that some canonists and

gible, a plotter, a disturber, giving scandal, after the third admonition he should either be shut in a small room for six months, and unless he returns to his senses, he should be dismissed from the Congregation, or, if he chooses for himself some approved Order, and he will find those who will receive him kindly, let him be commended to this Order.

6. This will be the formula of the making profession of vows when the time of probation is completed:

I, N., son of N., of the Diocese of N., of N. years of age, freely and of my own will, out of pure love of God, for His greater glory, and the honor of the Virgin, for the assistance of the dead who lack suffrages, especially soldiers and those who died from pestilence, I offer myself to the Divine Majesty, and the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, in her religious Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of Clerics Recollect, or Marian Hermits. This [I do] perpetually and irrevocably.⁵ And I vow Poverty, Chastity and Obedience to its Superior. May God and these holy Gospels help me.

moralists did not think much of the binding force of simple vows (which were considered more in line of mere promises, dispensable by any confessor; in fact, the *Rule of Life* of 1687 in the formula of the profession had “I promise” instead of “I vow” — poverty, chastity and obedience). So, he reinforced the simple vows of the Marians with an irrevocable oath of perpetual perseverance in the Congregation and tried to obtain in 1692 a decree from the Congregation for Regulars and Bishops stating that only the Holy See could dispense the Marians from their vows, and only for most grave reasons (cf. *Positio*, pp. 514-15). It is interesting to note that in the 1687 edition of the *Rule of Life*, the Marians were forbidden to leave the Congregation even “under the pretext of wanting to follow a stricter observance”, since — Fr. Stanislaus argued — “any of you may profess such a strict observance in your present institute” (cf. *Positio*, p. 463, footnote “b”). What he meant, was probably that each Marian could apply for the residence in the Korabiew Forest house, which was bound to a much more strict — penitential and eremitical — observance than the other Marian houses.

⁵ At that time, in the legislation of Religious Institutes, there was no practice of temporary vows.

CHAPTER TWO

Love

1. [St. Paul] the Teacher of the Gentiles has best compared a servant of God who is not glowing with true love to a tinkling bell and a clanging cymbal (cf. 1 Cor 13:1). For the attainment of eternal life — and the value of meritorious works — is rooted in love. Therefore, more than any other good, each of you should try to gain for himself [this love], this pearl of great price, this treasure hidden in the field (cf. Mt 13:44-46). Although love is a gift of God, it is obtained and preserved, however, by constancy to prayer and mortification. Therefore, let everything you do be done in love (cf. 1 Cor 16:14).

2. The commandments of God and the Gospel counsels, the laws of the Roman Catholic Church, its prescriptions, decrees, rites, usages, dogmas; as well as this present *Rule*, (and if at some time further prescriptions are given): let all of these be observed out of the love of God. This is what [Jesus Christ] the heavenly Lawgiver said: “If a man loves me, he will keep my word” (Jn 14:23). And this is to be understood not only of His teaching and of Scripture, but equally of His Church, which He Himself forms and governs by His Holy Spirit, and its orders and documents, and the dispositions of the Superiors which flow from her or are confirmed by her.

3. Out of the love of God, you will perform every good and flee every evil; you will exercise every virtue possible, and detest every vice and sin. Out of the love of God, you will bear, with willingness and fortitude, mortifications, afflictions, reproofs, injuries, calumnies, labors, pains, destitution, austerity, and other situations like these. Out of the love of God you will carry out in a most perfect way your exercises, duties, jobs entrusted to you, and whatever concerns your state and vocation. You will consecrate to divine Love all of your entire life, daily actions and sufferings, and each and every moment, particulars, circumstances, changes. Each and every action and suffering by due submission, confidence, and piety [will be consecrated] for all

eternity on the altar of love, by a pure heart joined to the merits of Christ the Lord, His Immaculate Mother, all of the saints, and the universal Church.

“[Y]ou shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (cf. Dt 6:5; Mt 22:37). This, which Divine Wisdom wanted to be most recommended in both [Old and New] Testaments (cf. Mk 12:30, Lk 10:27), should be your common rule and the safest way to Heaven.

4. Concerning mutual love: let it be known that the one who excels in mutual love is dearer to the Divine Majesty. Each of you should keep in mind that the soul of his Institute is love, and to the extent that he withdraws from love, he withdraws from life. Therefore, even as he will promote the good, reputation, integrity and holiness of the whole Congregation, so he will render to the individual members of this same Congregation all those things which he would wish for himself. And so, he will avoid these contagious diseases very opposed to love: envy, hatred, rancor, rivalry, suspicion, calumny, exclusive attachment, antipathy, jealousy, secret accusation, jeering, whispering, verbal abuse, annoyance, ambition, contempt for others, disturbances, agitations, quarrels, contentions. As he will watch over the tranquility of his own spirit, so the zealous guardian of love will also give great care to guard the tranquility of others and the whole house. He will suitably drive away any evil both from the whole Congregation and from each of its members. Call to mind the love of the early Church, about which the writer of the Acts of the Apostles says, “Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul” (cf. Acts 4:32).

5. You should always be mindful of the works of mercy⁶ which, done to His members, are done to Christ the Head. On all (cf. Mt 25:31-46) occasions, you will not neglect to show outsiders every possible love. You will surround with devoted love not only those you find benevolent to you, but adversaries as well, and enemies (whom our Lord rightly commanded us to love).

⁶ Cf. *Mystical Temple of God*, Ch. 21.

These works alone will triumph at the Last Judgment⁷ (cf. Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27-35).

CHAPTER THREE

Obedience, Poverty, Chastity

1. Firstly, you ought to obey God, the Roman Pontiff, the bishops, Superiors of your Order; then, their Vicars, local officials, and the bell calling you to common exercises. This you ought to do quickly, promptly, perfectly, patiently, humbly, decisively, and perseveringly. Nor should you be ashamed to be subject to men, since the Apostle [Peter] would wish us to be subject to all creatures, more so to every authority (cf. Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13; 1 Tim 2:2). For there is no authority, he says, unless it is from God. He who resists this authority resists the divine will and that is the highest form of stupidity. You should assume the motive and example of obedience of our Redeemer Himself, who “humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). He who would refuse to imitate [Christ] would appear not to want to reign with Christ if he did not obey the due authority who takes the place of Christ. The following order must be kept in obeying: the lesser power should yield to the greater power, nor should that lesser power attempt to weaken the greater. [Concerning what has been ordered:] if a previous order will clearly have been revoked, a later order should be given adherence. You should all respect the Ordinaries of the locality with due submission and be most ready to obey them. Nonetheless, in order to avoid many disorders and confusion in jurisdiction, only the Superiors will attend to the just orders of the bishops.⁸ The members, on the other hand, will obey the Superiors and the laws without any reluctance and pretense. Nor should they believe they have any

⁷ For the sake of clarity, the sentence order was rearranged in this paragraph.

⁸ This was the time when the Marians were still a diocesan institute dependent juridically on the bishop of the place. Only in 1699 did the Marians gain the privilege of exemption from this jurisdiction.

right or privilege to take the Superior to an outside court. This is stated to avoid many quarrels, scandals and rebellions. If ever any [of these] controversies should happen, or any less notable deficiency, then it should be settled and corrected within the Congregation itself, in an ordinary way, peacefully and justly. Through this *Rule*, we nonetheless do not intend to contradict anything of in Canon Law, or anything regarding the decrees and views of the Roman Church. If anyone among you has been found stubbornly disobedient, or a firebrand, or a wicked agitator of others, let him be restrained by the common action of all those who favor interior peace and good government (first, however, having given the possibility for a just defense and apology, with the due process of law having been kept). If necessary, even the force of civil authorities may be employed.⁹ Truly it is right that a servant of God be a peaceful man. Should he consider the person he should obey? Or shouldn't he consider the love on account of which he obeys? You should fulfill, with divine assistance, humbly and joyfully, all the penances and mortifications assigned by a Superior, although they may seem burdensome. You should not murmur against the Superiors or complain, but you should love and honor them. But if anyone should have been truly burdened by some Superior, let him either endure patiently what he finds oppressive for the merit of eternal life, or by himself or through another, present, with the greatest meekness and humility, a petition to the Superior, by whom he is pressed, so that he might use due moderation in the situation.

2. The essence of your poverty is found in this: that no one keeps anything privately without the consent of the Superiors, nor would he dare to call anything his own. However, those things given for his use let him preserve them neatly, carefully and for as long as possible. Let all income be turned over for common use whether it comes from alms or other sources. Let them observe, absolutely and strictly, the manner of collecting, saving and dis-

⁹ It was common practice for civil authorities to aid in ending rebellions in monasteries.

pensing this income, the manner contained in the papal decrees¹⁰ under the penalties specified there. Without the permission of the Superior, let none keep for himself either money or food or drink, under the penalty of losing active and passive voice. Such permission can be granted only for some good reason and for a short time, for all ought to live from common resources and the common table. However, foreseeing all the harm [that could come from its use], this permission is to be granted chiefly and only to the aged and the sick. No member should receive anything from anybody without the permission of the Superiors, whether it be from a house member or an outsider; nor should he give anything to anyone. Before profession, he should dispose of his inheritance and his goods in the world, if he had any. If he was hindered by something, then he should settle his affairs as quickly as possible after profession, since our Lord openly stated: “whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Lk 14:33). The Superiors will provide the members, as much as they will be able in the Lord, sufficiently in all things according to our norms, but not superfluously however. Otherwise, on account of more rigorous want, the members would be found slothful in their service of God. It is fitting for each one to be mindful that he is rather the imitator of the Heavenly King in need, who, it is said, had neither His own home (cf. Mt 8:20; Lk 9:58) nor when He was thirsty was ashamed to have asked for water (cf. Jn 4:7). So you, once you find yourself in a situation of utmost poverty¹¹, rejoice exceedingly, because then you can be the true disciples and followers of Christ the Lord.

¹⁰ Clement VIII, *Nullus omnino*, 1599.

¹¹ As a Piarist, Fr. Stanislaus was very much attached to the legal and ascetical concept of “utmost poverty” that he had learned in the novitiate. Due to the reform of the Piarists in 1656, he was already not able to profess it. (Later he was evidently trying to preserve or bring back at least some of its elements, by writing the *Apology for the Utmost Poverty*.) We do not have any evidence that in his own Institute he ever tried to introduce the “utmost poverty — either in that most strict, of the Capuchins; or in that less strict of the Piarist since 1622 — in the legal sense. Nevertheless, he cherished utmost poverty as an actual experience in religious life and insisted on the need of being satisfied with the true necessities of life, and with the utmost simplicity of life (cf. for example, below, Ch. 5. n.9,

3. Obedience guards chastity, and poverty nourishes chastity. Therefore, the one eager for purity exercises himself in obedience and poverty, and then he will possess chastity. The following means will be able to greatly aid anyone to preserve this angelic virtue [of chastity]: modesty of the eyes and the constant elevation of the mind to God; the flight from laziness, idle conversations, useless reading; prudent avoiding of dangerous company; love of one's cell, and respect for the cloister; an ardent invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mother of God, your guardian angel, St. Joseph, and the holy virgins. The Superiors will take pains lest they throw anyone into a situation endangering so great a virtue, or that they would neglect someone so endangered, seeing that they will have to render to God a most strict accounting of those entrusted to them.

CHAPTER FOUR

Mortification

1. Concerning internal mortification of passions, desires, and your own judgment and will — without which the old Adam can in no way be cast off — and in which it is fitting that you be most experienced: bodily chastisement greatly contributes to internal mortification. “Put to death therefore” — says St. Paul in Colossians 3 — “what is earthly in you” (Col 3:5). Therefore, let your food be moderate: such that prevents hunger, but does not fill your stomach. Food should not be prepared in an exquisite way, using vegetables, herbs, roots and relishes. You will not eat meat (the sick, the weak, aged, and travelers excepted). However, butter or some fat will be allowed to be used as a condiment. But, outside your houses, what will have been put before you, with God's blessing, you will eat moderately (cf. Lk 10:8).

2. Your ordinary drink ought to be water. Should you have any other drink, it will be up to the Superior to allow you to drink it

towards the end). In 1679 Bishop Wierzbowski witnesses to the “utmost poverty” in which the Marians were living (cf. *Positio*, p. 399, n. 12).

sparingly, with the exception of vodka, which is absolutely prohibited to you.¹² Away from the community meal or outside of the house, it is not allowed for anyone to eat or drink anything without the Superior's permission. Frequently think: food is destined for the stomach, but the stomach is destined for worms. By limiting yourselves to a small amount of food, you will render your nature satisfied, your spirit — vigorous. Certainly water and bread were the staple food at the beginning of humankind. When man thus feasted, he lived longer. The abundance of meals now brings about sicknesses, shortens life; opens up hell. Certainly, that one who feasted splendidly every day was buried in hell (Cf. Lk 16:19). Be content, therefore, with little and simple food and drink. Do not murmur on this account against anyone. If the Superior would see in the Lord that he can provide something beyond two courses — especially at the time of great celebrations and the monthly recreation¹³ — then this is left to his prudence, since his authority will be able to mitigate, in the fear of the Lord, this norm in consideration of persons, places and times, both in quantity as in quality.

3. Besides the Church's fasts and those customary in the region, you will observe the following: the Vigils of the seven Feasts of Our Lady, and of Saints Michael the Archangel, Joseph, Stanislaus¹⁴ and Anna, with one meal or by limiting yourselves to bread and water. Also, you will use Lenten foods, according

¹² This prohibition was stressed by Fr. Stanislaus also on April 10, 1701 in the first addition to his *Testament* (cf. *Positio*, p. 498). Probably shortly after, in *Praecepta*, he specifies that the use of vodka is forbidden to Marians both at home and outside "under the loss of Divine blessing" (cf. *ibid.*, p. 502, n. 5). This absolute abstinence from strong alcoholic drinks was in striking contrast with the prevalent customs of the Polish society of that time. Fr. Stanislaus saw how much moral, physical and material evil was caused by these customs. Hence, he tried to oppose them at least by the example of his abstinence and that of his religious.

¹³ By the first half of the 18th century, the practice of weekly recreation was introduced, but the General Chapter of 1754 restored the original observance: one day of recreation per month.

¹⁴ This is not a reference to Stanislaus Kostka, SJ, who was only canonized in 1714, but to Stanislaus, bishop and martyr (d. 1079), the principal patron of Poland and patron of the Servant of God. His feast is celebrated in Poland on May 8.

to the custom of the place, from the Feast of St. Martin to the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and from the Octave of the Immaculate Conception to the Solemnity of Christmas. While you will hard press the body by abstaining from food, try all the more to abstain from vices. One fasts in a disorderly way if he is hard pressing the body while he neglects the spirit. Nor is food fruitfully taken away from the body unless the mind is recalled from evil.

4. Because softness of garment incites not only pride, but also lust, you, as hermits, will wear clothing from the simplest, roughest and thickest material: you will wear a habit stretching to the ankles — not one which trails on the ground or shows the ankles too much — and a short mantle reaching to the knees, and a shirt from coarse linen or some other harsh material. All of these will be white in color¹⁵, in honor of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, and the greatest cleanliness of them should be observed, because dirty poverty can please no one.

5. At least when inside the house in summer, wooden sandals will be worn with bare feet. Outdoors, for the sake of propriety, and in the winter in cold regions for reasons of health, simple, uniform but not extravagant shoes are permitted. Hats lined with sheep's wool are not forbidden to be used to protect the body in a cold climate after the Superior General of the Congregation has been consulted.

The brother-workers will have to wear a different habit from the priests: a habit reaching to the ankles, of gray color, and a mantle without a collar. ("Worker" meaning those who in choir cannot perform the Office of the Dead and devotions with the others in the Latin language.)

¹⁵ Thus the white habit was designed by Fr. Stanislaus for the Marians as one of the means by which they were propagating the devotion to the Mary's Immaculate Conception. Later, he said: "I assumed the white habit in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary" (cf. *Positio*, p. 495). Strangely enough, the 1687 version of the *Rule of Life* gives a different significance of the white color of the Marians' clothing, namely: "in honor of Our Lord mocked [ridiculed?] by Herod."

You must be very strict regarding modesty. When you are about to give your body rest, you will lay it down in the straw and cover it with your own mantle, or with some simple woolen cloth, or with a rough blanket.

All will have the uniform clerical tonsure, according to the size proper to each order.¹⁶ Everyone will also shave their beard and mustache monthly.

6. Common flagellation will be on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for your own sins and those of others, especially for the dead. However, anyone will be able to make use of flagellation on any day on rising or before going to bed to honor our Lord, who was whipped, and as often as it will be imposed by the Superior.

CHAPTER FIVE

Recollection

1. Your continual interior silence will consist in this: that you will acknowledge, worship and bless God present everywhere, and thus you will walk in His sight modestly, faithfully and piously as it is proper for servants to behave in the presence of the Master. Make an effort to contemplate God in all creatures, and not only in yourselves, since we live and move and exist in Him (cf. Acts 17:28). In this way, He will never slip away from your mind.

2. Examine yourselves each hour to see how much you have progressed in the Love of the Lord or have failed. In this way, correct the failure and bring about your progress. Each hour, think that you are about to die, or at least that these hours slipping by will not return. In this way, you will work hard to merit continuously as much as possible, with the help of God, expecting the day's wage, which is infallibly given to faithful servants (cf. Mt 20:2).

3. In church, or as often as you will find yourself in chapel, think that you are in Heaven. As many times as you cross before the

¹⁶ That is the minor and major orders such as porter, exorcist, etc.

Sacrament of the Altar, you will humbly kiss the ground, adoring the Lord of Heaven and Earth really present, and worthily giving thanks for so admirable a memorial.

4. May silence — the custodian of blessed recollection — be continuous among you, especially in the chapel, the sacristy, the dining room and in other places designated for the community.

After the evening blessing¹⁷ and before the morning blessing, no one is allowed to say anything. If anyone should need to speak to another, let it be done with the Superior's permission. He should precede his words with, "Blessed be God!" and the other replying, "Forever!" You will speak in a more subdued voice to the bishops or any Superiors — venerating Christ in them — having first asked for their blessing.

5. Each day, you will spend two hours in meditation. Each month, taking turns one after another, you will make a retreat — which we call "Spiritual Exercises." We do not wish to have the Superiors exempt from this unless they are prevented from doing so by their duties. It will be the Superiors' duty to be certain that someone is continually on retreat, with all fervor praying the Divine Goodness on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church, Christian leaders, the Order, the house, benefactors and the dead.

6. So that you will be mindful of your vocation, and avid for the rewards prepared for those who loyally struggle until death, each day renew your vows privately before the Blessed Sacrament.

7. Any of the novices after entrance — and as well before profession — as well as those to be ordained, will diligently spend at least two weeks apart in their cell in private retreat.¹⁸ The time will be spent in assiduous mental and vocal prayer, in a general examination of conscience, and in considering their calling.

8. Lest you also be disturbed by outsiders, the door of the house will always be kept locked. No one is allowed to bring in anyone from the outside without the Superior's permission, nor

¹⁷ This is the blessing given by the Superior at the end of Night Prayer.

¹⁸ "In private retreat" is not in the Latin, but is implied.

will it be allowed for any of the members to go out (under severe punishment) without the same permission from the Superior. As often as anyone will be sent outside the house, he will always go out with a companion unless the most important reason would demand otherwise. When outside the house, he will direct his attention to the good edification of men by words and actions, neglecting nothing of his Rule, praying intently while on his way. Having returned at the assigned time, he will candidly tell the Superior all the things he has done.

Once the signal for nightly rest has been given, no one will dare to wander through the corridors, in which (according to papal decree) a lamp should be lit for the whole night.¹⁹

9. In order that you may have tranquility also in the house, no one should venture from his cell for any reason unless forced to do so by a legitimate necessity. Even less should he enter another's cell, or admit anyone to his cell.

This cell should always be kept clean, the bed made, holy water present along with a picture of [Christ] Crucified, or of the Blessed Virgin or some patron saint — a simple picture in printed reproduction rather than a painted one.

Always be mindful here of the Divine Presence, the angel watching over you. Never be idle, but always occupied either in reading, or writing, or prayer, or with some other useful work. Without the Superior's permission he should not sleep in his cell outside the accustomed time.²⁰ He should be cautious in using light. He should not keep in his cell anything, which would not be in agreement with utmost poverty. Let him love his cell as if it were a temporary Heaven, and desire to go out of his cell, by the mercy of God, only to Heaven.

¹⁹ Clement VIII, *Nullus omnino*, 1599: "lamps will be lit in the middle of dormitories for the whole night."

²⁰ or, "take rest."

CHAPTER SIX

Schedule

1. “The day evolves by God’s arrangement.”²¹ Therefore, the day is to be passed, for God’s glory, in good order. Rising a little after the middle of the night, you will move together to the church, when the second signal has been given. There, during the verse *Tantum ergo Sacramentum*, you will adore the Blessed Sacrament. Then you will say devotedly, distinctly, with attention and clearly, the Little Office of the Immaculate Conception²² to the end of None (according to the Roman Correction, approved by Pope Innocent XI in the brief sent to Emperor Leopold I on December 18, 1678) together with the first part of the Rosary, in the vernacular because of the brother-helpers. After the Rosary, you will spend an hour in mental prayer, at the end of which you will receive the Superior’s blessing with holy water.

2. From six to nine o’clock, devote your time to reading, studies, or works according to the Superior’s wishes. At nine-thirty you will recite the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer of the Office of the Dead. At ten, you have the conventual Mass; at eleven, an examination of conscience, reflecting on the Four Last Things,²³ then the Litany of the Name of Jesus, and the meal preceded by the blessing and customary prayers. The meal will be seasoned with the reading of Sacred Scripture — especially the New Testament — or the lives of the saints, your Rule, and spiritual books, for growth of the soul and perfection. All will remain silent, trying to keep the reading in their memory and to apply and imitate it.

3. After having given thanks, everyone will sit together and the work of some moral theologian of good standing will be read to them.

²¹ Latin proverb: “*ordinatione Dei perseverat dies.*”

²² Cf. Lucien Ceysens, OFM, *Le Petit Office de l’Immaculée Conceptions Pré-tendue Approbation, Condamnation* (1578). *Tolérance* (1679), in *Virgo Immaculate XVII*, Romae 1957, pp. 41-124; *Positio*, p. 474, footnote 67.

²³ i.e., death, judgment, Heaven, & hell.

On other days will be read the rubrics of the Mass or the Roman Breviary together with the explanation of an approved author, which they will then observe. Following the reading, they will pray another part of the Rosary with the usual litanies of the Blessed Virgin. Until three o'clock they will be occupied with spiritual reading, writing, or manual works, according to the disposition of the Superior.

4. When the bells of three o'clock have been heard, you will pray Evening Prayer of the Little Office and the Office of the Dead. You will spend a whole hour in meditation, first saying the Psalms of the Name of Mary. After this hour, say the third part of the Rosary.

5. At seven o'clock you will go together to the dining room to eat supper with reading. When supper is finished, sitting together, you will discuss — modestly and not jokingly — either religious perfection, promoting the glory of God, or cases of conscience.²⁴

At eight, after an examination of conscience, the profession of faith and acts of contrition, love and gratitude have been made, and having received the blessing of the Superior,²⁵ prepare yourself for rest, falling asleep in the saving wounds of our Redeemer.

6. The decrees of the Supreme Pontiffs should absolutely be read at a prescribed time at meals. The Superiors should not think that they have the right to interpret them.²⁶ Rather, they should try to keep them with the utmost effort and let the penalties contained in them be applied to transgressors.

7. When the Canonical Hours are said in common, any of the Superiors has the power to change this schedule for the convenience of their house and better order, provided nothing which is prescribed here has been left out.

²⁴ Referring to matters regarding confession and spiritual counseling.

²⁵ After Night Prayer.

²⁶ Evidently, interpret in the sense of relax or ease.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Superiors

1. One Superior will govern your whole Congregation for a six-year term. At the end of this term — as indicated below²⁷ — you will either choose another or confirm the same one. It is his office to admit or dismiss members, to approve confessors, preachers and Novice Masters, moderators of your Confraternity, to approve books to be published, to create or depose Local Superiors, to accept endowments, to make visitation of the houses, correct those erring and, if it be necessary, also to punish them. It is also up to him to establish, impose and carry out other responsibilities which are proper to the office of General Superiors.

2. Let all of the Superiors remember this warning of the Divine Spirit: “If they make you ruler, do not be puffed up, [but] be among them as one of them” (cf. Sir 32:1) [LV].²⁸ Therefore, be not a dictator, but be an example that the flock can follow” (cf. 1 Pet 5:3). Let him then first do by example what he is about to order others by word. He is equally an observer of the law with others, not only its custodian. Let him be endowed with piety, discretion and prudence, moderating zeal with mildness and moderating mildness with zeal, lest through too much strictness or indulgence he hurts the Institute, rather than contributing to its good. He should not aggravate his own men with rigid penances or commands. Rather, he should burden each with what conforms to his strength, talents and abilities. Since his subjects are bound to obey without any excuses, the one in command must foresee that he imposes on each such things as they will be able to fulfill for God’s glory and their own merit.

3. For their part, the members should not trouble the Superiors either by their impudence or stubbornness, but they should agreeably acquiesce, in the Lord, to the Superior’s wishes, respecting them out of love rather than being afraid of them out of empty

²⁷ Ch. 9, n. 1.

²⁸ This Scripture quotation was directly translated from the Latin Vulgate to better convey the meaning intended by Stanislaus.

fear. If any one of the Superiors should seem to someone somewhat negligent or less than exemplary, he should not — because of the Lord — on that account cease to honor and obey him. The Lord himself warns, “practice and observe what they tell you, but not what they do” (Mt 23:3). Indeed, the Superiors are worthy of much compassion, since while they serve all, they are at times forced to neglect themselves. Therefore, the members will always pray for the Superiors, so that God may enlighten, direct, help and keep them in His grace.

4. The Superior of the entire Congregation will visit the whole Congregation every three years; the Provincial,²⁹ his houses every year; but the Local Superior will visit the rooms of all the members almost every single month, lest anything be found in them not according to your vocation and poverty, or neatness. All Superiors will unanimously apply themselves to this, that there may flourish: an ever greater worship of God, in their churches; peace, recollection, love, uniformity, in their houses; holiness, in their members; and conservation of temporal goods. They may not give away these goods of the Congregation to outsiders, under ecclesiastical penalties.

5. If it will be necessary in any of your churches to preach the Word of God, this task is to be given by the Superior to such ones who have been instructed in the necessary doctrine and who have virtuous qualities, so that their preaching may bring salutary fruit to the listeners, enlightening by their teaching, stirring by their persuasion. Let them always attempt to speak those things which would bring forth more praise of God than [praise] of themselves; those things which would call forth in the people, with God’s help: edification, correction of behavior, love and fear of God, the exercise of virtue and good works, contempt for the world, and fervent desire for and striving after eternal happiness, just as in their own churches they will not preach without

²⁹ The Latin term “*Diocesanus*” probably supposes a division of the Congregation into Provinces according to the lines of dioceses, i.e., houses in a diocese form a separate Province.

the mandate of the Superior, so in other churches, they will not preach without the blessing of the Ordinary.³⁰

6. Let the professors perform the duty of teaching imposed on them (if at some time it is appropriate to institute them) for the glory of God, carefully and diligently and for the progress of the students. Let them use the textbooks of the most acknowledged authors, rather than fatigue themselves and their students with writing. Let them, however, not so immerse themselves, together with their students, in their subject matters that they forget prayer and mortification.

7. Novice Masters should be appointed who are exemplary, prudent, industrious, endowed with discernment of spirits. They should teach their novices all of the [spiritual] exercises perfectly. Likewise, they will occupy and exercise them in denial of themselves and of what belongs to them, in the following of Christ the Lord, in contempt for passing goods and the desire for the eternal, in patience, humility, modesty, silence, penitence, zeal for prayer, regular observance, and most of all, in the love of God. Novice Masters will always have before their eyes the care of those to be formed that has been entrusted to them — the care, first of all, for attaining the salvation of their souls, and in the second place, for the honor and advantage of the Congregation.

8. The Superior [General] will assign to each house a promoter of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception³¹ assisting the souls of the faithful departed. Let the Confraternity be erected in your churches, if not already done, on the basis of the permission granted by Pope Innocent XI on March 20, 1681, and on the basis of the admission of this document on the part of the Ordinary. He to whom this duty, full of merit, shall be entrusted will in every way apply himself to this, so that he may bring forth

³⁰ In the 1687 edition of the *Rule of Life*, Fr. Stanislaus had more extensive instruction included in this paragraph concerning preaching the Word of God (see: *Positio*, p. 477, footnote “p” and p. 478, footnote “g”). Obviously, he was giving here the fruit of his own experience as a preacher. The Marians partially restored the missing text in their *Statutes* of 1778.

³¹ See footnote 3 (p. 53).

as many fervent and devout members, lovers of the Immaculate Virgin, and helpers of the dead as possible. Let him administer this Confraternity prudently, so that he may obtain great profit for souls. To this end, he will especially exhort and incite those who become members of this Confraternity by inspiring them to the frequent and salutary use of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, as well as to works of charity and the abandonment of vices.

9. The same Superior [General] will take care to have other officials throughout the whole Congregation — Procurators, Economes, Zealots³² — who will try to fulfill their duties most diligently from a love of God, for the merit of obedience, so that they may one day receive an assured reward for their love and their labors from our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER EIGHT

On the Reception and Administration of the Sacraments

1. Both clerics and brother-helpers will receive Holy Communion with the utmost reverence on each Sunday and on feasts, and as frequently as the Superior wishes (the domestic family will receive once a month). It should be preceded by sacramental confession and some prayerful recollection. In the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament — which we wish to be done very seldom — the greatest care both in decoration and lighting should be observed. At least one member should be engaged in continual prayer.

2. The priests, as far as they are allowed to do so, will offer the Sacrifice of the Mass each day for the sacristy intention, not being forgetful of the dead who lack assistance. They should be

³² The task of the “Zealot” was to “proclaim” or denounce the faults of others in the Chapter of the Faults (cf. Ph. Schmitz, *Chapitre des Coulpes*, in *Diet. Theol. Cath.* II/I, col. 485). It is surprising that Fr. Stanislaus does not mention “Zealot” in the paragraph dedicated to the Chapter of the Faults (see below, p. 78).

aware that, on the basis of a pontifical decree, only two [personal] Masses are granted them each month. So that for their part, they may perform their duty worthily, let the priests never approach the altar with some sin on their conscience, nor without the greatest interior silence or sufficient preparation. Let them be exemplary, sober, modest, devoted, expert and observant of the rubrics and rites of the Roman Church. In celebrating Mass, let them neither hurry nor protract it; rather, reading everything distinctly, attentively and with devotion, not protract this divine work beyond half an hour. Let them recite the canonical hours³³ in common rather than privately. Let them give themselves to spiritual reading and the study of moral theology insistently, and to pray without ceasing. Thus, by integrity of life and the works of piety, they will not only render illustrious support and promotion to the Congregation but they will, at the very least, be of spiritual help to the whole Catholic Church.

3. The Superior of the whole Congregation will promote only members endowed with solid virtue and sufficiently instructed with doctrine to this royal priesthood. They are to be ordained under the due title³⁴ with the intention that a more abundant worship of God may flourish among you, and that the help of the dead — to which you have been called — may be more effective and frequent. So that he may appoint to this place and office those who would hold and exercise it worthily and well, the Superior will have a good knowledge of the qualities of all members of his Congregation.

4. It would be expedient for preserving the spirit of humility if, as much as possible, the priests themselves would sweep out the church, clean the linens and vessels, and attend to the decoration and maintenance of the churches and their furniture. Nor should they pompously push themselves ahead of others whom they surpass in [the] dignity [of their office], even though the

³³ i.e., the Breviary.

³⁴ No one can be ordained without being “attached” either to a bishop or a religious community; those being ordained are being ordained “under the title” of a Congregation.

greatest esteem is owed them on account of the reverence due to Christ. In hearing confessions, let them join sweetness to prudence. They should be cautious in examining the consciences of penitents, especially the simple folk. They should be careful in assigning penances, careful about becoming friends with outsiders, and learned in resolving doubts and scruples. They should not be ignorant of those cases reserved to the Apostolic See, or the bishop or the Superior, knowing that absolution is not always to be given to all. These laws [this *Rule*] do not oblige under any pain of sin whatsoever, except for the obligations which come from simple vows and the oath [of perseverance].

CHAPTER NINE

On Having Meetings

1. You will gather together one or more [delegates]³⁵ for the following reasons: first, every six years for choosing or confirming a Superior of the whole Congregation, his Assistants, and the Diocesan (Provincial) Superiors. Those who have an active and passive voice — three from each diocese (or Province) — will gather, having been called to one house by the letter of the Superior [General] concluding his term. There, having spent one day of abstinence and having sung the Mass to the Holy Spirit, they will be cloistered until, by secret vote, they have chosen one noted for integrity, prudence, religious discipline and outstanding in learning. The secretary and the discretus³⁶ will sign the certificate of the one elected by the consent of the greater part of the electors. All will kiss the hand of the elect as a sign of reverence and obedience. After the election, they will go to the church to sing the hymn *Te Deum laudamus*. If anyone [during the election process] will have been noted for his ambition, let him be perpetually declared unfit for all offices. Afterward, the election of Assistants,

³⁵ “*Singuli, vel aliqui*.” This is a difficult phrase to translate, but this appears to be the sense intended.

³⁶ Probably the one who verifies the vote.

the Procurator General, then of the Provincials shall be held — also by secret ballot. If anything will be decreed in this meeting, let it be inscribed in the General Acts.

2. The Diocesan Meetings will be held every three years, for establishing some good or abolishing evil; and for [the election of] those to be sent to the General Chapter, according to what was noted above. To these meetings will go the local Vicars³⁷ of each house, along with the delegates chosen by secret vote.

3. The Local Superior will call together the members twice each week. On Fridays, he will gather them to assign adequate penance in order to make up for their faults. Kneeling, each one will manifest his faults clearly, openly, with pious disposition, and without excusing himself. He will humbly accept the penance imposed there. If someone is falsely accused at that time [by another], he will not respond; afterwards, meeting with the Superior, he will testify to his innocence (unless he would prefer to innocently suffer with Christ). A liar will be punished, without being pardoned, with the penalty that would have been given to the one he accused.³⁸ Absent from this distinguished Tribunal of Love should be hatred, envy and excessive zeal. In fact, in telling another's faults — unless there is a risk in delay — it is praiseworthy to follow the Gospel's rule: remind him privately; [then] with a companion, admonish him; [and then,] unless he has come back to his senses finally, bring him to the Church (cf. Mt 18:17). But concerning the faults of outsiders, consider that nothing about it pertains to you — so much so that, unless you seem to be moved by good zeal, you should think that it is not your job to give an opinion about their faults.

4. The second time that the Local Superior will gather his members together is on Sundays, after evening meditation (or at another suitable time) for a spiritual conference in Latin (or in the vernacular) using simple, clear, passionate language in order to kindle their spirits to the practice of virtues, eliminating

³⁷ The Local Superiors were considered the Vicars of the General (or later, the Provincial Superior).

³⁸ Literally, "will be punished with the law of retaliation," i.e., the Old Testament "eye for an eye." Cf. Dt 19:21.

disordered affections and pursuing holiness. Or you may read a good book on this matter — namely, one that will exhort everyone quietly, yet efficaciously to loving God, following in Christ's footsteps, observing religious discipline and persevering in holy penance. After the conference, some mortification or prayer or act of virtue will be assigned to be exercised by everyone during the coming week. If the occasion or necessity shall have demanded it, during the same gathering, the Superior with the senior [members] will be able to treat whatever concerns the welfare of the community.

5. Lastly, everyone will be gathered together — by the common signal of the bell — to help the soul of any member departing from this human life. They will commend him with pious admonition, prayers and humble tears to God's goodness and mercy, striving with all fraternal strength that in this agony no one would be in danger concerning his own salvation. Indeed, the Superior will, with greatest charity, be certain to give the sick not only the bodily medicine they need at the right time but especially to give them the remedies for eternal life. These are: earnest confession of sins, and detesting of them, public declaration of [one's] faith, protesting against the plotting of the Devil, the handing over of his soul to the hands of God and his confessor, devoted reception of the Holy Eucharist and of Extreme Unction, the invoking of heavenly aid, and absolute hope and confidence in the merits of our Savior.

6. The Church's customary prayers at the side of the dying³⁹ are to be said devotedly. Their soul should be fervently entrusted to God. The body of the deceased should be fittingly washed, and piously laid to rest within three days. As quickly as possible, the news of the death should be spread amongst the other houses, so that the deceased [member] may be helped — with the sacrifice of Masses and with prayers and mortifications — by everyone. Together, all of you may bless the merciful God of Heaven, who, though unworthy, you serve on earth.⁴⁰

³⁹ Literally, "the agonizing [one]."

⁴⁰ Other editions close with the inscription "God's Honor and Glory alone."



quidam iniquitate linguæ captiui;
PRODROMVS
REGINÆ ARTIVM.

Classis 14.8
classis 14.8
classis 14.8
INFORMATIO
TYRONVM ELOQVENTIÆ.

AUTHORE

P. STANISLAO A IESV MARIA
PIARVM SCHOLARVM.

EDITIO QVARTA. C^h 130.



MESSENGER OF THE QUEEN OF ARTS

Or Training Beginners
Of Eloquence,
Composed by
Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary
of the Pious Schools

Selected Fragments

Translated by
Thaddaeus Lancton, MIC; Patrick Lynch, MIC
Edited by
Patrick Lynch, MIC

INTRODUCTION

Prodromus Reginae Artium, that is, *Messenger of the Queen of Arts or Training Beginners of Eloquence* (PRA) is a textbook on rhetoric composed by St. Stanislaus Papczyński in Latin and which sustained four reprints in less than a seven-year period. It was first released in print in Warsaw in 1663, by the printing house of the royal printer Elert, which also produced two subsequent editions in 1664 and 1665. The third edition, which has not survived to this day, appeared under an altered title: *Prodromus Rhetoricus sive Institutiones Rhetoricae*. The book's fourth issue, printed under the original title, took place in Krakow in 1669.

The title of the work, for which the author used a word of Greek origin: *prodromus* (from the verb *prodromeuein*, i.e., “to serve in the reconnaissance on horseback”; the Greek singular *pródromos* may be construed as the Latin equivalent of *praecursor* or “predecessor, messenger,” that is, someone who announces something different), indicates that Father Papczyński had in mind the work on rhetoric he composed in six books entitled the *Queen of the Arts* (*Regina artium*). The PRA was supposed to be the herald of this very work. We know that Fr. Papczyński — as he was teaching rhetoric in Piarist colleges — developed, for didactic purposes as early as 1658, a comprehensive textbook on rhetoric under this very title, and included some parts of it in the PRA. Basically, *Prodromus reginae artium* is an abbreviated edition of *Regina artium*, as Papczyński himself indicated in the PRA; however, it cannot be verified today, because *Regina artium* was never released in print because the manuscript was lost. Nonetheless, the fact that it existed once is confirmed by the documentation submitted for Fr. Papczyński's beatification process, from which we learn that in 1773, two volumes of *Regina artium* were submitted to Rome.

As he was composing this textbook of rhetoric, St. Stanislaus used the works of many authors. In the preface to editions I and II, he mentioned the following: Cicero, Aristotle, Quintilian, Georgius Trapezuntios, Caussin, [Cyprian] Soarez, and Lauxminus. Mr. Kupis listed additionally Radau, Kojalowicz, and possibly also Sarbiewski, whom Papczyński himself quoted in the *PRA* as a “Sarmatian poet.” The fact that *PRA* was reprinted three times within just a few years and also that Piarist novices in their first and second years learned rhetoric from this book at least until the 19th century, testifies to the high appreciation that the book enjoyed. Stanisław Konarski¹ also mentioned it. Noteworthy is that Papczyński — although composing a textbook on rhetoric — spoke about the state of affairs existing in the 17th-century Republic of Poland and strove to influence the course of events by shaping the minds of his students. Thanks to this, in spite of burdensome rhetorical forms — as they may sometimes seem — we may glimpse the author’s personal views on many issues of the social, political and religious life of that time. Certainly, some of them may seem today somewhat outdated or overly moralizing. And yet, the reflections contained therein are still up-to-date and close to contemporary man. For the needs of English-speaking readers, it was decided to select only a few fragments of that book. The selected ones have the least number of historical and social references to Poland and Europe of the 17th century, but they also treat timeless subjects, as it were, since they directly relate to the Catholic faith, of which St. Stanislaus was an outstanding representative – one who gave personal testimony to his faith.

Andrzej Pakuła, MIC

¹ Stanisław Konarski, Sch.P. (September 30, 1700–August 3, 1773) was a Polish pedagogue, educational reformer, political writer, poet, dramatist, Piarist priest and precursor of the Enlightenment in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth.

PRAISE OF THE VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

It seems, dear members of the Marian confraternity, that he who attempts to praise Mary, aims at a great matter. For I may rightly believe that all the tongues of the world would not be sufficient to express the praise of her, who surpassed the blessedness and dignity of all people. Even if one hundred poets with their one hundred mouths wanted to state something great on this theme, here, not even a thousand mouths would be sufficient. The one who strives to honor the Virgin Mother of God more by devotion than by eloquence manages it in the best manner. Yet, lest by fearing too much our weakness, we entirely hold back from this praise of the Most Blessed Virgin. Her known devotee and enthusiastic admirer Casimir maintains that imprudently and groundlessly does he behave who, not trusting in man's eloquence, refuses to praise her, who is the greatest adornment of earth and Heaven.

Therefore, however much the weakness of the human nature permits, however much the feebleness of the sterile mind and insufficient language shall be able, so much shall I try to praise the name of the heavenly Lady, even more so, as I feel threatened by the great dangers of our times. I think that I will succeed all the more easily, dear members, insomuch as I shall more graciously be sustained by your kindness.

Above all in my speech, I am concerned with the descent of the most noble Virgin. Her genealogy indicating royal lineage of a priestly clan cannot be surpassed by the excellence and antiquity of any family. For she herself surpasses all, because, according to the witness of the Holy Spirit, she was created from the beginning and before all ages.¹

¹ Cf. Prov 8:22-23.

You boast to me here, sons and daughters, of your lineage from princes, kings, emperors, and since the most excellent Virgin was created before the turning of the centuries, it is appropriate therefore to call her the Daughter of God. Even more, because before all others, she was brought forth completely by the Holy Spirit, and St. Paul states: “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God” (Rom 8:14). Is she not on account of this reason the Daughter of God? For the orthodox Church recognizes her as such, when it greets her: “Hail Mary, Daughter of God the Father.” Here let those vicious monsters depart, those women whom antiquity (deceived by great error) venerated as the daughters of the gods. Only the Most Blessed Virgin Mary can we call the Daughter of God, although not born from Him according to flesh and blood, but adopted.

If, therefore, the children of the princes ought to be educated more diligently than people in general, then what kind of divine education — do you think — did the Daughter of God receive? For since she in the future was to become the temple of God, they brought her when she was three years old to the Parthenon² of the Jerusalem Temple, so that there, together with the pure and devout girls, she would be educated in the divine laws, imbued with piety and strengthened in holiness. St. John Damascene, the enthusiastic admirer of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, gives witness to the same. He writes thus: “Planted in the house of God and fed by the Holy Spirit, she became like a fruitful olive, the dwelling place of all virtues.” Not being subject to the weaknesses of her young age, she did not chase after girlish trifles, but had in her as yet immature face the maturity of a grown woman, and she herself encouraged her companions — by her gaze — to the practice of virtues. She did not place any opposition nor did she reject the recommendations and commands of her formators, but filled with the Spirit of God, she zealously fulfilled even the smallest of their commands and she most perfectly kept them. She never gave herself over to the fickle amusements proper to her young

² The Parthenon was the sanctuary of the virgin Athena.

age, but she was always occupied either by deep contemplation or zealous prayer or useful reading. For in everything she began so wisely, so devoutly, so saintly and respectably, that she could have passed as an instructor in the eyes of her formators.

O Virgin abundantly filled with God, not subject to the world in the least thing, free from imperfections, given over to virtues so much that, the most eloquent St. Ambrose, admiring her, as if in ecstasy, cries out: "How many kinds of virtues radiate from the one Virgin: the secret of shame, the standard of the faith, complete consecration to God, virgin in family life, companion in the fulfillment of domestic duties, mother for the temple!" "How on earth could I be able to keep her temperance in the eating of food — I here fill up the insufficiency of my works with the sublimity of Ambrose — in the face of an excess of duties? Those others were above the strength of the feminine nature, nature itself was not capable of managing it. In duties, not a moment of respite, and if we speak of her food, the entire day was spent in fasting. And when the desire for food came, the food was normally simple, so as not to die, but not to cause pleasure. The desire for sleep did not appear earlier than was necessary, and when her body did rest, her spirit kept vigil, which often, sometimes during her sleep, repeated content she had read, or analyzed a given command, or prophesied those which had yet to be given."

What am I to say about her remaining virtues? She was a Virgin not only in body, but in mind, and no extent of her vow ever went against her purity of emotions. She was humble of heart; she maintained seriousness in speech; she was marked by prudence; she was sparing in words, zealous in reading, and she did not place her trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the prayer of the simple; she was given over to work; reserved in conversation; not in man, but in God she sought the judge of her thoughts; she never offended anyone; desired good for all; she gave up her place for the elderly, she did not foster aversion to her equals, she avoided bragging, she guided herself by reason, she fell in love with virtue. And did she ever, even by a simple glance, offend her parents? Did she ever argue with her relatives? Did she ever

despise her neighbor of a lower state? Did she ever pass by a poor person with indifference? She only met with those people, who were not ashamed to show mercy and did not forget about preserving dignity. In her eyes there was nothing gloomy, nothing arrogant in her words, nothing shameless in her behavior. None of her gestures were ever lazy, her manner of walking was not careless, nor her voice brash, and therefore her entire figure was a reflection of her soul, the personification of goodness.³

Therefore, it ought to surprise no one, that the one who was predestined to be the Mother of God was she, who was adorned by God with so many virtues, that it is simply [too] hard to count them all, and surely no one among men could possess them all at once. No celestial body shines with such radiance to compare with the brightest light of the sun. This sun, dear members, is the Most Blessed Virgin, your Queen. The remaining heavenly bodies shine like lesser stars. To such a refulgence of virtues, with which the most illustrious Mary enlightens the entire world, no one [of the lesser heavenly spirits] could attain, and then what now can one say about man?

But let us leave already the Parthenon and let us go to the most pure bedroom of the Virgin. They give the Virgin as wife to the Virginal Bridegroom and she does not fear at all about her virginity under the care of Joseph — she who, being obedient to the will of her parents, married Joseph. Having entrusted herself to God Himself, she entrusts and commits to the care of some sort of man this very great treasure. She did not have a shadow of doubt — she who earlier had offered the flower of virginity by a solemn vow, that hers would be the Virginal Bridegroom. She counted on this, that the one to whom she entrusted her purity would take care of it just as if it were his own.

And so? To the inviolate virginity was yet added maternity. The virgin became a Mother, and having become Mother, she never ceased to be Virgin. What is more worthy of surprise: that the

³ Cf. St. Ambrose, *De Virginibus ad Marcellinam sororem*. These passages appear in a different order in Ambrose's text.

Daughter of God became the Mother of God, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, the receptacle of the entire Holy Trinity. O happy Virgin, adorned with so many titles, showered with so many goods and gifts! And so the Daughter of God gives birth, and she bears the Son of God. From a creature is born the Creator; the Father is born of the Daughter, but not in a human manner, not as it is among people. For without a human father is born the Son, and without husband the Daughter of God becomes a mother. Yet He was true man, who was born, such that He came to the earth to save mankind, and He did not desire to save them in any other way except by becoming man.

How many mysteries are hidden within Christmas, how much joy, although by God's Will the greatest joy was penetrated by immense sadness. The shepherds greeted the newborn as God, the cold touched him as a man. There was not a place for Him in the inn, as if He were the most wicked of men. The foreign kings came to give Him homage; His own plotted to kill Him. All this happened so that the courage of the Virgin's spirit might even more shine forth in adversities. Thus, she had to flee to Egypt with Him, to whom belongs all the earth and Heaven. And for you, dear members, from here is such a teaching that you flee the dangers threatening your souls. Truly, why remain in Egypt? I leave Egypt and return to Judah. Will I be able to see there, how the holy Mother raised her most holy Son, how she taught Him, forms Him, how she sought Him lost in the Temple, how she admires the way He shows her obedience, how she interrogates Him and is astonished when He is teaching, how she venerates Him when in Cana of Galilee He performs the miracle, how she accompanies Him hastening to His Passion, because — dear members — it came to all this. And because I consider that nowhere else but precisely at the Passion and death of the Son the Virgin Mother of God merited most of all, for that reason I will delay on this matter a little longer.

First, I have to say one thing: truly, many other virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin appeared in a visible manner on other occasions, however in the terrible time of the Passion of her Son, her

love for us and the invincible power of her spirit were manifest in a particular manner. If it concerns love, I do not doubt, that she burned with such a desire for the salvation of men, that in the case of necessity, she herself would have been prepared to provide the nails for nailing her Son to the Cross for our salvation, and she herself would have crucified Him. Therefore, if standing by such a shameful Cross, she would have something to state, surely she would have stated these words:

“Eternal Father, behold Your — and at the same time my — Son, who took from me a human body, which I nurtured and saved, fleeing to Egypt from the tyrant Herod, with whom I returned to Judah, whom I dressed and with the greatest care protected; I offer Him now stretched on the altar of the Cross in reparation for the life of the human race, and at the same time, I consecrate to You for the salvation of the same human race all my sorrows, which I have experienced in his most cruel Passion and death. And You, through the torture of Your and my Son, preserve unfortunate men from eternal suffering. You, through His most cruel death, preserve them from eternal death. You, through His piercing Agony on the Cross, do not permit that they be overcome in battle with the hellish enemy. Finally grant them, on account of my sorrows, eternal joy.”

O, dear members, in what light stood here the love of the best Virgin in relation to us, how great was the love she showed us, how greatly she valued our salvation! Who, by God, among men is not concerned about this, so as to love, honor and praise in every way possible such a graceful and saving Lady? Oh, do not procrastinate to do everything that you can to venerate the Most Blessed Virgin. If only you served her so willingly, as she did so for us, when with such great desire she bore the Passion which tormented her Son.

I cannot agree with the opinion of those who maintain that the Virgin Mother of God, before the terrible sufferings of her Son, swooned. If the Roman Porcia was able to bear so courageously

the death of her husband⁴ and father,⁵ that she in a certain sense offered herself together with them to the gods as an offering for the fatherland,⁶ would the Virgin Mother not have been able to bear the death of her Son without fainting? Who would believe this? She poured forth tears, for her love for her Son required this, but never did she give up, for her heroic spirit did not permit this. One can read about a certain mother, who carried her own son on her own shoulders for burning on the sacrificial stake together with other companions for the confession of the name of Christ; so why did the Blessed Virgin have to faint, when her Son bore the Passion and handed over His Spirit for the salvation of the entire world? No one will ever convince me. The Macca-bean woman encouraged her sons to courageously go to their death, which the torturer prepared for them because they kept the law of God.⁷ And therefore, admiring the courage of this mother, Gregory of Nazianzus⁸ praises her in this way: "What a truly manly spirit in a womanly body! What a splendid dwelling-place of magnanimity!"⁹

The Mother of God, dear members, bore the death of her Son killed for us in such a way that if Gregory found himself then beneath the Cross, he would justly cry out: "O truly manly spirit of Mary in a womanly body!" She was the unshakable rock placed before all the beatings of the violent storm; pierced by sharp pains, and she did not give up; drowned by the waves of unspeakable sadness, she did not plunge herself in it; crushed by the weight of bitterness, she did not submit to it. For even though [her] heart suffered, it was comforted by the courage drawn from the awaited joy of the foretold Resurrection of the Son.

He rewarded the acute pains of his Mother in such a way that He first appeared to her immediately after the Resurrection, and

⁴ Brutus.

⁵ Cato.

⁶ After the defeat at Philippi in 42 B.C.

⁷ Cf. 2 Macc 7:20-29.

⁸ In the original: *ille sol Nazianzenus*.

⁹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio XV in Machabeorum laudem*.

having to return to the throne of God, He most tenderly said goodbye to her, that in her presence He solemnly entered Heaven, and when she remained still on earth, with love He visited her; He communicated to her the joyful news that He would bring her to Heaven, that He would help her at her blissful dormition, that her most holy soul, raised on the shoulders of archangels to Heaven, He would place at His right hand, that to her most holy soul He would join her most pure body, and both one and the other He would adorn with such glory that no one in Heaven enjoys except the Most Holy Trinity itself.

And so, dear members, we have accompanied — I do not know how — the Most Blessed Virgin Mary to her heavenly throne. All our soul burns to go after her and remain there, where there is found the greatest Love of Heaven and earth. But let him not count on seeing Mary in the heavenly dwelling place who here on earth did not imitate her, who did not serve her with complete dedication. And therefore let me be permitted to finish this speech with the words of St. Ambrose:

“Have always before your eyes the virginity and life of the Most Blessed Virgin as an image, from whom as from a mirror let there be reflected the excellence of chastity and the example of virtue. Whence, you have to draw the example from there of how to live; here, as in a reflection, you will find the explicit examples of an honest life, what you ought to correct, what you ought to avoid. The greatest encouragement to learning is the perfection of the teacher.

And who could be more perfect than the Mother of God? Who can shine more than she, whom Light itself chose? Who could be more pure than her, who gave birth to a body without contact with a body? Mary was such a one, that her life can be a school for all. If then the author does not displease, let us try as well, and let each one, who desires to receive from her a reward, let him imitate her example.”¹⁰

¹⁰ St. Ambrose, *De virginibus ad Marcellinam sororem* II 2; PL 16, 220, 6-7.15.

AMEN
EXPLANATION OF THE MOST COMMONLY USED
WORD IN THE CHURCH

O dear listeners, inasmuch as the ancient pagan peoples merited praise for this reason, that they invented many ways of pleasing, honoring and praising their gods by various festivities, how much more, having the orthodox faith as its foundation, the true Church ought most certainly to be praised on account of this: that for the sake of turning away the anger of the true God and for the sake of singing His glory, she introduced many hymns and prayers. For so zealously and with such consideration did she do this, that she recommended to her faithful the keeping of certain means of beseeching and praising God not only on certain days of the year, but on certain hours and times of the day. But nothing is able to be found that is more praiseworthy and fruitful as the unique word that finishes each prayer: *amen*.

When I look at this more closely, I see that *amen* does not mean anything other than, "*fiat* (may it be so)," namely, when we state *amen* or *fiat*, we express the same thing. Now indeed, who would not see more clearly by the heavenly light, [that] by this word *fiat*, the desires of those who beseech God are presented to Him most ardently and that in general, this word adds ardor to prayer in the same way that blood does to the human body? Most ardent indeed must be that prayer, under which lie these burning coals: *fiat, amen*.

We see the contrary take place, where we do not hear these ardent words. All vows grow cold, which are not warmed by the fervent stirring of desires, and this is entirely lacking where there

are not the words *amen* and *fiat*, which are like the fire of the most burning desires.

What feathers are for arrows, the word *fiat* or *amen* is for prayer. Arrows with feathers fly higher; without feathers, they creep, as it were, on the ground and in no way do they attain their goal. Take away the feathers joined to prayer, the words *amen*, *fiat*, and certainly, the prayer will not arise to Heaven, it will not arrive at the Heart of God and it will not attain its goal, from which you stray.

The weight of this word, by which it enjoys such recognition and has such value, the eternal Creator of all things Himself most clearly showed when — as is known — He created the entire universe precisely through this word. God spoke: “Let there be (*fiat*) a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other” (Gen 1:6). “And so it happened” (Gen 1:7).

And next, who took from Heaven to earth the Son of God and brought Him to the womb of the inviolate Virgin? Certainly, nothing other than precisely this word *fiat*. I confirm this with the testimony of that doctor,¹¹ who states: “Just as after the words ‘this is my Body,’ Christ is immediately made present under the sacramental species, so also after the words, ‘behold the hand-maid of the Lord, let it be done (*fiat*) to me according to your word,’ Christ was made present and was formed in the womb [of the Blessed Mother].”

I can also, if it pleases, give a more recent example. [When] a temple was erected outside the city walls by Valens, the Roman emperor,¹² the members of the Arian sect threatened it both by petition and by force. Basil, called the Great,¹³ opposed their wicked plotting and obtained an imperial decree deciding that the temple ought to fall to the members of that religion whose prayers bring it about that the temple itself open before them.

¹¹ This is Cornelius à Lapide, *Commentaria in Lucam* 138.

¹² Ruling in the Eastern provinces from the seat in Constantinople in the years 364-378.

¹³ St. Basil the Great (ca. 330-379), Bishop of Caesarea Cappadocia and Doctor of the Church.

For nearly three entire days the heretics fasted, prayed, they yelled aloud, but everything in vain: all the empty words passed away upon a strong wind. Then, it came to the zealous prayers of the members of the true Church. The mighty word *fiat* fell (was pronounced) and immediately the hinges were broken and the bolts were released, broken not by hand but by a word, and in this way the faithful were admitted into the temple.

O heavens, what strength of this word, what power, what might! It breaks hinges, releases bolts, and opens gates! The Truth teaches that the heavenly door must be struck with a certain hammer: "Hammer," He says, "and it shall be opened to you". Now with what hammer, dear listeners, shall we strike [the door]? None other than the word *fiat*, the word *amen*. This mighty hammer is indeed most fit for opening Heaven.

Since that is so, we must deservedly praise the true Church for having taught us to conclude every prayer with this word, and must never omit this word at the end of prayers out of negligence or contempt. Rather, this word should always be joined to [our prayers], as the arrow most sure to fly to the Divine Heart, and the hammer most fit to open the door of Heaven. He prays best and also most efficaciously, who joins to [his] prayer [the word] *amen*.

SPEECH

WHETHER ON ACCOUNT OF A RELIGIOUS VOCATION,
ONE OUGHT TO FORSAKE THE CONTINUATION
OF REMAINING STUDIES?

When I ponder on this, dear students desirous of learning, how here, before the approaching vacations, what kind of theme [I ought to choose] for a speech, being about to say goodbye to you all, the thought came to my mind that was not worth rejecting, to convince you that on account of a vocation from God, you ought to forsake the continuation of [your] remaining studies.

I understand that age is pushing many of you, and that the inspirations of the heavenly Spirit move you to this, that you

would leave behind as quickly as possible all vanity of this deceptive world and the lustful seducer, so as to possess the priceless pearl of the state of religious life.

If we are speaking of years, almost all of you are of the same age, in which one can expect that you will be considering what you desire to do further in life, and if we are speaking about heavenly inspirations, is there someone who could doubt that many of them can come from the examples and teachings of the religious teachers who are directing your consciences, from reading and hearing the Word of God, as well as from the immediate inspirations of God Himself, inflaming the heart, the mind, and the will?

Therefore, just like a ship, tossed from one side by the blasts of the favorable Zephyr, and on the other side by the raving gusts of Eurus, as quickly as possible heads to port so as not to drown in the whirls of the storm, so also you — I believe — ought to behave [the same], by submitting to the breath of Favonius and eagerly exposing your heart to the working of divine grace, avoiding the most dangerous storms of the ocean of this world, and drawing close without the smallest delay to the most peaceful haven of religious life.

And since there is never any lack of storms in this world, and the most gracious breath of the heavenly Wind propels you to shore while your very age urges [you] to the same: “Unfold the sails, grab the oars,” dear students desirous of learning, and direct your ships away from the whirlpools of the world, as well as from the dangerous straits of the sciences, to the most peaceful shore of the religious discipline.

I play the role of the experienced Palinurus;¹⁴ when embarking on the small boat of a small speech, I avert you from the threatening Scylla, who intends only to impede the course of [your] glorious navigation.

Inasmuch as, I say more clearly, I want to remove from you any doubt as to the studies to be forsaken; I want to convince you by means of the most just reasons, that on account of a divine voca-

¹⁴ Palinurus was the pilot of Aeneas.

tion you ought to forsake the continuation of remaining studies, however laudable.

What I shall now say, follow with devoted attention.

But so that my speech from this moment take on a convincing power, I say first, that God is not so ungracious that He would allow that those who set aside their own interests on account of giving themselves to Him would suffer some loss [for doing so].

His generosity knows how to reward most abundantly even the smallest intentions of human actions.

Therefore, you can persuade yourselves, dear students desirous of learning, that those, who in the course of their schooling, are drawn to His ranks, will never be deprived of the good of wisdom, they will never be deprived of the gifts of knowledge.

Resigning, however, on account of love for God from the vain knowledge of this passing world, they receive from Him a more lasting, better, and more perfect [knowledge], and offering Him so little — if one who can speak about dedicating oneself entirely to God can be called “little” — they are filled with an immense magnitude of heavenly gifts from the treasury of Eternal Wisdom.

For whether they abandon [the study] of eloquence, or of the stars, or of numbers, or of measurements or even the study of all philosophy, they learn a more excellent philosophy and the knowledge of God Himself.

And thus the Treasure, which they thought themselves to have lost, they find with the profit of a far more excellent knowledge.

What could perhaps be most worthy, more useful, more desirable than the knowledge of oneself? Which of the arts and sciences is able to surpass this? This knowledge is precisely what that man — the most devout and at the same time most wise — praises and gives priority to, as he has written: “The highest and most useful knowledge is the knowledge of oneself and the despising of oneself.”

And now, I come directly to you, dear students desirous of learning, and I wonder, whether you will be eagerly obedient to the divine vocation, deciding not only to throw away the con-

tinuation of remaining studies, but also every hope within your hearts of cultivating the various sciences.

And that in what manner? In such a way, that having trampled the principles of earthly rhetoric, you will be compelled by reason of [your] vocation to learn heavenly [rhetoric]; that having despised the lessons of pagan philosophy concerning the nature of things, the movement of the heavenly bodies, and the position of the Earth, you will grasp the doctrine of Christian philosophy concerning the last things; finally, that, having ignored the speculative theology most often rehearsed in various theological schools, you will concern yourselves with mystical and practical theology.

Therefore, if in the world you have the opinion of the most eloquent Tullius (Cicero), of the grandiloquent Maro (Virgil), the astute Aristotle, the subtle Plato; then you who are removed from the world and living in the cloister ought give yourself rather to silence than to speech, more to uprooting vices than to writing verses, more to sincere simplicity than to sophisticated flair, more to humility than to refinement.

But does this cause you to be deprived of knowledge? Not in the least. You lose a lesser knowledge; you gain a more noble knowledge. You relinquish human knowledge; you drink in divine knowledge.

This, I say, is the knowledge which St. Augustine, the sun and refuge of holy knowledge, begged for with all his heart (*Soliloquia II 1*): “Lord, if I had known myself, I would have known You”; it is the knowledge which Francis of Assisi, the glory of religious and of patriarchs, already possessed when by these words he addressed himself to Jesus: “Who are You, good Jesus — he spoke — and who am I? Are you not the One who is, and I, the one who is not?” To gain this knowledge, so many philosophers rejected hastily their porticos, so many theologians have left their debate halls, so many princes of the Church have left behind their mitres, so many kings have trampled upon their scepters, so many emperors have set aside their crowns, and even a certain prince of the entire Christian world, the high priest, the

Holy Father — I have here in mind Celestine V — who was the first and since then the only who gave the example of placing in other hands the highest authority and government after God, for he was in a hurry to attain this knowledge.

O how blessed and satisfied with yourself must you be, future religious, who on account of such a great, lasting, and perfect knowledge, that is so highly prized by you and so desired and dreamed of by many, that you have resigned from learning in school.

And although you, dear students, on account of God have gotten rid of the polite, lay style of life and the lay attitude, that does not mean at all that you will be cut off from obtaining the knowledge of a higher kind; even more, you will be able to constantly deepen it.

Seeing that unforeseen knowledge is most often infused by God in those who, having despised the charms of this world and having freely renounced the laws of disposing of oneself, enter into the narrow path leading to Heaven under the sweet yoke of the Cross.

With the greatest knowledge having been divinely conceded to them, the most free slaves of the Eternal King, that is, the religious men, are wont to excel also in the realm of the liberal arts as well as in the area of various scientific disciplines.

Because knowledge is a gift of God, therefore it can be granted precisely to the servants of God more quickly and in a more copious manner.

Entirely appropriate, for since the Lord prefers to mark out, distinguish, and reward his own servant more than any other, the commander his soldier, the king his courtier, how much more perfectly does the Ruler of Heaven and earth, God, do this, who grants such great gifts to those who are most given over to Him, such that they themselves could barely hope for or expect.

And because God grants various people different gifts, He is particularly generous in relation to religious, since He sometimes generously grants to them superfluous [things], [and] much more generously gives what is necessary for them.

And precisely in regard to such nonessential things — according to the opinion of the Teacher of the Nations and the successors of the apostles — one ought to number knowledge, since God makes them happy and enriches them with such knowledge, that — as experience teaches — each of them becomes more wise in the hood [of the religious habit], than he was before in the doctoral beretta.

Can one in this matter produce many witnesses known in the whole world?

Let there come forth to me the sun of the philosophers of all times, Albert, called on account of his great erudition, the Great. Was he not a simple and unlearned youth when they received him into the order of St. Dominic? And yet his wisdom knows no measure.

Where did he obtain it? In religious life.

Let there come forth the great student of this great master, the Prince of Theologians, Thomas Aquinas, whom at the beginning of religious life and discipline was named “dumb ox” and thought to be so by his classmates, but this ox bellowed so loudly through his teaching, that he filled the entire world with the not unlearned words of his great knowledge.

And where did he obtain such knowledge? In religious life.

Beyond the Angelic Doctor, let there come forth here the one contemporary to him and his equal in devotion and erudition, the Seraphic Doctor, St. Bonaventure. The most plentiful founts of his superhuman doctrine not only watered the Franciscan family, but even now subdue the thirst of all religious and secular academies.

And where did he obtain such knowledge? In religious life.

Let there come forth one more, last in order, but by no means in regard to his erudition, the most subtle knower of divine things, the so-called Subtle Doctor, the best of masters, John Duns Scotus, who competing by his attitude, his behavior and his knowledge with Bonaventure, gave to the world so many scientific works that he sparked among many a noble argument

about to whom one ought to attribute priority in theology: to him or to Aquinas?

And where did he obtain such superhuman knowledge? In religious life.

I pass by the learned Abbot Rupert;¹⁵ he attributed his uncommon knowledge to the Seat and Mother of Wisdom, to the most Holy Virgin, who was the one to impart it to him, when he lay in the solitude of the cloister.

I do not refer here to Cornelius, the excellent, yielding to no one, exegete of Sacred Scripture, who in the *Commentary to the Book of Wisdom*, dedicated to the best and most Holy Virgin the most wonderful line: “The sea — he states — of wisdom and grace, you are, O Maria our Mother! To you therefore let the streams of wisdom, which you have poured upon us, return, so as to pour forth anew.”¹⁶

Thus, as the one who in a moment has again to draw forth from it, he directs to the Ocean of Wisdom all his knowledge.

Who is capable of naming such unnumbered representatives of the religious life, who not only by the grace of God, but also, as it were, on account of their perfect morality, succeeded to place in themselves such infused knowledge, that not only people counted to the strict group of teachers, but almost the entire world admires, honors, and glorifies them.

But so that someone not carry away the impression that I have passed over the most important argument, I ask you to look at these most bright luminaries of the Church: such as Augustine,

¹⁵ Saint Rupert of Deutz (1075-1135), Benedictine theologian in the spirit of the Cluniac tradition (1075-1135), abbot of the Benedictine monastery near Cologne, author of numerous exegetical and theological writings. Cf. Migne, PL, vol. 175; see H. de Lubac, *Rupert de Deutz*, in: *Exégèse médiévale*, vol. I, part II, pp. 219-238; Rh. Haacke *Rupert von Deutz, De victoria verbi Dei. Monumenta Germaniae historica*, vol. 5, Weimar 1970.

¹⁶ Only the first line is from the commentary of Cornelius à Lapide, the rest was written by St. Stanislaus, who set the Latin verses in pentameter form:

*Mare inquit, Sapientiae et Gratiae es tu, O Maria,
Mater nostra! Ad te ergo | flumina sapientiae,
quae in nos effundisti, regrediantur, ut iterum fluant.*

Jerome, Gregory, Ambrose, Basil, Chrysostom; do you not know, how strongly the light of wisdom shines from them?

Think about it, that all of them were not only bishops, but also religious, and those whom you admire, who enlighten you, who give you such joy and satisfaction, have the rays of their wisdom from the hidden nooks of religious solitude.

Since it is so, dear students, do not have any doubts that on account of a vocation, you should break from studying in school; do not doubt in this — I repeat — that God will give you all kinds of knowledge, and at least — what is most desired of all — He will grant you the greatest of help, that you might attain perfection in all the scientific disciplines.

And if I have not yet succeeded in convincing you in this regard, that on account of a vocation you ought to break from school, then think about this one thing: that you ought to value eternal life more highly than temporal learning.

As a matter of fact, what the heavenly Teacher, Christ, concerning something else, stated: “What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” (Mt 16:26). One can, with certain changes, accommodate it and state: what advantage does a man gain with the knowledge of all the scientific disciplines, if on this account he is deprived of eternal life?

What kind of gain is there to be the best grammarian, chemist, geometer, the most perfect philosopher or the best theologian, if these exalted arts and scientific disciplines are conducted in an unworthy manner, deserving the punishment of condemnation, the deprivation of the sight of God, the loss of the heavenly kingdom?

Pay attention with your ears, dear students, to the story of the fate of Udo, once greatly learned, and now presently pouring forth tears and accusing himself in the infernal swamp: hear the pitiful voice of this unhappy man, listen to his wailing.

O how pitiful! — cries that condemned Udo — woe is me, the most unhappy of all people!

The ignorance of one, who was accompanied by devotion, raised him to Heaven, this infused knowledge, joined with lust, lost in the depths of hell.

"I am ashamed [says Udo] of the title of simpleton; I was ashamed of this, that my companions mocked me on account of my lack of knowledge; now, even more, I am ashamed that I was so learned and that, because of temporal knowledge, I fell into eternal confusion.

"As one having to do with divine matters, I besought the Mother of Wisdom for wisdom, but I did not know what I was asking for; I did not realize that temporal knowledge most of all stands in the way of eternal life.

"Having attained it — and for what? — having obtained therefore such unheard of knowledge, I lost on its account eternal life.

"When this knowledge raised me to the dignity of bishop, there was born to me, like Solomon, lust as its daughter, which like in the dreaded example of the wise [who fell], cast my soul into the abyss of hell."

Oh, understand, youth, the unhappiness of Udo, and having become more circumspect on my account, place eternal life higher than the knowledge that passes like the wind.

However, from the fire of Pluto, let us go to the cups of Bacchus, but let us speak of them in such a way as to know the punishment of eternal thirst.

Pay attention, dear students, to this, how miserable, how shameful, [that] people die drinking pure, undiluted wine or some sort of other liquor.

For either they murder each other on account of the most fiddling arguments, or having been drunk to unconsciousness by liquor, they give away or throw away their soul into the infernal fire.

And in this manner, by the excess of knowledge, intoxicated as it were by young wine, they lose immortal life, just as the drunk lose their normal life.

Therefore, properly we exhort with the words of the Prince of the Apostles: "For by the grace given to me I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than one ought to think, but to think soberly" (Rom 12:3).

I am silent over the thousand other dangers, to which knowledge can expose the salvation of many people.

There exists one underwater reef on which many wise people, carried away by the breeze of pride, excited by the pressure of foolish boastfulness resulting from knowledge possessed, crash and die, since it is completely natural for knowledge to inflate [man with pride].

Who at this point, not terrified by these dangers, would refuse to disregard temporal learning for the sake of eternal life?

I beg you, dear students, that you would extend to me your hands as a sign, that you feel convinced, and such that you would be resigned from the continuation of studies, [for such continuation] is vain, futile, and even possibly very harmful for you. [Rather], adhere to the divine vocation and erase [these studies] entirely from your minds.

Withdraw your boats from the dangerous ocean of the world and lead them as quickly as possible to the most blessed and most peaceful port of God's grace, with favorable winds blowing, with the applause of all Heaven, [and] with the recognition of the entire congregation of the learned.

Dangers will not threaten you then during the passage through the reef. I have already directed my boat through all the Syrtes and the dangerous Charybdis¹⁷ of the empty continuation of studies in school, showing to you the safest and most certain path. It depends on you, whether you want to come after me, or whether you will not want to, or whether you also will be afraid to direct your boats after my own.

Recollect yourself, open your sails to the working of the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, as long as the weather favors the passage. With all your strength, straining your mind and heart, with the help of the sails and oars, hasten to the most blessed port of religious life.

¹⁷ Dangerous bays off the coast of Africa.



INSPECTIO Cordis

Sancti a I. M^o Congregat
Immaculatæ Conceptionis
Uerionum Recollectionis
Ex scholis Lips Praepti
Recollectiones per Do-
minicus et Festis totius anni
et mensuris exercitijs
tumultuaria opera unanitate.

In Domo Goren Schol. Piam
extant alia emendationes
per authorem factæ.



DOMINICA 1. ADVEN.

Ante Sanctissima Communionem

Punctum 1. Erunt signa in sole, & Luna, & stellis. Luc. 21.

Considera nihil posse sine Iustitia regi, et consistere, tam apud mortales, quam apud Deum. Unde veteris Aethiopici fuerunt Aethiopes, et Aethiopes, iudices apud inferos agere animarum mortalium ab ipsis iudicatas esse: ut demonstrarent, nihil unquam scelus impune committi, et absolui. Sed nos multo magis debemus iudici metu averti a malo debere, ut potest qui non fabulis credimus, sed de veritate ac omni re haesimus, non fabulorum aut fictionum iudicium, conspectum nos habere, sed rem iudicii Veri Numinis Filii, sustentis ad reddendam computationem, verborum, operum, omnium nostrorum rationem: qui Filius Numinis unius solusque post mortem atrocissima ruina surgens quadragessimam circa diem regem caelestia intrauit, & inde, iuxta Apostolum quoniam testantem venturus est iudicare vivos & mortuos. Quod si iudicia diem hunc decretorum praefusa, tam furea sunt horrenda, ut mortales ad mortem capiendam, compulsi sint, quanto horribilius ipse actus iudicii, & facies erit? Ecce patet itaque utrum Dominus adveniat, tam ad salvandum, quam ad condemnandum constitutum esse, & se ad utrumque, serio per bona opera, praesentemque communionem verbis disponere.

2. Erunt signa et ibidem.

Quamvis apertissima haec doctrina sit de signis, quae futurum est, ut compaereant ante diem iudicii, tamen non abesse ea illam si potes apprehendere. Capta per Iohannem Baptistaem mandata intelligi, qui est Iohannes explicatio. Quasi: pax futura. Sanctissimam Dei Genitricem de cuius venustate dictum est: Pulchra, ut Luna. Per stellas, omnes iustos sanctosque Dei, quibus promissum est: Fulgebunt iusti, sicut stellae. Ita primum

Pro Ignatio a S. Francisco
scribit Paris

EXAMINATION OF THE HEART

By Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary,
a former Piarist,
Superior of the Congregation
of the Immaculate Conception
of Clerics Recollect

Daily Meditations for Sundays and Feasts
throughout the year [and] for the monthly exercises;
speedily collected at the Piarist house in Góra
[and then] corrected by the author himself.

No. 9

Copy, dated March 15, 1773,
prepared and court verified
[by] Franciszek Tomasz Groszkowski, notary public

Translated by

Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC; Patrick Lynch, MIC

Edited by

Jonathan Inskip, MIC; Patrick Lynch, MIC

INTRODUCTION¹

The Work and the Circumstances of Its Creation

Inspectio Cordis or *Examining the Depth of One's Heart* is a collection of meditations for Sundays, holy days, weekdays, and topic-specific reflections. The full Latin title of this work reads thus: *Inspectio Cordis, Stanislai a Iesu Maria Congregationis Immaculatae Conceptionis Clericorum Recollectorum, ex Scholis Pii Praepositi — Recollectiones pro Dominicis et Festis totius anni et menstruis exercitiis tumultuaria opera consutatae*.

This work, written in Latin and prepared for publication by Fr. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, was not released in print during the author's lifetime. Its Latin title was translated into Polish as *Examining the Depth of One's Heart* in an effort to better render the aim and character of this work. Throughout the book, the author frequently urges his readers to look deep into their hearts and to meet God there, and then to dwell with Him, and, by contemplating Him with love and faith, to examine their own self in the light and presence of God. The author wishes that his readers could experience the same thing that happened to Zacchaeus in the Gospel, who — encouraged by Jesus — quickly came down from the tree and hurried back home to welcome Jesus, his Lord and Savior, with joy and an open heart.

The original *Inspectio Cordis* manuscript has not survived to our times. However, we do have an official copy prepared in 1773 for the beatification process of the Servant of God Stanislaus Papczyński. This is verified by a note at the bottom of the front

¹ This Introduction is a direct translation into English of the Introduction found in the Polish edition of *Inspectio Cordis* (with the exception of a few minor clarifications that were added to the English version). Cf. Stanislaus Papczyński, *Pisma Zebrane*, PROMIC, Warszawa 2016, pp. 489-494.

page of the existing copy: “*productum et revisum iudicialiter*” (“produced and court-verified”) and the official signature of the notary public Francis Thomas Groszkowski, followed by the date of verification. The manuscript consists of 188 pages, written on both sides; it was found in 1971 by Rev. H.D. Wojtyska.² The manuscript is presently located at the Library of the Metropolitan Seminary in Lublin, under the signature Rkps 523 (i.e. Ms. 523).

The manuscript's front page supplies the following information:

Inspectio Cordis Stanislai a Iesu Maria Congregationis Immaculatae Conceptionis Clericorum Recollectorum Ex Scholis Pius Praepositi Recollectiones pro Dominicis et Festis totius anni et menstruis exercitiis tumultuaria opera consutatae. In Domo Gorensi Scholarum Piarum extant aliae emendationes per authorem factae.

[In English:]

Examining the Depth of One's Heart, by Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary from the Pious Schools, Superior of the Congregation of Clerics Recollect of the Immaculate Conception, meditations for Sundays and holy days of the whole year and for monthly retreats; works assembled hurriedly. Other corrections made by the author are at the House of the Pious Schools in Góra.

Father Papczyński's authorship of *Inspectio Cordis* is indisputable. The above inscription points to Fr. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, a former member of the Order of the Pious Schools (the Piarist Order), presently Superior of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of Clerics Recollect, the Marianists. From the act of establishing the Congregation of Marian Fathers, issued by Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski in Góra Kalwaria in 1679, we know that by the power of this act, Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński was named the Congregation's Superior (*Praepositus*

² Cf. Ks. H.D. Wojtyska, *Inspectio cordis, nieznanie dzieło ojca Stanisława Papczyńskiego*, in: *Summarius*, Sprawozdania Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL, No. 2 (22/1), for the year 1973, Lublin 1975, pp. 154-156.

Congregationis). This document gave him official permission to be titled thus, since he was no longer the Superior of individual Marian Houses, as he had been first in the Korabiew Forest (from 1673) and then in Góra Kalwaria (from 1677). It is noteworthy that the act of establishing the Congregation of Marian Fathers, reissued in 1687, mentioned Fr. Papczyński twice as a former Piarist. This note was missing from the original act.³ Furthermore, *Inspectio Cordis* was among Fr. Stanislaus' written works submitted to the Holy See for his beatification process to examine the orthodoxy of their teachings. *Inspectio Cordis* is included as item number 13 in the third *Summarium additionale* of the index of works submitted to the Congregation for Rites.

We can learn of the circumstances in which *Inspectio Cordis* was created only by analyzing its contents. Neither Fr. Papczyński nor any of his contemporaries left any specific information in that regard. The composition and contents of this work indicate that it was created on the basis of meditations given during Holy Mass for the Religious, to whom this work was addressed. We must add that these Religious were not the Marians, but the Piarists. Several reasons speak for this inference. First, the title page displays the information that the author of the meditations is "of the Pious Schools." Next, in the first topic of *Recollectio XI*, the author reminds his readers of the "Instructions of our holy Father," which was undoubtedly a reference to the Piarists' Founder, St. Joseph Calasanz. Furthermore, texts of the meditations from *Inspectio Cordis*, prepared for print, were in the possession of the Piarist Fathers; it was not a Marian, but a Piarist, Fr. Ignacius of St. Francis Krzyskiewicz, who held the original manuscript. What is more, if another copy of this work ever existed, it was surely located in the "Piarist House in Góra." For this very reason, *Inspectio Cordis* was not included among the inventory of works officially delivered to the Holy See by Fr. Dionisius Kisieliński of the Marian Archives,

³ Cf. *Positio* 395, 2; *ibid.*, *Piis e Scholis egressus*, p. 422; *antea in Scholis Piis existens*, p. 424.

since only the Piarists were able to make it available to the Marianians to submit it to Rome.⁴

The aforesaid circumstances also give an idea as to the period of time when Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński must have prepared his manuscript for print. Given the nature of this work, the place of its composition and its addressees, we can infer that it was created gradually, over a period of more than one liturgical year, and that it was even started possibly prior to Fr. Stanislaus' departure from the Piarists. However, the existing copy of this work could have been produced only after Fr. Papczyński's arrival in Góra Kalwaria — that is, in 1677 — or feasibly even after the issuance of the second decree of establishing the Congregation of Marian Fathers in 1687, since Fr. Papczyński could not have been officially titled Superior (*praepositus*) of the entire Congregation prior to that year.

Composition, Contents, and Purpose of this Work

Inspectio Cordis, which contains meditations (i.e., reflections and examinations) to be used by consecrated Religious, is divided into five parts.

The manuscript's first three parts contain meditations "for Sundays of the whole year," "for major feasts of the whole year," and reflections based on "shared texts." Generally, they all have the following composition: three points for meditation before Most Holy Communion (possibly right after the Gospel) and three afterwards. The content is not systematically organized, besides being ordered to the cycle of the liturgical year. The author selects the subject in such a way so that, through meditation and contemplation, the readers may more deeply understand and live out the mysteries of faith presented to them by the Church, become more willing to devote themselves to the apostolate, be

⁴ Cf. *Copia Publica Transumpti Processus Ordinaria Auctoritate in Curia Posnanien.* [1767-1769] constructi Servi Dei Stanislai Papczyński, Romae 1953, f.339r-365; copy of the original in the Archives of Archdiocese of Poznań (AAP): *Acta Processuum Sanctorum* — APS 10. Also see the documents submitted for the same process — APS 5, f.2r-3v.

more zealous in their religious and interior life, and be inspired to greater worship and love for God, for the individual Persons of the Holy Trinity, and especially for the Eucharistic Christ. The author also wants to enliven the readers' veneration of angels and saints, especially the Mother of God. The purpose of the text is to enable the reader to establish a living contact with God. For this reason, the following topics often reappear: God's presence in the human heart; God's action in the world and in the mystery of His Providence; the power of God's Word that calls for conversion and strengthening of faith; the living presence of Christ in the Eucharist; and the presence of the Savior among those gathered in His name. The author speaks frequently and fervently about God's love and His great and unfathomable mercy, wishing to arouse in this way love and unlimited trust in Him.

The manuscript's fourth part is more systematic and is intended to aid reflection during weekly or monthly retreats. It provides thematic meditations on general and particular favors granted by God, about the necessary virtues — a topic particularly important for the Religious — and it concludes with practical recommendations which are helpful in preparing the faithful for effectively availing themselves of the Eucharist.

The fifth and last part is composed of daily meditations (undisclosed on the front page). For the morning, it suggests meditations on the last things, and then focuses on the Passion of the Lord for the evening. In this part also, each individual topic is given three items for meditation.

Although *Inspectio Cordis* contains meditations intended for consecrated Religious, it is obvious that any one of the faithful can benefit from them, since their scope and the manner of presentation have an important significance for the life of every Christian.

Sources and Authenticity of the Text

To validate his teachings and justify the proposed ascetic requirements, Fr. Papczyński does not resort to speculative arguments, but follows the example of the saints and uses simple,

pictorial language, often employing allegory. Most often, he cites passages from the Holy Scriptures along with — although less frequently — quotes from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church (Augustine, Ambrose, Athanasius, Basil, Bernard, Bonaventure, Gregory the Great, Catherine of Siena, and Teresa of Jesus), as well as from writers and teachers of Christian perfection and the religious life (such as Venerable Bede, J. Drexelius, Philip Neri, and Thomas à Kempis). Sometimes he illustrates his meditations with liturgical texts from the Missal and the Breviary, or with real life examples.

The manuscript's front page displays a note stating that the meditations have been "assembled hurriedly," which was certainly done by the author in cooperation with his former listeners. Another note therein says the text was corrected at the Piarists' house by the author himself, who also "introduced other corrections," which could mean that the document is nearly authentic. However, the word "nearly" must be emphasized, because despite the good will of the copyists, omissions of individual words and other failings occurred due to inattention or other human errors. For this reason, the editor of the critical edition endeavored to capture these omissions and introduce appropriate corrections and additions to the text.

The present edition of *Inspectio Cordis* contains page numbering of the manuscript pages (also called folia),⁵ which were bolded and inserted in brackets. The "f." that goes along with, and precedes, the numbers of the manuscript pages, stands for *folium*, whereas, the "r" and the "v" that occur after the page numbers, refer to the *recto* ("front") and *verso* ("back") side of these *folia* that he wrote on.⁶ As to the footnotes, they provide information that may be useful to the reader.

Wacław Makoś, MIC

⁵ *Folium* (pl. form: *folia*); the Latin word for a "leaf," a general term used in printing for a sheet, leaf, or page in manuscripts and old books.

⁶ This sentence, regarding the abbreviations for *folium*, *recto*, and *verso*, was not in the Polish Introduction to *Inspectio Cordis* but was added here to give further clarification.

PART I

Sunday Meditations for the Entire Year

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Before Holy Communion

1. “*there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars*” (Lk 21:25) [DRB].⁷

Consider that nothing can be governed and upheld without justice, either by men or by God. Hence, to show clearly that no transgression is ever committed and pardoned without justice, ancient pagans imagined that Aeacus, Rhadamanthus, and Minos⁸ acted as judges in the lower world and passed sentences on the souls of men.⁹

⁷ In an effort to preserve the meaning of the Latin Scripture quotations used by Stanislaus while making the translation easily readable, the English Scripture quotations used in this work will be taken from three different translations: The Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition, the Douay-Rheims Bible, and the New American Bible. Quotations from the Douay-Rheims and New American will be marked by the abbreviations [DRB] and [NAB] respectively, while quotations from the Revised Standard Version will not have any abbreviation following, since this will be the main translation used throughout this work.

⁸ According to Greek mythology, these are the sons of Zeus, who in the underworld fulfill the role of just judges. Cf. Florian Bobrowski, *Słownik łacińsko-polski*, vol. I, Wydanie Adama Zawadzkiego, Vilnius 1841, (s.v. *Aeacus*); [hereafter *Słownik łacińsko-polski* will be abbreviated as *SLP*]; cf. *SLP*, vol. II, Wydanie Adama Zawadzkiego, Vilnius 1844, p. 131 (s.v. *Rhadamanthus*, and *Minos*). Cf. Ambrosius Calepinus, *Septem Linguarum Calepinus: Hoc Est Lexicon Latinum*, Vol. 1, Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii 1758, p. 24 (s.v. *Aeacus*). [Hereafter *Septem Linguarum Calepinus: Hoc Est Lexicon Latinum* will be abbreviated as *SLL*.] Cf. Stanislaus Papczyński, *Inspectio Cordis*, Institutum Historicum Marianorum, Varsaviae 2000, p. 17 (footnotes 1–4). [Hereafter abbreviated as *IC crit. ed.*]

⁹ Cf. Jan Parandowski, *Mitologia: wierzenia i podania Greków i Rymian*, Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza “Czytelnik,” Warszawa 1990, p. 155.

But the fear of judgment should deter and dissuade us from evil far more than pagans. For we have not been taught by fables, but by the mouth of eternal Truth, that we must face a judge in order to render an account of all our thoughts, words, and deeds; and not some invented and fictional judge, but rather the true Judge, the Son of the true God. This Son of the one and only God rose from the tomb after a most painful death and about forty days later, entered the heavenly Kingdom.¹⁰ From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead, according to the testimony of one of the apostles (cf. 2 Tim 4:1).¹¹

Now, if the signs that shall precede this Day of Judgment are to be so dreadful that they would compel men to long for death (cf. Rev 9:6),¹² how much more dreadful shall be the judgment itself and its proceedings?

Therefore, ponder the Lord's coming with two perspectives: salvation and condemnation, and with both of them in mind, try to seriously prepare yourself for it by good deeds and by this Holy Communion.

2. "*there shall be signs*" (Lk 21:25) [DRB].

Although this teaching about the signs that shall appear before the Day of Judgment is very clear, you may also consider it in this way: Imagine that the sun signifies the Savior of the world, who is the "Sun of [J]ustice" (Mal 4:2);¹³ the moon signifies the most Holy Mother of God, of whose charm it was said: "fair as the moon" (Cant 6:10); and the stars signify all the just and the saints

¹⁰ The plural is used in the original: *Regna caelestia intravit*, ("he entered the heavenly kingdoms"). This refers to the image of Heaven as being composed of regions or spheres, which was well-known among Jews (cf. 2 Cor 12:2), pagan philosophers, and neoplatonic theologians. Cf. *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, vol. IV, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1983, col. 963 (s.v. *Empirejskie niebo*). [Hereafter *Encyklopedia Katolicka* will be abbreviated as *EK*.] Cf. Fr. Marka Starowieyskiego, Ed., *Apokryfy Nowego Testamentu*, vol. I, Wydawnictwo WAM, Kraków 2003, pp. 151-163.

¹¹ DRB: "... Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead" (2 Tim 4:1). Cf. 1 Pet 4:5 and Mt 16:27.

¹² DRB: "And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it: and they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them" (Rev 9:6).

¹³ DRB: "... my name, the Sun of justice" (Mal 4:2).

of God, to whom it has been promised: “The just shall shine, [as stars]” (cf. Wis 3:7; cf. Dan 12:3).¹⁴

Therefore, consider that the first sign [f.3v] shall be in the sun: It will be a great anger that shall obscure the face that was seen shining most splendidly on Mount Tabor (cf. Mt 17:2).¹⁵ For this same face will hide behind the darkest clouds (cf. Jl 2:2; 3:15) in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (cf. Jl 3:2; 12),¹⁶ after the light of mercy and clemency is taken away.

In the moon, the light of refuge and kindness will be extinguished, according to these words: “[A]nd the moon shall not give her light” (Mt 24:29) [DRB]. This means that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the former and present Mediatrix for us all before the Son, will not intercede for any man in this dreadful and just tribunal.

The stars — that is the holy Patrons — will lose their brightness, meaning that their acts of compassion or intercession will cease. For on this dreadful day the apostles, as well as the other saints — speaking in a human manner — will not dare as much as open their mouths; they will stand speechless — I may even

¹⁴ RSV: “In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble” (Wis 3:7). “... and those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Dan 12:3).

¹⁵ This refers to the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor; cf. Mt 17:1-13; Mk 9:2-13; Lk 9:28-36. “A constant tradition, already attested by Origen, by St. Cyril of Jerusalem and by St. Jerome, identifies Tabor as the anonymous mountain of the Transfiguration of Jesus”: *Enciclopedia della Bibbia*, vol. VI, Elledici, Torino 1971, p. 741.

¹⁶ The Valley of Jehoshaphat (or Josaphat) is usually identified with the Kidron Valley, but this identification has no real basis. Rather, it is spoken of generally here as a place of divine judgment. The prophet Joel probably used this name in reference to the victory of King Jehoshaphat in the Valley of Blessing (cf. 2 Chron 20:20-26), and he chose to do so because of its symbolism, for the word *Jehoshaphat* means: “The Lord judges.” Cf. *Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu (Biblia Jakuba Wujka)*, Trans. Fr. Jakub Wujek, SJ, 3rd rev. ed., Wydawnictwo Apostolstwa Modlitwy, Kraków 1962, p. 1044 (see editor’s note). [Hereafter *Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu (Biblia Jakuba Wujka)* will be abbreviated as BW.] The Valley of Jehoshaphat is “the valley where all nations will be assembled by God for the final judgment”: *Enciclopedia della Bibbia*, vol. III, Elledici, Torino 1969, p. 1105.

say fearful — as is attested by this saying: “for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” (Lk 21:26).

Therefore, understand that in order to appear before such a dreadful tribunal and face the fearful countenance of the Judge, no other preparation will be necessary for you, except a very pure and good conscience. This alone does not fear even divine judgment.

3. “*and upon the earth distress of nations*” (Lk 21:25).

If we observe in our times some inordinate and bloody wars, plagues, and famines, the world thrown into turmoil by various unrests and riots, we usually say that the “Day of Judgment,” or a day similar to the Last Judgment, has come. What shall you say then, when you see things never yet seen, and hear things never yet heard; when the most merciful God abandons all mercy, when the angels tremble, and the just are in terror? For in that time, on that day, in that moment, even justices will be judged, discussed, and examined with great care.

If we ever attend a trial conducted by some secular judge, we will see men who are apprehensive and upset with fear, and who prepare themselves for judgment in various ways. Most of all, however, they seek to avoid being convicted of a crime.

Thus, for a similar reason, you should strive ever more to prepare yourself for the tribunal of the heavenly Judge, by washing away past sins through fitting penance, by avoiding future sins, and especially [f.4r] by frequently and piously receiving Holy Communion, because it erases faults, appeases the anger of the Divine Majesty, and brings the greatest peace to the conscience.

After Holy Communion

1. “*for the powers of the heavens will be shaken*” (Lk 21:26).

Whether you understand by “powers” the firmaments of Heaven or the angels, it is indeed most necessary that both of these considerations would move you and incline you to do serious penance before it is too late. For if the firmaments are to fall down on this last day, what else can be expected by the whole of creation if not the dreadful revelation of sins? If the most pure, unblemished angelic powers will tremble, then with what coun-

tenance, what facial expression, in what state of mind will you — who are full of the most abominable faults — stand before the implacable Judge?

So now you have the acceptable time, the time of salvation, in which your good works are able to be accepted by God: prayers, mortifications, humility, patience, toil, and striving after the virtues of perfection. Do not fail to exercise the slightest opportunity to practice them, so that you may safely attain the reward of the heavenly Kingdom and may hear and accept — along with the predestined sheep — this most desirable call: “Come” (Mt 25:34) and enter the everlasting pastures. Amen.

2. “*then they will see*” (Lk 21:27).

Consider that Christ will come to judge together with His apostles and all those who have lovingly embraced His Cross. For He predicted it Himself, saying: “[Y]ou, who have followed me ... shall sit on your¹⁷ [thrones] judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mt 19:28). Then the lovers of the Cross will take their place at the right side of the Crucified — and being already full of hope, and even certain of attaining salvation and eternal happiness — they will display an astonishing cheerfulness and joy. On the other hand, those who detested and despised the Cross will take their place on the left, and their conscience will torment them with incredible anguish. For they will see all the evil deeds they have committed, which at the same time will become manifest to all. [f.4v] For at that time both the virtues of the blessed and the evil deeds of the damned will be revealed to all; both to mortals and to the immortal inhabitants of Heaven. Indeed, the Universal Judgment will reveal to all creation the things that men try so much to conceal when they sin.

You know, therefore, what should divert you from even the slightest imperfections and move you toward virtue: the sight, manner, dread, and severity of the future Judgment. Indeed, your most gracious Savior refreshed you with His Most Holy Body for

¹⁷ St. Stanislaus used the word *vestras* (i.e., “your”), whereas, the Clementine Vulgate (Latin Bible) uses the word *duodecim* (i.e., “twelve”). [Hereafter the Clementine Vulgate will be abbreviated as CV.]

no other reason than this: to urge you to run toward the reward, and to persuade and encourage you to imitate the deeds and virtues of His saints.

3. *“then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory”* (Lk 21:27).

When those who despised Christ behold His majesty and glory, consider how great their shame will be! For they did not want to follow Him and they killed Him (putting Him to death on the Cross like the wickedest of criminals). On the contrary, what joy will come to those who have not only followed and acknowledged the despised Jesus, but also preached Him and suffered contempt and even death for love of Him. For Christ our Life will descend in His glorified body, clothed in the sun, carrying before Him the victorious sign of the Cross and surrounded by the angelic troops and the multitudes of saints.

Therefore, that you may come to share in this glory, you should desire and embrace the highest contempt for the world and — I would say — contempt for yourself. For as the Apostle affirms, “the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us” (Rom 8:18) [DRB].

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Before Holy Communion [f.5r]

1. *“Now when John heard”* (Mt 11:2).

Consider why the Precursor of Christ, John the Baptist, sent his disciples to Jesus to ask: Are you the true Messiah? Being held by Herod in the cruelest of prisons, John wanted the consolation of knowing — while still alive — that He who had been promised to the Fathers (cf. Lk 24:27) had already come. Indeed, lest perhaps John’s disciples might doubt after his own death who they should follow, John sent them that they might learn from the mouth of Christ His identity, His teachings, His conduct; that they might see His Person and then follow Him.

Today, my soul, you visit Christ not through an envoy, but you go to Him yourself. However, do not hasten to Him so that He would console you, held in the harsh prison of your body, because you are not at all worthy of the consolations of Him whom you have so many times saddened by your evil deeds, especially in the fatal garden (of Eden).¹⁸ Rather, you come that you may know to what you should cling: to pleasure? To the world? To the passions in which you are greatly entangled? Or to this crucified God, the One who is going to feast you today — undeserving and rebellious as you are — with His flesh and blood? Decide whom you are to follow. Be careful, lest by succumbing to your evil will you do wrong to God, who wishes that you belong only to the One, and that you follow Him alone.¹⁹

2. “Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ” (Mt 11:2).

Take note of this slight oddity: that the Herald,²⁰ the son of Zacharias, who had surely gotten to know the Lord when giving Him holy Baptism, sends to Him his envoys after hearing about the Lord’s works and miracles, as if not knowing who He was.

As for you, mark that you do exactly the same: You know that the true God — who gives life and puts to death, saves and condemns — is under the species of bread; and yet you do not mature to a true conversion after so many Communions, and they seem to be not at all salutary for you, because the more often you approach the sacred table, [f.5v] the worse you slacken in spirit, as if never refreshed by this most nourishing spiritual food.

What more do you expect? Are you waiting for Him to act? Do you await exceptional graces? You should instead reconsider what

¹⁸ According to the theology of recapitulation, the Garden of Eden became “fatal” for our first parents and their descendants as a result of original sin (cf. Rom 5:12-19). On the other hand, each of the stages of Christ’s Passion, taken on voluntarily, has a salvific (not fatal) character (including his spiritual suffering and sadness in the Garden of Olives). Cf. *IC crit. ed.*, p. 246 (f.114v § 1).

¹⁹ St. Stanislaus uses a beautiful play on words here that cannot be translated into English: *ut sis una uni, et solum sola sequaris*.

²⁰ John the Baptist. As the one who announces Christ, he is here called the *Prodromus*, that is, “herald,” or “messenger.”

fruit you have gained from the graces given to you so far; what return, what honest interest have you added to the heavenly treasure with the talents poured out upon you most generously? With what motive, ardor, and zeal have you cooperated with the divine help? Therefore, approaching today this Lord who will require an account from you of all His gifts, make a serious resolution that from now on you will never neglect good works and the amendment of your life; that you will strive to fulfill what is essential.

3. “*Are you...?*” (Mt 11:3).

Think about what method of prayer, what manner of beseeching, what pattern or sort of entreaty will you use when you come to the King of Heaven. Use this humble, solemn prayer, saying: “Lord, You are my Savior, who long awaits my conversion, which I — a vile servant and fugitive — still delay. You, Lord, are the One who most justly could thrust me innumerable times into hell because of my evil deeds, but You have waited for me to return to my senses. It is You, prompted by mercy alone, who — upon seeing me fouled by innumerable and most abominable stains of wicked deeds — have called me to this sacred bath of Your Most Precious Blood in order to wash me.

Behold I come, having converted in spirit and already knowing my illness, which is a very dangerous leprosy and severe consumption of vices and tepidity. Here I am, standing at the gate of the holy and salutary bath; I knock and most humbly urge You, Most Merciful Jesus, to wash away all the filth of my soul. Once washed and purified, I will throw myself into Your embrace and will offer sweet thanksgiving. Having received the Most Sacred Eucharist and resting in the bosom of Your guidance and love, I will sing: O Lord, “My soul clings [f.6r] to [Y]ou; [Y]our right hand upholds me.” (Ps 63:8).

After Holy Communion

1. “*The blind see*” (Mt 11:5) [DRB].

Consider the response of the Teacher of **Truth**: He does not say openly that He is the true Messiah, but only reveals to the disciples of John the signs by which they may recognize Him. For

it was not St. John, but only his disciples, who were unaware that Christ was the Savior of the world, and therefore John sent them to Him so that they could learn who He was and follow Him.

You can know that in Holy Communion you have received the true grace of Christ and have been enlightened by the true light of the true Messiah, the eternal Sun, if you see the signs of that Sun; that is, if you acknowledge and give attention to your imperfections, the negligence of your past life, and the defects of your actions with an intent to remove all these things by penance. For the true light of God in us is that by which we see our sins. Just as the rays of the sun entering into a house uncover all of its dirt and reveal all ugliness, so the Sun of Justice — Christ our God — by entering into the dwelling place of the soul, into the depths of the heart, shows clearly all stains and every sin which the soul was not able to see, overwhelmed by the darkness of its offenses.

If, therefore, you are illumined in this way, consider this as the greatest grace granted to you by God, and henceforth walk in the light and in the Sun so that it may not look as if you love the darkness and hate the Sun.

2. *“the lame walk”* (Mt 11:5).

Consider that these are the effects of receiving the Most Holy Eucharist: seeing, walking, being cleansed, being healthy, being resuscitated, and preaching the Gospel. Give this matter more precise and extensive consideration.

“Seeing” means remaining always in God’s presence. [f.6v] “Walking” means avoiding imperfections and progressing courageously and untiringly in acquiring virtues. “Being cleansed” means being purified through penance from the dirt of sin. “Being healthy” means recovering from the illness of the soul and the acquired habit of sinning, i.e., ceasing to sin. “Being resuscitated” means to rise by the grace of Life immortal from spiritual death, which is far more grave than bodily death. “Preaching the Gospel” to the poor means abounding without any merit of our own in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and receiving from the heavenly King — solely due to His grace — the treasures of knowledge and of the virtues; it means owning them and distributing these trea-

suers prudently and generously for the salvation of our neighbors and the benefit of one's own soul. Finally, preaching the Gospel in poverty means: to change from a sinner into a penitent, from a wretched little man into a servant or herald of the immortal Word; to penetrate by human intellect the inscrutable mysteries of divine matters and — starting with oneself — to make them clear to others, teaching both by the sound of words and the example of the virtues.

If you have these qualities, be sure that the Holy Spirit rests in you, that you experience the effect of the Most Holy Sacrament, and that you — by the clemency, grace, and mercy of God — are one of the chosen ones from the tribes of Israel, designated for eternal life (cf. Rev 7:4).²¹

3. *“What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind?”* (Mt 11:7).

Admire and wonder at the sanctity of the most humble John, which merited the praise of the Incarnate Word of God Himself, and not without reason. Being visited as a prophet, he confesses to be a reed;²² being taken for Elijah, he declares himself to be the voice of one crying in the wilderness (cf. Jn 1:23); being asked whether he was the Messiah, he admits and does not deny that he is not worthy [f.7r] to take off the Messiah's sandals (cf. Jn 1:20; 27; Mk 1:7).

O my Jesus, here I am so miserably agitated — as a true reed — by the disrespect and distractions of Eurys, just as much as I am upset by the vainglory and flatteries of the rising up of Favonius!²³ How much I am lacking the perfection and sanctity of St. John!

²¹ RSV: “And I heard the number of the sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel” (Rev. 7:4).

²² It should be noted that this is St. Stanislaus' interpretation, because John the Baptist does not use this comparison in relation to himself, and Christ even ruled it out (cf. Mt 11:7).

²³ Here St. Stanislaus draws names from Greek mythology, in which the “Aeolus,” the son of Zeus, is the god of the winds; “Eurys” is the east or southeast wind; and “Favonius” is the west wind. Cf. *SLP*, vol. I, Wydanie Adama Zawadzkiego, Vilnius 1841.

O Most Holy Aeolus,²⁴ my Jesus! Calm and restrain these raging winds in the grotto of my heart, which You entered today and which I always submit to Your power; turn away hurricanes, calm the waves, restrain the storm of pride, anger, and impatience; because in Your sight and that of all creatures, I am not even a speck of dust suitable for some use, but only a most hideous dog.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Who are you?”* (Jn 1:19).

Today, my soul, come down to yourself and ask yourself what you are: You are a most remarkable creature of God, although a sinner! You are endowed with innumerable benefits and adorned with ornaments and yet ungrateful! You were granted access to so many Holy Communions! Yet you never produced fruit, because you remain negligent, lacking in humility, a lover of the world instead of God alone. How cold you are, slothful in doing good work, inconstant and wavering in generous undertakings; how much you revel in yourself, how proud and conceited you are.

But hark! Do you realize Who is about to come to you? In His presence direct your attention primarily to self-knowledge. At this time discuss, inspect, and question yourself, what you are and what is He, whom you will be allowed to consume, so that — on your part — you may consume Him worthily. You shall consume Him worthily if you completely annihilate yourself in His presence and accuse yourself of your faults. [f.7v]

2. *“I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness”* (Jn 1:23).

Be astounded, my soul, upon hearing about such an unheard of humility: He calls himself a voice that cries out not in temples or debate halls, but in the wilderness. The Word of the Father singles him out with the highest praise, affirming that he is more than a prophet and giving him priority over all the men who

²⁴ See footnote 23 (p. 126).

preceded Him (cf. Mt 11:11). Indeed, such great humility was worthy of so great a Eulogist.²⁵

Hence, understand to what place self-contempt can attain and how necessary it may be for lifting the soul up to the regions of the happiest eternity. For indeed, if humility and self-contempt make us dear to God — the heavenly Love — then thanks to them we shall also be endowed with the heavenly Kingdom, and we shall live forever with the Most High God.

3. *“Make straight the way of the Lord”* (Jn 1:23).

Consider that conforming our will to the will of God opens for Him a clear and royal road to us. Without this, even the Son of God could not have descended into the Immaculate Virgin’s womb. If conformation to the will of God and resignation from one’s own will caused God to become man and opened for Him the way to the human heart, then it will also make ready and open for Him the way to your heart.

Thus it is, O Eternal Father, that no heavenly gift, no grace, almost no virtue will be able to enter into my soul, unless I resign from my own will. Therefore, I submit to You all my senses; I surrender my heart: Govern them so that through true resignation I may attain a true and free rule of my spirit. My heart is ready for You (cf. Ps 108:1). May Your will be done (cf. Mt 6:10). Here I am, Your servant (cf. Ps 116:16); what do You want me to do? (cf. Acts 9:6).²⁶

After Holy Communion

1. *“Are you the prophet? And he answered, ‘No’”* (Jn 1:21).

Reflect on how the Precursor of Christ, because of his great humility and penance, was [f.8r] preferred over the prophets

²⁵ Note here that the word “eulogist” must be understood in its primary etymological signification, which is that it is a direct transliteration of the Greek verb εὐλογέω, which means literally “to speak well of” or “to praise.” The common use of the word “eulogist” in English refers to the specific context of someone who “eulogizes” or “speaks well of” of a deceased person at their funeral, but this is not the meaning intended here.

²⁶ DRB: “And he [i.e., Saul/Paul] trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). This particular verse is not found in the RSV.

by Christ the Lord. Therefore, be convinced that you should be applying yourself to acts of penance and humility rather than seeking gifts of prophecy and extraordinary graces. The certainty of possessing grace is not based on prophecies, and not all those who prophesied the future entered the Kingdom of salvation. Instead, it is in penance and humility that great hope of salvation is placed. Indeed, the exercise of penance is like a key to Heaven and the exercise of humility like a stairway.

Ecstasies, spiritual exaltations, sweetness and delighting in piety do not help much toward sanctity; indeed, they are sometimes granted even to the greatest sinners; but sorrow for sins and penitential exercises strengthen the mind in hope, earn pardon, and win over the Divine Majesty for us. Saul was among the prophets, but the repentance of David was found more excellent than the prophecies of Saul.²⁷ It is possible to find men who lead a most pious life and are renowned for their miracles, but are rejected by God. But you shall not find any penitent who will not be saved. For miracles, devotion, and knowledge of future things bring forth pride; but penance washes away sins, opens Heaven, wins God over, and fosters humility, which undoubtedly has a place in Heaven.

2. "*Then why are you baptizing...?*" (Jn 1:25).

Notice the stupidity of the envoys sent to St. John by the deceitful synagogue: Who would not rebuke such a thing? They thought that he did all the things which they saw from the outside by his own human powers and not by the power of the Holy Spirit. They did not know that the Holy Spirit was dwelling in the saint's heart, instructing and directing him.

Learn from this that the commands, actions, and counsels of your superiors, spiritual fathers and elders are the works of God, by whom they are prompted, directed, and led. Therefore, when you see something admirable and holy accomplished by them, attribute it to God, and note, praise, and glorify the fact that this

²⁷ When Saul entered Galgal (*DRB*) or Gibeah (*RSV*) and met a group of prophets there, the Spirit of God also descended upon him and he began to prophesy with them. Hence it was said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (cf. 1 Sm 10:11-12).

ability was given them by [f.8v] the right hand of God. Think that without God's grace a man is like a tree without roots, a vine without sap and a tool without a craftsman. If things of your own doing are worthy of praise and recognition, be particularly eager and willing to attribute them to God.

3. "*He confessed, he did not deny*" (Jn 1:20).

Consider that it is an admirable, fruitful, and greatly necessary thing for ecclesiastics and persons serving God to cover and to hide, as much as possible, the works that they perform well and the gifts that they possess.

You hear and learn that this is the way St. John the Baptist acted. For although entitled to call himself a prophet and to make it known that he is something more than a prophet, he nevertheless says that he is nothing more than a voice.

You have in this saint yet another example for imitation, namely his truthfulness: Because he confessed and did not deny, i.e., he affirmed that he is nothing and that he is not one of those persons about whom he was questioned. This truthfulness has such a great importance for God that Christ calls Himself Truth and adopts for Himself the name and title of the Truth. He does so for no other reason than because truth is something utmost in harmony with, and related to, humility. Indeed (as St. Teresa understood, thanks to the grace of God), humility is nothing other than truth, and truth nothing other than humility.²⁸

Hence, do not be anxious that your faults are revealed to all. For why should you fear or not dare to reveal to others now what shall one day be revealed and stand open before the whole of Heaven, this world, and hell?

²⁸ St. Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, in: *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila*, Trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, vol. 2, ICS Publications, Washington, DC, 1980, 2012, p. 420 (6th Mansion: Ch. 10, § 7): "Once I was pondering why our Lord was so fond of this virtue of humility ... It is because God is supreme Truth; and to be humble is to walk in truth, for it is a very deep truth that of ourselves we have nothing good but only misery and nothingness." [Hereafter *The Collected Works of Saint Teresa of Avila* will be abbreviated as CWTa.]

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Before Holy Communion

1. “*Prepare the way of the Lord*” (Lk 3:4).

Just as John — when the Savior of the world was coming into the world and preparing to teach — urged the people to prepare the way of the Lord [f.9r] and get ready to receive the Messiah, so now you should also stir yourself up, because the same Lord, hidden under the species and the veil of bread, hastens to you. Prepare the way of the Lord and prepare your soul to receive the Lord of the whole world and Heaven. When a king is to visit another king, all the palaces are adorned with gold and silver and are beautifully and carefully cleaned; and the arriving guest is greeted on his way long before he reaches his destination. It is then far more fitting for you, a religious, to work hard — prior to the arrival of the heavenly Ruler and the Lord of all kings — at cleaning your interior and adorning the palace of your heart, where He will stay; and come out to meet Him with the greatest longing and fervent devotion.

2. “*Prepare,*” etc. (Lk 3:4).

You shall continue pondering the necessity for penance, reflecting upon and placing before your eyes St. Mary Magdalene, the sinner. For although the Savior Himself absolved her sins, nevertheless after His Ascension she began to lead a most austere and penitent life in the desert.²⁹ Although she knew that her past sins had been forgiven and that she had received full absolution, nevertheless — being on her guard against future sins — she armed herself with rigid penance against the harshest assaults of the old enemy.

What do you think you should do? What penitential acts ought to be practiced and for how long? By your daily faults you increase

²⁹ St. Mary Magdalene “according to Eastern tradition ... the last thirty years of her life, it is claimed, she spent in a cavern of a rock, La Sainte Baume, high up among the Maritime Alps”: Alban Butler, *Butler’s Lives of the Saints* (s.v. July 22 — St. Mary Magdalen). [Hereafter *Butler’s Lives of the Saints* will be abbreviated as *BLS*.]

your punishment, and perhaps, the reason why you so frequently sin is that you do not close the way to future sins by zealously repenting for your past faults; and by thus neglecting to atone for past sins you pave the way for imminently graver ones. Just as the preceding sin is an occasion for the following sin, [f.9v] the penance undertaken after sin hinders and repels future sins. Indeed, no one in the whole world will be able to avoid falling again if they will not worthily atone for past sins, and apply their wills and hearts to a rigid, true, and strict penance. The Apostle, testifying that he has done this, rightly says: "I pommel my body and subdue it" (1 Cor 9:27). Why? — In order not to return to previous ways of sinning and the vices of the past.

Think of how you should do the same: persist in penance. You shall never be safe from evil, unless you set forth the barrier of penance. If you neglect penance then temptation, sin, and an evil spirit will return to you, bringing along ever stronger companions to assault the will of your soul; and it is to be feared that the latter condition will be worse than the former (cf. Mt 12:43-45).

3. "*Bear fruits that befit repentance*" (Lk 3:8).

Consider that both for receiving Jesus Himself and obtaining His gifts, there is not a preparation better and more secure than penance. This is the teaching of the **voice of the one crying** in the desert, St. John, who was visited by a multitude of various people and by groups of proud and haughty scribes and Pharisees. While exhorting them to penance in order to prepare for receiving the Messiah, he used to admonish them: "Bear fruits that befit repentance."

Hence, as you are to approach, receive, and consume today this Sun, whom the Jewish people awaited with greatest longing, have recourse to penance so that through it you may open for the Savior of all people an easy way to you. Apply yourself to practicing this virtue so much that you would rather leave this world and this body than part with penance and that you would rather die than abandon mortification. [f.10r]

After Holy Communion

1. *“the word of God came”* (Lk 3:2).

John highly valued the fact that — being filled with the Divine Spirit and Word — he merited to proclaim the coming of Christ. You, how much do you value the fact that not only the words of God, but the Word Himself, God Himself, came down to you? At the reception of Holy Communion, some people experience wonderful sweetness; the others are elevated in mind and soul and — enraptured with the whole heart — they cling to God. To some people are revealed many of the most secret mysteries of God, while certain people have visions and receive wonderful favors at this divine table.

But you shall earnestly wish and plead for one thing only from the all-good God, namely: that this Holy Communion would not be an offense that deserves a punishment, but that it may be a salutary intercession that brings about forgiveness; that the Lord may cause a change of feelings in you, lead you to a true and constant repentance, and awaken your self-contempt and abjection (since you do not belong among His closest friends, but are a sinner). Finally, may He have mercy on you and bless you, and may He let His countenance shine upon you (cf. Ps 67:1), while He leads you again on the royal road of perfection, shared by great spiritual men.

2. *“and [H]e went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”* (Lk 3:3).

Penance is not the same as the Sacrament of Baptism, but it has been called baptism.³⁰ Just as all sins are washed away in the baptismal fount, so all stains of evil deeds are removed by penance. Like a serpent that crawled into a tight hole to shed its old skin and assume a new one, [f.10v] also the sinner who undertakes strict penance lays aside the old man — that is, his bad morals, poor habits — and regains the new garment of innocence, according to St. Paul’s expression: “[P]ut on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 13:14).

³⁰ Cf. CCC, 980.

Then, just as John's preaching was preparing people through penance for receiving the Messiah, so it is also necessary that this Word, speaking in your heart, prepares you likewise through penance for the coming of the same Word who will judge mortal men. At that time the people devoted to penance shall look at that Judge with a joyful heart and serene countenance; and even though in their conscience they will be aware of their sins, yet they shall no longer shed tears and blush with shame because of them, but — seeing them destroyed by the baptism of penance — they will exult in wonderful joy.

3. "*for the forgiveness of sins*" (Lk 3:3).

If John's baptismal immersion was preparing the Jews for obtaining the forgiveness of sins or striving for it, the Most Holy Body of our Lord is much more efficacious in attaining it. There, it was the servant who immersed bodies in the river, here it is the Lord who purifies souls with His Blood; there it was the prophetic words taking effect, here it is the ongoing work of Christ's powers within you. By the singular grace and efficacy of speaking, John was rousing people to beg for forgiveness of sins, and he believed that they would obtain it as the fruit of penance.

Christ, whom you received, speaks Himself to you from the chair of the heart. It is He who animates you to penance, remits evil deeds, imparts forgiveness, and grants remission of punishment. [f.11r] Therefore, to show gratitude to your Lord, bear fruits that befit repentance and — out of love for Him — mortify yourself in some matters, especially where your own judgment, evil desires, and perverse will are concerned, offering something of your own to such a great Majesty.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY

Before Holy Communion

1. “[Joseph] and [Mary] marveled at what was said about [H]im” (cf. Lk 2:33).³¹

The Holy Mother together with the guardian, her holy spouse, was wondering at Simeon’s words and the prophecy about God’s and her only Son. As for you, wonder at your own inefficiency and inability to make spiritual progress. For whenever you are called to self-denial or prompted to obey the persuasions of others and the instructions of those more prudent than you, you neither accept their counsels nor follow the lead of divine inspirations.

There is however something in this present Holy Communion that you should admire more than all else, namely that under the little piece of bread, already transubstantiated into His Body, remains the incomprehensible God-Man. He distributes Himself to all, and yet remains intact; and, what is even more astonishing, He becomes food for both the virtuous and the wicked.

As for you, aspire and endeavor to be well prepared for receiving most fruitfully the heavenly bread “having all sweetness within it” (cf. Wis 16:20).³² This depends most certainly upon your will and disposition.

2. “and Simeon blessed them” (Lk 2:34).

Behold how St. Joseph and the Blessed Mother — as indeed the divine Jesus Himself — humble themselves before an old man and await [f.11v] his blessing!

Would you dare to place yourself above others: to presume much about yourself and yours? To value yourself highly, wanting to be highly regarded? Not to yield your own ways of thinking to another’s? However, this is what the Infant Jesus and His Virgin Mother teach us today, by submitting themselves to Simeon

³¹ St. Stanislaus used the names of Joseph and Mary, whereas the RSV just says: “his father and mother.”

³² Here St. Stanislaus uses the Latin phrase “*omne delectamentum in se habentem*,” which is the response at Benediction to the phrase “*panem de caelo praestitisti eis*” (“you have given them bread from heaven”), which itself is also from Wis 16:20.

and to the Mosaic Law, from which they have been excepted by supernatural privilege. For you should know that there is no ladder to Heaven and to the abode of eternal life other than humility; indeed, we ascend upwardly as high as the depth of our surrender to others.

Therefore, beg this most humble Lord, whose body you are going to relish, to grant and instill in you true humility so that, upon possessing it, you may be happy in your actions, happy in your life and at the moment of your death.

3. *“She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day”* (Lk 2:37).

From this holy widow, the prophetess Anna, you can learn perseverance in prayer, find out what is the proper place for praying, and discover what it is that helps prayer and its constancy. Take her as an example for yourself. She offered her prayers in the temple, complementing them with fasting and vigils, and she prayed unceasingly. Such prayer is most blessed and will not be rejected.

Now, as you go before God, present in the Most Holy Sacrament, approach Him with many humble and sincere prayers. Similar to people who adorn their bodies with costly garments before going to the noble’s banquets, so you should adorn your soul, for you are about to go to the most excellent banquet of the highest of kings, to the great supper of the Heavenly Father. With what could it be adorned more beautifully than with prayer?

After Holy Communion

1. *“Behold this child is set for the fall, [f.12r] and for the resurrection of many”* (Lk 2:34) [DRB].

What do you hear? The prophet calls our Lord the Prince of Peace (cf. Is 9:6), while Simeon names Him the Author of many falls, destined for the fall of many. But he rightly adds that He is destined also for the resurrection of many, so that you may understand that Christ the Lord came to the world partly to build, partly to destroy: to demolish and to destroy those things that were the work of the devil; to restore the things made by

the hand of God, which were demolished by the cleverness of the same very cunning and infernal Ulysses.³³ Yet is it not true that even the angels have sung: “[O]n earth peace to men” (Lk 2:14) [DRB]? However, lest you think that upon the coming of the God-Man to earth peace was given to all men, they added that it was granted only to “men of good will.”

Now for you, I wish that this Lord whom you just received will lead you to resurrection! May you rise from your imperfections, for now is the hour to arise from sleep (cf. Rom 13:11). May He bring about the ruin and destruction of those things that infernal architect, the demon, fabricated in your heart and mind. May He destroy them, and may He repair and restore the destroyed foundations of the Holy Spirit.

2. “*and a sword will pierce through your own soul*” (Lk 2:35).

Divine Wisdom interweaves joy with sorrow, and sorrow with joy in this manner: Sometimes He fills the senses with the sweetest honey, and at other times He pours into them the bitterest gall. Do you want to know the reason why He does this? It is so that the soul is not corrupted amidst sweet things.

Just as we salt some foods for preservation, even so the most wise Creator and Ruler of all things alternates the bitter with the sweet, and sweet with the bitter. Thus, after pleasant [f.12v] delights and refreshing pleasures, He strikes our soul with the hard hammer of afflictions, that it may not become stained with the filth of pride due to the enjoyment of constant prosperity; and may endure unhurt, uninjured, and uncorrupted after being “seasoned” with long and even continuous calamities.

The most chaste Virgin herself, the Mother of God experienced this same thing. Amid festive joys, the most wise God pierced her soul with the sword of sorrow. Each of her special joys was

³³ St. Stanislaus compares the infernal demon to Ulysses (Odysseus), who was known as the “cunning warrior” and “author of the deception that ruined Troy,” i.e., this refers to the trick “of the Trojan horse”; cf. Gaetano De Sanctis, *Enciclopedia Italiana*, vol. XXXIV, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1937, pp. 630-632 (s.v. *Ullisse*). [Hereafter *Enciclopedia Italiana* will be abbreviated as *EL*.] Cf. Parandowski, pp. 255-257.

accompanied with a particular sorrow: yet, this was certainly not done for the preservation of her spirit — which did not know sin and was always most vigorous — but for strengthening it further so that it would attain greater glory in the dwelling and land of eternal peace.

As for you, learn to keep your spirit strong amidst the sorrows that follow fleeting joy. For soon, after grievous storms, the Lord of supreme goodness will bring back the desired calm, should He deem that you need it. If you are buffeted by incessant waves of adversity, know that it happens by God's wisdom and providence, lest you be consumed by iniquity and lest you perish in the hideousness of your sins. Thus, He trains a long time by tribulations, in which — as if in brine — He preserves your spirit.

3. "*that, out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed*" (Lk 2:35) [DRB].

Here you have the reason why the Lord allows us to be assailed by frequent storms in the open sea of the world; for He leaves our souls without the westerly winds of graces, as if a captain abandoning his ships, and floods them with waves of temptations, tribulations, and griefs; and He does this that we may learn from experience what we can do without Him, how constant is our spirit, and what sort of heroes, warriors, and men we are. It has been said that: "In temptations and trials the progress of a man is measured; in them is greater opportunity for merit; and in them virtue is made more manifest."³⁴

Eagles usually lift up their chicks in the air and let them fall from high up so that they learn to fly with their own wings. This is what God, our Father, usually does to [f.13r] us. He carries and holds us in His hands, He leads and supports us; but then He leaves and abandons us at an unexpected moment so that we learn to run on our own. He does so as a father or a nurse would do with a little child, teaching him to take steps: first lead-

³⁴ Cf. Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, Bk. I, Ch. 13, § 8. [The English translations of *The Imitation of Christ* are all translated directly from the Latin quotations of *The Imitation* from *Inspecio Cordis*, in order to fully convey the meaning that St. Stanislaus intended. Hereafter *The Imitation of Christ* will be abbreviated as *IC*.]

ing him by his right hand, then handing him a little staff to lean on, and eventually taking it back and telling him to walk without any guide or support.

Thomas à Kempis teaches what should be done in such circumstances, exhorting us to stir up hope and prayer. “We must not despair,” he says, “when we are tempted, but pray to God the more fervently, that He may see fit to help us, for according to the words of St. Paul, ‘with the testing he will also provide the way out’ as well as with tribulation, ‘so that you may be able to endure it’ (1 Cor 10:13).”³⁵

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF EPIPHANY³⁶

Before Holy Communion

1. “*And when [H]e was twelve years old*” (Lk 2:42).

When you hear that the 12-year-old Jesus is going with His most holy parents to the Temple of Jerusalem, admire His piety and recall your own conduct, deeds, and behavior when you were of a similar age. That was the time when you started offending God, loosening the restraints of your wanton youth, and falling into all sorts of evil and transgressions. Oh, what a contrast

³⁵ Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 13, § 7.

³⁶ The Octave of Epiphany (along with a number of other Octaves) was suppressed by the decree *Cum hac nostra aetate* by the Sacred Congregation of Rites under Pope Pius XII on Mar. 23, 1955. [Cf. R. Kevin Seasoltz, *The New Liturgy: A Documentation, 1903 to 1965*, Herder and Herder, New York 1966, pp. 203-209.] At that time, and continuing up until 1969 when the liturgical calendar was changed again for the *Novus Ordo*, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph was celebrated on that particular Sunday. (I.e., the Feast of the Holy Family was celebrated on was the same Sunday until 1969, but pre-1955 that Sunday was called the “Sunday within the Octave of Epiphany,” and then from 1955-1969 it was called the “First Sunday after the Epiphany.”) [Cf. Rev. F.X. Lasance and Rev. Francis Augustine Walsh, *The New Roman Missal: In Latin and English*, Reprint of 1945 ed., Christian Book Club of America, Palmdale 1993, p. 178. Cf. *The Roman Catholic Daily Missal: 1962*, Angelus Press, Kansas City, MO, 2004, p. 236.] In the current liturgical calendar, the Feast of the Holy Family occurs on the “Sunday within the Octave of Christmas,” or, if there is no Sunday in that Octave it occurs on December 30. [Cf. *The Roman Missal*, English trans. according to 3rd typical ed., Catholic Book Publishing Corp., New Jersey 2011, p. 39.]

between you and Christ! The twelfth year in your Savior's life produced examples of astounding piety, while in yours it gave beginning to all sorts of wickedness.

And how are you spending your years in the house of God now? In negligence, listlessness, and insolence! Watch out lest it may seem that you imitate Jesus by your religious garments, yet are a villain by conduct, and show yourself worse than a man of the world. The religious state does not save anybody, but the religious life does. Perhaps you have heard about that condemned soldier who, having entered a certain religious institute, traded his military uniform for religious garb, but did not change his conduct. Therefore, after his death he appeared from hell, bringing back the religious garb on a horse's tail.³⁷

May the heavenly host forbid that you [f.13v] be a religious in name only and not in fact. If you do not abandon your evil worldly habits, and if you do not respond to your vocation, then you shall have a similar and most unhappy end.

2. "*they sought [H]im among their kinsfolk and acquaintances*" (Lk 2:44).

The most chaste Joseph with his spouse, the Blessed Virgin, could not find the Child Jesus among their friends, family members, and relatives. Neither shall you find Him in idle chats, in curious reading, in the world, on the streets, in thoughts foreign to your manner of life, or in the conversation of worldly people.

Listen to the words of St. Augustine, the bishop of Hippo and Doctor of the Church, who for a long time sought the Lord exactly in such places: "I went all round," he says, "the villages and city streets of this world, seeking You," (God) "but not finding: because I was erroneously seeking outside the One who was inside. ... You were with me, yet I was not with You: You were kept away from me by these things that could not exist other than by You."³⁸

³⁷ A source could not be found in which this event is narrated. The identity of this religious and the institute he joined are not known.

³⁸ Augustinus, *Soliloquia*, in: *Meditationes, Soliloquia et Manuale*, Lugduni-Parisiis 1861, pp. 155-156 (Ch. 31, §§ 1, 4).

God should be sought within, in the house, in constant mortifications, and not on the outside, amid vain pleasures. For whatever effort you would eventually put into finding God will be without success, unless you mortify yourself, seeking Him. Do you know where God is found? Where man is let go. Do you know where Christ is found? Where one's own will is renounced, mortified, and offered in sacrifice.

3. "*they found [H]im in the temple, sitting among the teachers*" (Lk 2:46).

Behold the Holy Boy, the Heavenly Boy, whom they sought for three days, is finally found in the temple. Here too, O my soul, seek Him!

Oh, if only you would visit the temple more frequently, you would find the lost Jesus more often there! When His sweet presence is withdrawn from you, where should you be looking for Him other than in the temple, where He is always bodily present? When you are afflicted by internal or external worries, go to the temple and you shall be comforted. If you need God's help in your occupations, go to the same place and He who will help you, will be there. Hasten to His holy sanctuary now; enter, and you will find Him there. [f.14r]

After Holy Communion

1. "*and all who heard [H]im were amazed*" (Lk 2:47).

What caused the amazement of the teachers? What caused the admiration with which they gazed dumbfounded at Christ? It was His knowledge and wisdom. But, O my soul, what Divine Wisdom can possibly be greater than uniting God with man and giving them both to such a sinful man as you. Yet, you are not astonished at this wisdom and you do not admire nor praise it.

The Israelites marveled at the horn-like rays coming from Moses' head³⁹ after his conversation with God (cf. Ex 34:29-30).

³⁹ The rays coming forth from the face of Moses are expressed by the Hebrew word *qaran*, which besides meaning "to radiate," also means "to put out horns" (Ps 68:32 in DRB). Hence, the Vulgate has (cf. Ex 34:29) "*cornuta esset facies sua ex consortio sermonis Dei*," which literally means: "his face was horned" (cf.

Would you not then marvel at God, who is no longer conversing with Moses, but having a discussion with you in your heart and remaining within you? Would you not worship Him? The Jewish people were afraid of talking with God, and they said to Moses: "You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die" (Ex 20:19).

Indeed, the King of the Jewish people, having laid aside His majesty, comes to you in a gentle and friendly manner under the species of bread, in each little piece. O goodness! O wonder! O delight! Speak to Him, do not be afraid, and carry out precisely all that He teaches you.

2. "*Did you not know that I must be in [M]y Father's house?*" (Lk 2:49).

Here is a 12-year-old Boy, already realizing at His young age the reason for which He came into the world; He is already anxious to fulfill the will of the Father.

As for you, remind yourself of the reason for which you entered the religious life. Call to mind and renew your former intentions to improve your life and habits. Be assured that the noblest and highest perfection is to accomplish the divine will and to conform to it.

This is the most well-traveled way to Heaven, followed by all the saints, patriarchs, and religious. Indeed, Abraham wanted to sacrifice his son to God according to His command. As for you, in following his example, you should sacrifice something to the same Lord.

At the divine voice, Abraham went out [f.14v] from his ancestral land and left all his kindred and friends (cf. Gen 12:1-5; 22:1-12). You also have gone out from your native region to the place indicated to you by the finger of the Holy Spirit through a religious vocation. Forsake your evil habits and unbridled passions just as you left behind your kinsfolk and your friends;

Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu (Biblia Tysiąclecia), Eds. Augustyn Jankowski et al., 5th ed., Pallottinum, Poznań 2002, p. 99 (see editor's note). [Hereafter *Pismo Święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu (Biblia Tysiąclecia)* will be abbreviated as *BT*.]

and then, on the mountain of Moriah⁴⁰ (that is, in religious life), consecrate, dedicate, and sacrifice your only son Isaac, which is your will, to the one, all-good, and all-powerful God. In accordance with the Eternal Wisdom, always say of all actions or plans: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in [H]eaven” (Mt 6:10) [DRB]. As to me, O Lord, may Your will be done with me in every moment, hour, day, and in eternity.

3. “*and [He] was obedient to them*” (Lk 2:51).

Now Christ teaches you the sublime virtue of obedience not by lengthy words, but by the power of brief examples, as you consider His submission to the will of His parents.

I am more astounded here, O Jesus, at Your humble obedience to Joseph, than at Your persuasion of the Israelite teachers with the admirable power of Your words and knowledge. For what is astonishing in Your debating most wisely, since You are Eternal Wisdom? But who would not be astonished that You, the Lord of Heaven, willingly subject Yourself to parents; that You, who are God, submit Yourself to human beings? O my Jesus, having Your example before my eyes, I acknowledge the excellence and necessity of the virtue of obedience. For it was necessary that He who would have to be obedient to His executioners later, and to Whom the whole world was to be subjected, obeyed His parents first. Should neighbors and kinsfolk have noticed that He rebelled against His Virgin Mother and His presumed father Joseph, they might have suspected that He was under the influence of an evil spirit and that He was hypocritical and conceited. Obedience is the true witness and proof of all holiness. [f.15r]

⁴⁰ Moriah is the name of the mountain to which Abraham went to offer sacrifice to God (cf. Gen 22:2).

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY⁴¹

Before Holy Communion

1. *“there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee”* (Jn 2:1).

People regard a wedding as a magnificent and solemn act for which they prepare themselves with the greatest diligence, by adorning themselves and dressing up.

Today, my soul, the immortal Spouse invites you to a wedding. He invites you to the heavenly wedding, for which a banquet is prepared that surpasses all earthly banquets, because its food is God Himself. Put on the robes and don quickly the beautiful virtue of humility. For at this wedding of the heavenly Lord, nobody would be more welcome and better dressed than the one clothed in humility. Without this most precious toga, no one would be admitted to this banquet. Beware, my soul, not to come to the solemn act of this wedding without this garment, lest you be expelled with the words: “[H]ow did you get in here without a wedding garment?” (Mt 22:12).

2. *“and the mother of Jesus was there”* (Jn 2:1).

A bridegroom would think himself very fortunate if a king or a queen were attending his wedding. For this reason were the newlyweds at Cana most fortunate, because on this solemn day of their marriage bonds, the Queen of queens herself, although not yet known to all, and the King of kings, honored them with their presence.

As for you, when you come to the wedding of Jesus, to “the holy banquet in which Christ is consumed, the memory of His Passion is recalled, the soul is filled with grace, and a pledge of the future heavenly glory is given to us;”⁴² know that you will find

⁴¹ See footnote 137 (p. 317), which explains more about the Sundays after Epiphany.

⁴² This is a direct translation from the Latin of the Magnificat Antiphon for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi — Evening Prayer II. Cf. *Liturgia Horarum iuxta ritum Romanum*, vol. III, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Città del Vaticano 1972, p. 502. [Hereafter *Liturgia Horarum iuxta ritum Romanum* will be abbreviated as *LH.*] The English translation found in the 3rd volume of *The Liturgy of the Hours* is: “How holy this feast in which Christ is our food; his passion is recalled; grace

the King and Queen of Heaven there: The Son will be present in substance and the Mother through her intercession. Therefore, in the presence of the heavenly Empress and the citizens of Heaven, take care to receive the heavenly food with veneration and affection [f.15v] so that it may be recognized that you do not approach the wedding banquet of Jesus with a cold disposition or bad preparation.

Thus, concentrate and prepare your spirit. Reflect on how you shall approach the sacred table. Most of all, you will need two things for this: the desire to receive Holy Communion and purity. This purity consists of cleansing the heart of all imperfections and of every thought that is foreign to the present action. The desire consists of the ardor and great love with which your soul should burn for this Most Holy Sacrament.

3. “*They have no wine*” (Jn 2:3).

Consider how tender the holy Mother is towards the need of another; regarding it as her own, she says: “*They have no wine.*”

It is fitting that you too have a tender concern both for your soul and for the soul of your neighbor, and that you ask Jesus Christ, the Lord of virtues (both on your behalf, as well as that of others), for the wine of virtues. For virtues have a sweet aroma that rejoices the heart of man and of God. Therefore, fear not to present before the heavenly King the necessities of your own soul and the souls of others, following the example of the Most Holy Mother. Indeed, with great confidence and faith, ask for the virtues and the graces necessary for salvation, saying:

“O richest Lord of Heaven and earth, we have no wine: both N.N. and I are deprived of the sweet wine of virtues. The springs and wells of our hearts are dry, the vineyards are laid waste. Show us your generosity and transform into sweet [f.16r] nectar the fount of tears that we pour out before you, asking for heavenly gifts. Fill our vessels, that is our souls, with the most excellent

fills our hearts; and we receive a pledge of the glory to come” [cf. *The Liturgy of the Hours: According to the Roman Rite*, English trans. prepared by ICEL, vol. III, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York 1975, p. 622. Hereafter *The Liturgy of the Hours* will be abbreviated as *LHE*.]

wine. Thus, at least at the end of the wedding (that is, our life) we may offer you and our heavenly guests the sweet drink of virtues and refresh the parched palate. Amen.”

After Holy Communion

1. “*My hour has not yet come*” (Jn 2:4).

Understand that there is a time for doing miracles; this time, as the Lord says, has not come yet. It is not as if He has a specific time-frame for doing miracles, outside of which He could not bring about any supernatural sign. For He was able to perform unheard of wonders even lying in a cradle, and indeed He performed them when He closed the mouth of demons, lest they give answers, and drove them out from images.⁴³ But understand that the Lord said these words because, capable as He was, He did not want at that time to demonstrate His omnipotence and divinity.

Hence learn this: If you are denied in Holy Communion and at other times the pleasure and sweetness of spiritual food, it happens not because the Holy Body of the Most Holy Lord lacks heavenly sweetness, delights, and taste, but to put your strength and virtue to the test. The hour has not yet come for you to abound in heavenly delights, and it is more advantageous — and is more meritorious for you — to experience dryness of heart and mind, rather than to abound in sensual devotion and to drink the sweet heavenly nectar.

2. “*Fill the jars with water*” (Jn 2:7).

It must not be doubted that the Lord will transform the water of your heart, that [f.16v] is, your tears, into the purest wine if only you would fill the jars with it; that is if you would pour them out so abundantly that they would suffice for washing away your

⁴³ Saint Stanislaus evidently learned about this episode in Jesus’s infancy from the 6th-century apocryphal writing: *Pseudo-Matthew, Book of the Nativity of Mary and the Infancy of the Savior*, Ch. XXIII, which claims that during their flight to Egypt the Holy Family, “arriving in the land of Hermopolis, in a city called Sotinen, ... they entered a temple containing 365 idols, which all immediately fell to the ground in a thousand pieces.” Ferdinand Prat, SJ., *Jesus Christ: His life, His teaching, and His work*, Trans. John J. Heenan, vol. I, Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, WI, 1950, p. 104.

sins. Indeed, if you would drench your bed with tears and soak your couch with weeping every night together with the sinful king and sincere penitent⁴⁴ (cf. Ps 6:6), then the springs of your heart would become sweet indeed, and its dry earth would produce extraordinary fruits of virtue.

It usually happens that when a bitter recollection of sins elicits streams of tears from a spiritual man, then the Divine Goodness transforms them into sweet nectar, and an immense sweetness penetrates his spirit.

3. *“Do whatever [H]e tells you”* (Jn 2:5).

Just as the disciples’ dedication and obedience, roused in them by the encouragement of the Blessed Mother who understood the will of her omnipotent Son, were necessary for performing the miracle at Cana, so also all works to be accomplished in you and through you by divine grace, as well as all favors that the good Lord will grant you, require the consent of your will, your concurrence, and your cooperation. For what good could He achieve through you if you resist His command and will? What would be the use of entrusting, commissioning, and inspiring you, if you are not inclined to obeying and carrying out?

Therefore, if you wish to rejoice in the heavenly wedding, there is nothing else to do but learn to conform your will to His will. If you wish to reign for all eternity together with the all-good God in the Kingdom prepared by the Eternal Father for His slaves, it is necessary that you be obedient, docile, and serve Him most zealously right now.

Many have fallen from grace because of doing their own will; on the other hand, many rose from the great depths of evil deeds and attained the blessed haven because they conformed their will to the will of God and were obedient to it. Just like the righteous man would be excluded from the abode of eternal life if disobedient, [f.17r] which was demonstrated and proven in Saul (cf. 1 Sam 15:1-26; 31:1-6); so also, the sinner would gain life

⁴⁴ St. Stanislaus is referring here to King David, in whom we see an example of true and sincere repentance.

and Heaven should he be obedient. Indeed, no one can be saved without his own participation.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Before Holy Communion

1. *“and behold, a leper came to [H]im and knelt before [H]im”* (Mt 8:2).

The desire to regain health was so great in that leper, oppressed by a grave illness, that he did not hesitate to seek out and go to the Lord, the heavenly Physician. Thus, with what vehement desire should you, contaminated by so many imperfections and sins that are worse than leprosy, hasten to the physician of your soul and to receive the Most Holy Eucharist, the most wholesome and proven medicine of your soul?

Notice the abasement of spirit and the reverence with which this sick man approaches Christ: he adores Him in order to teach you the adoration and worship due to God alone, especially as you are presently coming to the Lord, the King of the universe. Just as the leper did not ask for anything before rendering veneration, so you should mind your posture before you start praying. For, if it is shameful, rude, unpolished, and ill-mannered to approach the kings of this world without showing respect and honor, it is so much more shameful and reprehensible to approach disrespectfully the Lord of infinite majesty and power. Although He is not perceived with the bodily eyes, His presence in the soul must nevertheless be thought of and fixed in one's mind.

2. *“Lord, if [Y]ou will, [Y]ou can make me clean”* (Mt 8:2).

Consider that we should ask for health, prosperity, and other things of this kind under [f.17v] the condition shown by the leper. When desiring to be cleansed from leprosy, he submits himself to the divine decision saying, “If you wish.” However, the healing from leprosy of the soul and the gift of graces necessary for salvation are to be requested insistently, not conditionally. Indeed, they are to be obtained by the force of prayers, as per

our Savior's exhortation recorded by the Evangelist: "knock, and it will be opened to you" (Mt 7:7). Certainly, if a door is not opened at once, one may knock twice or three times in an urgent situation. In the same way you also, should continue to beseech, ask, and insist so that the Lord — who might be delaying granting you the grace which is greatly necessary for either your improvement of life, or for attaining greater perfection — may be prevailed upon by the persistent knocking of prayer to hasten to help you, to change your conduct, and to renew a steadfast spirit within you (cf. Ps 51:10). For "the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force" (Mt 11:12) and capture it.

3. "*if [Y]ou will, [Y]ou can make me clean*" (Mt 8:2).

O good Physician, my Jesus: This is the way the leper entreated You to restore his health. As for me, I will begin and shape this prayer in a far different way, and thus I say and pray with tears: "Lord, even if You do not want to, You ought to make me clean. For if You came to save sinners not the righteous (cf. Mk 2:17), why do You allow me to be stuck in so many evil deeds for so long, and to stink so repulsively from them? If You were moved by the leper's prayer, pleading for this bodily healing, You should comply more with my prayers, and rightly so, as I implore from You the health of my soul. If You, either Yourself or through Your disciples, healed the lame and the blind, sometimes even without their asking (cf. Mt 11:5; 21:14), it is more just, O my Jesus, Physician of my soul, that You heal me, as I am truly beseeching You with my whole [f.18r] heart.

They could not walk in the world because they had lost the use of their legs, and for that reason You had mercy on them; but I shall not enter Heaven unless You direct my steps into Your way. They could not see the light of the sun and people's faces because of their blindness, and thus You healed them so that they may enjoy the sight of things created. But I who am blind in spirit shall not be able, unless You enlighten me, unless You restore sight to me, to delight in the sight of You and to look at the face of Your Father and of the immortal spirits, and to contemplate

the heavenly beings. Being deprived of such joys would be the greatest punishment.

My cause and my prayer are then far more justifiable and the necessity is far greater; therefore, kindly deign to heal, purify, and enlighten me. What benefit is there from my blood if I shall go down to eternal destruction? (cf. Ps 30:9). What fruit shall I gain from Your Passion and from my redemption if, redeemed by You, I would be condemned because of my evil deeds and lose again my freedom forever?"

After Holy Communion

1. "*See that you say nothing to any one*" (Mt 8:4).

The leper was forbidden to divulge the grace of healing bestowed upon him for no other reason than because Christ did not yet want to reveal before all His divine omnipotence and the magnitude of His miraculous powers.

Likewise, it would be fitting that you conceal the graces received in Holy Communion, that you not divulge them carelessly and imprudently to anyone, according to this admonition of the religious man: "Do not open your heart to every man, but discuss your affairs with one who is wise and who fears God."⁴⁵

Indeed, it is a great virtue and even a duty to reveal inspirations, favors, enlightenments, and other similar things; but to pour out your heart to anybody you meet is a sign of either rash confidence or little prudence. The wonderful things of God are revealed at their proper time without publicizing, because there is nothing hidden that will not [f.18v] be made manifest (cf. Lk 8:17; Mk 4:22).

As for you, see that you do not reveal the inspirations which the Lord has imparted to you today, lest by divulging the graces granted to you, pride would creep into your mind, or you would wish to be greatly valued and highly esteemed. Surely, it is much better to honor God with worthy gratitude for favors received than to publicize them.

⁴⁵ Cf. IC, Bk. I, Ch. 8, § 1. Cf. Sir 8:19.

2. "*show yourself*" (Mt 8:4).

Contrary to the previous point of meditation, this one states that divine favors and benefits are to be revealed. But to whom? To the priests. Concealing the great works of God is a grave sin. Not revealing one's conscience would be a dangerous thing to do, partly to avoid being deceived and partly in order to receive guidance. For this very reason, God appointed in His Church wise men who can discern various kinds of spiritual leprosy, and judge, counsel, and instruct. Failure to entrust one's soul to them is evidence of either distrust, or presumption, or vain fear, or deceit.

Those traveling with a guide cannot go astray; the same is true for those who, on their spiritual journey, depend upon the leadership of others and are led by their counsels: They cannot be deceived.

Recognize, therefore, and acknowledge that you are ignorant of spiritual matters, and do not go journeying without a guide on the difficult and perilous road of perfection, on which many persons without a guide have lost their way; but let yourself be led by your guide's counsels, admonitions, and instructions, as if you were lacking eyesight.

3. "*offer the gift*" (Mt 8:4).

The Lord tells the leper to offer a gift for his recovered health. You who have been cleansed from so many and such great diseases of spirit in the pure and saving bath of the Blood of Christ, will you not think of offering something in return?

It is fitting that you should offer to Him the gift of penance. First, be careful to keep your soul from being tarnished again, [f.19r] even with the least stain of sin. Secondly, in accordance with your utmost ability and the grace granted to you, imitate with your penance the ardor, example, spirit, and perseverance of the ancient Fathers.

Then you must offer another gift, that of gratitude. For this sublime favor of Holy Communion cannot be repaid in any other way than with gratitude. We give thanks to those whose bread and kindness sometimes sustain us. Since God has refreshed

you with heavenly bread, would you leave His table without showing gratitude?

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Before Holy Communion

1. *“And behold, there arose a great storm”* (Mt 8:24).

Notice how the danger of shipwreck and the rising sea waves proved the faith of the disciples.

You can be sure that a similar test has happened to you or will happen to you. You should trust that those tempests and disturbances arising in your soul, which originate either from evil or from yourself, happen by the will and providence of God to test your constancy and fidelity in virtue and in the divine service. For we incessantly find ourselves on the sea, that is, in this miserable and calamitous life. We cannot possibly avoid the tempests of torments, the waves of temptations, the storms of sorrow. Neither should we be free from them.

If the valor, knowledge, and aptitude of sailors are demonstrated by their skill in avoiding and overcoming the tempests, so the love for God, the fortitude, and the prudence of God’s servant are proven in his passing through the waves of misfortunes.

David speaks about it, claiming that he, too, was tested in a similar way: “O Lord, [Y]ou have searched [f.19v] me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up” (Ps 139:1-2). It is as if he were saying: “O God, You wisely permitted various waves of temptations and calamities to harass me, and sometimes You helped me by Your grace to resist them. Sometimes You abandoned me so that I would be sustained by my own merits alone. Sometimes You even allowed me to suffer a shipwreck through my sins, but after the shipwreck, after the fall, You lifted me up again. Thus, You have come to know the strength and vigor of my spirit; You have probed and You have tested how weak and how strong I was, how much I could endure and remain standing, and how much was needed to make me fall.”

2. “*but [H]e was asleep*” (Mt 8:24).

Think about what frequently happens to people who dedicate themselves to the spiritual life and try hard to serve God: They suffer great neglects and they feel as if they were abandoned by God, like a ship abandoned by the captain while the storm is at its full intensity. Complaining loudly about it, the great friend of God, the Hebrew king, sings: “[W]hy have [Y]ou cast me off? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” (Ps 43:2).

However, in this abandonment, as we understand it to be, the most merciful Lord does not usually move away from us entirely, but only pretends to be asleep in order to teach us to fight with our own strength and thus accumulate greater merits. Therefore, when St. Catherine of Siena, His illustrious handmaid, was complaining amicably and asking where and why He departed from her during her greatest temptations, He responded that He was in her heart, and that He only permitted the evil spirits to attack her so that she might earn the merit of perseverance, and to test her fortitude, but that He did not allow her to fall into a disgraceful defeat and condemnation.⁴⁶

3. “*Save us, Lord; we are perishing*” (Mt 8:25).

Here is the most powerful remedy which Jesus’ disciples, endangered at sea, [f.20r] offer and suggest to you when in danger, in temptations, in dejection, or in misfortunes: **Prayer**. God wants to give pardon, and therefore, He permits us to be tempted, afflicted, or assaulted. A soldier, armed with a sword and other kinds of weapons, either fights the attacking enemy or flees before him. The servant of God should resist the infernal enemy by the power of prayer. This is exactly how the man

⁴⁶ Cf. St. Catherine of Siena, *Breviario di Perfezione*, Intro. and Notes by P. Mariano F. Cordovani, Salani, Firenze 1942, p. 238 (Ch. 20 § 10): (Conversation between Jesus Christ and St. Catherine): “she said: ‘O sweet and good Jesus, where were You when my soul was in affliction?’ Sweet Jesus, the Immaculate Lamb, replied to her: ‘I was with you ...’” Cf. St. Catherine of Siena, *Le Lettere di S. Caterina da Siena*, vol. 3, G. Barbèra, Firenze 1860, p. 245 (Letter #221).

according to God's heart acted, as he himself testified: "In my distress I cry to the Lord that [H]e may answer me" (Ps 120:1).

Hence, do not surrender immediately after the first or even the thousandth enemy attack on your soul, but resist him as long as he keeps attacking you, even if it should continue throughout your whole life. The more often you are victorious, the more often you receive the laurel crown; the harder the fight, the greater the reward. The divine help will be given to you if you ask for it. Jesus pretended to sleep when He allowed these attacks on you. He is asleep whenever you are troubled, therefore you must awaken Him by powerful, humble, and constant prayer to receive help. Why don't you, the wretched one, sinking and nearly drawn by your evil deeds into the abyss of hell, shout out: "Lord, save me, I perish"?

Should He embark today on the boat of your heart, doubt not that He does so to guide, help, and save you.

After Holy Communion

1. "*Then [H]e rose and rebuked the winds and the sea*" (Mt 8:26).

I know, Jesus, that Your power is so great that You can free me in an instant from all spiritual oppression and restore the greatest sense of relief to the troubled and distressed spirit. Indeed, You do it for no other reason than because You know me to be too fearful to endure these storms and too weak to oppose their strength. [f.20v] But then, I most especially feel peace restored to my soul when You, the gentlest Prince of Peace, enter the chamber or the dwelling of my heart. I recognize Your goodness as You support me with Your arm just in time to keep me from falling down under the force of the tempests.

However, my Lord, knowing that it is of the highest merit and that it pleases You greatly, when I preserve a strong and unchanging spirit in any abandonment, for Your glory I desire to be abandoned sometimes so that You may be glorified more, while I may be humbled by the powerful hand of my enemies. Therefore, arrange everything around me gently and prudently. You know how to turn a trial to our advantage (cf. 1 Cor 10:13):

You know when it is necessary to command the winds and the sea, so that peace and quiet may reign within a soul totally docile to Your spirit and most devoted to You, to Your law, and to the evangelical counsels.

2. *"And the men marveled"* (Mt 8:27).

Consider the most stupid minds of these seashore dwellers: They marveled at the miracles of the Savior of the world and were astounded; yet they neither divulged them nor acknowledged Him openly as the Son of God and the true Messiah; rather, they besought Him to leave their borders (cf. Mt 8:34).⁴⁷

As for you, the same almighty God-Man performed today an even greater miracle in you, as He offered Himself along with His humanity and divinity as nourishment for you while remaining alive and intact. What, therefore, are you going to do? Will you only marvel at Him, together with that insane crowd, instead of adoring Him? Will you beseech Him to go away from you rather than to remain within you, so that you may honor Him by praise and acts of thanksgiving?

Indeed, as you were unworthy of the coming of this admirable and powerful Lord, you are even less worthy of His making His dwelling in you. Nevertheless, beseech Him to dwell within you, by saying: "Stay with me, O Lord, and illumine me with light; dispel the darkness of my mind, fill my heart with sweetness. Amen." [f.21r]

3. *"What sort of man is this ...?"* (Mt 8:27).

You ask, what sort of man is the one whom you have received in the Most Holy Eucharist? He is alive, immortal, strong, sweet, and invincible; He is good, merciful, very gracious and all-great; He is gentle and kind; He is wisdom, love, truth, the fullness of all life and goodness.

⁴⁷ Here St. Stanislaus is referring to the people of the country of the Gerasenes (or Gadarenes), who, after hearing how Jesus cast demons out of two demoniacs into a herd of swine and the herd subsequently rushed into the sea and drowned, asked Jesus to leave their area. Note: This reference to the Gerasenes is different from the actual scriptural quote used from Mt 8:27 where the men who marveled at Jesus' works (the calming of the sea) were His own disciples.

Picture in your mind gold, silver, precious stones, all the jewels in the world along with the riches and delights of Heaven; the world with all its created beings; Heaven with all the angels and the blessed. God who gave Himself to you in spiritual food surpasses all of this: true God and true man. It is He who created you; it is He who redeemed you; it is He who will judge you. Finally, if you inquire about the taste of Him whom you have received, know that He is sweet; you would feel this sweetness in your heart should it not become bitter from the gall of sins.

You cannot know many things, and neither would it be beneficial for you to investigate, examine, and ponder His quality, quantity, and essence. Rather, humbly surrender yourself to Him, like a dog to his master, begging for crumbs of graces and glory and not exploring His majesty, because the examiner of the majesty is crushed by glory, as the Holy Scripture says [cf. Prov 25:27; Sir 3:22-24; Ps 131:1]. On the other hand, the humble man obtains grace and much knowledge: He understands, discerns, and grasps many things, and he comprehends God Himself.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Before Holy Communion

1. “*a man who sowed good seed*” (Mt 13:24).

Thus, indeed it is: The heavenly Farmer sowed in His field (that is in your heart and in your soul), not only the good, but the best seeds. [f.21v] For each time you went to Holy Communion, He planted in your soul a good inspiration and graces of light.

But you, the arid, untilled, barren field, what fruit have you brought forth from these abundantly sowed and richest seeds? Have you refreshed your Farmer? Unfortunately, He perceives that useless burrs, thorn bushes, and darnels are spread everywhere across His field, that He obtained at the price of His Blood, and that He very often irrigates with the same Blood. Like a farmer inspecting and lamenting his unfruitful field, He is also very sad and complains loudly and bitterly, saying: “What more

was there to do for [M]y vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Is 5:4) I tended to it carefully and it yielded thorn bushes; I planted the best seed, and unfruitful, it brought out the monstrosities of ugly weeds; I cleaned its surface, irrigated it, put it in order and behold! How many nettles (wicked actions) it yielded, how many unclean thoughts! They are like these very thorny bushes that continue to sting Me so greatly; that is to say, they torture Me!

The earth has stung My head with thorns, but I ordered them to sprout forth; I told you to abound in virtues that refresh Me like fragrant flowers, yet you teem with countless vices and evil deeds, which torture, sting, and wound Me more than thorns.

Apply yourself, my soul, and make every effort to annihilate this harvest of bad fruits and sprouts; and beg your heavenly Spouse and Farmer, that He would not reject and abandon you who abound in both useless and even poisonous weeds, as an angry farmer usually abandons his barren field and farms it no longer. [f.22r]

2. *"but while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds [among the wheat]"* (Mt 13:25).

You should thoroughly examine two points made by these words:

1) That spiritual drowsiness, be it sloth or despondency, is the cause of many imperfections and faults. If the fields of an industrious farmer are always green, sprouting, and crop-bearing, they are contrary to the fields of a negligent farmer, which lie fallow and produce copious amounts of useless weeds. Likewise, the soul of a spiritual man, who loves advancing in all kinds of virtues, is vigorous; his mind flourishes, and abundant fruits spring forth. On the other hand, not only does nothing good come to be and remain in the mind and heart of sluggish or halfhearted persons, but many imperfections and even the filth of terrible sins stain them both.

So, if you value the progress of your soul and wish to see the fruits of Holy Communion and of the Lord's banquet, you should drive out the drowsiness of apathy, shake off the yoke of idleness, and be continually vigilant.

2) You should note that the demons lay snares for us, in which they try to catch us mainly when they see us idle, as if asleep. There is no other cause of any sin than idleness: for the infernal enemy, by the testimony of so many holy Fathers, fears to approach industrious people who diligently watch over their own progress. In fact, when we turn our mind away from honest and holy occupations, immediately our enemy throws into it the seed of bad thoughts, and this wicked infernal farmer sows for himself in the field of the heavenly Lord. Be on your guard against idleness, keep watch and follow the example of Anthony the Great, the model of ascetics,⁴⁸ pray to the Lord in this Holy Communion that He may uproot all idleness from your heart and stir you to salutary works by the incentives of His love. [f.22v]

3. “*then the weeds appeared also*” (Mt 13:26).

You should avoid small imperfections and even the smallest transgressions with the greatest diligence. Indeed, they are hard to notice while the infernal villain is sowing them. Yet, after you recognize and reflect on your more serious falls and a significant number of grave sins, you will understand that they originated by very small imperfections, committed out of carelessness. Then the weeds appear. You should imitate the farmers who eradicate the tares from their wheat or other crops, in order to prevent even more harmful weeds from attacking their fields.

You should act likewise: Be on your guard against all small imperfections in order to ward off graver sins, and to eradicate those already existing. This will help keep your heart clean and your soul pure, and ensure that you do not commit evil deeds

⁴⁸ It appears that St. Stanislaus is speaking here of St. Anthony the Great (250-356), “defined by St. Athanasius as the founder of asceticism”; cf. Scaduto, Mario, *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, vol. I, Ente per l’Enciclopedia Cattolica e per il Libro Cattolico, Città del Vaticano 1948, p. 1534 (s.v. *Antonio Abate*). [Hereafter *Enciclopedia Cattolica* will be abbreviated as *ECat.*] Cf. Atanazy Wielki, *Święty Antoni — Żywot. Pisma ascetyczne*, Trans. Ewa Wipszycka and Janina Dembska, Tyniec — Wydawnictwo Benedyktynów, Kraków 2005, pp. 79ff. (s.v. *Żywot św. Antoniego*). And thus, “his day is divided by work and prayer”: S. Atanasio, *Vita di Antonio*, Ed. Lisa Cremaschi, Edizioni Paoline, Roma 1984, pp. 51-52.

which are greatly harmful to your salvation. The evil spirit usually does this to people dedicated to the spiritual life: he does not immediately capture them with grave sins, which they abhor, but with small faults, which he knows to be treated lightly, and through them he brings about even more grievous falls. When you receive heavenly wisdom, ask for the insight by which you may be able to avoid these tricks of the evil spirit.

After Holy Communion

1. *“How then has it weeds?”* (Mt 13:27).

Consider whether Christ does not wonder at you, your soul, and your senses, and whether He does not also say: “How then has it weeds?” Perhaps you turn too quickly to external things shortly after receiving the Most Holy Eucharist and you fall into the most disgraceful vice of ingratitude, thus causing weeds to appear among the wheat which the heavenly Landowner had planted [f.23r] in your heart today.

Therefore, at least focus your mind and meditate today on this immense favor that the Lord of Heaven granted you. Give Him endless and due thanks for it, not forgetting that the thanksgiving for one Holy Communion is the preparation for another.

2. *“An enemy has done this”* (Mt 13:28).

Consider that the servant of hell always attentively tracks human faults; but on the day when we reconcile with God through the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist and recover His grace, he works especially hard to outwit us, or perhaps to induce us to sin and to fall into grievous imperfections.

Why, then, do you behave thoughtlessly and carelessly? Do you believe that he is not preparing any snares for you today? You are wrong. All the power and efforts of the evil one are in effect today in the attempt to cause your fall. For if Judas’ evil deed is deemed grievous, because he betrayed and sold the Lord at the moment of consuming the Lord’s Body, so anyone’s fall can be more hideous, insofar as it suddenly stains the soul that had been cleansed by the Blood of Christ. Hence, your imperfections displease the Lord today even more than at any

other time. For who can be more wicked than a man, who — being reconciled to another merely a short while ago — begins again multiplying offenses, increasing injuries, and renewing enmities? Wherefore, lest you succumb to committing the same grave crimes, you must be mindful of the benefits you received when you were restored to the grace and love of God.

3. “*Let both grow together*” (Mt 13:30).

Ponder why the most just God does not punish evildoers immediately after they commit their crimes, and why He permits sinners [f.23v] (spoken of here under the guise of weeds) to remain a long time in the filth of their sins, instead of condemning them as soon as possible by His most just sentence.

Saint Augustine explained the reason thus: “For every sinner either lives that he may be corrected, or lives that a good man may be exercised [in virtues] through him.”⁴⁹ Now if God, the just Judge, did not rush to pass the sentence on you who had offended Him with great sins, it is because you may come back to your senses and improve your life. Why then do you delay to amend your life, although you know that your sentencing and punishment are postponed so that you may do so? Indeed, there is never more need for haste than in fleeing from sin and amending one’s life.

⁴⁹ Cf. Augustinus, *Enarrationes in Psalmos: In Psalmum LIV (vers. 2-5)*, in: *Patrologiæ cursus completus, Series Latina I-CCXXI*, Ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 36, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1865, p. 630 (n. 4): This quotation was taken from St. Augustine’s Exposition on Psalm 54, n. 4; however, in the original Latin text, instead of *peccator* (“sinner”) we have *malus* (“evil man”). [Hereafter *Patrologiæ cursus completus, Series Latina I-CCXXI* will be abbreviated as *PL*.]

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY⁵⁰**Before Holy Communion**

1. *“For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder”* (Mt 20:1).

Consider that this householder is Christ, the vineyard is the Church, the vines of the vineyard are the faithful souls, and the laborers are both secular and religious clergy, who were preceded by many, starting with the holy apostles who founded and cultivated this vineyard together with the householder, Christ Himself. Then there are the martyrs, whose blood watered the vineyard; and the virgins, whose lilies of chastity and various flowers of fragrant virtues adorned it and made it thrive.

Recognize that you also have been called to this vineyard, and rejoicing in this, apply yourself in the vineyard with all the strength of your soul and body to the works of charity. Moreover, the all-good Lord of the vineyard has already prepared for you and for all His laborers the most exquisite meal, the sufficient and salutary food that is His Most Holy Body which you are about to consume. [f.24r]

2. *“After agreeing”* (Mt 20:2).

Consider the great gentleness, goodness, clemency, and generosity of your Lord. Although He could use you in all things without pay as a slave bought with His own Blood, He nevertheless determined a wage and made an agreement with you. He expressed the greatness of this wage in these words: “you who have followed me ... will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life” (Mt 19:28-29). Therefore, shake off all torpor and negligence and get ready to work! Why do you sink into idleness? Why do you slacken? The sons of this world cross over countless seas and expose themselves to so many dangers just to acquire transient

⁵⁰ This was the Third Sunday before Lent, the beginning of a time of penance in preparation for Lent. In the *Novus Ordo* this particular Sunday would just be a Sunday of Ordinary Time leading up to Lent. St. Stanislaus placed his reflections on the Gospel for the 6th Sunday after Epiphany after those for the 24th Sunday after Pentecost — see pages 317-319. Also see footnote 137 (p. 317), which explains more about the Sundays after Epiphany and their placement in the liturgical calendar.

goods. Indeed, they sweat, working hard night and day; and they expose themselves to so many risks, endure so many labors, and suffer so many discomforts just to support their mortal life.

As for you, who are a son of light, shall you neglect eternal goods? Won't you try to gain eternal life by undertaking the labors necessary for it? Will you be lazy? Know that "the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force" (Mt 11:12): Be heroes, not asses; be laborious, not slothful.

3. "*he sent them into his vineyard*" (Mt 20:2).

Imagine that you have been given work in some vineyard, where quite a few people already devote themselves to unceasing work: one digs the earth, another cuts off young shoots, one tends to the vines, and another irrigates them.

Realize that this vineyard of the heavenly Lord is the true Church, where countless workers continuously toil and sweat. One teaches, another takes action, one enriches the field of the souls of the faithful with the Word of God, and another cleans them from the filth of their sins by administering the Sacrament [f.24v] of Penance. Nobody is at rest. All work in turns and strive for perfection through various deeds of mercy, being solicitous for one thing only, that the vineyard yields most abundant fruits for the Lord; fruits that console and gladden Him.

Would you not be ashamed if you were the only idler among such a great number of hard-working people? Are you going today to consume in vain the heavenly bread of the heavenly Lord?

After Holy Communion

1. "*I will give you what shall be just*" (Mt 20:4) [DRB].

Quail, my soul, before the strictest severity of divine justice, and fear the great punishments for your neglect! You hear that God promises just payment for the work, so that he who has done his job well and diligently will receive eternal life as a reward; but he who cultivated God's vineyard very negligently and has rather soiled it with new filth, namely scandals and the bad example of a wicked life, shall earn eternal punishment or at least the severe punishment of the flames of Purgatory.

Therefore, be eager and take care that your labors may please the Lord, and your wage may not be unpleasant, but salutary for you.

2. “*Because no one has hired us*” (Mt 20:7).

On the great Day of Judgment many among the pagans may have an excuse for their lack of faith on the grounds that they had never heard anything about Christ, the Life of the world and the Savior [f.25r] of men; or that, at least, the pagans will surely suffer lighter punishments than Christians, according to the explanation given by the soul of a pagan priest that appeared to St. Macarius.⁵¹ On the other hand, who among Christians will find an excuse for his evil deeds when his failure to observe God’s commandments, Church laws, evangelical counsels, and Christ’s teaching brings upon him the most dreadful verdict of condemnation?

What you should fear most of all is falling into the hands of the Judge to whom you will be able to give no excuse for your failings, instances of negligence, evil deeds committed, and good deeds omitted. Laypeople will probably have to give an account before God the Judge only of the divine and ecclesiastical commandments. You, however, will be demanded to account for your vocation, the inspirations you received, the means for acquiring virtues that you ignored, your lack of observance of the Constitutions, your misuse of the extraordinary help granted to you by God so that you might always strive toward a higher perfection.

Finally, do you not think that your attendance to the Most Holy Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist will be especially subject to a strict examination? Settlement for them, by means of their fruits, will be demanded from your soul. Where are their fruits and the fruits of today’s Communion?

⁵¹ Cf. De abbate Macario Ægyptio, *Palladius — Appendix I: Apophthegmata Patrum*, in: *Patrologiæ cursus completus, Series Græca I-CLXI*, Ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 65, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1864, p. 279 (Saying n. 38): “*Narravit abbas Macarius: Iter agens ... subitus nos sunt.*” [Hereafter *Patrologiæ cursus completus, Series Græca I-CLXI* will be abbreviated as PG.]

3. “*on receiving it they grumbled [at the householder]*” (Mt 20:11).

Since you understand that the most just Lord allots the reward according to the quality of works performed, try to complete a great number of good works and earn the most abundant merits. Do not get stuck on ordinary things, but desire rather to do even greater things than the holy Fathers did, in order to obtain a greater reward. Do not be content with just any degree of perfection, but pursue greater perfections and apply and devote your mind to them. For in the blessed eternity, [f.25v] no reward beyond what is merited shall be given. The following words of Holy Scripture teach you that: “their works follow them” (Rev 14:13) [DRB].

Beware, therefore, lest what usually happens to negligent disciples happens to you, namely, that while others advance to higher things, they are compelled to remain in old filth because of their negligence. Take care, lest, if you prove to be tepid, those called last into the vineyard of the Lord should receive better payment than you.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY⁵²

Before Holy Communion

1. “*A sower went out [to sow his seed]*” (Lk 8:5).

Consider that Christ will come out from His tabernacle today to plant the seed in the soil of your heart. This heavenly Farmer will come to you under the species of bread, to plant in your soul the seed of the good inspirations of His Word. But alas! Beware, lest He walk away angry, should He find you like the untilled and neglected soil, abounding in thorn bushes of imperfections, so arid and so parched! Lament your wretchedness and your miserable state. Indeed, among other fields of God (meaning His

⁵² This was the Second Sunday before Lent. In the *Novus Ordo* this particular Sunday would just be a Sunday of Ordinary Time leading up to Lent.

zealous servants), you are found so barren and fruitless, neither doing nor planning anything good. Lament, so that at least when He comes and sees you steeped in tears, He will not hesitate to scatter holy seed in your heart.

2. *“then the devil comes”* (Lk 8:12).

Consider that you used to ask many times for holy inspirations, often craving them fervently, and many times they were given to you even without asking, yet you gained no fruit from them. Notice the cause of this, namely, as soon as the Holy Spirit instills them in you, the evil spirit, this infernal harpy,⁵³ arrives and either expels them with many filthy thoughts [f.26r] or crushes you with an immensity of evil deeds; and thus, having gained control over your soul, he tramples it underfoot. For this reason, the divine seed planted in your heart bears no fruit. Therefore, you should use the same remedy against the evil one that the best farmers use: to avoid dismay at the sight of their fields destroyed by travelers, they block the paths made by such travelers and erase even their smallest footprints.

As for you, block the infernal traveler’s access to your heart and close the footpaths; that is, divert your ears and eyes from useless distractions and hope that the future seed of God planted in the field of your soul will not be trampled underfoot, but that that it will yield a great and profitable harvest.

3. *“And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away”* (Lk 8:6).

Consider your reason and reluctant will to be like the hardest rock. Although many a time the Lord, either Himself or through others, such as spiritual guides and other sowers of the Divine Word, has scattered on this rock His holy seeds, which are good inspirations and incentives to virtue, He reaps no fruits; because those inspirations, those seeds of virtues cannot take root in

⁵³ Cf. Goffredo Bendinelli, *EI*, vol. IV, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1929, pp. 568-569 (s.v. *Arpia*): “Harpies are female demons ... with a human head, torso and arms, [with] the rest as a bird. ... Their greatest popularity is perhaps ... due to their nature as infernal winged demons ... involved in the transport of souls to the afterlife.”

your hard heart and stubborn⁵⁴ will; and so some dry up, and the infernal birds, that is, the evil spirits, carry some of them off. You become a rock whenever you resist the divine ordinance, whenever you show yourself to be like an inaccessible and barren cliff, whenever you display with a certain wicked obstinacy your hardened feelings and views, not allowing anyone else to change them for the better, nor yourself to think of improvement or greater perfection.

Woe to you, the wretched one, if neither the hammer of God's grace [f.26v] nor divine omnipotence will soften you, and if the Blood of Jesus Christ, whom you approach, will not shatter the harder-than-diamond rock of your heart! Naturally, a good farmer will not tolerate hard, useless stones in his field, but will throw them out. Watch out and beware of becoming hardened, lest you be thrown outside the Kingdom of God.

After Holy Communion

1. "*and the thorns grew with it and choked it*" (Lk 8:7).

Having received the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, think about how many seeds of virtue are planted in the soil of your heart, like the grains of the graces that God, the generous giver of graces, brought to you along with the gift of Himself. Therefore, take care lest the thorn bushes of fresh faults and offenses, the thistles of evil feelings and shameful desires grow upon the beautifully cleaned out, cultivated, and well-planted soil of your heart, and choke the excellent seedlings.

But alas, what a problem is your negligence! Scarcely had you accepted the new seeds, and no sooner had the heavenly Farmer walked away from your field, when so many and such great thorn bushes already began to sprout there; for you immediately turned your thoughts to various preoccupations, and totally and will-

⁵⁴ The word in Latin is *caucasea*, which comes from the Caucasus — mountains between the Black and Caspian Seas, and here it means rocky, very stubborn or hardened, as this word is used by Seneca (Med. v. 43). Cf. *SLL*, vol. 1, p. 127 (s.v. *Caucasus*): "*Caucasum mente induere ... est supra modum indurare animum, et ad scelerata quaeque obdurare.*"

fully detached your mind from giving thanks for such an exquisite gift! Beware, lest what happened to our first mother Eve also happen to you: Having forgotten to be grateful for the benefit of creation and the gift of Paradise, she began a conversation with the serpent, and thus fell miserably and was expelled from the most blessed Elysian Fields⁵⁵ (cf. Gen 3:1-6; 23-24). [f.27r]

2. “*And some fell into good soil*” (Lk 8:8).

Do you know what is meant in this quote by the “good soil”? It means a spirit that is just as eager to obey as to listen, and one that is very quick to fulfill the commands of God and of those to whom it subject by law, so that there is no need to repeat them. An obedient religious and Christian are understood here. Just as the farmer calls “good” ground that which gives back with interest every seed sown upon it, so in the mystical sense, we call rightly the “good ground” those who are indiscriminately obedient to whomever it is due; they are the ones who bear the great fruit of obedience. Make therefore every effort to become “good ground,” suitable for every seed, able to produce every kind of fruit. This will happen if you eradicate from your heart and mortify the passions that are contrary to obedience, for these passions are like thorn bushes.

3. “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear*” (Lk 8:8).

Consider that Christ valued the words of His teaching more highly than miracles, and that He wanted us to put these words into practice. For this reason He did not say, “He who has eyes ought to see my miracles and believe,” but said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Neither does He consider blessed, on another occasion, the miracle workers, but those who show obedience and are willing and eager to hear His words. He beatifies them, as it were, by saying, “blessed are they who hear the word of God” (Lk 11:28) [DRB]: They are chosen and predestined.

Be ashamed and contrite, because sometimes you have resisted the words and commands of your Superiors, for their words are

⁵⁵ *Elysian Fields* is an expression taken from Greek mythology, referring to the dwelling place of the souls of the dead heroes and of all just people. Cf. Jan Tokarski, Ed., *Słownik wyrazów obcych PWN*, PWN, Warsaw 1980, p. 188.

also the words of God, to which the Truth Himself testifies, saying: “He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me” (Lk 10:16). [f.27v]

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY⁵⁶

Before Holy Communion

1. “*and all things shall be accomplished*” (Lk 18:31) [DRB].

O happy news! O words of Christ full of joy! Many prophets predicted the redemption of Israel but kept the people’s joy in check by the veiling of their prophecies because they did not reveal the time when the Messiah and the true Son of David would ascend to the city of Judea, the dwelling of the kings, where He would suffer death for the salvation of all people. Now it is Christ, the Messiah Himself and the King of the Prophets, who tells the circle of His disciples about the imminent redemption of the world, announces that the time of salvation is already near, and reveals the manner of His death: a most shameful slaughter.

Learn from this that nothing that came from the prophetic and apostolic mouth of Christ the Lord and was decreed by Him is subject to change. Most true especially are those predictions about the condemnation of the wicked and the glory of the just. May they stir you up to the love and fear of God, inspire you to improve your life, and lead you to a worthy preparation for receiving this Most Holy Sacrament. For Heaven and earth will pass away, but the divine words and prophecies will certainly be fulfilled, and will not pass away (cf. Mk 13:31).

2. “*For [H]e shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and scourged*” (Lk 18:32) [DRB].

You have good reason to pour out abundant tears; you have good reason to grieve; you have an incentive for continuous pen-

⁵⁶ This was the last Sunday before Lent (or Shrove Sunday). In the *Novus Ordo* this particular Sunday would just be a Sunday of Ordinary Time leading up to Lent.

ance. It is you, yourself, who handed the innocent Jesus over to the Jews for mocking, scourging, and crucifying. You handed over not some wicked thief, but the gracious Son of God; not an evildoer, but the good and gracious Creator and Father of all. Should you ask Him about His reason for going to the City of Jerusalem, [f.28r] where He would suffer the most horrid kind of death, He would answer you: “for the transgression of [M]y people” (Is 53:8), and He would add, in strict conformity with the truth: “For your enormous and unbearable sins.”

You are the one who led Christ to the Cross, and alas! You crucify Him every day when you act impiously! Where will you now turn, having treated your Creator with such great impiety? And yet He calls you to Himself, oblivious to His wounds, injuries, and death. Moreover, He invites His enemy to His table, laden not with exquisite dishes,⁵⁷ but with His Precious Body. O love! O goodness! O clemency, unheard of and inconceivable! Avail yourself of this favorable opportunity for conversion and work for your salvation and for that of your neighbor, as long as time is granted to you.

3. “[on] the third day [H]e shall rise again” (Lk 18:33) [DRB].

Consider that Christ the Lord is being killed by sinners as many times as they mar their own soul, created in the image of God, with impious evil deeds, just as it is said in the words of the Apostle, in rebuke of sinners: “they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold [H]im up to contempt” (Heb 6:6). Particularly in this most unhappy time, when nearly everyone is immersed in various evil deeds and loosens the control of his appetites, you must know that the most gracious Lord is scourged, spat upon, and crucified again. Countless examples can teach you this.

⁵⁷ St. Stanislaus had written in the Latin: “*mensam ... saliaribus epulis refertam*,” where the adjective *saliaris* comes from the word *Salii*. “*Salii* [was] ... a college of priests of [the pagan god] Mars ... whose sacred processions, accompanied by singers and armed dancers, took place annually in the beginning of March. ... [And it was] from the sumptuous feasts that followed the procession of the *Salii*” that the word *saliaris* came to be used as a proverb meaning: “splendid, magnificent” (*Cassell's Latin Dictionary: Latin-English and English-Latin*, rev. ed., Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York 1955, p. 498 (s.v. *Salii*)). [Hereafter *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* will be abbreviated as CLD.] Cf. *SLL*, vol. 2, p. 257 (s.v. *Saliaris*).

Although He seems to leave unnoticed the offenses of His people, yet He does not let them pass with impunity; and should He not punish them by the disasters of wars, pestilence, and famine in the present time, He will certainly render to everyone according to their deeds in the dreadful judgment (cf. Prov 24:29).

Do not think that your imperfections are also left unnoticed; in fact, each impious deed awaits a just punishment. Therefore, it is better to wash away the faults you have committed by penitential exercises and to make up for your frequent evil deeds by more frequent acts of good works, rather than to experience shame and punishment because of them when the Lord descends as Judge.

After Holy Communion

1. “*And they understood none of these things*” (Lk 18:34) [DRB].

Consider how bad is the state of one’s intellect [f.28v] when it does not recognize or grasp the good things done or proposed by someone else, and even rejects them. The apostles, who were afflicted by this mental darkness, did not understand the Lord speaking at length about His torments and His impending death. There was no other cause for this occurrence, than this: the virtue of charity, with its office and perfection, was still concealed from them, and so they did not understand the will to suffer for another (whether friend or foe), the torments, calamity, and vicissitudes of adverse fortune.

If you still do not feel a desire to help your neighbor, and to endure for the common good things painful and contrary to your disposition, know that you still don’t understand the perfection of charity and are still in total ignorance of all the virtues by which we ascend to Heaven.

Ask, ask light from God, so that you may understand how great is the importance of each virtue. Ask, that you may know what God wills you to do, and by what road He wants you to advance in perfection. Ask and pray: “give me understanding that I may live” (Ps 119:144); “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things” (Ps 119:18).

2. *“a blind man was sitting by the roadside [begging]”* (Lk 18:35).

Ponder the intention of that blind man sitting by the wayside, namely that he would receive either alms from passers-by, or light from the Savior, whose arrival to the city of Jericho he had heard of earlier. Now, if because of these two things this man bore great troubles, sitting by the wayside in heat and cold and pleading with such great insistence for the light for his external eyes by invoking the Savior with cries so insistent that they offended the ears of those following Christ, consider how much perseverance in prayer you need, how much constancy in enduring mortifications and the inconveniences of this life, so that you may receive the internal light, so that you may obtain a spark of devotion, just as a dog gets a crumb and a piece of food from the table of his lord; that you may ultimately merit to receive the fullness of joy in the heavenly realm in the sight and light of the uncreated Sun itself! Just as persistence may attain all, so no heavenly gift is acquired without perseverance in prayer. [f.29r]

3. *“Lord, let me receive my sight”* (Lk 18:41).

If that blind man begged only to have his sight restored so that he could see the world and created things, then with what longing should you ask for the light of the soul; with what prayerful effort and, shall I say, also with a certain holy importunity should you beg to be able to gaze upon and contemplate the Creator Himself? Truly, people who ignore the way of holy contemplation are deprived of a very great good, because one comes by this means to the knowledge of himself and of God, and to the closest union with the Creator of all things, the Supreme Good.

Indeed, there is no greater goodness and no better gift of God, among those that He usually lavishes on men, than the gift and goodness of contemplation. For the entire happiness of the saints in Heaven comes from looking upon God. Hence, those who contemplate God, the works of God, and themselves with the most diligent and most attentive mind, taste that blessedness in some measure, they feel it beforehand, and become sharers in it. Sacred contemplation is the eye of the soul; seek it out with your whole heart, implore it with all your might, beg for it earnestly in

unceasing prayer. When you receive it, take care not to lose it; take care that it is not driven out from you by needless occupations. Indeed, you should remember to guard it with such diligence as people guard their bodily eyes.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Before Holy Communion

1. “[*Jesus*] was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness” (Mt 4:1).

Consider that at some time Christ the Lord was prompted, or rather stirred up or driven by the Divine Spirit to withdraw into the desert. There, after a strict 40-day fast, He was tempted by the infernal evil spirit, although He had never before dealt with such a tempter while staying among the people.

From this you should learn that there are many people [f.29v] in the world who do not feel temptations; for the evil spirit believes them to be already his own, and therefore he does not display his hostile force against them, does not throw his darts nor devise battle formations or lay traps. But he assaults with great intensity those who live in a religious institute, in the sacred and fortified city of God. Hence the religious, although employing a great many mortifications, fasts, and all kinds of abstinence, are harassed and subjected to uncommon temptations. Since the universal, infernal enemy perceives them as his most implacable enemies, he employs, therefore, all cunning devices and applies all his forces in order to either drive them away from there, as if from a camp strongly fortified by divine power and protection, or else to destroy, conquer, and annihilate them in their present place and situation.

Therefore, do not think that this kind of affliction and cross, the religious struggle, is something new and extraordinary, since you hear that even the God-Man was tempted; and do not despair of the help of He who led you outside of the walls of Babylon⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Babylon (in Mesopotamia) was for the Jews synonymous with all evil and violence; this name was used in an allegorical sense by Christians, referring to Rome and to the sinful world. Cf. Hugolin Langkammer, *EK*, vol. I, Towarzystwo

into the holy desert. Neither should you doubt that the infernal foe can be defeated by you as many times as he attacks you, for armed as he is with many foul thoughts, vices, and evil incitements, his forces are far weaker than can be imagined. This dog can bark but cannot bite.

Indeed, as often as you are refreshed by the banquet of the Most Sacred Eucharist, you always acquire new strength and defensive armor. After all, the **Eucharist** is the most powerful weapon against every temptation.

2. *"If you are the Son of God"* (Mt 4:3).

Look at the cunning of this sly snake: How craftily indeed he attacks Christ the Man. He sees Him fasting and so he tries to incite Him to gluttony. When he achieves nothing by this temptation, he proceeds to a bolder impudence, saying: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down" (Mt 4:6). But when this ruse proves to be of no avail either, he tries to induce Him to idolatry by showing and promising Him all the kingdoms and glory of the world: "All these," he says, "I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me" (Mt 4:9).

This is how [f.30r] the infernal Ulysses⁵⁹ is accustomed to behave; with this method of temptation, he approaches the servants of God. He takes advantage of even the slightest opportunity for their seduction: he tries gluttony for the famished, sleepiness for the halfhearted, flames of fury for the impatient; lustfulness for some and pride and conceit for others.

It should be said to the one tempting you with gluttony: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). The one who incites to presumption must be rebuked thus: "[Again] it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" (Mt 4:7).

When his other temptations are foiled by other remedies and his efforts are warded off or shattered; he usually makes a final strike against perseverance in divine service, in spiritual

Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1973, pp. 1231-1232 (s.v. *Babilon*). Cf. Rev 14:8; 16:19; 1 Pet 5:13.

⁵⁹ Cf. footnote 33 (p. 137).

exercises, and in the practice of virtue. He does this partly by himself, partly through wicked people assisting his cunning, by the offering of pleasures, fame, wealth or honors, and a fleeting earthly glory. By these crafty devices, he tries to drive away and remove from the plough the laborers dedicated to the service of God and call them to go out from the divine camp and into the world (which is a wickedness near to idolatry). But here is the sharp sword of the Divine Word against this infernal Gyges⁶⁰: “it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and [H]im only shall you serve.’” (Mt 4:10).

3. “*Then the devil left [H]im, and behold, angels came and ministered to [H]im*” (Mt 4:11).

Look, look at the happy outcome of the temptation. The evil spirit attacked, the God-Man resisted: The latter triumphs, the former suffers defeat; the former is put to flight, the latter is surrounded and refreshed by angels. This is what Divine Providence does with the tempted: He allows them to be attacked, leaves them to fight with their own strength and unaided, permits them to be troubled and overwhelmed by various waves of temptations. [f.30v] But at the end He reserves for them all joy and consolation (O immense joy! O inexplicable consolation!): “To him who conquers,” He says, “I will give some of the [hidden] manna” (Rev 2:17), and I will let him “eat of the tree of life” (Rev 2:7). Truly, just as earthly commanders after a brilliantly conducted and victorious battle confer on their fellow soldiers excellent rewards, laurel crowns, titles of honor, and various favors, so also our heavenly Commander crowns us, after a strong, courageous, and vigorous resistance to temptation that ended in victory, with astonishing favors: internal consolations, visions, revelations (how unworthy of them we are!) and the highest charisms and heavenly gifts.

Fight, fight heroically and persevere!

⁶⁰ St. Stanislaus compares the devil to Gyges, because just as Gyges illegally obtained the throne and adoration of his subjects, so also the devil wanted to obtain the adoration of Christ. Cf. Ægidio Forcellini, et al., *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*, vol. 2, Typis Seminarii, Patavii 1864, (s.v. *Gyges*). [Hereafter *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis* will be abbreviated as *FLL*.] Cf. *CLD*, p. 245 (s.v. *Gyges*).

After Holy Communion

1. “*But [H]e answered*” (Mt 4:4).

The strongest and optimal manner of resisting temptation is to counter its promptings with contrary arguments. Here the cunning demon incites Christ to gluttony, and Christ says: “It is written: Not on bread alone does man live” (cf. Mt 4:4). Realize that you also should act this way. Are you roused by the temptation of the flesh? — Say to the tempter: It is written: “Let your loins be gird” (Lk 12:35) [DRB] with the stole of chastity. “For we gird our loins” (says the great Doctor) “when we subjugate the lustfulness of the flesh by self-restraint.”⁶¹ Are you attacked by pride? Reply to the demon: “But I am a worm, and no man” (Ps 22:6). “I have said to rottenness: Thou art my father; to worms, my mother and my sister” (Job 17:14) [DRB]. Do you feel that your spirit is resisting obedience? Restrain it with this saying of Samuel: “For obedience is better than sacrifices” (1 Sam 15:22) [DRB]. For Gregory says: “Obedience is justly preferred to victims, because by victims the flesh of another, but by obedience our own will, is offered up.”⁶²

Are you oppressed by laziness, sluggishness, or idleness? Impress upon your memory these words: “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread” (Gen 3:19) and: “Cursed be the man who does God’s work carelessly” (cf. Jer 48:10). Are you tempted in your virtue of perseverance? [f.31r] Resist the temptation by saying: “It is foolish to remove the hand from the plough; it is dangerous to turn and look back; it is a miserable and most unhappy thing to be reduced to a statue of salt.”⁶³

⁶¹ Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber I — Homilia XIII (Luc. XII, 35-40)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1123 (n. 1481). In the original text in place of “we subjugate” (*coarctamus*), St. Stanislaus wrote “we smite” (*mactamus*). Cf. Gregory the Great, *Gregory the Great: Forty Gospel Homilies*, in: *Cistercian Studies Series*, Trans. David Hurst, vol. 123, Cistercian Publications, Inc., Kalamazoo, MI, 1990, p. 151 (Homily 20). [Hereafter *Gregory the Great: Forty Gospel Homilies* will be abbreviated as *GFGH*.]

⁶² Gregorius Magnus, *Moralium Libri: Expositio Librum B. Job — Liber XXXV (Job XLII, 11)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 765 (nn. 1155-1156).

⁶³ Most likely these are St. Stanislaus’ own words. Cf. Lk 9:62: “No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” [DRB].

Most importantly, refresh yourself frequently with the Most Sacred Heavenly Banquet. I mean the angelic bread; be mindful of the grace of this most gracious God and remember to give thanks, for thus you will overcome and ward off all the might and the strong attacks of the tempter and infernal warrior.

2. “*command these stones to become loaves of bread*” (Mt 4:3).

O the insanity of the evil spirit! He offers stones to Christ the Man in order to test His divine omnipotence! If he knows Him to be God, why does he tempt Him? If he recognizes and perceives the fragile vessel of the human body assumed by Him out of humility, why does he stir up pride in Him?

There is a lesson for you: You should not presume too much about your own strength, even fortified by the most efficacious Sacrament; you should not promise yourself security, although you are filled with so many endowments and supernatural gifts. Instead, be always vigilant, always pray, lest you fall into an insurmountable temptation. It is not by great knowledge, or experience, or mortification that the infernal tempter is conquered; but he is put to flight, driven away, and completely conquered by: custody of the senses, the sword of prayer, great trust in God, patient humility, and humble patience.

3. “*Then the devil left [H]im*” (Mt 4:11).

Consider the devil’s persistence in attacking Christ and Christ’s fortitude in repelling and resisting the devil. The devil does not relinquish his attacks on Christ, although the latter used a very powerful weapon in the first clash with the pestilent enemy. [f.31v]

From this you can conclude for yourself that the battle with this enemy is, and will be, a continuous one. For “the life of man upon earth is a warfare” (Job 7:1) [DRB], says Job, a very experienced warrior. Some others interpret it in this sense: that the whole life of man upon earth is a temptation. Therefore, prepare your soul

Cf. Gen 19:26: “And his wife looking behind her, was turned into a statue of salt” [DRB]. Cf. Bede Venerabilis [Bede the Venerable], *In Lucæ Evangelium Expositio — Liber III (Luke IX, 62)*, in: *PL*, vol. 92, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1862, p. 461.

after a mild temptation to resist another more serious one. As the religious man says, "When one temptation (...) passes, another comes along,"⁶⁴ and often a graver one.

You must not, however, yield to the evil spirits, but go against them more daringly, although you may not know any peace in your whole life. And thus, indeed, there are numerous battles so that triumphs may also be many. Therefore, double the fighting to double the crowns of glory. For this reason, the Lord grants you frequent access to the sacred table, so that you grow stronger against the more frequent attacks of your enemies.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Before Holy Communion

1. *"Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother"* (Mt 17:1).

Reflect on the reason for which these three disciples were led by Christ to Mount Tabor: it was so that, having gazed at the radiance of His glorious Transfiguration, they would not experience later a fearful shock at His disgrace and His shameful death on the summit of Golgotha, and so that, by the love and example of their Master, they would easily undertake all toils, and be ready to suffer death itself, although a terrible one (which they actually did suffer) for heavenly glory, a part of which they already saw in the Transfiguration. [f.32r]

To you, also, the same Lord shows many times His glory in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, allows you to savor the greatest sweetness and grants you internal consolations, so that later, when they are taken away from you and the most complete abandonment befalls you, you would undertake and accomplish all works with a greater willingness and steadfastness of spirit; and so that you would accept and carry any cross, even the heaviest one. Through His favors the Lord wants to bring you closer to

⁶⁴ Cf. *IC*, Bk. I, Ch. 13, § 3.

Himself and to His Cross so that having tasted how sweet He is, you would desire nothing worldly and instead long for Him alone; and so that there would be nothing too arduous to accomplish, nothing repugnant to your spirit, except what must be abandoned for His glory.

2. “*Peter and James and John his brother*” (Mt 17:1).

The Lord wanted these apostles to witness His glory so that they might likewise carry the Cross. He wanted them to be present at His Divine Transfiguration, so that, by joint effort, they would overcome the powers of hell and eradicate the darnels and burrs; that is, the pagan teachings spread throughout the world by the cunning of the evil spirit; and so that they would plant the salutary seed of the Divine Word in the whole world and would zealously and continuously preach and spread faith in their Master, the Savior of the universe!

If you, along with so many other holy ones, come to the table of Christ and consume the food common to all the saints, if you enjoy the food and drink shared with them, you should not hesitate to work together with them. Indeed, since you have become a sharer in the fruits of the Most Sacred Eucharist, consider how and resolve to bear fruit in the vineyard of the Lord, lest perchance you be only a friend “*ad aras*,” (i.e., until the dangerous sea threatens⁶⁵), lest you only take good things from the Savior, but flee from every unpleasantness and difficulty, as from a rabid dog or a snake.⁶⁶ [f.32v]

3. “*And [H]e was transfigured before them*” (Mt 17:2).

What a great favor the Lord did to the apostles by showing Himself to them in His divine glory! He shows you a favor just as great, or even greater, when He gives you not only to see but also

⁶⁵ According to Virgil (in *Aeneid*, Bk., line 112), *arae* are “rocks near the sea” where it is dangerous to navigate. Cf. *CLD*, p. 49 (s.v. *arae*). St. Stanislaus warns against being like people whose friendship fails when their friend is exposed to certain dangerous situations and sufferings, when the friendship would oblige them to share or to assist the friend at a certain cost to themselves.

⁶⁶ “*Cane peius et angue vitare*” (“avoid the rabid dog and the snake”) is a proverb used by Horace (cf. *CLD*, pp. 81-82 (s.v. *canis*)), where the “dog” is rabid and the “snake” signifies a detestable thing to flee away from (cf. *FLL*, vol 1, Typis Seminarii, Patavii 1864, pp. 513-514 (s.v. *canis*)).

to eat His Deity and at the same time His Most Sacred Humanity, concealed for your sake by the veil of bread. What could be better than this Lord, who bestows upon you such great benefits? What could be worse or more wicked than you, who sadden Him with your many imperfections, with which you veil, so to speak, the divine glory?

Come to your senses and rouse yourself, lest such a good, indeed the best Savior and Creator, should be compelled to turn into your most severe Judge, who passes on you the verdict of eternal death, and thrusts you down into the abyss of infamy, in spite of showing you so many times the glory of His Deity at the sacred table. Therefore, beg Him during this Most Sacred Communion to transfigure your heart and soul and transform you entirely into Himself.

After Holy Communion

1. “[H]is face shone like the sun” (Mt 17:2).

The face of the transfigured Christ was as splendid as the serene face of the sun. Indeed, the light of the sun, the moon, and all the stars is nothing but utter darkness in comparison with the splendor of the Savior’s face.

Yet, He granted to your heart such great a light. Out of love for you, the bearer of this great light and splendor concealed His face, brighter than all light, under the veil of ordinary bread. The Lord of such great majesty, the King of such great glory has deigned to visit you, a miserable little worm, indeed a stinking dog (you are rightly deserving of this name because of the putrid filth of your evil deeds), and to regale you with the food of His Most Sacred Body. [f.33r]

Beware, therefore, not to hide under a bushel this brightest Light, that descended unto you. Take care, lest the hostile cloud of hell or a storm of temptation find you careless and snatch this uncreated Sun away from you.

2. “it is good for us to be here” (Mt 17:4) [DRB].

Behold, how much the Prince of the Apostles longs to be on the top of Mount Tabor, and even to remain there, where he tasted

in spirit and saw with his eyes a portion of the heavenly glory. Oh, if only you, who have received the whole King of all glory Himself, would rouse in yourself the same feeling: "It is **good** for us, O Lord, to be here!" It is good to seek delight and to rest solely according to Your pleasure; it is good to frequently come to You and to enjoy Your consolations; but it is better to surrender our own will; and the best is to suffer out of love for You.

For that reason, a significant portion of the celestial glory was shown to these observers of Christ's majesty, so that, having tasted it, they would desire to undergo for Him all misfortunes, even death itself; that having become participants in the scorn and torments He suffered, they would also become participants in His honor and eternal joy.

Thus the all-good Lord grants His glory to your soul in the Most Sacred Eucharist more often than not, and refreshes it with wonderful consolations for no other reason than to have you (incited by the taste of everlasting joys, delights, honors, and goods) endure joyfully and willingly scorn, injuries, calamities, and the light yoke of religious life, and to assure you that you must come through the most burdensome labors to the sweetest rest, through pains and the greatest anxieties to the highest serenity, and through death to life.

3. "*This is [M]y beloved Son*" (Mt 17:5).

Know that the One whom the eternal Father showed to the disciples on the mountain is the same One whom you received. O unfathomable love of God! He reveals the Son to the apostles, lest, upon seeing all the unusual and ignominious things happening to Him at His most shameful death, they should waver in faith or be scandalized. But He gave Him to you to be consumed in order to turn all scandal away from you; to procure your honest reputation [f.33v] and good name; to nourish, sustain, direct, help, and guide you to a happy eternity. Ponder most carefully the great love with which He embraces you! How much He cares for you, how much kindness He shows you; indeed, He appears to you as goodness itself!

And you, could you possibly not love Him alone as the wisest and most merciful Lord? Could you possibly not serve Him faithfully, sincerely, and persistently?

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Before Holy Communion

1. “*Now [H]e was casting out a demon*” (Lk 11:14).

Consider that the Church proposed for your reflection this Gospel today so that, having recognized the act of kindness and omnipotence of the Lord in freeing one possessed by the evil spirit, you may ask humbly to be freed from all impediments to your eternal salvation and be protected from the crafty tricks of the evil spirits, both by a similar act of kindness and by the help of the same Lord. Beseech Christ to remove from you all that is not in accord with and that does not adorn the religious spirit and state, knowing it to be of the evil one, namely, perverse inclinations and vicious actions.

When the Lord enters the abode of your heart, ask Him to purify it the same way as the house of Zacchaeus; may He perform in you what He once did in Zacchaeus. Indeed, being brought to repentance by the Lord’s arrival, Zacchaeus distributed among the poor whatever wealth he had illicitly accumulated, liberally giving them even half of his goods (cf. Lk 19:8). Similarly, at the coming to you of this Lord of lords, you should leave behind and ignore those things that belong to the world and the flesh; and hereafter you shall run the path of the Lord’s commandments because your heart will be expanded by this Holy Communion (cf. Ps 119:32).

2. “*that was mute*” (Lk 11:14).

That man possessed by the devil, (as the Venerable Bede teaches) was said not only to be mute, but also blind.⁶⁷ The Lord

⁶⁷ Cf. Beda Venerabilis [Bede the Venerable], *In Lucae Evangelium Expositio — Liber IV (Luke XI, 14)*, in: *PL*, vol. 92, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1862, p. 475.

freed him from the cruel devil, and from the pain of silence, and also from a pitiable and calamitous blindness. As for you, place yourself today before the Lord as someone mute, blind, and deceived by the evil spirit.

Insofar as you are a mute, think [f.34r] how halfhearted and dry you are in prayer; indeed, you have no devotion at all. Insofar you are as a blind man; think how shamefully you err by following your own will and the dictates of your mind, and its diabolical manner of thinking. Think how greatly you lack the true divine spirit, when you willingly give yourself up to external matters, because you do not have yet the strong spirit of denying yourself and serving God, and because you transgress against God's commandments in many things, virtues, and rules; and finally, because you do not undertake any religious (nor even Christian) action, and easily allow yourself to be deceived by the vile spirit and, once deceived, you fall more often and more gravely.

Therefore, ask the Lord for these three things: light, that you may walk the true road of religious perfection; speech, that abounding in the ardor of devotion, you may persist in continuous prayer without distractions; finally, liberation from all the vile attacks of the evil spirit, which you are unable to resist, and from every irresistible temptation and every action contrary to a religious and holy life.

3. "*Jesus was*" (cf. Lk 11:14).

This is the one whom you are going to approach and to receive; this is the Conqueror of the evil spirits, the Savior of the world, the Lord of Heaven, the Creator of the world, the Way, the Truth, the Life, and the future Judge of all mankind.

Wherefore, approach and revere the majesty of so great a Lord with the fullest awareness. Do not get distracted by anything external; do not look behind or around; do not drool like a simpleton; do not get excited like a reckless person; do not fear as if distrustful of His goodness; do not be conceited as if presumptuous of mercy, but humbly, quietly, cheerfully, modestly, lovingly, and longingly wait for the Lord. Greet Him when He comes to you and let Him do in you everything according to His pleasure.

Let Him cast out the mute and blind evil spirit, and restore the light, as well as the grace of devotion and zeal for perfection.

After Holy Communion

1. *“the mute man spoke”* (Lk 11:14).

Consider that this man was mute until the time when the evil spirit was cast out of him. Thus, the heavenly Spirit is not within you as long as you are deprived of the use of speech, that is, as long as you do not give thanks [f.34v] to the most generous and most gracious God for the countless benefits you have received.

It would be hard for someone who has been thus far afflicted with so great a vice of ingratitude to assert or to think that he has the Spirit of God: For not only does he not think at all of giving thanks, but neither does he even call to mind the blessings granted to him, thus committing them to perpetual oblivion.

Just as the most certain sign of a true friendship would be someone's frequent reference to the favors received from a friend and the attempt to repay them by all possible means; thus, the infallible evidence of the true Divine Love hidden within us and of the good Spirit dwelling within us is manifest when we frequently give thanks to God for the gifts bestowed upon us and when we do not ever allow celestial benefits to disappear from our memory, but always ponder, praise, and treasure them.

2. *“the people marveled”* (Lk 11:14).

If the people present at that sight of the Savior setting the possessed man free from the devil and restoring his use of speech were seized with admiration for such a great deed; even so the heavenly multitude will also admire you today when they see your gratitude for Holy Communion and hear you speaking of and proclaiming the divine benefits, rather than just pondering them.

Although many like yourself have been filled today with the same benefits, yet a great number of them immediately turned from the sacred table to the mundane one, from the chalice of salvation to the goblets of sensual pleasure; many immersed themselves in various worldly matters; many let themselves be

overwhelmed by the drowsiness of negligence and did not give thanks to their most generous Benefactor.

If you give due thanks for such a great gift just as that most grateful man did, one of the ten who were healed (cf. Lk 17:15-18), you will undoubtedly cause the heavenly hosts to be amazed. Truly, you ought to dedicate a lot of time to thanksgiving; removed and separated from the world, you are closer to the Lord; also, you are not impeded by various matters in such a way that you would be unable to dedicate yourself most diligently to fervent thanksgiving. [f.35r]

3. *“others, to test him, sought from [H]im a sign from heaven”* (Lk 11:16).

So that you would not have the opportunity to tempt the Lord, He left Himself to you in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is a miracle, the greatest of all miracles. Among the faithful in the world, this Sacrament is a continuous memorial of the Divine Goodness and also of His love and omnipotence.

If you go to Him when you are feeling sad, would you ever depart without consolation? If you resist temptation whenever tempted, are you not freed from it? If in your need of grace or help you beseech the Lord hidden under the veil of bread, would you not receive what you ask for? Do you want the light? Beg Him for it, and He will give it to you. Do you ask for strength to work in the field of the heavenly Farmer? He will give it to you. Do you earnestly demand the eternal Kingdom? Do not doubt that He will lead you there. But ask for all this in such a manner that it would not seem as if you were tempting the most powerful, best, and wisest of Kings.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Jesus went to the other side”* (Jn 6:1).

My soul, you learned from experience that the cause of such a great sadness, nay, of so many evil deeds and imperfections, was your neglect or withdrawal from the Divine Presence. For as long as the heavenly Light is in you, you see most clearly what you should do or what you should shun. Then you endure all bitter things with sweetness, you possess all agreeable things with a readiness to renounce them. Then you have a pure conscience, and it seems to you as if you dwell and rest in an earthly paradise, which you believe to have already found, to enjoy its delights to the full. Whenever you pray, you feel as if you were in the presence of angels; hence you pour out your prayers with great devotion, humility, and care. I will pass over in silence countless other blessings, which the Divine Presence brings to you.

On the contrary, when you do not have God’s presence before your eyes, when Jesus departs from your mind, you become sad, you suffer from dryness, you are shattered, you fall, you stagger, you sink into even the worst offenses, and it seems to you that you are in hell, or close to it.

Quite right was the one who said: “To be without Jesus is a grievous hell; and indeed, to be with Jesus is a sweet paradise.”⁶⁸ Therefore, you can see how much [f.35v] you should value God’s presence and with what great diligence you should preserve it after receiving the Lord at the sacred table!

2. *“a multitude followed [H]im”* (Jn 6:2).

Consider that those faithful people, those pious souls, that holy flock who were refreshed and nourished by His most ardent, most delightful, and salutary sermons, did not leave Jesus when He departed across the Sea of Tiberias (cf. Jn 6:1-2). Rather, they followed Him through many dangers, through places exposed to

⁶⁸ Cf. IC, Bk. II, Ch. 8, § 2.

various perils and to harsh climate conditions such as summer heat, among others.

You should imitate their actions with a constant and devout spirit. When the Lord prepares to depart overseas, when He is getting ready to leave without you, that is, when He wants to withdraw from you spiritual consolations and feelings of devotion, you are to follow Him nonetheless, though greatly troubled, through the waves of desolation by the Way of the Cross. Indeed, He wishes His "*triarii*"⁶⁹ to remain and abide on the hill of Golgotha where the Cross is, rather than on the summit of Tabor where His light and glory are seen.

3. "*because they saw the signs*" (Jn 6:2).

Ponder this: Just as a servant, who faithfully and steadfastly offers his services to his master without receiving any signs of the latter's favor, cannot displease him, so the heavenly Lord also endows with significant favor such a servant, I would say, such a religious, who serves His Majesty with faithful perseverance, with steadfast heart and a cheerful spirit, without receiving nor expecting from Him any special favors, signs of particular love, or miracles of divine omnipotence.

For anyone can easily persevere in divine services if sustained by continuous bonds of love and favor. On the other hand, the one who is burdened with constant crosses, always exposed to countless misfortunes and calamities and harassed as a useless and forsaken slave, and yet who continues to serve the omnipotent King with all his might, is the one who attains the merits and the laurel crown of the greatest heroes. For the servants and lovers who follow the Crucified One because they have seen signs are not stable, but they are stable rather, who not having seen any signs, have hearts in which a strong love for God reigns. They are those who do not long for extraordinary favors and graces, but who bear the yoke of divine service with the

⁶⁹ St. Stanislaus uses here the terminology of the ancient Roman legions, in which "*triarii*" (translated as "old guard") were "the oldest and most experienced Roman soldiers, who were drawn up in the third rank ... ready to help in need" (CLD, p. 587 (s.v. *triarii*)).

utmost holy determination. They are not concerned with what the Lord owes them, but with what they owe Him. They never tire of striving on the road of perfection, of practicing charity or doing their daily toil. Such servants will be praised in the end, such soldiers of Christ will be honored, and such religious will obtain an everlasting reward.

You should desire to be among their number, and you should ask the Lord, dwelling in the Most Holy Eucharist, to make you fit not for seeking consolations, but for bearing crosses and for enduring countless labors.

After Holy Communion

1. *“what are they among so many?”* (Jn 6:9).

Just as St. Andrew exclaimed, looking at the multitude and not knowing the omnipotence of Christ, that those five loaves would not be sufficient for such a great gathering of people, thus also you would most rightly exclaim, on account of your mind, distracted and distant from all feeling of devotion: “What are they among so many?”

What are the divinity and humanity of my Lord accomplishing among so many and so various idle, useless, even sinful thoughts? What kind of connection, association, or dealings does this great mass of worldly thoughts have with the great Lord, dwelling most lovingly in my heart today?

Go, go away passions of no advantage to my salvation! Disappear from here all harmful affections; flee before the eternal Sun and scatter at His light like a cloud, chased away by the sun’s rays. What do these trifles have to do with the Sovereign of infinite majesty? What do the clouds have in common with the unreachable Light? What do you, fleeting and unstable handmaids, have to do with the immortal King? Therefore, go away from here and completely vacate the space of my heart, leaving it to the truly serene, majestic, and gracious heavenly Host.

2. *“And when they had eaten their fill”* (Jn 6:12).

The Lord showed there such a great concern about food for the body; He sought the food for the accompanying crowds with

such an attentive tenderness; He fed them with such a magnanimous liberality, that none of these people went away suffering from hunger or longing for food. [f.36v]

He cares for our souls with the same attentiveness and goodness. With what clemency and zeal He provides spiritual food for those who follow Him; with what prodigal liberality He refreshes, nurtures, educates them, and strengthens their steps on the paths of holiness! How magnificently and sumptuously He is used to treating them, lest they fall while running to the summit of perfection. How many resources and graces He generously lavishes on them so that they may complete the work of their salvation!

Think it over in regard to yourself, pondering the many gifts, many charisms, and copious spiritual nourishment with which the divine Generosity has filled you, although you are a worthless servant. How much strength He gave you to strive for perfection, and how many countless ways of supporting, nurturing, and saving your soul He showed you. Other things aside, how often did He revive and strengthen you, the weary one, with the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist? When you were dispirited, sad, and nearly falling into the abyss of despair, how many times did He refresh you, cheer you up, and restore your best hope with the consolations that this Sacrament provides?

And yet, what a bad use you have made of all these helps! Therefore, come to your senses and improve!

3. *“Gather up the fragments left over, that nothing may be lost”* (Jn 6:12).

Convince yourself firmly that great and numerous graces are granted to all those who care for their neighbor, so that they may be able to attain not only their own salvation, but also that of others, and to gain the souls of many.

Why, therefore, are you so sluggish that no concern or love for your neighbor can touch, move, or trouble you? You say that you are busy with your own salvation. But you, who look so well after your own salvation, should know that by caring for your neighbor you also care for yourself. In fact, if you give great attention to yourself alone, it is to be feared that you may fail in saving your-

self. For the more you exhaust yourself working in the vineyard of the Lord, the more assured you may be of your eternal salvation and of an everlasting reward.

Therefore, always gather up the fragments left for you; use whatever remaining time you have for the salvation of your neighbor; apply and dedicate the strengths and supernatural graces that super-abound in you to the care of the same neighbor, lest you have to render an exact account (and indeed, this will happen for certain) about wasting gifts and talents, if you have indeed wasted them, in the strict judgment of the awesome Judge, Christ, the author of the salvation of us all.

For He is ready, if need be, to pour forth His Blood again for even just one soul. [f.37r]

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD⁷⁰

Before Holy Communion

1. “*Which of you convicts [M]e of sin?*” (Jn 8:46).

Behold, the most just Lord, Redeemer of the world, has committed no evil deed or crime. Why, nevertheless, was He seized as an evil doer? Why was He accused, condemned, and led to capital punishment like a criminal? Why then, worse than any robber or great miscreants, was He crucified and put to a death as cruel as it was shameful? Your sins did this. “For the wickedness of my people” says the Divine Majesty with the lips of a prophet “have I struck him” (cf. Is 53:8) [DRB].

Look and ponder: How such great audacity, nay wickedness is contained in your everyday falling so rashly and so easily; in being so negligent to amend, while you obstinately adhere to evil deeds. On their account the Savior of the world suffers such great, such severe, and unfathomable torments! Jerusalem, Jerusalem — the soul that is not just burdened, but overwhelmed by a load of sins; the soul that chose the ill-fated road leading to the infernal region:

⁷⁰ In the current liturgical calendar, this is the Fifth Sunday of Lent.

Turn back at last to the Lord your God (cf. Hos 14:2), who has never done anything to you to cause you to change from a loving child into someone, who while being so hostile and unfriendly toward him, delights in sins.

2. "*He who is of God hears the words of God*" (Jn 8:47).

If whenever the most gracious Lord knocks at your heart with holy inspirations and encourages you to work hard at performing good deeds, if whenever He rouses you that you may awake from the sleep of sin and admonishes you to begin your journey according to the principles of virtue and to lead a wholly spiritual life; if, I say, on these occasions you pretend not to hear the Divine Word, not to perceive it, or not to understand God's inspirations, or you do not take them into account, you must know that you are in a very bad state, very near to an unhappy end of life, and that you are soon to be drawn by the evil, infernal spirits to eternal damnation.

Similarly pitiable is your state if you unwillingly listen or turn a deaf ear to those who admonish and exhort you to enter the true path of perfection, or if you actually accept their admonitions and listen to their words, but do nothing to put them into action either because of your pride, or because of the very great stubbornness of your will and the hardness of your heart (which [f.37v] is the surest sign that a man will be damned).

Therefore, take action! Follow divine inspirations; be obedient to counsels, persuasions, and right guidance from others, lest it be found that the Blood of the most merciful Lord has been poured out for you in vain. Long for Him and implore that this present Holy Communion be salutary and beneficial for you.

3. "*you are a Samaritan*" (Jn 8:48).

O admirable patience of the God-Man! He was said to be possessed by a devil and called a Samaritan,⁷¹ and yet He answers so

⁷¹ The adversaries of Jesus refer to him contemptuously as "the Samaritan." To the Jews, Samaritans represented a heretical and schismatic group of spurious worshipers of the God of Israel, and were detested even more than pagans; cf. John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Collier-MacMillan, London-Dublin 1965 (s.v. *Samaritans*).

humbly, and endures so patiently the bitter lashings of impudent tongues! Wonder at and admire this highest model of patience and imitate His way of life! As you detest this Pharisaic malice and calumny, never allow yourself to be carried away by rage. But instead, suffer the rage of others willingly and with a joyful spirit.

For the Lord also has something against you: So many of your evil deeds and so many wrongs done to Him are placed before His eyes. For it is the greatest ingratitude, or at least a striking half-heartedness, that you do not try to gather any fruit from His deeds, which are most worthy of every kind of imitation, and from the manner of His Passion, abounding in so many virtues.

Be silent, therefore, when faced with the biting tongues of other people; ponder the injuries and calumnies endured by the Savior, and ask this Lord in today's Holy Communion for nothing else but for the admirable virtues of patience and meekness.

After Holy Communion

1. "*you dishonor [Me]*" (Jn 8:49).

O with what pain does the august King of Heaven complain of being spurned by the Jews, and not only because they did not treat Him with due honor, but also because they showed Him the greatest contempt! Indeed, these complaints are not without grounds. For He had come to them as to His chosen and beloved people; He had come as a shepherd to save the sheep [f.38r] of the house of Israel, which had been lost. But instead of finding gratitude, love, and great veneration, He found ingratitude, hatred, and contempt. They did not recognize Him; hence, neither did they worship Him.

You too, take heed and be on your guard, lest the same Lord say to you on the last day, the dreadful Day of Judgment: "And you did not honor Me." If having received Him into the dwelling of your heart, you were to insult Him; if when He had come to you so lovingly, led by pity for your soul and in order to heal it (seeing it wasted by the sickness of so many imperfections), you were to treat Him injuriously and to conduct yourself shamelessly, ungratefully, impiously, and carelessly in His presence; if you did

not offer a gift of extraordinary prayers, or of virtues practiced more zealously or of spontaneous mortifications; if, finally, you refused to spread His honor whenever possible, or help those who are spreading it. Or, what is more impious, if you hindered them in spreading it; or, finally, if you lessened the honor that was being spread. Therefore, abstain from this and from every other irreverence shown to the Savior. For if you do not treat with honor the One who should be honored, He will judge you in His ultimate, dreadful, and just tribunal.

2. *“Truly, truly, I say to you, if any one keeps [M]y word”* (Jn 8:51).

If there is such a great power in the words and teaching of the Lord that it preserves human souls from temporal and eternal death, consider what a great power is contained in the Most Holy Sacrament, where not only the words and the speech of Christ, but the whole Christ, complete with His divinity and humanity, is present and received. Who would doubt that this Sacrament grants life to people, and either raises or preserves from the unhappy death of sins those who receive it devoutly and piously? That which the **Truth** Himself expressed in words about His Most Sacred Body is certain: “he who eats [M]y [F]lesh and drinks [M]y [B]lood has eternal life” (Jn 6:54). You ask: how can this be done? Thus says the Lord: “As the living Father sent [M]e, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats [M]e will live because of [M]e.” (Jn 6:57) [**f.38v**]

Therefore, consider yourself fortunate, for you have been revived today with this lifegiving bread, and do not forget the great divine benefit and grace granted to you.

3. *“whoever keeps my word”* (Jn 8:51).

Consider that the Gospel teaching of Christ the Lord guards and preserves people not only from eternal death, but also from the earthly one. For if drunkenness, gluttony, lust, and other vices destroy the health of men, snatching away days from a longer life, and weaken bodily strength, causing countless ailments; then the one who keeps clear from these things and (forbidden by divine commandments and warned against them by the evangelical counsels) shrinks from them more than from a dog or a snake,

will suffer none of those ailments and weaknesses. Yet, God's teaching must be observed with even greater attention, because it brings eternal and immortal life to our soul. So that you can more easily attain it, beg the Lord to guard you from all deeds contrary to His law and His words. For you say, O Lord, that You are a Samaritan, which means guardian. You did not refute this name pinned on You as a slander by impious men, and thus You acknowledge yourself as the Guardian of all humankind.

Therefore, guard me, O Lord, as the apple of Your eye (cf. Ps 17:8), from every evil lapse. Protect me under the shadow of Your wings from the passion and the assault of infernal enemies. Bring it about that, in turn, I may keep Your words, and by keeping them, may attain and acquire everlasting life. Amen.

PALM SUNDAY

Before Holy Communion

1. *"As they drew near to Jerusalem ... Jesus sent two disciples"* (cf. Mt 21:1). [f.39r]

Consider that whenever Christ the Lord draws near to souls who are pious and devoted to Him, He always sends ahead two disciples, like envoys: that is, an affliction or a cross that would exercise us in patience; and a mortification that would make our will submissive to His. Then, after these two messengers, He himself comes and bestows upon us spiritual delights, and a precious sweetness.

This happened (as you learn from the Gospel story) to the disciples, whom the Lord of death was about to fortify by His Resurrection; He taught and wished that they first suffer sadness because of His Passion and death, and that they make their will resemble His own, so that, when He died, they could endure His death with equanimity.

2. *"untie them and bring them to [M]e"* (Mt 21:2).

Consider that the donkey from today's Gospel can represent simple, honest, and obedient people, whom the Lord orders to be

brought to Him. For He Himself associates with simple people; He places the honest ones at his side, and His brothers are the obedient ones who do his will (cf. Lk 8:21), as He Himself did the will of the Father who is in Heaven. For just as the donkey is a simple animal, inasmuch as it bears whatever burden has been laid upon it and is obedient to its lord and his command (it goes wherever it is driven, or comes back whenever called); so it is necessary that the soul, the servant of Christ, be simple, in order to bear most steadily both injuries, which are great burdens, and the yoke of obedience.

It is necessary for a soul to be obedient, to heed the command of the Lord and His Vicars, and to follow the road indicated by God and by the Superiors who represent Him. Hence the saints were happy to call themselves donkeys, because they were either most obedient or had a will ready to comply.

Therefore, remembering the excellence of these virtues and holding them in high esteem, reflect upon the well-known words of St. Peter Damian: "Therefore ... let us go forth to meet the Lord at Bethphage,⁷² pricked with fear of punishment, and strengthened by the hope of heavenly life, confessing sins with humility and simplicity, treading down the garments of our carnality, that the Lord may deign to sit upon us, and to bring us with Himself into the Heavenly Jerusalem."⁷³ Amen.

3. "*The Lord has need of them*" (Mt 21:3).

Since it is assumed that the Lord's donkeys are the simple and obedient [f.39v] people, then you should now understand that God seeks out exactly such people so that He may easily place His yoke upon them, and may manifest and enjoin to them His will. Obviously, a human will that is opposed to God is not fit to serve Him. As masters dislike disobedient servants, so does God dislike disobedient religious. The Lord Jesus has need for obedient servants, as He Himself was; for His sustenance was to

⁷² Cf. Mt 21:1.

⁷³ Cornelius à Lapide, *The Great Commentary of Cornelius à Lapide: S. Matthew's Gospel — Chaps. X to XXI*, Trans. Thomas W. Mossman, 4th ed., vol. 2, John Grant, Edinburgh 1908, p. 400 (Ch. XXI, 2): A quotation from the homily "*in Dominica Palmarum*" of St. Peter Damian.

do the will of the Father and to be obedient to Him till death on the Cross. His most holy apostles, through whom He converted the whole world, were servants of such a kind.

Since He is the giver of all good and all virtue, ask Him today for this quality: that you may become to Him like a beast of burden and that you may be with Him always.

After Holy Communion

1. *“The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them”* (Mt 21:6).

The true servants of God are those who carry out all they are commanded to do with great readiness, eagerness, and perfection. Truly, what could have been more difficult than to seize and lead away somebody else’s donkey? Its master could have said that their Teacher was unknown to him. Consequently, he could have disagreed about Jesus riding the animal. Nothing of the kind happened, because obedience knows no hindrance, obstacle, or difficulty. Indeed, only the obedient man conquers difficult things; the more difficult the order is that is given to him, the more willingly he accomplishes it. For the true servant of God often turns very important matters over to God, distrusting his own mind with regard to them, and hopes that God would see them through.

Although the Lord imposed on the apostles the difficult and burdensome task of bringing Him somebody else’s animal, since they already knew that He was God, they proceeded without any objection to take the donkey. Naturally, the authentic spirit of true obedience consists in the prompt readiness to obey, although the task may seem impossible to achieve. Since obedience [f.40r] is almighty, it overcomes all difficulties and never leaves unfinished something it had once undertaken.

Therefore, take caution, you who have received in the Most Holy Sacrament the Son of the immortal Father, obedient unto death, lest you disobey Him to whom you are bound. Beware, lest you push away all those things that you have a duty to accomplish and which God, through His deputies, commands you to

do. Take heed, for it is better to be ready to die rather than to disobey.

2. *O my immortal God! What kind of reign is Yours? What kind of victory?*

The Roman emperors, returning from wars and celebrating their triumph, used to ride into the city of Rome on elephants or crowned camels; and You, the Emperor of Heaven and of the whole world, You enter the royal city of David sitting upon a young donkey! What self-contempt! What humility!

O my soul, what could happen to you hereafter that is so painful and burdensome that you would not take it upon yourself out of love for Jesus? What is there so shabby, worthy of disdain, and so contemptible that you would dare to reject, inasmuch as seeing today your Leader humiliated this way? What can restrain you in the future from contempt for the world? What reasoning can convince you about things you desire or choose that are splendid, beautiful, and remarkable?

The newborn Christ lay between the ox and the donkey; He entered Jerusalem on a donkey. What for? To teach you that people who love inexpensive things and hold the lofty ones in contempt, and who deride and despise all ostentation, shall be granted an easy admission into the heavenly Kingdom. As for you, your every cross, however heavy, would become lighter if you prepare yourself through self-contempt to carry it; if you learn beforehand to forget about yourself, if you grow used to count yourself for little, and eagerly desire to be regarded as nobody. Jesus more easily bore the crown of thorns, the purple cloth of mockery, and all the ridicule and insults of Friday, because He entered the city on Sunday so humbly, riding on the back of a donkey.

3. *“When [H]e entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred”* (Mt 21:10).

Just as the eternal Word, Christ the Lord, stirred up Jerusalem by entering it, thus we may believe that the whole human soul (mystically called Jerusalem), [f.40v] is moved, changed, and transformed when visited by the same Lord with all His humanity and divinity. He transforms a soul once subservient to flesh

into one completely subordinated to the spirit, and the one formerly given over to sensual things into a lover of mortifications. He makes the one formerly addicted to various passions into a cultivator of many virtues, and the one afflicted by frigidity and dryness to one abounding in graces of devotion and heavenly consolations. Moreover, the proud becomes transformed into the humble, the rebellious into the obedient, and the follower of the world into the follower of God. These are the effects of the Most Holy Sacrament; these are the most certain signs of divine grace abiding and acting in a man.

If on this day you feel affected, stirred up, and moved in an unusual way; if you are discouraged or filled with anger or jealousy; if you crave to be soothed and covered with flatteries, if you are given to the vanities of the world or feel that your heart is not yet fully detached from them; if you flee before even the smallest of crosses, if you dread the divine will and refuse to resign yourself to it, then know that you received Christ the Lord the same way as the Pharisees did, and not as the jubilant crowd that danced for joy. Therefore, you must quickly correct this error.

SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION

Before Holy Communion

1. *"And very early on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb when the sun had risen" (Mk 16:2).*

Ponder the true love of the pious women, Magdalene and the other Mary (cf. Lk 24:10), the love with which they burned for Jesus. First of all, you should consider here their eagerness, namely, that they hurried to the tomb very early in the morning. Hence, we learn from this, a swift accomplishment of actions undertaken out of love for God. For when love is true indeed, by the power of its warmth, it burns out all laziness and sluggishness in the loving one. Love is quick, it cannot stand a delay, it dislikes slowness, it does nothing at a slow pace, it accomplishes

everything fast. Love is like the winged Pegasus.⁷⁴ But as for you, notice the speed with which you perform the actions you undertake out of love for God. Notice how quickly you run to the **Fountain** of living waters: Do you imitate a deer and Pegasus, or a sluggish donkey and a tortoise? If you realize that you are sluggish, then you do not love, you do not have the true ardor of divine love, which would set your heart afire [f.41r] with the desire of receiving **Christ** your **Love** and would inspire, compel, and urge you to receive Holy Communion.

Second, consider the difficulties that these women, burning with love, met on their way to the tomb of the Lord. Indeed, it was particularly difficult for the two women to get to the Lord's tomb very early in the morning, in the hours before daybreak, since the tomb was surrounded by soldiers and closed off by a great stone. Although, thinking it over, "they were saying to one another: 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?'" (Mk 16:3), yet, like the blind, they were led by blind love. Armed solely with love against every difficulty, they knew only one thing: Nothing is too difficult for those who love.

You too should not fear any difficulty in matters regarding the love of God. For love overcomes all, since the power of the Beloved, which those who love Him never lack, can do all things.

2. *"so that they might go and anoint him"* (Mk 16:1).

Consider that Mary Magdalene alone anointed Jesus several times with precious aromatic oils. And yet, when she goes to the tomb of the most beloved Lord, she wishes to have a companion, the other Mary, Salome, not only to accompany her, but perhaps to share the expense. "They bought," says the Scripture, "perfumed oils" (perhaps both of them) "that they might anoint Jesus." (cf. Mk 16:1) Although presumably they bought the aromatic oils individually, the expense was one. Admire their unique alliance in this good work. Together they go to anoint Christ, and together they expose themselves to all dangers.

⁷⁴ "Pegasus" is the name of the winged horse (from Greek mythology). He was later adopted as the symbol for speed and grace. Cf. Parandowski, pp. 111, 203, 217.

Indeed, they teach us to extend our helping hands most willingly to the others who work for the Lord, and to do good deeds together in continuous sweat and hard work as long as we live in this place of mortality.

Since we will never have the possibility to anoint the body of Christ, to offer Him this last dutiful action of human kindness, nay, of love, let us refresh Him with the sweet fragrance of virtue and let us anoint Him with the aloe and balsam of holy deeds. For indeed, “if filled with the fragrance of virtues,” [f.41v] (as Gregory the Great teaches) “with the repute of good works we seek the Lord, we come to His tomb truly with perfumed oils.”⁷⁵

3. “*He has risen, [H]e is not here*” (Mk 16:6).

Consider that the Divine Body in the tomb did not make any fetid odor such as the body of Lazarus caused after four days;⁷⁶ indeed, it has not undergone any change. In fact, it came out of the tomb most glorious, and shone with rays of immortal brightness that were as numerous as the wounds and torments had been.

Consider that the bodies of the Blessed shall have the same heavenly glory, although here on earth by the law of nature, according to God’s decree, they turned into ashes and became food for worms. However, after their resurrection they will radiate in the Kingdom of Christ with as many rays as were the worms with which they teemed while decomposing in the tomb. Therefore, in your unhappy condition, in view of the decomposition of the body, find consolation in this privilege of future glory. What is more, do not fear to weaken your body by labors, mortifications, night vigils, and penances if you long for the greater glory and future splendor of everlasting happiness. This immortal Lord, risen from the dead, whom you are going to receive as a guest today with vivid faith, will be your greatest helper in all these things.

⁷⁵ Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber II — Homilia XXI (Marc. XVI, 1-7)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1170 (n. 1526). Cf. *GFGH*, p. 158 (Homily 21).

⁷⁶ Cf. Jn 11:39.

But first of all, give thanks to Him for His glorious Resurrection, and say: O most happy day! O day to mark with a white pebble!⁷⁷ O most longed-for day! When not only the hope of salvation shone for us, but salvation itself was restored; when the darkness of limbo was illuminated, while its prisons were annihilated, and a such a great number of holy captives, held there for so many centuries, were delivered to eternal freedom. O day on which the dead body was revived despite the law of nature. O day on which the Mother looked with astonishment on the living Son, who was killed three days before, while the Risen Jesus consoled the sorrowful Mary with His greeting. O day on which the heavenly spirits conversed with earthly women. [f.42r] O day on which the Master, resurrected after His natural death, appeared to the disciples, and, as the Prince of Peace, offered peace to the apostles. O this most happy, most glorious, and most joyful day!

After Holy Communion

1. *“Who will roll away the stone for us?”* (Mk 16:3).

How much these holy women are worried about the removal of the stone from the tomb! Seeing that Christ is crushed in your heart by the great stones of imperfection: the marble of half-heartedness, the rock of spiritual coldness, the flints of obstinacy, of self-will, and self-love, you can, nay, must cry out: “Who shall roll back these stones for me?” Also: “Who shall remove the scales from my eyelids, or rather the film from my eyes, so that I may see my Lord staying with me today?”

O can it be that one of the heavenly saints would descend and, having removed the darkness, restore the light to my soul and lift up and throw away the stones of my defects! Certainly You, Jesus risen from the dead, whose presence I am still able to feel in me, can enlighten me like the Sun and, as a strong man girt with power, remove from my heart every hard stone.

⁷⁷ Cf. *SLL*, vol. 1, Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii 1758, p. 111 (s.v. *Calculus*): Here St. Stanislaus is making reference to “[t]he Thracians [who] used to mark a day of success and happiness with white stones or pebbles cast into an urn.” Cf. *CLD*, p. 79 (s.v. *calculus*).

2. “*He has risen, [H]e is not here*” (Mk 16:6).

You can reflect on these words in a twofold manner: Consider that Christ the Lord, whom you have received at the sacred altar, already left you because of your imperfections, and that your defects suddenly forced His grace to flee from you. On the other hand, consider that, due to the Lord of virtues coming to you, every perverse passion disappeared from your soul and you can exclaim, being freed from evil passions: “He has risen, [H]e is not here!”

Lust quieted down or, rather, went away because it could not have endured the holy, heavenly flames. Impatience disappeared because it could come together with the most patient Lord. Anger and harshness of heart went away, because there was no room for them [f.42v] alongside the meekest Lamb. Gone is the worry about honor, glory, and self-esteem since it was inappropriate for them to remain next to the despised, condemned, insulted, stripped-of-all-belongings, and naked Son of God. For two contrary things (according to the doctrine of the philosophers, applied to devotion) cannot exist simultaneously in the same subject. Thus, carnal and spiritual love, sensuality and mortification, honesty and dishonesty, and other such things, cannot coexist in one heart.

Therefore, rejoice, be glad, and give thanks to the Lord, since every plague got up and fled from your heart at the sight of Him.

3. “*Do not be alarmed*” (cf. Mk 16:6).

The most loving and most gracious Lord never abandons His friends in adversities. Thus, at one time, He strengthened His disciples who were terrified by the waves of the stormy sea (cf. Lk 8:23-25); thus, He armed them against the furious ravings of hell and of the world: “Fear not” (Lk 12:32), etc. “Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials” (Jas 1:2), etc. When they scourge you, “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven” (Mt 5:12). Thus, also today He consoles, strengthens, and confirms the pious women through an angel who says: “Do not be alarmed”; do not be troubled by the death of Christ. For the Risen One arose from the dead, and now “[H]e is not here”

in the tomb, where you seek Him, but He will go “before you to Galilee; there you will see [H]im” (cf. Mk 16:7).

Therefore, should you fall by divine permission into various adversities, do not lose heart for that reason: Do not be troubled, do not be afraid, and do not fret. Longingly wait for the Lord, and He will be attentive to you (cf. Ps 40:1). He will put you to the test, but He will not abandon you. He will withdraw you from Himself, but He will go ahead of you to Galilee, meaning that He will precede you to the place of prayer. When you turn to prayer, dejected in spirit and troubled in heart, you will undoubtedly find and see Him there soon, and experience His kindness. [f.43r]

SECOND DAY OF EASTER⁷⁸

Before Holy Communion

1. “*That very day two of them were going to a village*” (Lk 24:13).

Consider that prior to you receiving the Lord, you should enter the castle⁷⁹ of your soul and examine its present state: how well it is protected against the assaults of the infernal enemy; to what extent it is free from the filth of faults; and finally, how greatly it is adorned with the carpet of virtue. If it is lacking any of these things, you should ask the Lord to inspect it during His visit so that He may protect, clean, and adorn it with His gifts, and so that it would be lacking absolutely nothing necessary to make it more perfect, and without which it would be disgraceful, despicable, contemptible, and useless. The evil spirit indeed does not need a great opening by which he can let himself slip in to destroy the structure of the whole castle of the soul; even a transgression against the smallest rule would be sufficient for him to do this.

⁷⁸ I.e., Monday within the Octave of Easter.

⁷⁹ In the original: “*Ibant ipsa die in castellum*.” Saint Stanislaus uses a play on words here in the original Latin that is lost in English. The Latin word *castellum* can mean both “town/village” and also “castle.” So, although in the verse it refers to a village, St. Stanislaus uses it in reference to the castle of one’s soul.

It has been frequently proved that even a little filth left behind suffices to cause great stench in the soul, and that great virtues are annihilated by small imperfections, which are considered to be of no importance due to their smallness.

2. *“But their eyes were kept from recognizing [H]im”* (Lk 24:16).

As a small glaucoma impedes the bodily eye from seeing, think how the veil made up by the tiniest defects can blind the whole soul and prevent its internal eyes from being fully opened to contemplate God. Woe to the soul whose eyes are restrained so that it cannot see God or even recognize Him! Oh! Beg, beg Jesus, before you approach Him, to remove the obstacles that impede your ability to see and recognize Him, lest perchance you do not see Him, or, although you may see Him, do not recognize Him like His disciples in today’s Gospel, and fall into the same misfortune. As St. Gregory mentions, it was to the disciples that “the Lord appeared as they were talking about Him, but He did not show them His outward appearance, which they could recognize.”⁸⁰ May it never happen to you that, although you received Christ risen from the dead in Holy Communion, you are found spiritually dead; and although you would have the Lord of virtues with you, no marks of these virtues would be manifest in you. [f.43v]

3. *“What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?”* (Lk 24:17).

Consider that the Lord will scrutinize you; indeed, He will strictly judge all the words of your mouth, all the speech of your tongue. Since life and death come forth from the mouth of a man, you shall give an account to the Supreme Judge of those whom your conversation refreshed, instructed, edified, summoned to a morally better life; or, on the contrary, you will answer for those whom you destroyed, perverted, and to whom you were a cause of perdition. Therefore, act as a severe censor of your mouth; be your own judge; and, calling to mind all your lies, talkative-

⁸⁰ Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber II — Homilia XXIII* (Luc. XXIV, 13-35), in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1182 (n. 1538). Cf. *GFGH*, p. 176 (Homily 23): Saint Gregory the Great is referring to the risen Lord appearing to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus.

ness, defamations, and grumbling, wash them away and atone for them by worthy penance. Then, curb your tongue starting now, and ask the Lord to set a guard before your mouth and a gatekeeper at your lips (cf. Ps 141:3), so that you would not speak anything unworthy of a religious.

After Holy Communion

1. *“they found the stone rolled away from the tomb”* (Lk 24:2).

Consider that these women, who were holy and devoted to Christ, found the Lord’s tomb in a state different from the one they imagined: namely, they found the stone, about which they had been worrying so much, rolled back. Yet they did not find the Lord’s body, whose presence there they did not doubt. Hence, they became overwhelmed with great anxiety, and began weeping. Magdalene laments about this, saying: “they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid [H]im” (Jn 20:13).

Thus, the stone, made heavier by more than a few faults, was rolled back from your conscience today. But if you no longer find within your heart the One who just now has been placed there, you ought to break down in great sorrow and tears. How very quickly did vain amusements, unsuitable matters, and trifling occupations expel Jesus from you! How quickly they snatched Him away from you! Oh beware, beware henceforth, lest you lose this great Good!

2. *“And they remembered [H]is words”* (Lk 24:8).

Consider how our perception is influenced by events. In the past, neither Magdalene nor the disciples understood the Master speaking about His Resurrection; but [f.44r] when they did not find Him in the tomb, their eyes were opened, and then they remembered His words.

Notice that, for the most part, this also happens to you: When you are taught something by Christ the Lord, or by His Spirit, or by His Vicars, that is, your spiritual directors, you do not understand it until you learn it through experience.

O Lord! From now on, may I be able to understand Your teaching immediately. What is more, may it be that after suffering so many losses I would, albeit late, remember Your words, and I would be converted to You along with David in the time of Your visitation: so that I would come to my senses along with so many other holy sinners; so that I would not remain with Judas, would not persevere in my obstinacy, foolishness, and blindness, and would not be condemned for that reason.

3. "*they told all this*" (Lk 24:9).

Reflect that those devout women told the apostles everything they had seen at the tomb, partly because they were ordered to do so by the angel and partly because they feared being deceived by the evil spirit under the guise of an angel.

And you, either because of fear or because of an excessive self-confidence, will you doubt whether you should reveal your conscience to another? If you are afraid, you are foolish; if you have excessive self-confidence and presume that you are very experienced in spiritual matters, be on your guard lest you fall down! For even Christ the Lord did not guide Himself, but had the Spirit by whom He was led and by whom He fulfilled the will of His eternal Father most exactly. Notice how many benefits you receive by revealing your conscience; and how many losses you suffer by concealing it. Are you not constantly tormented by whatever you concealed? And yet, do you not enjoy the fullest peace and the greatest delight whenever you reveal it?

Therefore, learn from the holy women, spoken of today, to reveal all your interior matters to those with whom you ought to do so, and to be obedient to their advice.

THIRD DAY OF EASTER⁸¹**Before Holy Communion**

1. *"Jesus stood in the midst of the disciples"* (cf. Lk 24:36).

O, what a great joy then filled the hearts of the dejected apostles! How great [f.44v] was their exultation! What tremendous joy when they beheld in their midst Jesus, triumphant over death in the highest glory! In His glorified body, remarkable in its highest majesty and adorned with so many privileges!

Such consolation, such blessing is prepared for you today, my soul. For the one risen from the dead, Jesus, the invincible conqueror of hell, the world and death, will come into the abode or upper room of your heart, and will remain within you.

What, therefore, are you going to do; what are you going to prepare for the arrival of such a great Lord? Collect your wandering mind and scattered thoughts and fix your spirit on one thing: that it would try and be able to see only Jesus, that it may long to receive Him with a burning desire, to be refreshed, to be sustained, to be delighted by Him; that it may have dealings only with Him, having brushed aside all other dealings and delights.

For He went to see the apostles only when they were gathered together, and He appeared to them only when they were burning with the greatest desire to see Him.

2. *"Peace to you"* (Lk 24:36).

Behold peace, the most desired companion of the Divine Presence and its most certain effect. So, focus your attention and understand that Jesus is never present to you when you are lacking peace of soul, and that He is always compelled to flee from the dwelling of your soul because of serious imperfections, whenever you succumb to interior disorders. You are taught this by the example of David: Having offended the Divine Majesty, he experienced, besides pestilence, the torment that those who were friendliest to him became his most hostile enemies (cf. 2 Sam 24:10-17; Ps 41:9; 55:13-14).

⁸¹ I.e., Tuesday within the Octave of Easter.

Certainly, what also snatches blessed and heavenly peace away from you is that you seek peace in transient, external things, among your friends and family members. But the admonishment of the Divine Spirit is "Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no help" (Ps 146:3). The one who begs for peace from men will never enjoy peace. Whenever the Jews had recourse to God, they immediately received very efficacious help. But when, for the sake of obtaining peace, they asked the Egyptians to help, the Lord of hosts forsook them (cf. Is 30, 1-7; 31:1-3; Jer 42:11-22; 43:7-13; 44:1-14). Thus, heavenly peace is granted to no one who seeks earthly peace, and who, for the sake of peace, has recourse to the creation rather than to the Creator.

Therefore, may your peace be with the peacemaking Solomon: Jesus Christ. When you do not have it, quickly perform an examination of your conscience, and just as quickly a sweet tranquility of heart will descend upon you. [f.45r]

3. "*Fear not*" (cf. Lk 24:36).

The Lord knew the apostles as those who had already experienced delusions and deceptions, and therefore, by appearing to them, He exhorted them not to fear. For these holy disciples of the heavenly Master knew that both the evil one and the Jews were hostile to them, and therefore they were on their guard against the traps of each of these two enemies. For this reason, upon visiting them, this good and gracious Master advised them not to be afraid as soon as He appeared, and said, revealing Himself to them: "It is I" [cf. Lk 24:39]. Undoubtedly, a man should know that divine charisms, graces, illuminations, and heavenly visions will not cause any disturbance and fear in the soul, but will produce the greatest sense of security and peace. Indeed, who could fear with the Lord standing by his side? "Though a host encamp against me" (says the Jewish psalmist), and God will be near me, "my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident" (Ps 27:3).

Surely, the one armed with the shield of the Divine Presence fights safely and boldly. O the blessed one, who shall receive today the Lord Himself, substantially, that is, in a sacramental

manner! The One to whom all things are obedient, of whom all things are afraid, and whom nothing can resist!

After Holy Communion

1. *“they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit”* (Lk 24:37).

Reflect upon the great prudence and caution of the assembled disciples: For although they were not unaware, and indeed were fully informed that the Lord would rise from the dead, yet upon seeing Him, they were terrified and trembled with fear. Oh, if only you would in this manner proceed more cautiously in your spiritual journey! You would certainly never wander from the right path and rarely, indeed never, would you be deceived. If you were so watchful and prudent in avoiding the cunning ploys of the evil one, you would never fall for them. If you proceeded on the journey of perfection in this saintly and wise manner, you would never fall grievously. [f.45v]

Therefore today at least, pay attention when the eternal light illuminates you, lest by chance you be led into the dense darkness of imperfections, deceived by a spirit who is not good. But you will avoid them if, distrustful of yourself, you follow this heavenly light like a bright lighthouse.

2. *“questions rise in your hearts”* (Lk 24:38).

Watch, watch your every thought carefully both today and always, and do not give outsiders access to your mind or open to them the door of your heart without a long deliberation. For such thoughts bring with themselves so much evil into a miserable soul, such great damage! For the evil spirit first elicits a thought, and then this thought poisons or carries off the cleanness of the heart. Once it has been carried off, an enormous sadness follows which, by weakening the strength of the spirit, makes it unfit for anything and not seldom throws some people into such an abyss of despair that, having rejected the salutary yoke of Christ, they remove the hand from the plough and desist from the cultivation of the field of the soul that they had previously started.

Therefore, resist this enemy, expel this evil from the threshold of your mind, and keep your heart pure for the purest Lord, both today and throughout the entire course of your life.

3. “*See [M]y hands and [M]y feet*” (Lk 24:39).

As a commander is recognized by his insignia and a king by his diadem, so Christ our heavenly King wants to be recognized by His Most Sacred Stigmata. “See,” He says, “[M]y hands and feet.” It is as if He were saying: If you fear to be deceived, turn your attention to My pierced hands and feet. If you doubt that I am your true Commander, behold My insignia, the five wounds. Just as you contemplated Me on the Cross on Good Friday, so here I appear to you: Recognize your Lord, welcome Him, and rejoice in His presence.

But, oh my soul, if [f.46r] you want to be considered as one of the soldiers of the army of this wounded Commander, you should desire the same things and have similar wounds, though not such as St. Francis received.⁸² Which ones then? Love, patience, forgetting injuries, bearing hardships, and carrying your cross until death.

SUNDAY “IN ALBIS”⁸³

Before Holy Communion

1. “*gathered together, for fear of the Jews*” (Jn 20:19) [DRB].

Consider what great thanks you should give to the Lord, because He Himself suffered unheard of torments for your sake, and He wanted His beloved disciples to endure them. They were

⁸² Cf. Gaetano Stano, *ECat*, vol. XI, Ente per l’Enciclopedia Cattolica e per il Libro Cattolico, Città del Vaticano 1953, col. 1343f. (s.v. *Stimmate*).

⁸³ Cf. *The Roman Catholic Daily Missal*: 1962, Angelus Press, Kansas City 2004, p. 626. This Sunday was called *Dominica in albis (deponendis)* (“Sunday (of putting aside) the white robes”) because it was on this day that the newly baptized first laid aside their white baptismal garments, which they had been wearing since their baptism on Holy Saturday. It was also known as “Low Sunday.” In the *Novus Ordo* this particular Sunday is known as the “Second Sunday of Easter” or “Divine Mercy Sunday.”

hiding, fleeing, and gathering together, because the Jews were persecuting them day and night. But their good and gracious Master never abandoned them. In all things He was near to them, whom He wanted to test in all things.

As for you, in imitation of your Savior and of that afflicted group of apostles, desire to carry the cross with a joyful spirit and to suffer torments, whenever it would please the highest Good, the Eternal Wisdom, to impose them upon you. No matter how long He would want you to be harassed by them, trust that you will never lack the help or the counsel of His Majesty.

2. *“Jesus came”* (Jn 20:19).

Consider how much the Lord values unity and concord, since He appeared in the middle of His disciples soon after He saw them gathered together and united; for unity thrives among those who live in harmony; and where there is unity, there is love. Where there is true love there is Jesus, who Himself is Love. Therefore, whenever you break the bond of charity or disturb this unity, you exclude Christ and keep Him away from the midst of His disciples, your own brethren.

Thus, remember how the Seraphic Patriarch, St. Francis, did not let a certain brother, whose soul was tormented by resentment of another brother, go to bed before he would purge from his heart this virus of negative fervor, if not hatred. It is much more appropriate and necessary that you approach the sacred table of Jesus without similar gall. Therefore, be promptly [f.46v] reconciled with your brother (cf. Mt 5:24).

3. *“[Jesus] said to them, ‘Peace be with you’”* (cf. Jn 20:19).

Your Savior demonstrated that peace is a great good, for each time He visited His disciples after the Resurrection He bestowed upon them this greeting: “Peace be with you.” For this reason, you shall desire, nay, you shall beseech Jesus, that upon His entering into the disturbed dwelling of your soul, He would bring His peace with Him. Not the kind of peace that would make you free of adversities and every kind of cross, because it is better to be tried than to live undisturbed, since even the waters, unless they are stirred, begin to fester. But rather His is the kind of peace

that lets you endure magnanimously all adversities with peace of mind, so that you may receive from Him personally the olive crown of peace in the city of the heavenly Jerusalem, and you may enjoy forever the peace you have gained through steadfast battles against the devil, the world, and the flesh.

After Holy Communion

1. *“Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord”* (Jn 20:20).

The apostles could not help but to rejoice when they caught sight of the risen Lord, whom they had been bitterly mourning as dead. Indeed, who knows whether they ever experienced a greater joy than the one that overwhelmed them on seeing Jesus risen from the dead? No doubt this joy, comparable to the one they experience now in Heaven, was still a lesser joy for this reason only: that they contemplate the entire Most Holy Trinity there, while here they saw Jesus alone, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity.

But you are wondering why, since you received the same Son of God risen from the dead, you were not filled with any joy, with any increased delight. Instead, you are overwhelmed perhaps by sadness, and are filled with sorrow.

Ah, miserable one! It is sin, imperfections, and uncorrected faults that brought this evil on you! Perhaps the reason is also that inconsiderate joy in which you exulted on those days dedicated to pious sadness, while the Most Holy Mother was bewailing the cruellest death of her dearest Son; the holy sinner was weeping over the death of her Lord; the pious disciples were mourning the cruel sufferings of their Master; and even the stars, the rocks, the earth, and other creatures were bearing witness to the great sorrow caused by the horrible death of their Creator. [f.47r]

2. *“Receive the Holy Spirit”* (Jn 20:22).

O highest grace! O gift than which nothing greater can be attained! What more wonderful benefits, favors, and charisms besides the Holy Spirit could the Lord impart to His disciples? He who possesses Him seems to have everything! He who is

directed by Him cannot err, and a safe and straight road leads Him toward the heavenly Fatherland!

As for you, consider whether you have received the Holy Spirit today in the Most Holy Sacrament, whether you possess Him, whether you could say with the Apostle: "And I think that I have the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 7:40).

Know that these are the traits of the Holy Spirit: joy, peace, wisdom, gentleness, patience, humility, counsel, longanimity, and others like them (cf. Gal 5:22). If these do not shine forth from you, then not only do you not have the Holy Spirit, but not even a spark of the divine light.

3. *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven"* (Jn 20:23).

Behold the apostolic power! The power of the successors of Christ! The greatest power! To forgive sins is something divine; hence, who would not call gods, as it were, those to whom such power is imparted? Rightly David says about the priests: "I say, 'You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you'" (Ps 82:6). O how unwisely those miserable people behave who do not submit themselves to this power or abuse it with great wickedness! The ones who do not lay bare their leprosy before those whose duty it is to heal it: How impiously do they stray from the right path! How terribly blinded are those who sacrilegiously approach this Sacrament of Penance, for it is a Sacrament instituted by the Most High God Himself with such great authority, with such great benevolence, and with such great tenderness!

You should consider here the mercy of your gracious Savior, poured out both on the entire human race in general and on you in particular; because, having foreseen such frequent wounds to your soul, He provided the most excellent physicians for you, His Vicars, and a very efficacious medicine in [f.47v] the Most Sacred Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. Since you have received this Sacrament also today, give most humble thanks to your Lord.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER⁸⁴**Before Holy Communion**

1. *"I am the good shepherd"* (Jn 10:11).

Consider the three main duties of every shepherd: 1) to know his flock; 2) to know its number; and 3) to supply it with fodder and defend it from greedy wild animals. Notice that our all-good heavenly Shepherd fulfills all of them.

He knows His sheep to which He Himself testifies: "I know my sheep and my own know me" (cf. Jn 10:14). He has them all recorded not on some perishable piece of paper nor with some erasable script, but in indelible letters on the palms of His divine hands, for He tells us: "Behold, I have graven you on the palms of [M]y hands" (Is 49:16).

Next, notice how attentive He is in nourishing His flock, that is our souls, and realize that He invites us to receive this food in a clear and kind manner: "Come to me" He says, "all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Mt 11:28).

Just how thorough the protection and defense He provides are has been clearly shown to us and is expressed by the prophet-king: "For [H]e will give [H]is angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways" (Ps 91:11). Indeed, He Himself says to His flock, offering the most effective care and defense: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20). But where? In the Most Holy Eucharist.

Rejoice, O my soul, about having such an attentive, kind, and all-good Shepherd. Approach Him now with love, listen to His voice, and be obedient to Him.

2. *"I am the good shepherd"* (Jn 10:11).

Consider that Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and careful Guardian, calls Himself the "good Shepherd" most rightly and justly. [f.48r] There is no one who would not attribute to David, the son of Jesse, the name of the good shepherd, at least on the grounds that he pursued and tore to pieces the wild animals (a bear and a

⁸⁴ In the *Novus Ordo* this Sunday is the "Third Sunday of Easter."

lion) that were snatching his father's flock, and boasted about it, saying: "when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth; and if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and struck him and killed him." (1 Sam 17:34-35).

Thus, David was already a good shepherd. But your Jesus was a better one, since upon seeing His Father's flock (indeed His own as well, because He has all in common with the Father) being swept into the underworld by wild and infernal animals, He came to its defense with a love for His sheep that grew even greater the more perilously He endangered His life, which He ultimately lost. David did not sustain any harm to his life, while tearing his father's young goats and lambs out of the mouths of wild animals, but Christ the Lord, in guarding His flock or taking it away by force from the infernal beasts, wanted to die for it, lest His flock die.

O truly good Shepherd! O truly best Guardian! Our most affectionate Father indeed! And you, the lost sheep, how are you going to repay Him for such a great gift?

3. "*The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep*" (Jn 10:11).

Consider that it is not enough for a good shepherd to weary only his body for the sake of his flock, but his soul must be worn out also. The most propitious and most famous in this regard is Moses, that leader of Israel, who opposed the Lord of Hosts when He wanted to destroy all the Israelites because of their enormous transgressions. Moses offered his life for the lives of his brothers, preferring to be blotted out of the Book of Life rather than seeing the people entrusted to his care be destroyed (cf. Ex 32:1-14, 30-32). This is something great and admirable.

But what Christ did for our sake is much greater and far more astonishing. In brief, He subjected His body to the most horrible, unheard of, indescribable torments, and to the most ignominious death. For the sake of His sheep, He also offered and subjected His soul to such great sorrows, pains, thorns, and torments, that not only the human, but indeed even the angelic mind can hardly conceive of them, and no mouth of man or angel can explain

them. Then what? Is He not more worthy of love than Moses? Is He not the best Shepherd among all shepherds? [f.48v]

Come, my soul, spend this entire day in praising His love and blessings for you; or, rather, spend your whole life in thanksgiving for the grace of redemption.

After Holy Communion

1. “[He] who is... *not a shepherd*” (Jn 10:12).

Weigh carefully in mind the traits by which you recognize a good and true shepherd as opposed to a hired servant. In other words, how do you distinguish between the demon’s suggestions and divine illuminations? You discern precisely in this way: As a hired servant, the evil spirit does not nourish the soul, but tries to despoil it of all spiritual good. For it is characteristic of hirelings to seize the offspring, the wool, and other commodities from the flock, to devour the flock itself, rather than to increase its spiritual goods.

In support of the above, someone once said: “The one who is a wicked shepherd has only his own benefit and convenience in mind and takes care of his own interests alone, even though this often happens to the detriment of the sheep.”

Ezekiel declares that such were the shepherds of Israel, and he reviles them, saying: “Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep” (Ez 34:2-3).

The infernal, sly old fox usually behaves this way: pretending to be the good shepherd, he whispers to a soul some seemingly right things, but he does it to his own advantage and to the soul’s detriment; for he wants to suck the milk out of its virtues, to shear the wool of its good actions, and finally, to devour it altogether, like a roaring lion.

Jesus, the true Shepherd, is totally different. Although He permits you to fall into some afflictions, in them He strengthens your spirit, nourishing you with the sweetest food. The infernal spirit serves you a sweet morsel smeared with the allurements

of various sensual pleasures, but he is enticing you in this way in order to kill you. On the other hand, God shows you a heavy cross and wants to put you on the narrow and difficult path of penance, for the sake of your salvation.

Cling, therefore, to the true heavenly Shepherd; run away from the infernal hireling; reject the delights, sweets, and enticements of evil; take hold of the heavenly Shepherd's austere discipline of the Cross and of the mortification of your passions. [f.49r]

2. "*He flees because he is a hireling*" (Jn 10:13).

How many times have you recognized from experience that you have been cheated and deceived by the evil one? How many times have you detected or recognized his frauds, cunning tricks, and his troops drawn up against you? When he gives you to drink from the chalice of all kinds of sensual delights, you notice that it was indeed filled with sweetness on top, but with bitterness on the bottom. It is customary for such sensual delights to taste like sweet and pure honey at the first sip, but afterwards they change and end in great bitterness. A satisfied delight produces nothing more than a gnawing worm of remorse.

Why then do you follow this temporary hired hand, namely the evil spirit, who is a dispenser of transitory sensual delight, a giver of a bitter sweetness, and a provider of poisoned food? Why would you reach for the apple of Tantalus?⁸⁵ Why would you let yourself be led through the most pleasurable ways, full of sensual delight, to an end that is more grievous than all grief?

Come! To action! Take care of your soul and cling wholeheartedly to this all-good Shepherd, by whom you have been refreshed today with the immortal bread. Should He lead you even through the harshest thorn bushes, He will save you nonetheless.

⁸⁵ CLD, p. 565 (s.v. *Tantalus*): "Tantalus ... set his own child as food before the gods, and was punished in Hades by being placed near fruits and water, which drew back whenever he attempted to satisfy his everlasting hunger and thirst."

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER⁸⁶

Before Holy Communion

1. “A little while, and you will see [M]e no more; again a little while, and you will see [M]e” (Jn 16:16).

Consider that the eternal Word addresses with these words both good and bad religious. And what is this “a little while”? “A little while,” says St. Augustine, “is the whole space of time, through which the present age passes by.”⁸⁷ Therefore, it is as if our gracious Lord exhorts us to fulfill our vocation, though we are sometimes deprived of enjoying the sight of Him: “Come on, you careless laborers, useless servants, religious negligent of your own perfection; wake up, come to your senses, get quickly to work, because in a little while you shall no longer see Me. Your journey and your life will end soon, and My judgment about you is very soon to be made. If your evil deeds bring condemnation upon you, after a short time you will be deprived of the sight of Me forever.

And you, [f.49v] most diligent laborers; religious wholeheartedly attending to your perfection, fervently pleasing Me with tears, carefulness, and various mortifications, be of stout heart; for although I have withdrawn Myself from you a little, permitting you to fall into many afflictions and temptations, I assure you, however, that you shall see Me again in a little while. After a short period of mourning you will rejoice forever. You will toil for a short time so that you can receive eternal rewards. You will fight for a short while so that you may be crowned with immortal laurels. For in a short time I will visit My vineyard, and I will lavish on each their deserved reward. Following a short time of suffering,

⁸⁶ In the *Novus Ordo* this Sunday is the “Fourth Sunday of Easter.”

⁸⁷ St. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John: Tract. 101*, § 6, in: *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, vol. 90, Fathers of the Church, Inc., New York 1950, p. 239. [Hereafter *The Fathers of the Church* will be abbreviated as *FC*.] Cf. Augustinus, *In Joannis Evangelium — Tractatus CXXIV: Tractatus CI* (Joan. XVI, 16-23), in: *PL*, vol. 35, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1864, p. 1895 (#6). Cf. Cornelius à Lapide, *The Great Commentary of Cornelius à Lapide: S. John's Gospel — Chaps. XII to XXI and Epistles I, II, III*, Trans. Thomas W. Mossman, 3rd ed., vol. 6, John Hodges, London 1892, pp. 167-168 (Ch. XVI, 16).

after the brief end of this temporal life, I will lavish upon you, My faithful and prudent servants, whom I placed above My family, the everlasting sight of Me and the goods, treasures, and delights contained in this never-ending vision.”

Therefore, be eager to fight the good fight that you may receive the crown of justice (cf. 2 Tim 4:7-8). Follow Christ in such a manner that you may reach Him; and, having reached Him, you shall enjoy Him to the full not only in this Holy Communion, but also in the heavenly beatific vision.

2. *“I go to the Father”* (Jn 16:17).

You ought to consider when approaching the sacred table of Christ that you go to the Father, and not to the Judge. Indeed, you go to the very Father who, receiving you with very great joy, and open arms, will embrace you as a prodigal son and will order your white garment of innocence to be brought in, which He will restore to you in this Most Holy Banquet. After starving for a long time and eating the husks meant for the swine, He will feed you not with the flesh of calves or other cattle, but with His own Body. Therefore, go back to your Father, go back! Why do you travel in the far country of passions, feeling estranged from the highest Good?

Go to the Father! Christ calls you, go on! If you are afraid and ashamed because you have wasted the whole inheritance of so many of His goods, it is a good sign: The fear and the feeling of shame are the first steps toward approaching Him. The greater your repentance and atonement for your sins, the more welcome you will be in the house of your Most Holy Father. [f.50r]

After Holy Communion

1. *“We do not know what he is talking about”* (Jn 16:18).

Consider that it is not yet a man’s worst unhappiness if he does not know, does not grasp, and does not understand the divine words. Wherefore David once said: “The unfolding of [Y]our words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.” (Ps 119:130).

Now that the heavenly Master is present at the pulpit of your heart, you could, indeed, request that He explain to you the

divine oracles, words, commands, and discourses, which He would undoubtedly do as He was used to doing for many. But since various interpreters, such as doctors and teachers, were appointed by Him for this purpose in His Church (while for you your religious Superiors, spiritual teachers, and directors of conscience were appointed to declare His pronouncements), it would be pleasing to Him and salutary for you if you turn to them when you have doubts to clear up.

In fact, God values this so much that He stopped the rich man, who eagerly desired to come out of hell in order to admonish his brothers, by saying: “They have Moses and the prophets” (Lk 16:29). In this way He instructed us that it is fitting for people to be taught by persons who have been filled for this purpose with Divine Wisdom.

2. “*What is this that [H]e says to us*” (cf. Jn 16:17).

Notice that sorting through doubts in convoluted matters, questioning, and getting advice signify great prudence. You hear that the apostles did so, for they said one to another, when they did not understand the words of their Master: “What is this thing that [H]e is telling us?”

Oh, if only you would use such prudence when assailed by various thoughts immediately after departing from the sacred table; if you only knew how to question them — “What kind of thoughts are you?” — before letting them into the depths of your heart. If only you would have enough cleverness to properly establish where they come from. Whether from God, or from the evil one? What kind are they? Are they useful and salvific? Or are they useless, vain, hurtful, and sinful?

How very fortunate would you be if only you would carefully check prior to lending your ear to those abusing another person’s good name: What is it that this person is saying? What is it that I want to hear from Him? If only, I say, you would abound in this prudence of doubting, questioning, and getting advice. [f.50v]

3. “*you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice*” (Jn 16:20).

Here you see the difference between the servants of God and the servants of the world: The former lament, the latter laugh; the former sigh, the latter play or sing; the former are overcome by mourning, the latter bubble with joy. But what is the end of the one and the other? You know that joy ends in mourning (cf. Prov 14:13). You are also not ignorant of the fact that sorrow is turned into joy (cf. Jn 16:20; Jer 31:13). As the king-prophet⁸⁸ teaches, the servants of the world “spend their days in prosperity, and in peace they go down to Sheol” (Job 21:13). But the God-Man, the Divine Wisdom, whose words are immutable, whose promises are most certain, says to His servants: “So you have sorrow now; but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you” (Jn 16:22).

O happy servants of God whose sorrow led them to penance! Blessed are those who mourn, because they shall be comforted! (cf. Mt 5:5) Blessed are those who went from the house of joy to the house of mourning (cf. Eccl 7:3).

Come on! Give infinite thanks to this Lord, whom you hold in your heart, that by the power of His Providence He led you out of the great rejoicing of Babylon to the weeping daughter of Zion. Here, you shall be happy if only you never seek nor even dream about the joys of this world, which are so greatly condemned by Christ.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER⁸⁹

Before Holy Communion

1. “*But now I am going to [H]im who sent [M]e*” (Jn 16:5).

Consider that the reason Our Savior delayed, and did not ascend to Heaven at the moment of His glorious return to life, but remained for a longer while with His disciples, was so that

⁸⁸ This is a mistake by St. Stanislaus, as the following words were said by Job, not King David.

⁸⁹ In the *Novus Ordo* this Sunday is the “Fifth Sunday of Easter.”

He could confirm them in faith and teach them more fully about the heavenly mysteries.

Now turn your attention to yourself and think: Why do you remain in this place; why do you prolong somehow the delay and not go up right away to receive the great Sacraments? Undoubtedly, the reason is to let your soul be imbued with the mysteries of this Most Holy Eucharist, which it is going to receive, so that your soul may know that it should not only receive the Eucharist with the greatest faith, but also (having corrected its defects) with the hope of eternal life. Likewise, Jesus the Master instructed the disciples that if they believed in Him and did good deeds according to the faith, then, once released from the fetters of mortality, they undoubtedly would follow Him to where He was about to go. [f.51r]

2. *“none of you asks [M]e, ‘Where are you going?’”* (Jn 16:5).

Ponder that the good and loving Master did not want to conceal from His disciples where He was going. For that reason, He reproached them for not being piously curious enough to inquire of Him: For what journey was He preparing, and to where was He about to go?

Prepare your soul for receiving the Most Blessed Sacrament and question your soul, led by pious curiosity: “Where are you going?” If your soul tells you that it is going to the nuptials of the heavenly Lamb, remind it about the wedding garment. If it says that it is going to the banquet of a certain God-Man, urge it to bring along everything necessary for such banquets; but have ready especially copious tears in place of the clear spring water used at the beginning of banquets.

Finally, rouse up your soul to such zealous and meticulous preparation for this imminent journey, lest it return without great fruit.

3. *“none of you”* (Jn 16:5).

Consider that the Lord would have been most pleased, perhaps, if at least one of His disciples had asked Him about His departure. But since no one thought of asking, this must have been slightly painful for Him to bear.

So today, quite a few people will surround Him, many will come to Him, some will consume Him under the species of bread, but perhaps all will lack the desire with which it is appropriate to consume such a great food. Therefore, lest this situation happen here, arouse in yourself a thousand times the desire to receive the Lord, so that at least one soul may be found who would show a true longing for Him, who would be recognized as having come to Him worthily and who would gain from Him the greatest benefit.

After Holy Communion

1. *“it is to your advantage that I go away”* (Jn 16:7).

Consider the Lord’s departure from your soul to be twofold: first because of you, and second because of His own will. First of all, God departs from a man’s soul because He cannot remain there due to the dense darkness of sin and the filth of evil deeds. David lamented this in the past and sighed, saying, “My heart throbs” in me. Why? Because, he said, “my strength fails me; [f.51v] and the light of my eyes — it also has gone from me” (Ps 38:11).

In the second case God departs in order to probe the steadiness, faith, and fortitude of a soul dear to Him. He deprives it of His presence, consolations, and favors; and instead He lets it fall into innumerable anxieties, fears, and temptations. But this withdrawal is a strong indication of love: therefore, the soul should surrender itself into divine hands and let his Majesty do with it as pleases His will. If you did not expel Him, His absence will certainly be to your benefit, and it will be expedient to you that He goes away.

But the other kind of departure is dangerous and dreadful, inasmuch as it is an indication that the infernal spirit is coming into the soul. The Book of Kings speaks about it: “Now the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him” (1 Sam 16:14). Therefore, be on your guard not to become the cause for this other kind of withdrawal. Instead,

pray to the Lord with the King of Judah,⁹⁰ that He may remain constantly with you: “Hide not [Y]our face from me” (Ps 27:9); “Be not far from me” (Ps 22:11).

2. *“it is to your advantage that I go away”* (Jn 16:7).

Contemplate deeply these words of the Savior, and consider how much good His withdrawal from your soul of His own will does to it; namely, it infuses in your soul the greatest humility. For when it feels forsaken, it recognizes that without God it cannot do or think anything good. The soul recognizes and experiences its own worthlessness, and it understands how much this state of abandonment differs from the constant presence of its beloved God. Therefore, having acquired through this withdrawal the knowledge of itself and of God, the soul turns to Him with greater love. For the more that is learned about a lost good, the more it is loved and appreciated. The further a soul is from this good, the greater is its desire to see it, according to the saying “My soul yearns for [Y]ou in the night” (Is 26:9). Thus, do not lose heart if the Lord, your Guest today, should withdraw Himself of His own will, but “Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage” (Ps 27:14).

3. *“if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you”* (Jn 16:7) [DRB].

O admirable providence of our Lord! O highest expression of fatherly care! O inexplicable goodness!

When He reveals to the disciples the news of His departure, knowing that it will bring them sadness, He promises the advent of a Consoler, and He says, as if leaving the choice to them: “if I go not, [f.52r] the Paraclete will not come to you.” It is as if He were saying: It is necessary that either the Paraclete or I stay with you. Now, if I do not go, although I most certainly must, He will not descend upon this world and, therefore, upon you. If, however, you desire eagerly to see and receive Him, it is necessary for you to be deprived of My visible presence for some time.

⁹⁰ Saint Stanislaus is speaking of King David, who belonged to the tribe of Judah.

Consider now how greatly beneficial that resignation was for the apostles, namely, that they let the Lord go to the Father. For it is with the coming of the Holy Spirit that they obtained the knowledge of tongues, the understanding of the Scriptures, an unparalleled magnanimity, and unconquerable fortitude, to such an extent that instead of taking flight out of fear and pusillanimity as they did shortly before, during the Passion of their Master, now, filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they started to openly spread His Gospel, proclaim His Resurrection, convert the Gentiles to the true faith, and continually endure in His name many persecutions, innumerable calamities, enormous crosses, and torments, and suffered terrible deaths with a great, joyful, and brave spirit.

Whereas before the advent of the Paraclete they did not understand the meaning of “a little while” (cf. Jn 16:16-19), after being enlightened by Him, they interpret the writings of the prophets and doctors of the law and acquire the perfect knowledge of all sciences. And, having acquired it, they instruct the whole world, as the Church sings: “their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world” (Ps 19:4).

Without a doubt, this voluntary and deliberate absence of the highest Goodness from the human soul is so that merits would not be taken away, nor the exercise of virtues impeded, nor the way of salvation obstructed. Rather, instead of the sensation which the loving soul perceived because of the presence of the Beloved, He infuses such a soul with solid virtues, constancy in adversities, and perseverance in good works, and accomplishes in it an admirable and extremely salutary transformation.

Therefore, having received His Holy Body, prepare yourself for all the greatest gifts, and although you lose the sensuous taste of His sweetness, nonetheless overcome all difficulties out of love for Him, do not yield to adversities, do not abandon the path of virtue, persist in the good works you have begun: “I waited patiently for the Lord; [H]e inclined to me and heard my cry.” (cf. Ps 40:1). [f.52v]

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER⁹¹

Before Holy Communion

1. “if you ask anything of the Father, [H]e will give it to you in [M]y [N]ame” (Jn 16:23).

Christ, the heavenly Teacher, the true Son of God, calls His disciples to pray with trust, and also promises that none of their prayers will be without effect. He says: “if you ask anything of the Father, [H]e will give it to you in [M]y [N]ame.” It is as if He were saying, “As long as I remained with you, you had no worries or pressing concerns. For I defended you from the Pharisees, I nourished you with the words of salutary teaching as well as with corporeal food. I provided the necessary things for your soul and for your body. I took such care of you that I did not even hesitate to pay the tax for some of you” (cf. Mt 17:23-26).

“But now, when the time of My departure is getting near and I will soon go to My Father, I leave only prayer to you. With it you are going to overcome your enemies and obtain the gifts of the Holy Spirit, both for yourselves and for others. And finally, in every matter have recourse to prayer alone as your protection, your treasure, and the horn of Amalthea.⁹² Moreover, I promise you that nothing will be denied to your heart, whatever it would desire and request. Now if any of you should have doubts whether he will obtain the things that he would request, let him ask in My Name, and it will certainly be given to him” (cf. Jn 16:23-24).

Therefore, believe prayer to be so powerful that it moves God to grant whatever man would ask for, as is attested to by the heavenly Orator, who says: “Prayer is what conquers Heaven and

⁹¹ In the *Novus Ordo* this Sunday is the “Sixth Sunday of Easter.”

⁹² Amalthea is the name of the sacred goat that replaced the infant Zeus’ (Jupiter’s) mother in providing him with milk. One of the goat’s horns, broken off by accident, was placed among the stars as the *Cornu Amaltheae* or *Cornu copiae*: cf. *CLD*, pp. 33, 138 (s.v. *Amalthea*, and *Cornu*); E.M. Berens, *A Hand-Book of Mythology: Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece and Rome*, Charles E. Merrill Co., New York 1894, p. 15. [Hereafter *A Hand-Book of Mythology* will be abbreviated as *BHM*.] Hence the horn of Amalthea is the sign of plenty.

obliges God” (cf. Sir 35:16-21).⁹³ Consequently, there is altogether nothing that exists or that can be conceived of, which would not be obtained from God by pious, fervent, proper, and humble prayer. Therefore, you should always, and particularly today, apply yourself to prayer, not only coming by the will of God into the Lord’s presence, but receiving God Himself, who having laid down His majesty, descends to you, a miserable worm.

2. *“ask, and you will receive”* (Jn 16:24).

Ponder this: Although the Savior said that those who ask shall receive everything, [f.53r] there are yet certain things that are considered altogether unfit to be requested by a Christian and a religious, either because they are opposed to justice or are contrary to charity. Indeed, seeking to harm somebody’s life or goods, or asking and wishing for someone’s death in order to seize his inheritance are violations of justice. On the other hand, beseeching God to punish your enemies is contrary to charity, which tells us to love our enemies.

And so, as it is, you will request the three most proper things from the Heavenly Father in the Name of the Son who is about to sojourn with you: the forgiveness of sins, the grace of persevering in good, and immortal glory.

Indeed, if you heed the Truth you shall seek first the Kingdom of God, and all the other things shall be given to you (cf. Lk 12:31).

3. *“Until now you have asked nothing in [M]y [N]ame”* (Jn 16:24).

You may consider here the power of the Name of Jesus: In His name those possessed by an evil spirit are liberated, the sick are healed, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the lame walk (cf. Mt 11:5; 15:31; Lk 7:22). The Savior Himself says: “in My [N]ame they will cast out demons” (Mk 16:17); and also, we read elsewhere: “that at the [N]ame of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Phil 2:10).

⁹³ The text has not been accurately quoted by St. Stanislaus. Sirach says only that: “The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds, and it will not rest until it reaches its goal.”

Consider more closely that the prayers of many are useless because of the fact that they do not ask and pray to the eternal Father in the Name of Jesus. Hence, you will realize that for this reason the Church has always been instructed to add to her prayers this ending: "Through our Lord Jesus Christ," etc., and thus her prayers are always heard.

Therefore, having in mind these instructions, approach the Lord and ask with great confidence in the Name of Jesus for great and enduring virtues. Indeed, things of little importance should not be exhorted from the Sovereign of infinite majesty. Therefore, earnestly demand greater things and do so in the Name of the Son. Even if you ask the Father in an unfriendly manner, be confident that all shall be granted to you most generously.

After Holy Communion

1. "*ask*" (Jn 16:24).

There are manifold prayers according to the necessities of the petitioners. [f.53v] Some express in prayer their sorrow for sins; others pray earnestly requesting the forgiveness of sins. Some ask with the most vehement yearning for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and for holy virtues; on the other hand, others demand from God, with the greatest longing and persistence: knowledge, wealth, property, and other goods of nature and of fortune.

But in the present time set aside for prayer (assigned to you by the providence of Eternal Wisdom), you will exercise yourself in thanksgiving, partly for some of the countless and various benefits, such as creation, preservation of life, justification, redemption, illumination, and your vocation; partly for the institution of the most abundant gift of this Sacred Meal. For you see how lavishly indeed He treated your soul at his table today.

And do not doubt that the Lord will impart to you many additional graces if you receive the present grace most gratefully, and give worthy thanks for it, for every thanksgiving prepares man for receiving greater gifts and obtaining charisms from the all-good and Most High God. **He, who praises the Almighty**

God by showing gratitude, makes for himself a debtor of the surest remuneration.⁹⁴

2. *“if you ask anything”* (Jn 16:23).

After His Resurrection and before He withdrew Himself from their sight, triumphantly ascending into Heaven, the heavenly Teacher taught the apostles many things. Among other things, He recommended to them in the first place the art and study of prayer; prudently, of course, and not without great consideration for future things. Having foreseen their future crosses and persecutions, and also many other evils, and knowing that nothing is more suitable than prayer for taking them away or enduring them (especially the prayer offered in His Name), He taught it to them first of all. Indeed, He left prayer to them as nearly the only remedy for all calamities and all necessities, and also as a way of attaining all perfection and self-knowledge.

You too, having established today friendship with God, be convinced that prayer is necessary for you in the highest degree. Equipped with this anchor, you will safely navigate through all storms; armed with this shield, you will pass unhurt through fire and water, through countless dangers of death. Having this companion, you will advance without harm on the road to perfection and eternity, a road beset by many ruffians. As a religious, for whom is it more fitting to persist in prayer than for you? [f.54r]

3. *“[H]e will give it to you”* (Jn 16:23).

Consider that the promise of receiving from the Heavenly Father whatever is asked in the Name of the Son was not only made to the apostles. Indeed, it was given to all the faithful also, and to the religious especially, to whom the evangelical counsels come down from the apostles by law of inheritance.

Indeed, the most merciful Lord had regard for you too, when He uttered these promises and assured that you would not be denied anything if you asked appropriately for something that is just. Moreover, the prayers of men are of such a great value

⁹⁴ These words were emphasized by St. Stanislaus himself in the original manuscript.

to God that even those flowing from the mouth of nonbelievers penetrate His Divine Majesty. And they are in no way ineffectual, as it is to be learned from the story told in the Acts of the Apostles about the good centurion (cf. Acts 10).

Therefore, adhere closely to this holy and fruitful practice of prayer. Also, understand that when you neglect it, you make a step toward everlasting condemnation. For the one who turns away from prayer is on his way to hell; and as many times as he neglects to pray, he makes steps toward hell. On the contrary, the more fervently and more often we apply ourselves to prayer, the more frequently we converse with God.

Besides, nothing multiplies vices and imperfections more than the neglect of prayer, to such an extent that if you examined yourself, you would notice that you have fallen into quite a few faults; always because, due to sluggishness, you have neglected some of your usual prayers. On the other hand, nothing cultivates, purifies, and sets in order the garden of the soul, and grafts into it the new plants of virtue better, faster and more beautifully than the renewal and restoration of the practice of prayer.

As for you, having weighed and considered these things in a mature manner, humbly pray to the Lord, entreating Him for the sake of His glory and for your immense advantage, as well as for the sake of your neighbor, never to withdraw the grace of devotion, which He granted to you at the sacred table. Therefore, together with David, tell Him: "My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to [Y]our word" (Ps 119:28) and invigorate me in the exercise of prayer, which is most pleasing to You, and most useful for me. [f.54v]

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION⁹⁵

Before Holy Communion

1. *"When the Paraclete comes"* (cf. Jn 15:26).

Consider that the Holy Spirit comes to us for a threefold reason: 1) to set on fire; 2) to console; and 3) to convict. He sets the frigid and the lukewarm on fire, whereby they advance more fervently on the road of virtue. He consoles the afflicted, whereby they love the gracious God even more, realizing His great care and goodness toward them. He convicts the disobedient, the sinners, and the wicked, whereby they come to their senses faster, give up their depraved conduct, avoid lying, and adhere to truth.

As for you, implore that the grace of the Holy Spirit may rest in you always: if you become lukewarm may you be inflamed by this grace; if grief distresses you, may you burst forth in ever more remarkable acts of divine love, having been comforted by the Spirit; if you divert from the road of virtue and the pursuit of truth, then having been brought back on it and convicted by this grace may you be able to say: If the Lord had not helped me, if He had not convicted me, little was wanting, lest my soul would have dwelt in hell (cf. Ps 93:17). Being so strongly fortified, may you be able to run continuously in the way of God's commandments.

2. *"whom I shall send to you"* (Jn 15:26).

Consider that every spirit that Christ did not send is a liar. Such was the one in the mouth of the prophets of the king of Samaria. Such is the one in the speeches of the modern heretics who, being teachers of falsehood, sow new doctrines, invent new gospels, and reject the traditions of the ancient fathers and the writings and dogmas used from the very beginning in Christ's Church. Their spirit is the spirit of lies, which is not sent by Christ, the Truth Himself, but instilled by the father of lies, the devil.

⁹⁵ In the *Novus Ordo* this Sunday is the "Seventh Sunday of Easter," or in dioceses where the Ascension is transferred from Thursday to Sunday, "The Ascension of the Lord" is celebrated on this day.

As for you, rejoice because you possess the true Spirit together with the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles; and give great thanks to the good God, because He makes you walk in the truth. Then, from now on attend to any and all of His inspirations, and try to carry them out in your deeds, lest they may seem like pearls cast before swine (cf. Mt 7:6).

3. "*the Spirit of truth*" (Jn 15:26).

If you want to recognize whether someone has, or whether you have, the Spirit of the Lord, [f.55r] consider whether he is a lover of truth and also whether you attend to truth. Concealing the truth is characteristic of a diabolical mind, and not admitting the truth is proper to the evil one. He who neither tells the truth to others nor allows it to be said to them is not of God; nor is the one who neither hears the words of God, which are the truth, nor proclaims them to another.

On the other hand, if you welcome as precious the rebukes made to you, you have the Spirit of God. If you acknowledge the faults of your past life, and your present defects, if you atone for them and correct them, you have the Spirit of God. If you also bring others to recognize their evil deeds, repent for them, feel disgust for them, and correct and atone for them, you have the Spirit of God. Every desire for virtue, and every disapproval of vice is proper to the Spirit of God, because these are the best things. In truth every good gift comes from the Father of lights (cf. Jas 1:17).

But when you acknowledge and see that you have degenerated wholly into the old man, Adam, pray to the Lord, together with the penitent king, during Holy Communion: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me" (Ps 51:10). Call upon the same Lord, the Spirit, for help, saying ardently:

"Come, Holy Spirit, come!
And from your celestial home
Shed a ray of light divine!
Come, Father of the poor!"

Come, source of all our store!
 Come, within our bosoms shine,"
 etc.⁹⁶

After Holy Communion

1. "[H]e will bear witness to [M]e" (Jn 15:26).

Consider that if the desire to imitate the life of Christ, and especially His Most Holy Passion, is instilled in your heart, you have certainly obtained in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist the true Spirit of the Lord. For this is an infallible sign of a heart inflamed by the Divine Spirit, when it wants not only to continuously contemplate the way of life and the deeds of the Lord, but also to try to imitate them to the best of its ability. Hence the apostles, stirred up by this heavenly Spirit, immediately began fearlessly preaching the glory of Jesus, and scourged for this preaching "went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts 5:41), to receive lashes for their witness to the truth.

Therefore, you too should desire to conform yourself to Christ the Lord through suffering injuries and accepting insults, affronts, and false accusations brought against you, even by those who are most dear to you, as well as through any crosses, bodily pains and afflictions. This will be in accordance with the true Spirit of God. [f.55v]

2. "*You shall give testimony*" (Jn 15:27) [DRB].

Consider that testimony to Christ is given by those who are crucified with Him; that is, those who suffer together with Him because of their love for Him and who, through such co-suffering,

⁹⁶ This quote is from the Sequence *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, for Pentecost Sunday: *Lectionary for Mass, Vol. I: Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts of the Lord and the Saints*, 2nd typical ed., Catholic Book Publishing Co., New Jersey 1998, p. 483. [Hereafter *Lectionary for Mass* will be abbreviated as *LM*.] Cf. *Missale Romanum: Ex Decreto Ss. Concilii Tridentini Restitutum Summorum Pontificum Cura Recognitum*, Editio VII Juxta Typicam Vaticanam, Benziger Brothers, Inc., New York 1953, p. 379 (*Dominica Pentecostes, Sequentia*). [Hereafter *Missale Romanum* will be abbreviated as *MIR*.]

reveal His image by enduring all the adversities, temptations, torments, harsh words, and cruel beatings, on account of His love. As St. Paul, speaking of himself, says: “the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20:23-24).

Realize, therefore, that you have been fortified today with the Most Holy Body of Christ the Lord, so that you may be made stronger for enduring every experience of changing fortune and of tribulations, which make you like Christ.

3. “*I shall send to you*” (Jn 15:26).

When Moses offered his lack of fluency in speech as an excuse to God, who appeared before him and commanded him to approach Pharaoh with a request to set the Israelites free, he was told in response: “[Go, and] I will be with you” (Ex 3:12).

In a similar way, while withdrawing Himself from the apostles, whom He sends to convert the world, Christ the Lord encourages them, lest they doubt and worry about how they will preach to the nations; how they will manage to bring the corrupt Gentiles to venerate the true God; and what means they will use not only to disprove the sophisms, deceits, and errors of those men, but to bear the threats, persecutions, and death with which the Gentiles will threaten them. He says: “I will send to you ... the Spirit of truth” and “[He] will teach you everything” (cf. Jn 15:26; 14:26); He will be your future Teacher, Protector, Helper, and Consoler.

But He also says, “I am with you always, to the close of the age” (cf. Mt 28:20); promising them and assuring them of His most certain presence, lest they lose hope entirely because of His absence: And today you have indeed experienced exactly this. For certainly you saw Him present on the altar; you adored and received Him. Wherefore, do not fear to apply yourself also to the apostolic duties imposed upon you, because He has not only sent you His Spirit, but He also came to you, He stays with you, and will do everything together with you. [f.56r]

SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *"If a man loves [M]e, he will keep [M]y word"* (Jn 14:23).

Consider that the essence of perfect love is **to observe** the divine words. Just as children who truly love their parents try to fulfill their will exactly, in the same way, as the sons of God, those who would like to be lovers of the best and greatest Father should take great care to fulfill His commandments most diligently.

On the other hand, he is unworthy of the name of "son" who, deaf to all commandments, receives them as fairy tales and considers many of them to be unnecessarily imposed by the Father. Thus, the one who does not pay attention to God's will is not to be regarded even as a servant of God. For the infinite Goodness says in complaint about such people: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" (Lk 6:46).

Therefore, it will be your duty to strive for a perfect union through the true observance of the laws and commandments of God, and of those who represent Him.

2. *"and [M]y Father will love him"* (Jn 14:23).

Consider how those servants rejoice, who have won over by their services not only the hearts of the children but also of their parents. When they have gained their favor, they rejoice and believe that they will lead a very quiet and calm life, as if carried by the favorable west winds. The Truth promises the same to anyone who is obedient to Him, because by true obedience and service, a person will gain not only His love, but also the love of the eternal Father, the almighty and gracious Lord: "And [M]y Father," He says, "will love him." O the happiness of the soul that loves Jesus! O the bliss of the spirit submissive to the Holy Spirit! Consider: What greater happiness could you experience in this life than being loved by God? For the most wonderful thing has already happened when someone is loved by God. But make sure that you respond to the divine love extended to you with an equal love (although who is able to achieve this?), with humble submission, eager readiness, steadfast service, and constant obedience. [f.56v]

3. “[W]e will come to him and make [O]ur home with him” (Jn 14:23).

Famous are those houses visited by kings; blessed are the thresholds upon which tread the feet of priests and of any servants of God. But what is to be said about that soul, into whose space pure **Love** enters, whose abode is visited by the King of Kings, the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek? The kings enrich those whom they visit with wealth, adorn them with honors, or ennoble them with coats of arms. The priests impart a blessing to those whom they visit.

But, as the richest King, our Lord Jesus Christ liberally bestows gifts on any soul He visits, imparting much wealth (namely, virtues), a glorious coat of arms (namely, the gift of grace and signs of various favors), and His divine benediction. Consider that He comes to you today, indeed not alone, but with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for where the Son promises to abide with the Father, there the Spirit is also invariably present, proceeding from both of them. Therefore, come down to your chamber in a hurry and clean it; put it in order and adorn it so that it may be fitting to receive such a great guest, because it is necessary for the Lord Jesus to remain with you today. When Zacchaeus was to receive Him in his house, with what great joy He looked forward to it! What goods He promised to share! (cf. Lk 19:6-8).

You should be jumping with even greater joy and promising an even greater number of goods, since Jesus is going to come to you accompanied by such favored, splendid, eminent, and holy guests. Here comes the Father; rise, why are you sleeping? Here the Spouse is near; go forth to meet Him. Here the Consoler hastens toward you; why are you groaning, filled with grief? Open to them the chamber of your heart, and they will transform it into Heaven.

O Trinity! O Most Holy Father, Most Merciful Son, Most Beloved Spirit, the abode of my soul is open to You. Come, hasten; here I am, a sinful man.

After Holy Communion

1. *“And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting”* (Acts 2:2).

You can deem the arrival of the Holy Spirit and what preceded it as astonishing:

1) because of the sadness of the heart that preceded it, according to the words of the Lord: [f.57r] “Sorrow will fill your heart” (cf. Jn 16:6);

2) because an enormous sound was heard upon its arrival;

3) and because it was coming from nowhere else but Heaven.

And this is the way to recognize the Spirit of God: Namely, if a trial precedes Him. For this is a peculiar sign of the divine grace being poured into man’s soul, according to someone’s saying: “We almost never have God nearer to us, than when we find ourselves in a difficult situation.”⁹⁷ And Nahum says: “His way is in whirlwind and storm” (Nah 1:3).

The Holy Spirit comes to a man with a loud clamor and sound, when the soul is disturbed, frightened, and worn out.

Finally, He comes from Heaven, sent by Christ the Lord from that immortal ark of the triumphant heavenly Sovereign. For the inspirations proceeding from the infernal marsh (namely, the whisperings of the evil spirits) seductively approach the soul and gently caress it; but on their departure they leave a thousand vexations of conscience, a thousand stings, and a thousand severe pains. On the contrary, it is clear that the Spirit of the Lord (preceded by anguish) comes in a whirlwind and with noise. However, signs of joy, a thousand consolations, a thousand fruits and a thousand goods immediately follow Him.

If, therefore, you were tormented before the Sacred Banquet because of your imperfections, or because of a desire to regain divine grace, or for any other pious reason, believe that you

⁹⁷ Hieremias Drexelius, *Gymnasium Patientiae: Pars. I, Cap. IV — § II. Sagittæ*, in: *Opera omnia*, vol. II, Ioannis Cnobbari, Antverpiae 1643, p. 10. Follows the quotation given here from Nahum, introduced by: “For that reason the prophet Nahum.”

received the Spirit of the Lord, who will be accompanied by incredible consolations.

2. *“they began to speak in other tongues”* (Acts 2:4).

Consider that the knowledge of tongues, the explanation of the Scriptures, the capacity for understanding the mysteries of faith and the knowledge of future things are the signs, consequences, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. But they would vanish quickly, or they would be of little use for our salvation, unless strengthened by our gratitude, guarded by humility, directed by right intention, and sustained by proper use. For the Apostle speaks thus about them: “Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away” (1 Cor 13:8).

He says so not because he makes little account of God’s gifts, but because love is to be recognized as the foundation of them; love is the foundation of all virtues, of gratitude, of humility, and of many other things. [f.57v]

3. *“and make [O]ur home with him”* (Jn 14:23).

Consider the explanation given by St. Gregory about this abode of the Holy Spirit: “The Holy Spirit,” he says, “comes to the hearts of certain people, and does not make there [H]is abode.” Why? “Because,” he says, “through repentance they gain God’s respect indeed, but at the time of temptation they forget exactly what they had repented of; and thus they go back to committing sins, as if they did not bewail them at all.”⁹⁸

If, therefore, you do not have the intention, nor feel any desire to mend your ways, if you do not prefer to die rather than to fall again, believe that the Holy Spirit does not abide in you.

Strive, therefore, to correct your defects, so that you would be considered as not only having received the Holy Spirit internally, but that you would also show it externally; henceforth avoiding all kinds of imperfections and making the greatest efforts in the zealous exercise of all virtues.

⁹⁸ Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber II — Homilia XXX (Joan. XIV, 23-31)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1221 (n. 1576). Cf. *GFGH*, p. 237 (Homily 30, § 4).

The Holy Spirit changes the disposition of sinful people into love for Him, as He did with the apostles. While they were without Him, tongues like fire appeared to them; when He was within them, their hearts were set on fire, as attested by the same Holy Doctor.⁹⁹

MONDAY AFTER PENTECOST¹⁰⁰

Before Holy Communion

1. “*For God so loved the world that [H]e gave [H]is only-begotten Son*” (Jn 3:16).

Occupy your mind with reflections on God’s love towards humanity, which is so great that no human or even angelic tongue can express it, and our mind is unable to comprehend it. For if we were to forget for a second all of His other acts of love for us, and if God had not shown any other besides the one in which He decided to offer His only Son as a sacrifice for the salvation of the entire human race, and in fact did so, this alone would certainly be evidence of His infinite charity and inconceivable love.

Consider how many things He does every day out of love for you, and how many things He did in the early stages of the world, as it came into existence. Out of love for you He created the vast universe. He affixed to the heavens the bright [f.58r] ornaments, from which you would have the necessary physical light. Out of love for you He created so many kinds of birds and reptiles, such great hosts of fish swimming in the waters. Out of love for you

⁹⁹ Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber II — Homilia XXX (Joan. XIV, 23-31)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1220 (n. 1574). Cf. *GFGH*, p. 236 (Homily 30, § 1): “Today the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples... When tongues of fire appeared outwardly, their hearts within them were set afire; since they received God in a vision of fire they were gently enflamed by love.”

¹⁰⁰ In the *Novus Ordo* this is the beginning of Ordinary Time, and as of February 11, 2018, on this Monday after Pentecost, Pope Francis has added the Obligatory Memorial of “The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church.” Before the changes to the liturgical calendar in 1969, there was an Octave of Pentecost, and so this would have been the Monday of that Pentecost Octave.

He adorned the earth with a variety of beautiful trees, flowers, and grasses. What else do your eyes need to be pleased? What else could your heart desire to be satisfied? What is lacking to your soul to be refreshed and comforted?

Undoubtedly, the most gracious Father thought that these things, created out of His love for you, were still too small and inadequate, since He also wanted His only-begotten Son to be put to death for your salvation. In this way the all-good God loved the world; He loved the human race, and He loved you, who are ungrateful.

Be ashamed and embarrassed, since you have not done anything worthy out of love for Him, you have not accomplished any remarkable deed, and you have not exercised any solid virtue. Indeed, if you would look at yourself more carefully, you would find that you have repaid good things with evil ones: love with hatred, benefits with evil deeds, and favors with ingratitude. This is revealed through your grievous daily faults, which, upon careful examination of your conscience, you will find beyond number.

To action, by the immortal God! Promise at once to bewail not only your evil deeds, but also those of others, and to reconcile yourself with the Divine Majesty by giving worthy satisfaction.

2. *“that [H]e gave [H]is only-begotten Son”* (Jn 3:16).

Consider how great would be the love of subjects for a king who would offer his son, his only son, to die for the preservation of the kingdom that was about to be totally lost and annihilated forever together with all its provinces. Certainly, such a prince would earn the endless love and remembrance of his own people, and the lasting admiration of outsiders.

Moses offered himself to receive great disgrace and nearly eternal condemnation before God who wanted to annihilate the whole of Israel (cf. Ex 32:10), with these words: “Lord, either forgive this people, or strike me out [f.58v] of the book of life” (cf. Ex 32:31-32). All men admire this act, and quite rightly, for God Himself approved of it.

And you, my soul, with what words will you extol your Creator today? With what praises will you adorn Him, with what gratitude of heart will you remunerate Him, who is so inconceivably good and loves you so intensely that He offered His only Son to be sacrificed on the altar of the Cross for your salvation! In what way indeed will you praise Jesus Himself? With what deed will you repay Him for the death He endured for the world in general and for you in particular?

Come! Offer Him in return as a sacrifice on the altar of obedience, your greatly beloved and only daughter (cf. Jgs 11:29-39), namely, your own will.

3. *“that whoever believes in [H]im should not perish”* (Jn 3:16).

Everyone expects in return an equal benefit for one provided, or, at least the remembrance of and gratitude for it. There is nothing that people give to other people for free. In return for the inconceivable gift of redemption, God requires from you, my soul, and indeed at the same time from all men, nothing except faith; that they believe in Him. And He requires this not for His own sake, but for our advantage, for our benefit, for our good and preservation, lest we perish.

However, consider that there are many pagans, circumcised Jews, and heretics, who, rejecting the gift of redemption, not only do not believe but also blaspheme. Yes indeed, how many Christians are there who do not cooperate with this gift of faith, neglecting the good and eagerly pursuing evil. Sympathize with their blindness and humbly ask the Sun, i.e., Jesus Christ concealed in the Most Holy Eucharist, for the light necessary for believing and acting, both for them and for yourself, so that by believing and acting in this way you may not perish, but may be saved by your obedience to divine inspirations, commands, and illuminations.

After Holy Communion

1. *“that [H]e gave [H]is only-begotten Son”* (Jn 3:16).

Consider that you have consumed today the same living Lord who died for the salvation of the world. O you, the redeemed and wonderfully beloved by God, to whom the Redeemer offered Himself as food! He gave His Body for nourishment, and His Blood for refreshment! Consider, therefore, what great thanks you are going to give to this all-good God for this vivification and Communion, since love certainly has the right to draw from you immense thanks [f.59r] for redemption. Oh, if you would gaze at Him with the eyes of your soul, as the heavenly spirits do, you would surely acknowledge and wonder that such a great Lord has entered the abode of your soul today.

What more do you need? You have received God: the One who created you; the One whom the Virgin Mary bore; the One whom the Jews, His beloved people, crucified; whom hell dreaded when He descended into it; who was greeted by the Holy Mother and His disciples with extraordinary joy upon His Resurrection from the dead; whom, finally, the whole heavenly host went out to meet, and, withdrawing Him from the eyes of men, carried up to the throne in the clouds, at the right hand of the Father. From there, 15 days later, He sent to His faithful the Holy Spirit:¹⁰¹ Consoler, Teacher, and Witness to Truth.

Undoubtedly, this God whom you received will be your Judge one day. Be afraid if you received Him unworthily; be on your guard should you treat unworthily the One whom you have received. Above all, however, take special care to repay so great a love with an equal love, or at least with such love as your iniquity permits, both for the eternal Father who gave the Son to be slain for you, and for the eternal Son who offered to die for your salvation and life.

2. *“but may have eternal life”* (Jn 3:16).

Consider that God is not the cause of any soul's condemnation. This is clear from His own words, as well as from the testimony

¹⁰¹ There is inaccuracy here, because the sending of the Holy Spirit took place on the day of Pentecost, which was only 10 days after the Ascension, not 15.

of the prophet, who says: “Destruction is your own, O Israel” (cf. Hos 13:9). On the contrary, He eagerly desires the salvation of all, and for this reason He handed over His only-begotten Son to be crucified. Indeed, He eagerly desires it at the present time, since He instituted the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist for the sake of those who, after the baptismal bath (where are all stains of the soul were washed away), acquired anew the stains and filth of either mortal or venial sins; that through the proper use and frequent reception of this Sacrament they would be able to make expiation and be cleansed.

Now, therefore, focus your thoughts on the greatest love that the all-good and supreme God has for us, and on His concern and desire for our salvation. It is He who provides us with so many and such easily accessible remedies, so that we may have everlasting life!

3. *“the light has come into the world”* (Jn 3:19).

Consider what this light is that came into the world, namely, the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, which inflame our senses and enlighten our hearts, that we may do good works with divine love. Although the Evangelist says that Christ was this light “which enlightens every man that comes into this world” (cf. Jn 1:9), it can be assumed nevertheless that he meant the Holy Spirit, who was always united to our Savior. It is proper for the Holy Spirit to enlighten, to excite, to direct; and the Church prays for such, saying: “May the grace of the Holy Spirit enlighten our senses and hearts.” Now, you shall perceive how abundant that light is from the fact that it is sufficient to enlighten all men. [f.59v]

O how miserable you would be if you did not receive it! More miserable, if you were to drive it away by your wickedness! And then most miserable, if you were to remain in the darkness of pride, of your own opinions, impatience, curiosity, sluggishness, and of other very bad vices, after receiving this grace in Holy Communion.

TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST¹⁰²

Before Holy Communion

1. *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly"* (Jn 10:10).

Consider that Christ the Lord is a good Shepherd, as He Himself testified in these words: "I am the good shepherd" (Jn 10:11). For there is nothing amiss with the goodness of a shepherd if He looks after the life of His flock and provides it with ample pastures. Notice that He did both things most eagerly, for He both gained life for us by His own death, and He likewise procures most abundantly for us, His sheep, the food of His Most Holy Body and the drink of His Most Sweet Blood, which continue to be the great and wholesome nourishment for our souls, as He stated: "[M]y flesh is food indeed and [M]y blood is drink indeed" (Jn 6:55).

What a fare! What sustenance! O Most Blessed Food, which not only purges the inmost part of a soul, but also nourishes! It drives away spiritual illness and pours in new strength. It is medicinal and nourishing! Therefore, take up your work, lest you consume this heavenly food in vain. For the servants do not eat fruitlessly the food generously given by their masters; but the more often and more sumptuously they are treated, the quicker, more diligent, and more zealous they are in fulfilling their duties. Would you sleep at the table of Christ?

2. *"I am the door; if anyone enters by [M]e, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture"* (Jn 10:9).

Ponder that which a certain spiritual man rightly observed: Christ the Lord, His life and teaching is the gate; while the Church, or a religious institute or some pious sodality is the sheepfold.¹⁰³ Therefore, those who enter through this gate, which

¹⁰² Before the changes to the liturgical calendar in 1969, this was Tuesday in the Octave of Pentecost, but in the *Novus Ordo* it is part of Ordinary Time.

¹⁰³ Cf. Ioannes Busaeus, *Feria III. Pentecostes*, in: *Enchiridion piarum meditationum in omnes dominicas, Sanctorum Festa, Christi passionem*, etc., Officina Typographica Balthasar Lippij, Moguntiae 1606, p. 65. From a marginal annotation we know that the "spiritual man" who made this observation was Johannes Busaeus, Jesuit author and theologian (1547-1611). Cf. J. Daoust, *New Catholic*

is Christ, into the sheepfold of Christ, which is the Church, or a religious institute or a sodality, will be undoubtedly saved. Also, the entrance through this gate is gained by pondering [f.60r] the teachings of the Savior, and especially by meditating on His Most Holy Passion and imitating His life.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, there are many who, while openly professing Christ, cherishing His truths of faith, and constantly reflecting upon them, yet draw away from the gate of salvation because they do not combine their reflections with practice. For only blessed are those who “hear the word of God and keep it” (Lk 11:28). As for you, proceed to the sacred table with the intention both of hearing and imitating, and you will find the most certain pastures there.

3. “*will go in and out*” (Jn 10:9).

Assuming that your religious community is that gate of Christ, consider that both are saved: those who enter through it, and those who go out. This means to say that not only those religious enter into life eternal, who, being once admitted within the walls of a monastery, give themselves to continuous solitude, prayer, penance and to the exercises of other virtues there, never appearing in public, never going outside. But indeed, everlasting life is also promised to those, who, compelled by obedience or charity, go out into the world to bring help either to their religious institute or to their neighbor, although they are thus prevented from adequately satisfying at the same time the duties of their religious community.

Staying among the people, they do not have the same opportunities for praying, meditating, applying themselves to pious reading, conducting spiritual conversations, and doing other things of this kind that are required of them as religious, as are preached by those who constantly remain in a religious house. But because they went out from there through the gate of charity or obedi-

Encyclopedia, vol. II, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York 1967, p. 909 (s.v. *Busaeus* (*De Buys*), *Johannes*). [Hereafter *New Catholic Encyclopedia* will be abbreviated as *NCE*.]

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *Busaeus*, p. 66.

ence, they are not deprived of their merits, and their salvation incurs no detriment.

Therefore, approach Christ, who awaits you on the altar, and ask Him for the virtue of submission, so that you do not refuse when He wants you to imitate Magdalene in praying, or to follow Martha's example in working¹⁰⁵ (cf. Lk:10:38-42). [f.60v]

After Holy Communion

1. *"To him the gatekeeper opens"* (Jn 10:3).

Consider that every Superior is to be understood under the name of "shepherd" and the Holy Spirit under the name of "gatekeeper," who opens the gate for the shepherd, that is to say, shows the Superior the right paths of the Lord on which He is to lead the sheep entrusted to Him, namely, His subordinate brothers and disciples, so that they would not deviate from the salutary path, driven by the winds of carnal lust, desire for praise, or their own gain.

Therefore, revere your Superiors as if Christ was staying with you; obey their orders, their wishes, and their will, as if they were the commands of the Holy Spirit; and be fully convinced that you will never be deceived if you are obedient to them.

2. *"for they know his voice"* (Jn 10:4).

Believe that it is the voice of the Lord if you hear the call to improve your life and to withdraw from the way of error; if you are encouraged to do penance for your faults; and if you are prompted to spurn the world, to deny yourself, to love your neighbor, and to obey. Lastly, if you are called to acquire all kinds of virtue, then the voice that stirs up, compels, and admonishes you is the voice of the Lord. Hence you will admit that those who hear, discern, and recognize this voice are very happy indeed! For this is the reason that they will never be deceived, and never err or be lost.

As for you, keep your heart always open to this voice, and say with the righteous David: "My heart is ready for You" (cf. Ps 57:8);

¹⁰⁵ St. Stanislaus follows the opinion of those who identify Mary Magdalene with Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha. Cf. Busaeus, p. 66.

O sweetest voice of the Lord: “let it be to me according to [Y]our word” (Lk 1:38)!

3. *“he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber”* (Jn 10:1).

Consider who the thieves and robbers are who do not enter through the gate and do not come from the Holy Spirit. To be precise, they are all the incentives to sin and to the more serious imperfections: all evil and carnal desires, [f.61r] vindictiveness, infliction of damage, malicious accusation, injuring others, and persecuting one’s neighbor (under the pretext of a just accusation or some kind of a zeal); renouncing virtue, breaking good resolutions, and abandoning the way of the Lord; and finally, hatred, rancor, envy, pride, and defiance. Since these things do not enter through the gate, Christ designates them by the name of thieves and criminals, for they steal from souls the Kingdom of God, and they kill them, like criminals. Indeed, the soul of any mortal is close to death whenever by desire it is close to committing a sin, and it is already dying when it is stained with a mortal offense.

As for you, try to avoid these thieves and criminals, namely, by overcoming your passions by the restraint of reason, lest they should overcome you. Indeed, Christ, whom you have received, will bring you help.

TRINITY SUNDAY

Before Holy Communion

1. *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to [M]e”* (Mt 28:18).

Consider that the Lord speaks here about Himself as a man, not God, since, according to His divinity, He is equal in power to the Father from all eternity, and that He did not receive this power from anyone, but that He always had it from Himself, as

St. Athanasius attests: “All-powerful Father, all-powerful Son, all-powerful Holy Spirit.”¹⁰⁶

Therefore, authority in Heaven was given to Christ as a man so that, having entered it first, He would open it to those who believe — to the just and holy — and close it to the faithless, unjust, and condemned. This power on earth was given to Him to annihilate all worship of created things, to crush idolatry, to bring the pagans to the true faith both personally and through His disciples, to institute His Church, and finally to reign in the minds, souls, and hearts of men everywhere.

O how happy will you be in the future, if today you subject yourself entirely to this most powerful King, who is coming to you in the familiar form of bread, lest He scare you away from receiving Him! [f.61v]

2. “*Go therefore and make disciples*” (Mt 28:19).

Consider the clemency and goodness of Christ, the true God. Although as the Lord of death, He could punish men severely due to their falling into the worship of various idols, as He had done once before in destroying the world by the Flood, yet He shows himself rather the Lord of life, as He orders the apostles: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19). But, why are they to do it? So that everyone, He says, “who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mk 16:16). Put, therefore, your hand to work with Christ, and cooperate with the gift of faith, that you may reach salvation.

3. “*make disciples of all nations*” (Mt 28:19).

Behold, the most gracious Savior! Desiring that no man should perish, He sends the apostles to every country, province, kingdom, and empire, indeed to the whole world, with the task of showing them the way to salvation.

Indeed, it is most certain that there simply is no part of the world, or of a nation, where the preaching of the Gospel would

¹⁰⁶ Athanasius, *Commentarius in Symbolum Quicumque: Tractatus de Fide Catholica* — #13, in: PG, vol. 28, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1598 (n. 665).

never come. Yet, the reason why we see that the majority of men find themselves in the darkness of idolatry and heresies, is this: They withdrew themselves from Christ and abandoned His teachings, deceived by Mohammed, Arius, Luther, Calvin, and other heresiarchs, indeed by the infernal spirit himself, who is the teacher of all errors and of those going astray. Thus, they bring on themselves their own perdition.

O the singular gift of God bestowed upon you of perseverance; [may you] persist in the holy vocation of the true faith! Cast your heart on the Lord, and say with the mouth of the Pharisee, but the heart of a pious Catholic: "Lord, I thank you that I am not like other people" (Lk 18:11). I give You thanks, Most Holy Trinity, that I walk not in the way of error, but of Truth; this is Your work, Your grace, Your benefaction. I humbly ask that You would enlighten the infidels also, convert the heretics [f.62r] and stir up sinners, so that under one Shepherd, in one sheepfold, we all together may acknowledge You openly, worship You, and love You forever and ever. Amen.

After Holy Communion

1. "*baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*" (Mt 28:19).

Note that Christ the Lord instituted two special Sacraments for the renewal of humanity: **Baptism** and **Penance**. You might wonder whether one of them is more efficacious than the other.

Baptism, especially in infants, removes the taint of original sin. Penance blots out in adults all transgressions committed after Baptism. The efficacy of Penance, as well as its necessity, is so great and outstanding that Penance has been called the "second plank after a shipwreck."¹⁰⁷ The first Sacrament is like a ship. When it is shattered by the winds of mortal sin, then the person who reaches out to the second, and similar Sacrament, (namely,

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Tertullian, *Operum Pars Prima: Series secunda — Libri Dogmatici: De Pœnitentia*, in: *PL*, vol. 1, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1844, pp. 1233-1234 (Caput IV and Commentarius "(e) Alicujus tabulæ").

the plank for the shipwrecked) and who embraces and firmly clings to it, will undoubtedly reach the port of Eternity.

You reached out to that last resort today when, having your conscience properly purified, you also received the food for the journey of those who sail over the stormy seas of the world. God grant that you hold on and do not let go of this plank, that you may see yourself safely in the heavenly harbor!

2. *“in the name of the Father, and of the Son,”* etc. (Mt 28:19).

Consider that God, triune in Persons, one in Essence, exists from all eternity. After the creation of the universe, you were formed, or rather the forefather of us all was formed, from whom our present existence emerges. And indeed, to him and to his posterity the ample and pleasant region of Paradise was given to be populated, and the universe to be possessed, and all living beings to be ruled. Death’s power over him was taken away, if only, in obedience to the Creator’s command, he would not taste the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (cf. Gen 2:17).

The Most Holy Trinity granted these first benefits to man, although the creation of things is attributed in a special way solely to the Father.

Think also now about the work of redemption. Consider the compassion by which the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, namely, the Son of God, was led when He took human flesh [f.62v] so that He would annihilate with His Blood not only original sin, but all the sins of men, and thus would open the gate of Heaven that was closed both to our first father (driven away from the Kingdom of Paradise for disobeying the divine command) and to all of us, His posterity.

Finally, prepare your mind to consider the benefits of the Holy Spirit. His office is to bring us to embrace the true faith, to recognize the Truth, to give us the knowledge of and aversion to our sins, to urge us to improve our life, to illumine our hearts with a special light, to turn the lodging of a demon into the dwelling of God, to infuse holy inspirations, to help us make and carry out good resolutions, and also to accomplish in man’s

soul many other works proper to Him until He brings the soul to a perfect enjoyment of the Most Holy Trinity.

3. Having considered the particular benefits of each Person of the Most Holy Trinity, give them thanks individually. Praise the good and almighty Father (for He created you for glory), and ask Him that He may not condemn you to disgrace. Extol the Son, because by His love He redeemed you to life, and humbly beseech Him that He may not thrust you down into eternal death because of your sins that deserve the greatest loathing. Exalt the Holy Spirit, who enlightened you through grace, and earnestly ask Him that, due to His just anger, He may not send you down to the infernal darkness.¹⁰⁸

Then conclude these manifestations of your affections for the Most Holy Trinity with those fervent words of the Three Young Men:¹⁰⁹ “Let us bless the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Let us praise and exalt [H]im above all forever. Blessed are [Y]ou, Lord, in the firmament of [H]eaven. Praiseworthy and glorious and exalted above all forever.”¹¹⁰ [f.63r]

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI

Before Holy Communion

1. “*gave a great banquet*” (Lk 14:16).

Consider the two meanings of this banquet: The first is the divine vision, fully enjoyed by the souls admitted to the heavenly banquet hall; the other is the banquet of Holy Communion that

¹⁰⁸ In the original Latin: *ad Acherontis tenebris*; “Acheron” — the river in Epirus, which flows into the Ionian Sea. Because of its semi-underground course, it was considered the legendary river of the underworld, and also synonymous with hell. Cf. Alojzy Jougan, *Słownik kościelny łacińsko-polski*, Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, Poznań 1958, p. 10. Cf. *FLL*, vol 1, Typis Seminarii, Patavii 1864, p. 53 (s.v. *Acheron*). Cf. *CLD*, p. 8 (s.v. *Acheron*).

¹⁰⁹ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Cf. Daniel 3:12, 51.

¹¹⁰ *LHE*, vol. III, p. 690 (Week I — Sunday, Morning Prayer: Canticle — Last Stanza).

the Lord Jesus prepared for the faithful of the Church Militant. How sweet is its food! How salutary is its drink! The food is the Body of Christ; the drink is the Blood of Christ. Compared to them, all the food and all the drinks of the world, even the most exquisite ones, are but a shadow, or rather an abomination. And yet, for shame! The table of God is so easily abandoned, is despised by many for the sake of human tables! They are the ones who, on account of carnal delights and through their incredible laziness, have become accustomed to deprive their souls of the heavenly ambrosia and nectar,¹¹¹ while those who worthily enjoy the divine feasts may be regarded entirely as gods.

2. *“invited many”* (Lk 14:16).

Consider that the greatness and excellence of a banquet is manifested in the number and dignity of the guests attending. Hence the Lord’s Supper is great and excellent, for many men are invited to it, whom God has made kings of the earth; the whole world is invited really: “Come to me, all...” (Mt 11:28) says Christ the Host.

Reflect that this banquet is really so sumptuous, that if all of Heaven and earth would assemble for it, they would not run out of food for a whole century, even for all eternity. What you should admire most of all is that the participants of this sacred banquet always consume the entire Christ, and yet He is always intact; He is not dismembered; He is not diminished. Very miserable indeed are those who neglect this banquet because of their little faith, or pusillanimity, or finally because of some very vain occupations.

3. *“But they all alike began to make excuses”* (Lk 14:18).

Consider the pettiness of the excuses of the foolish people who were invited to the great banquet. One said that he must take a good look at a farm; [f.63v] another claimed that he must test the oxen; finally, the last one, more foolish than the others, declared that he was impeded by the fact of his recent marriage

¹¹¹ “Ambrosia” — the food of gods (CLD, p. 34); “nectar” — the drink of gods (CLD, p. 361).

(cf. Lk 14:18-20). Infer from this how greatly prosperity, abundance, honors, and riches obstruct the way to human salvation; how much it is impeded by avarice and lust, as well as by vulgar relations and carnal love. People offered these things as excuses for not attending.

Whence it is said about the rich: "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 19:24). It is also declared about the impure: "do not throw your pearls before swine" (Mt 7:6). Who are these swine, if not the people rolling in the mud of lust!

O thrice blessed are the religious, for whom the Lord removed these impediments to salvation through the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience!

After Holy Communion

1. "*Come, eat*" (cf. Lk 14:17).¹¹²

O, what a great love of the merciful God shines here for us! How great His generosity shows itself to be! Having set the table, He affectionately and paternally invites our famished souls to partake in the heavenly dishes, and to consume His very self: **Come!** However, you do not realize how many are those who are deaf to His sweet invitation; how many despise His table, filled as it is with the most exquisite food and drink! They prefer to die from eternal hunger for the sake of worthless and often perverse reasons rather than to take part, in response to His merciful invitation, in the rich banquet provided by the God-Man.

It is out of His goodness that He has invited you to it; and out of His grace He decided to give you His Body to consume. Therefore, as an expression of your gratitude, repay Him with great thanksgiving for such a splendid and salutary meal, and keeping in your heart the memory of such a great favor, not only on this day, but for many days to come, until the next banquet.

2. "*he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited 'Come; for all is now ready'*" (Lk 14:17).

¹¹² RSV: "Come; for all is now ready" (Lk 14:17).

Reflect that this “servant” is God’s inspiration and instigation, which drew us to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Although all citizens of the world are indeed invited guests, the special guests are those whom the Holy Spirit [f.64r] often inspires with a special grace to lead a better life and attracts to the divine love in many different ways, mainly by means of frequent Communion. When they do not show obedience to Him, He abandons them. Then the Lord dispatches the servant, namely a holy incentive, to invite others who are poorer, that is, not so abundantly endowed by Him with grace.

Consider your position among the guests invited to the Lord’s banquet. See with what dishes you were nourished and what effects they had on you: did these effects include an improvement of lifestyle, self-contempt, divine love, humility, patience, fortitude and other virtues? And also, finally, be on your guard, lest by your sluggishness you impede or annihilate these effects.

3. *“bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame”* (Lk 14:21).

Ask yourself: who are those poor, maimed, blind, and lame? Undoubtedly, they are the sinners stripped of virtues, wavering in their good resolutions, failing to perceive the path of justice, and not walking rightly before the Lord. Nevertheless, the Divine Goodness orders that such people be invited to the great banquet, to His table. When they begin to repent, He first adorns them there with the garment of innocence, strengthens them for accomplishing good works, illuminates them with the heavenly light and restores to them the ability to walk, so that they would firmly persevere in the way of perfection. He does this by the efficacious, inspiring, helping, and accompanying grace that He gives them at the reception of Holy Communion.

Therefore, do not despise sinners, whom God can justify in a moment. Also, do not treat lightly nor sometimes neglect the truly great banquet of the Lord! It is so fruitful that it enriches the poor, strengthens the maimed, enlightens the blind, and makes the lame walk rightly.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [H]im” (Lk 15:1).*

As the sun draws up harmful moisture from the earth, and sometimes makes the reptiles come out, so Jesus, the Sun of Justice, was attracting, and continued to attract to Himself the tax collectors, [f.64v] the sinners, and other wicked people. He did it to such great extent that if you consider His whole life, you discover that it was spent on deeds of mercy and compassion. Still in His cradle, He attracted the pagan Kings; when He was teaching, He attracted Zacchaeus, Matthew, Magdalene, and numerous others; when dying, He attracted a thief, a centurion, and Longinus, who pierced His side. What is more: as the head of His Church He set up none other than a sinner.

And so you, a sinner, come near this Magnet; that is to say, the uncreated Sun, who often and with such great clemency draws sinners to Himself by the bonds of charity. And when you see that you have been drawn to Him, having already attained some improvement, try to edify other sinners by your example.

2. *“to hear [H]im” (Lk 15:1).*

Consider how very blessed were those sinners and tax collectors who gathered for the sole purpose of hearing Jesus. Indeed, they did not have the same intention for listening to His discourses as the Pharisees had, who were only watching for what He would say. But these sinners wanted to hear Him, because the words of eternal life, for which they had a very great longing, flowed out from His mellifluous mouth like the dew.

You are miserable indeed if you hear and read the words of God with any other intention than obtaining from them saving fruit. Moreover, you are even more appalling if you do not prepare nor open your heart to the inspirations of the most eloquent Jesus in this Holy Communion.

3. “*the Pharisees and the scribes murmured*” (Lk 15:2).

Consider that the vice of pride is opposed not only to humility, but also to mercy. Indeed, you perceive this in the murmuring Pharisees who, like the cruelest robbers of souls, envy sinners for the grace of the Savior. Puffed up with pride, they rise up against them and want to destroy them; not even wanting them to be recalled by the words of the eternal Word to a morally better life.

As for you, therefore, consider that whenever you sense an internal murmur, you are tied up with the ropes of pride. Wherefore, when you approach the Master of humility, ask Him for the virtue of humility. And He, “who makes the sun to rise upon the good, and bad” (cf. Mt 5:45), will not condemn you either. [f.65r]

After Holy Communion

1. “*This man receives sinners*” (Lk 15:2).

Consider that the limits of divine goodness, clemency, and mercy are infinite; from this it follows that God will not reject any sinner, even if he were the most wicked. Indeed, He says, sweetly inviting those burdened with many transgressions: “Come to [M]e, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you” (Mt 11:28) [DRB]. And also, so that they would not fear to draw near, He declares that He did not come to save “the righteous, but sinners” (Mt 9:13).

Indeed, this is what has happened to you today. Burdened as you were with so many and such great imperfections, He invited you to the sacred table in the friendliest manner; and of course, He did not eat with you, but gave Himself to you to consume.

O, what clemency! O, what grace! From a vessel of abomination you became an ark of God that contains not the bread of offering (cf. Mt 12:4), but the bread of angels. Ask this Lord, whom you contain within yourself, that He may impart a blessing to your house, which He now dwells in, as He imparted His blessing to the house of Zacchaeus (cf. Lk 19:5-10) and to that of Obededom (cf. 1 Chron 13:14), houses which held only the figure of the Sacrament received by you.

2. “*and eats with them*” (Lk 15:2).

Consider that Jesus, as He was staying among the people, conversed lovingly with sinners, just as He converses with them now. Therefore, He does not deny His Body and Blood to them, although they are unprepared, according to the Church’s song: “Bad and good the feast are sharing.”¹¹³

Each man, however, should strive to prepare himself to the best of his ability before consuming this manna of the New Testament, lest he eat judgment on himself (cf. 1 Cor 11:29). Moreover, it is fitting for those rising from the sacred table, to conduct themselves devoutly, so that they would spread through their ardor the sparks of divine love, instead of extinguishing them by their half-heartedness. Just as it is not recommended, and even harmful, to go outdoors and tax oneself after taking some medicine for the body, so it is not at all beneficial after receiving spiritual medicine to become distracted or occupied with superfluous matters.

And so you, having entered the chamber of your heart, contemplate only yourself and your Guest, Jesus, that your fire of love may warm Him and His fire of love warm you. [f.65v]

3. “*there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents*” (Lk 15:10).

Consider that “penance” here means both the virtue and the Sacrament of Penance. Therefore, by confessing your sins, having sorrow for them, and making a very firm resolution not to sin any more, you gave joy to the angels. Cause them more joy by taking up voluntary mortifications, whether for the sake of atonement or for the prevention of sin, and by exercising yourself willingly, yet discreetly, in the mortification of your body.

Just as friends feel the greatest joy when their friends return from a long voyage, so our friends the angels greatly rejoice when they see how, after having suffered the shipwreck of our inno-

¹¹³ This quote is from the Sequence *Lauda Sion*, for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi: *LM*, p. 979 (Stanza 17). In *IC crit. ed.* these words are quoted from the Latin original, where it is simply said: “*Sumunt boni, sumunt mali*” (“The good receive, the bad receive”): *MIR*, p. 398 (*In Festo Sanctissimi Corporis Christi, Sequentia*).

cence, we resort to penance, and with its help we strive to make it to the shore of the heavenly Fatherland. Thus, delight these heavenly beings by doing solid penance.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“But at [Y]our word I will let down the nets”* (Lk 5:5).

Consider that distrust is the greatest impediment in undertaking all heroic works, in our efforts to uproot vice, and in our desire to exercise virtue. On the other hand, trust is the most powerful help in accomplishing very great things, as David boasts: “O my God, in [Y]ou I trust, let me not be put to shame” (Ps 25:2).

At the same time, consider that the efforts of many people become ineffectual in their many works, because they do not let down the nets at the word of the Lord. Also, those fishers of men who seek by their teaching their own praise and not the praise of God, not the salvation of souls, will not make a catch. You take care then, that having a good intention, you may do all things at the word of the Lord.

2. *“Master, we toiled all night and took nothing!”* (Lk 5:5).

Consider that those holy fishermen, having despaired of the success of their fishing and washed their nets, were getting ready to go ashore when [f.66r] the Master suddenly appeared and told them not to lose heart and to throw their nets into the water. Then a large previously unseen multitude of fish was drawn out.

Thus, sometimes we dedicate ourselves to fishing with great effort for the whole night; namely, for many years and many decades; but with no fruit, and, beginning to despair, we abandon the care of our neighbor as if our work were futile; and then, suddenly the help of divine grace comes and sends a great catch into our nets.

Learn from this, or rather resolve, that no weariness, no injury nor inconvenience shall drive you away from work undertaken for your own or someone else’s perfection, but that you will do it

to the best of your ability. And God, although He may be slow in coming, is to be expected, and He will support your good intention and your diligent effort.

3. *“they left everything and followed [H]im”* (Lk 5:11).

Ponder two things here. First, that those who are following or who want to follow Christ, must leave all things: the world, honors, earthly possessions, friendships, loved ones, relatives, parents, “and their own life also” (cf. Lk 14:26), and subject their own will to the will of another. This is, in short, the way of those who tread in the footsteps of Christ. Second, consider that those whom Christ won over by His favors, graces, and benefits have a greater obligation to imitate Christ perfectly. This is what these holy fishermen did, who, having seen their catch of fish as evidently both a miracle performed and a grace just for them; immediately, “leaving all things, they followed Jesus” (cf. Lk 5:11).

And since Holy Communion does not belong among the lesser benefits of Christ, consider what demands are laid upon you who receive it.

After Holy Communion

1. *“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord”* (Lk 5:8).

Consider that the first effect of the Divine Presence is self-knowledge. Just as the dirt remaining in the house is concealed during the night, but is easy to see when the sun has risen, it is the same when the divine light is far from us, and we do not feel even our most obvious faults. O, how clearly we perceive the stains of our imperfections; even let us say, the monsters of our evil deeds when the rays of the divine light penetrate the room of our heart [f.66v]. Thus, St. Peter acknowledged being a sinner only when in the boat he saw Christ, the eternal Sun.

Woe to you! If, carrying Him in your heart today, you do not see and profess yourself a sinner.

2. *“I am a sinful man”* (Lk 5:8).

Consider that those whom the uncreated Light endowed with self-knowledge act best. For they grieve when they see their evil

deeds; they feel loathing when they recognize their ugliness; and when by divine grace they conclude that they are the greatest sinners, they toil greatly for their salvation.

You are wretched, if you do not see your faults, if you are blind at the examination of conscience and if, in spite of your hidden defects, you rejoice at being called a saint and believe yourself to be one. But, how will this beautiful sanctity of yours truly appear when God your Judge comes, descending from Heaven in the clouds, and “explores Jerusalem with lamps” (cf. Zeph 1:12).

Therefore, admit being a sinner now, as He comes down to your inmost heart like the most gracious Father.

3. “*Do not be afraid*” (Lk 5:10).

Consider that upon leaving the sacred table, many people are bothered by their imperfections: embarrassed and worried that they have received Holy Communion unworthily, they exclaim: “Depart from me, O Lord” (cf. Lk 5:8); however, nobody should fear, unless they received the Divine Body not for the sake of their salvation but out of derision.

For if you fear that you are a sinner, remember that Jesus came to save sinners. If you fear that He came to you while you were not prepared, Jesus will remove the flaws of your preparation. If you are disturbed by the thought that you received Him unworthily, although you are not aware of committing any serious sin, know that none of those who receive Holy Communion can be sure of this, except for Jesus whom you received.

If, finally, you fear lest suddenly you should lapse and fall into an illness of the soul, trust in Jesus. For the most gracious Jesus came to you so that He could strengthen, protect, and save you.

Therefore, do not fear; but instead greatly rejoice, because “today salvation has come to your house” (cf. Lk 19:9). [f.67r]

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. “*unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees*” (Mt 5:20).

Consider how the truthful and holy Master exhorts His disciples in their advancement and perfection, namely: that they zealously strive to make progress so that no one surpasses them in sanctity of life, and that they may surpass everyone in the excellence of their virtues, and thus obtain the heavenly Kingdom.

As for you, make no less effort than this so that you may be the most perfect of all. Hence, stimulated by a kind of holy envy, try hard to surpass everybody by your virtues. Do not believe the opinion that it is sufficient for you to be at the same level as others. Do not doubt at all that when you think that that you stand with others in the highest degree of perfection, you remain in the lowest degree. For not unjustly does Christ admonish: “Be perfect, as also My Heavenly Father is perfect” (cf. Mt 5:48). Thus, the greatest Teacher of perfection wants you to have the perfection of God Himself.

Therefore, let your righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, yet, since you depart from it so quickly and so often, beg God, who is about to come to you, to accomplish in you what He commands.¹¹⁴

2. “*every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment*” (Mt 5:22).

Consider how seriously fraternal charity is commended to you, and at the same time realize that your soul is your brother. Indeed, you persecute your soul in anger whenever, as if out of envy for future glory you miss an occasion of merit. Also, you do the same by rushing along wholeheartedly to do evil things and

¹¹⁴ Cf. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Trans. Henry Chadwick, Oxford University Press, Oxford — New York 1992, Bk. X, Ch. 29: “Grant what you command, and command what you will” [Hereafter *Confessions* will be abbreviated as AC.] Cf. Augustinus, *Soliloquia*, in: *Meditationes, Soliloquia et Manuale*, Lugduni-Parisiis 1861, p. 136 (Ch. 18, § 5).

listening to the suggestions of the flesh, or of the world and the cunning evil spirit; you take away from your soul the ornaments, namely the splendor of virtues, with which it was once endowed by God, its Bridegroom.

Be on your guard, lest on that account you experience the gravity of divine judgment, and prepare your soul now, promising henceforth every possible obedience to right reason.

3. *“every one who is angry with his brother”* etc. (Mt 5:22).

Secondly, consider that the word “brother” means any neighbor, [f.67v] but mostly those of the household of the faith (cf. Gal 6:10). Consider, therefore, whether you have one heart and one soul with all (cf. Acts 4:32); whether you are troublesome to someone; whether you blame or accuse somebody with more zeal than is appropriate. Consider why you interfere with someone else’s promotion; why you do not rejoice in the qualities and talents of others; why you are not favorable to their progress in perfection; why you are ill-disposed toward some; why you address them with stern and harsh words.

Consider whether all this proceeds from a just zeal, or rather from an angry disposition, lest you be punished by a very severe verdict of the Judge, who comes to you today.

After Holy Communion

1. *“and whoever says, ‘You fool!’”* (Mt 5:22).

Consider how harmful it is to reflect upon the defects of others, or even more to magnify them, for this is not your concern at all. Oh, that you may never fulminate in words against others! But, noticing somebody’s imperfections, you should rather attribute them to yourself and say: he learned this evil from me; I used to fall into similar faults; I gave him evil example; this is my vice, not his; I perceive these things in me, not in my brother.

Oh, what a great effort I should make, that I might correct these defects in myself, which are conspicuous to me in others! Oh, how most perverse, most ungrateful, most negligent am I of all creatures! O Lord, unless You help me, I will perish.

Convert me, O God my Savior, and turn Your anger from me (cf. Ps 85:5).

2. *“first be reconciled to your brother”* (Mt 5:24).

Consider that here it was made clear by the heavenly Master **that he who does not burn with the love of neighbor, is unworthy of the love of God**, and that he who is not reconciled with his brother and is not favorable to him, does not merit reconciliation with the Savior, or receive His favor. [f.68r]

Woe to you, if returning from the altar and carrying within your heart the same self-love, you again irritate someone and fill him with sadness! Realize that the Lord wants you to be reconciled again with your brother. For **love** and **hatred** cannot agree, or linger in one heart.

3. *“Settle with your opponent quickly”* (Mt 5:25) [NAB].

Consider that your opponents are all those things that are opposed to your ill will and seem difficult to accomplish, although they are very good. Therefore, it is a right thing that you quickly agree with them; that you undertake them without delay, without murmur and resistance, and that you bring about their perfect accomplishment. For what kind of virtue do you show if you execute cheerfully only those things that are required of you that are according to your liking? Indeed, if you want to be a hero, you should imitate the heroic deeds of the Redeemer whom you have just received; namely, His conformation,¹¹⁵ resignation and abnegation.

Seek therefore occasions to let go of your own opinion. Indeed, since you have offered to hell so many victims of your own will, offer now to Heaven, (although late) only one victim: your entire will.

¹¹⁵ That is, of His will with the will of the Father. Cf. Lk 22:42.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *"I have compassion on the crowd"* (Mk 8:2).

Consider that it was not out of justice, but out of pity, that the Savior refreshed the crowd following Him: the people exhausted by three days of fasting.

Thus, do not think that it is because of your merit, if at times you are given to drink the nectar of heavenly sweets, and offered ambrosia, the food of the gods; but you should instead attribute it to the Divine Mercy and goodness. Thus, perceiving your hunger and the weariness of your soul, God came to help by the sweetness of His generosity, lest your soul collapse on the way. Wherefore, how right it is that you hear Him, how assiduously [f.68v] you should imitate Him, how persistently you should follow Him!

2. *"some of them have come a long way"* (Mk 8:3).

Consider that these, who come from afar off, are converted sinners. They return to Christ not from the mouths of the Nile, Tiber or Ganges, but from the gates of hell. He refreshes them too by heavenly consolations and seasons their bitter penance with the sweetness of internal delights.

Just as the prodigal son was tormented by great hunger, you also journey to your most gentle Father from the distant region to which your imperfections attracted you. Oh, with what great desire, expecting you, He cries aloud: "Come, come, and do not hesitate!" To what a sumptuous banquet He is going to welcome you: "a great supper!" (cf. Lk 14:16).

3. *"How many loaves have you?"* (Mk 8:5).

Consider that it was not unknown to the Lord, to whom all things stand open, how many loaves were in His supply of provisions. Yet, He sought to get information. He wanted to test the faith of His disciples.

I believe that He wanted also to teach you, who are about to approach His table, that although you carry nothing except countless sins, you should come nonetheless with confidence, both to

get rid of your burden, and to satisfy your spiritual hunger. Yet it is necessary now to inquire of yourself: how many imperfections do you have? What qualms of conscience do you feel? What is lacking for your perfection? What is lacking for your goodness? That way you will know better how to place your needs before the most gracious Lord.

After Holy Communion

1. *“because they have been with [M]e now three days”* (Mk 8:2).

Consider that this crowd following the Lord was given some refreshment not at first, but only after three days; so that you may be taught that there are a countless number of people, [f.69r] who having spent many years in the service of God, do not receive any gift of consolation, which is a sign of the good will of the eternal King.

Take as an example the singular St. Teresa. Although she was a handmaid of God distinguished by very rare virtue, she was for a long time among very grave storms of affliction and persecution and she was not granted any of the refreshment of heavenly consolations, with which sanctity on the earth usually abounds.¹¹⁶

Persisting in the service of God, your duty, therefore, will be to try to refresh your good Lord by fulfilling His will, rather than desiring to be refreshed by Him with those sublime delights which are more to be reserved for the future life.

2. *“And they ate, and were satisfied”* (Mk 8:8).

Consider that it is a greater miracle that we eat Christ so many times and do not consume Him wholly, than that the four thousand people who were fed with seven loaves left seven baskets of crumbs and fragments. Yet, we are astonished at this miracle of the loaves and we proclaim it, whereas it seems as if we do not notice that other miracle. The reason for this fact is nothing else than the frequent use of Holy Communion. All things, when

¹¹⁶ St. Teresa of Avila, *The Book of Her Life*, in: CWTA. Trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, 2nd ed. rev., vol. 1, ICS Publications, Washington, DC, 1987, pp. 256-257, 259-261 (Ch. 30, §§ 8, 13-15); pp. 264-267 (Ch. 31, §§ 1-7); pp. 284-292 (Ch. 33); pp. 309-322 (Ch. 36).

used often, lose value, while rarity gains them value. However, by the mystery of faith, you would hold this most profound Sacrament in continuous admiration. Be on your guard lest it have little importance and esteem, since you use it so frequently. But the more often you receive it, the more you should appreciate that Christ is there always whole, never different, always intact!

3. "*And they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets*" (Mk 8:8) [DRB].

Consider the excellent effort of the apostles, which they manifested in making public this miracle, first by the diligent collecting of crumbs, then by commemorating it in writing. For thus it is fitting not to blot out of our memory the works and marvels of God.

As for you, you keep silent about the countless benefits God granted to you. You see that God nourishes the whole world and you are not astonished at it. The countless throngs of the poor, of religious and various [f.69v] men, indeed, the whole world is nourished, ruled and sustained every day by Him; and you are not astounded at it, and you do not praise God for it. It is He who secures food and clothing, even for His rather negligent servants. He takes care of this house, which you inhabit. He guards the good name of His disciples; for them He makes a great name, gains authority, secures love, guards their honor, grants them supernatural goods without restraint, succors their health, offers them conveniences, hastens to aid them in every necessity. Will you, however, not appreciate it? Nor admire it? Nor praise it? Will you be silent about it? Will you not repay it by worthy gratitude?

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. "*Beware of false prophets*" (Mt 7:15).

Consider that for you it is not the matter of prophets, but of your inclinations, of your senses. It is of them that you should beware, lest by the appearance of good, they cast you down to the calamity of hell.

What a false prophet is sight, which for the most part mars the image of a decent thing with bad internal ideas! A false prophet also is hearing, which is open to any idle conversations, and causes so many distractions for you when you are about to pray. A false prophet also is taste, which through gluttony promises you strength of body and firmness of mind, but in reality weakens both of them. A false prophet also is touch, which pleases now, but torments thereafter. Finally, the sense of smell is a false prophet, which rejects some smells as something that will bring harm to you, and accepts pleasant smells as something that will do you good, and deceives you in each case.

Beware of these false prophets: it is you who should govern them, and they should not govern and deceive you.

2. "*who come to you in sheep's clothing*" (Mt 7:15).

You should consider the rectitude of your thoughts and examine their quality. For how often, when they are very foul, do they penetrate into your mind as very beautiful? In this way, they are admitted quite often under the appearance of devotion, yet they cause the effect of impiety.

They come, indeed, under the veil of zeal, but many times they conceal an angry disposition. They come under the garment of good love, but bring evil [f.70r] love. They come under the veil of justice, but they really bring vengeance. They come under the cover of discretion, but in truth they are thoughts of half-heartedness. Finally, they come as manifestations of sanctity, and after their departure they leave a sense of illusion.

Be on your guard, lest you allow wolves in the clothing of sheep to enter into you.

3. "*but inwardly are ravenous wolves*" (Mt 7:15).

Consider that it is characteristic of the evil one that he feigns to be a sheep, lest recognized as a wolf, he be shunned. Thus, by reason of an urgent necessity, he deceived Saul, so that Saul offered sacrifice without the approval of Samuel; while truly more acceptable to God would have been his obedience, rather than a sacrificial victim (cf. 1 Sam 15:22).

In this way he usually deceives many now also, to whom he holds out weakness as a pretext, that they would not take upon themselves mortifications; he inspires concern for a good name, lest they be eager to be condemned; he promises Heaven as already guaranteed, that they would not strive for it any more. Alas! It is a wolf, and not a sheep!

Therefore, ask the Lord at the sacred table, that He would impart to you the light to distinguish sheep from wolves, good things from evil ones.

After Holy Communion

1. *"You will know them by their fruits"* (Mt 7:16).

Behold the Lord already shows you the way to recognize false prophets (namely the impact of senses, thoughts and inspirations) when He teaches that they are to be judged by their effects, consequences and fruits. For just as He Himself said: "An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, and a good (tree) evil (fruit)" (cf. Mt 7:18), thus the end of good inspirations and thoughts is very good and the result of evil ones is very bad.

Hence, you should not think that the contemplation and illumination that freed you from contrition, obedience, and self-contempt was from God. You should not judge as good any ecstasies, raptures, and visions that do not make you good or better than you are.

Do not believe anything to be holiness which does not have charity, and which lacks humility. [f.70v]

2. *"Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit, shall be cut down"* (Mt 7:19).

Consider yourself as placed in this religious community, like a tree planted in God's garden. Moreover, lest you fall into a crisis of your vocation, lest you undergo the danger of being cut down, observe which fruits and what kinds you are going to bring forth here. You should fear the sad case of those who, because of the neglect of their vocation, were cut down and cast out from the beautiful garden of Christ, like unfruitful or wild trees. Where-

fore work hard, that you may “bring forth much fruit in patience” (cf. Lk 8:15).

3. *“and thrown into the fire”* (Mt 7:19).

Consider how a prudent landholder, taking into account not only the embellishment, but also the profit from his garden, plants various little trees, irrigates the ones planted, and is not accustomed to neglect anything regarding their needs. But when he sees that any one of them, in spite of such care, does not grow and does not bring forth fruit, but indeed that being unfruitful it has withered, in order that it would not be in the way or be a cause of disgrace, he cuts it down and gives it up to the flames.

What great care that heavenly Lord displays also for you, His beloved tree! Behold today He watered you with His own Blood, like a most exquisite rose; He fertilized you with His Most Holy Body, like a chosen vine.

Woe to you if you do not bear fruit, if you become unfruitful, if you wither! Then the fire, the fire awaits you, and indeed an everlasting one.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“who had a steward”* (Lk 16:1).

Consider that you also are a steward of God, who gave you your soul and five senses that you should govern them. He gave you knowledge and some cognizance of spiritual matters [**f.71r**] to administer these gifts; not that you would waste them or hide them in the earth, but that by their good administration, you may make profit and fruit for your Lord.

Consider therefore your qualities and ability; and be on your guard not to neglect what you could do for God’s honor, for the salvation and the advantage of your neighbor and for your own. **For it is a sacrilege to be unwilling to make use of divine gifts.**

2. *“What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your stewardship”* (Lk 16:2).

Consider how often secular lords disregard and postpone the reception of accounts from their stewards, until they hear something evil spoken of them. In a similar manner this rich man in the Gospel acted with his steward, who was defamed before him, because he had wasted his goods.

No differently does that heavenly Lord disregard the sins of those who serve Him, until they burst forth in the open. Thus, He endured for a long time the sons of Eli, but when the people began to be scandalized by their plunders, He hastened to call them to give an account by a terrible death (cf. 1 Sam 2:12-34).

Hence learn that God waits for the correction of hidden sins for a long time and patiently; whereas public scandals, even if less serious, are punished quickly and severely.

3. *“What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me?”* (Lk 16:3).

This certainly is the last good fortune of wicked servants: to be roused from the profound lethargy of their sins, especially by imminent punishment for their bad stewardship.

Fortunate are you if you imitate the praised foresight of today’s steward. He is called to make a settlement of the accounts, and since he foresees that in doing so he is to undergo a great danger, he donates much to his debtors, so that also his own debts would be forgiven him.¹¹⁷

The Lord will require also from you, both at another time and in today’s Communion, an account of the words, deeds and thoughts, and all things by which you have offended Him. O you, miserable one! What kind of ruse will you resort to then? Are you going to be so out of your mind and insane, that you will retain in your soul some hatred against your neighbor, wanting to avoid God’s hatred? Or will you not wholeheartedly forgive everyone for injuries and offenses, desiring that God grant you a similar grace? [f.71v]

¹¹⁷ The Gospel does not mention the debt of the steward; this is St. Stanislaus’ own interpretation.

After Holy Communion

1. "*Turn in the account*" (Lk 16:2).

You should demand of yourself an account of today's Communion. Ask yourself: With what disposition and how well prepared were you when approaching the sacred table? With regard to your conduct there, were you filled with devotion? With eagerness, with piety? In what manner, in fact, did you return from there? What thanks did you express to the Lord? How long were you recollected? What fruit, what profit and what graces have you received from this Most Blessed Sacrament?

Give an account to yourself, that you may either take notice of your failings, or make progress in these kinds of dispositions.

2. "*I am not strong enough to dig*" (Lk 16:3).

Behold what great anxiety sluggishness creates in this despairing steward!

He does not say that he does not know how to dig, but that he is not strong enough, and this means that he is lazy, and not ignorant.

But because ignorance is more easily excused than idleness, truly you would be more fortunate to be judged as ignorant than as sluggish. Wherefore, when some labor is imposed upon you, or you assume it voluntarily for the glory of God, take care that you do not say or think: I cannot do it, this occupation is beyond my strength, I am not able to undertake such a difficult or such an ordinary labor.

On the contrary, infusing yourself with courage, say with Paul: "I can do all things in [H]im who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13) by His Body and Blood, the good God.

3. "*I am ashamed to beg*" (Lk 16:3).

Behold the son of a white hen,¹¹⁸ behold the pampered chicken, behold the tender lover of the world. He is ashamed to be poor,

¹¹⁸ The original Latin text has: "*albae gallinae filius*" ("the son of a white hen"), which is a proverb, from the 1st century A.D. poet Junius Juvenalis, meaning "a lucky fellow" (*CLD*, p. 28 (s.v. *albus*)). Cf. *SLL*, vol. 1, Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii: 1758, p. 322 (s.v. *Gallina*): "that is [someone who is] happy, fortunate, celebrated."

he is ashamed to beg alms from door to door, he is ashamed to be a beggar.

Rejoice in your voluntary poverty and desire that you arrive at such a state that, while begging, a piece of bread would be refused to you, and that there would be no one from whom you could receive it. For you profess yourself to be a poor one of that Lady¹¹⁹ [f.72r] who, having just brought forth the Son of God, “laid [Him] in a manger, because there was no place for [Him] in the inn” (cf. Lk 2:7).

You glory that you are a servant of that King who, when He came into the world subject to Him, as created by Him, did not have even a quiet corner to lay His infant head comfortably (cf. Mt 8:20; Lk 9:58).

Therefore, do not be ashamed to beg.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. “*seeing the city, [H]e wept over it*” (Lk 19:41) [DRB].

Consider that, if Christ the Lord, foreseeing and predicting the future destruction of the city of Jerusalem, was not able to restrain Himself from profuse tears because of the great pain, then with what sadness He is struck, how intensely He is pained and with what lamentation He is shaken, when He foresees the fall of your soul, or sees that already it has fallen into ruin and is devastated and not reformed. For your soul is the city of the Most High: its inhabitants are the senses; the buildings the members; the ornamentation the virtues; the city walls the body; the city gates the eyes and ears; the heart is the royal throne, the fortified citadel, and the fortress.

Therefore, O my soul, bring relief to your Jesus, who is weeping for you! For thus you may hope that you will avoid ruin, or if it has

¹¹⁹ This is said to the Piarists, members of the Congregation “of the Poor of the Mother of God.”

already happened, that you will repair it with His help. Put your inhabitants in order (the senses), mortifying them, that they withdraw no more from the divine love and make no more sacrifices to idols, that is to sins, to your own will, and to your self-love.

2. “[H]e wept over it” (Lk 19:41) [DRB].

Consider how great a consolation Jesus would receive, if one of His friends would assist Him in bewailing the forthcoming ruin of Jerusalem. Thus, realize that it is very pleasing and very delightful to Him, when we expiate by daily tears not only our imperfections, but bewail also the ruin of other souls who are in mortal sin; offering supplications for them to the Divine Majesty, together with voluntary acts of penance, in order to restore them; striving that they be recalled and [f.72v] led back to their former state of grace.

Wherefore, whatever tears the Lord will grant you in this Holy Communion, remember to share them with miserable sinners, especially with those who in their most recent fall found themselves in danger of the eternal punishment of hell.

3. “*Would that even today you knew*” (Lk 19:42).

Consider the great darkness that is found in the human mind, and first and foremost in your mind. You do not know and do not acknowledge not only the sins committed since the beginning of your use of reason, but you also do not notice those that you have committed even today, at this moment. Indeed, it would be more bearable if you did not weep for what you do not know; but you, as if pretending that things are not as they are, do not want to acknowledge those faults for which you are responsible, although you perceive them more clearly than you perceive yourself. Indeed, you do not begin to weep bitterly for them, because of the pride of your mind, the disgrace of your soul and the hardness of your heart.

Would that at least this time, when you approach the uncreated Light, you would notice, reveal, and no longer conceal the dimness of your soul and of your mind so that the eternal Sun at His arrival would not find you in darkness! Whatever sins you have, confess them and do not pretend to be the innocent John,

but, going to the banquet with Christ, consider yourself rather as a penitent Zacchaeus.

After Holy Communion

1. “[H]e wept over it” (Lk 19:41) [DRB].

O the incredible of goodness of God! O the immense love, even towards those who are ungrateful and towards enemies! He knows that by these very people whose grievous lot He mourns, He is to be killed. He knows that in this city, the forthcoming destruction of which He mourns, He is to be raised on the Cross in cruel torments. Nevertheless, unmindful of future injuries, and wounded by the sharpest dart of pain, He manifests compassion to both of them: to the people and to the city, in their misfortune.

O meekest Savior, You leave this example to me, so that I may always be forgiving to my enemies; especially today, when You granted me the gift of your generosity by the reception of Your Most Holy Body. But if all are very friendly to you, O my soul, be mindful of the enemies of your Lord, [f.73r] and with your tears and humble prayers commit to your Spouse, Jesus, all those who are separated from His love.

2. “*But now they are hidden from your eyes*” (Lk 19:42).

It is a great distress and misfortune not to know that our goods and belongings shall be lost; much worse is to be ignorant of the impending loss of one’s soul.

But alas! Even if you, my soul, know this loss very well, yet you do not evade it at all, and you do not pray to avoid it. Indeed, making light of eternal death, which waits for you to fall mortally in any way whatsoever, you never withdraw yourself from the danger of grave evil deeds. For if you looked at yourself from the beginning of your existence, you would perceive that you have always been in sin, and that you remain in this miserable state of condemnation. You came out of the womb with sin, and who could count the faults committed by you after you reached the use of reason? They have become more numerous than the sand of the sea, than the stars of the sky, than the leaves of the trees, than the grasses of the meadows. They are innumerable.

See, however, with what love your Spouse has embraced you today, most wicked one! With what love He has forgiven and pardoned all! Behold, He made you healthy, and you have escaped eternal death. Therefore, do not sin any more.

3. *“they are hidden”* (Lk 19:42).

Entreat the Divine Goodness, that your evil deeds and your defects may never be hidden from you, but rather that even the smallest imperfections may be very well known to you. For just as, having seen slight stains on our garments, we usually clean them at once, even so, seeing the conscience soiled with a stain of some sin, we cannot, and we should not tolerate it, but should indeed try to expiate it at once. It is a great favor when God displays our faults before our eyes. It was beneficial for David that, admonished by the prophet, he acknowledged his offense (cf. 2 Sam 12:1-13). It was harmful for Solomon that nobody revealed to him his grievous lust or dissolute living, that nobody admonished him about his cult of idols. Hence, realize that it is a grace for you, and not a wrong, when somebody opens your eyes, points out your faults to you, and rebukes you.

For as long as this is being done to you, consider yourself, my soul, as saved. [f.73v]

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Then [H]e spoke ... to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others”* (cf. Lk 18:9).

“It is good to confide in the Lord” (Ps 117:8) [DRB].¹²⁰ It is proper to sanctity not to confide in oneself; it is wicked to have no confidence in God; it is dangerous to confide in oneself. Who would dare to consider himself as just? As long as we live we are in danger of committing a sin; indeed, since it is said in the Holy Scriptures that the just man falls seven times daily (cf. Prov 24:16),

¹²⁰ In the RSV, this is Psalm 118:8.

it would be foolish even for a just man to hold himself in high esteem. The one who proclaims his righteousness ceases to be just and becomes godless. On the other hand, the one who confesses his wickedness ceases to be a sinner and becomes righteous.

Wherefore, if you feel that you are in a state of grace, you are bound to give countless thanks to the Holy Spirit for this grace; but you should not at all suspect others of evil and become contemptuous of them. The one who easily believes that someone else is without grace is not in the state of grace himself. For one who cannot acknowledge the graces granted to another cannot acknowledge those granted to himself. Truly enlightened was the one who said: "I do not know whether I am worthy of grace, or hatred" (cf. Eccl 9:1), and he was an apostle at that, a vessel of election (cf. Acts 9:15) and the one caught up to the third Heaven (cf. 2 Cor 12:2).¹²¹

Therefore, upon approaching the sacred table with others, regard all of them as justified and just and yourself as full of imperfections and evil deeds. Shun that pharisaic: "I am not as ... this publican" (Lk 18:11): But rather, like the one deserving a divine curse and the hatred of all creatures, you shall cry out with the tax collector: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (Lk 18:13).

2. "*God, I thank you*" (Lk 18:11).

O what a hidden evil is pride! How mildly and cunningly it insinuates itself into people's souls under the cover of virtue! Today's Pharisee thought that he was giving worthy thanks to God for the benefit of justification, because he thought that the obligation of gratitude is the greatest virtue; but here was hidden the enormous vice of pride. Behold how thanksgiving proves to be not always good, not always [f.74r] a virtue: sometimes it assumes the form of boasting, and at another time the form of flattery.

Consider, therefore, how cautiously you should walk the way of perfection since you must beware that your good deeds themselves do not bring the verdict of condemnation or that this

¹²¹ St. Paul the Apostle is referred to here, but we do not find in the Scripture the words attributed to him here. *HW*, p. 912 (n. 7: *Foundation of the House of Recollection*, § 23): "I do not know whether I am worthy of grace or hatred."

Holy Communion itself does not interfere with your salvation. Comply, therefore, with St. Gregory, who warns: "Today's Holy Gospel compels me to say that you should be fearful and greatly circumspect about even the good things you do, lest through your upright deeds you actually desire human favor or others to be in debt to you, lest the desire for praise creep in, and what is shown outwardly be deprived of its reward inwardly."¹²²

3. "*that I am not like other men*" (Lk 18:11).

Consider that with these few petty words this Pharisee prepared his own annihilation. You, however, will be able to draw from them life if you would say with a Pharisaic mouth, but not in the Pharisaic spirit: "I am not as the rest of men," meaning by this that others are devout and you are spiritually dry; that others are humble, and you are proud; that others are eager, and you are sluggish; that others are patient, meek, obedient and you are impatient, lacking in meekness, disobedient; that others produce grapes in the vineyard of the Lord, and you the wild vines; that others cheerfully make the journey of perfection, and you who just began making it have already abandoned it; that others are thirsty for work, and you for idleness; that others are pure, and you are impure; that others are adorned with virtues, and you abound in imperfections; that others are worthy of eternal glory for their good works, and you deserve eternal disgrace for evil deeds; finally, that others are rightly favored at this very sacred table with well-deserved consolations, while you quite deservedly dread that the earth may open under your feet and swallow you, full of malice, who so boldly dare to open your impure mouth to receive the immaculate Lamb.

Consider in this manner that you are "not like the rest of men," and again, lowering yourself below hell, cry out with a groan: "God, be merciful to me" (Lk 18:13).

¹²² Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber I — Homilia XII (Matth. XXV, 1-13)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1118 (n. 1476). Cf. *GFGH*, p. 68 (Homily 10).

After Holy Communion

1. *“standing far off”* (Lk 18:13).

O true knowledge of oneself! The miserable tax collector does not dare to come closer to the altar, because the voice of his conscience holds him back, and he owns up to the evil deeds that he has done. What do you think this troubled man was saying to himself? What did he toss around in his mind? [f.74v] Certainly this: “I will stay here by the doors, I shall not go farther, because I am a sinful man.”

But you, with what thoughts have you not only gone forward today to the altar, but also brought your lips, stained by so many useless conversations, to receive the Divine Body Itself. That tax collector was afraid to put himself in the sacred place, lest he insult God if he, a sinner, were to enter a house of prayer. And you, how often do you dare to abandon yourself to vanities, or at least to take delight in vain thoughts in the very same place, where he was afraid to enter? What you failed to do through imprudence then, amend by sorrow.

2. *“would not even lift up his eyes to heaven”* (Lk 18:13).

O fortunate fear, which merited the remission of sins, pardon, and justification! Realize, my soul, that the first step to regaining God’s grace, to obtaining His favors, is this holy fear and low estimation of oneself. Pondering it, the psalmist rightfully entreated God: “Pierce my flesh with fear of you” (cf. Ps 119:120).

Therefore, restrain your vain gladness and joyful conceit, which arise in you from doing a few good works; rather, recalling your own failings, fear with trembling the judgments of God, which are like the great depths of the sea (cf. Ps 36:6).

3. *“beat his breast”* (Lk 18:13).

Contemplate the Divine Mercy! You see that today’s tax collector participates in it to such an extent that, according to the testimony of the Son of God Himself, he “went down to his house justified” (Lk 18:14).

Therefore, learn to immerse with great trust all your imperfections in the immense abyss of this Divine Mercy. And never dare

to despise like the Pharisee or, what is worse, to condemn any man; even if he should be more wicked than Judas himself.

Indeed, proclaim that the heart of God is open to all, and attest that the way to salvation is not inaccessible to any sinner as long as he is willing to repent. Do not believe that sinners are to be treated harshly, being always mindful of your own weaknesses and the Divine Goodness towards you. [f.75r]

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“they bring to [H]im one deaf and dumb”* (Mk 7:32) [DRB].

Consider that there are two great evils filled with the greatest unhappiness, namely: being deaf and dumb. Symbolically, disobedient and impious people are designated by these defects of mouth and ears. The king-psalmist says about them: “They have ears, but do not hear”; “they have mouths, but do not speak” (Ps 115:5-6).

O what a great handicap is this deafness, I mean this disobedience, in a man who is a religious! What a great evil is this disadvantageous sealing of one’s mouth, the total lack of the practice of prayer! Since every religious community blossoms and survives for a long time thanks to these two things: the virtue of obedience and enthusiasm for prayer, who would not agree that a religious who neither obeys nor prays, would perish?

Take care that you are neither dumb nor deaf in a similar manner. Hasten to Christ the Lord as soon as possible, that He may unbind your ears and tongue, that is to say, that He may grant you the virtue of obedience and the grace of piety.

2. *“And taking him aside from the multitude”* (Mk 7:33).

Behold, here is an instruction for you about how to heal the defect of ears and mouth, that is, how to acquire the virtue of obedience and the grace of devotion: namely, by **fleeing away from the crowd** and **loving solitude**. Possibly, you are rebellious and lukewarm because you have dissipated your spirit in the

crowd. You will not be able to restore your spirit in any other way, unless you keep yourself apart, unless you pull yourself together again outside of the crowd.

Hiding here, therefore, apply yourself seriously to the recollection of your spirit, and think primarily about how you may supplement and correct your lack of obedience, and how you may restore and retain your ardor of spirit, so that you would no longer be deaf and dumb.

3. *“they begged [H]im”* (Mk 7:32).

Consider the fact that health of the body is to be entreated from the Lord [f.75v] by earnest prayer. Hence, those who brought the deaf and dumb man to Him besought the Lord to restore his hearing and speech. Thus, the health of the soul, which is based on the infused virtues, is obtained from God only with many prayers.

Therefore, beseech Him that, as He in His goodness made this deaf and dumb man of the Gospel to hear and speak, so He may grant you, in the same goodness, a sound soul and adorn it with the most beautiful ornament of all kinds of virtue.

After Holy Communion

1. *“looking up to Heaven, [H]e groaned”* (Mk 7:34) [DRB].

Christ groans, although He has no need to groan. I believe, however, that He groaned, looking up to Heaven, because He saw how few would strive to enter the gates of the heavenly palace, already opened by Him, while very many would value the fleeting goods of the earth over the eternal riches of Heaven. And so, He groaned, because countless men would value so little the Fatherland bought and redeemed for us by Him at an immense price; and they would trade it for hell instead, for the solace of the most miserable and abominable sensual pleasure of some sin.

As for you, learn to look up to Heaven more often and groan, because you have lived so long in exile from it. Implore the divine help with incessant sighs, lest at some point you lose Heaven altogether because of one final evil deed.

2. “*And [H]e charged them to tell no one*” (Mk 7:36).

Consider how the Son of God acts, that He would not reveal Himself so that His works would remain hidden. He did it, not for fear of accolades, but to give you an example so that you do not pride yourself on your good deeds, and that you learn how to hide and stay hidden in the face of countless dangers.

With what great zeal ought this to be done by you, if indeed God Himself, Who to be glorified through His works so that everyone would believe in Him as the maker of marvelous things, wants this miracle to remain hidden and orders those who brought before Him the dumb and deaf man [f.76r] “to tell no one.”

If your ears were opened in Holy Communion and the fetter of your tongue was untied, know that you also were ordered not to tell anybody; not because the gifts of God are not to be revealed, but because boasting of them is dangerous.

3. “*He has done all things well*” (Mk 7:37).

Consider that praise is due to such people who did not refuse to give proper honor to the wonderful works of Christ, but said out of joy: “He has done all things well; [H]e even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”

You would demonstrate something even greater if, exposed by the will of God to various afflictions, crosses, calamities, persecutions or temptations, you would exclaim with great joy: “He has done all things well.” If someone threatens to inflict injuries upon you or if you are held up to contempt and ridicule, blamelessly accused, unfairly punished, sing the same tune with a cheerful countenance: “He has done all things well.” If treated with enmity at home, if harassed by slander on the outside, tormented by diseases here or lashed by the wicked tongues there, you will say with a strong spirit: “He has done all things well.”

If you behave in this way, it will be a most evident sign for you that in today’s Communion, in this way, Jesus opened your ears and untied your tongue.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *"Blessed are the eyes which see"* (Lk 10:23).

O my soul, how unhappy you are! You are blind, devoid of light; you stray, you err greatly, because you do not see which way you are to go to a blessed eternity. For so many years you have been running in search of Jesus through the streets and squares of the world, yet He was within you;¹²³ but you, the miserable one, did not see Him. Even having entered His house, the religious community, you do not yet perceive Him present here; you still do not have Him before your eyes. This is made evident by your many imperfections, indeed so many evil deeds, which truly you would not commit if you were aware of the presence of God. Behold, today you approach Him personally, and you will be permitted not only to see His Body and to touch It gently, but also to consume It. Blessed be your eyes [f.76v] if, before you stand in His presence, and He in yours, they would see the many vices with which you abound and the many impurities with which you are fouled!

To action, my soul! Swiftly wash yourself in tears, lest you stir up the anger of the Spouse by receiving Him into such a foul room.

2. *"what you see"* (Lk 10:23).

What did the Disciples of Christ behold with their eyes? Your Savior, my soul. Now, if the most fortunate and most desired blessedness consists of seeing Him alone, consider how great is the effort and desire with which you should long for and seek it. Still, since you know that "Nothing defiled can enter into the heavenly kingdom" (cf. Rev 21:27) and gaze at that uncreated Sun shining for all eternity, you have to expiate first the disgrace incurred through your countless vices by a truly serious exercise of penance; and you should be on your guard against the filth of

¹²³ Cf. AC, Bk. X, Ch. 27. Cf. Augustinus, *Soliloquia*, in: *Meditationes, Soliloquia et Manuale*, Lugduni-Parisiis 1861, pp. 155-156 (Ch. 31, §§ 1, 4).

all your faults, by which you are stained at any given moment. Cut off, and remove, therefore, what impedes you from obtaining this most blessed vision. Taking delight in God is in your power (although not unconditionally). God does not deny Himself to anyone. Let the one who longs to gaze at Him approach Him with a right disposition.

3. *“did not see”* (Lk 10:24).

If the disciples of Christ, even by the testimony of the Master Himself, are said to be more fortunate than the patriarchs, prophets, and the other fathers of the old law, it is because they heard Him teaching, saw Him performing miracles, and depended upon Him who called them to Himself.

With what great happiness will you abound today when you see the same Christ, although He is concealed under the veil of bread. And, what will bring even greater happiness, you will enjoy Him when He lowers Himself into your mouth as the sweetest food, and makes your heart cheerful with a wonderful sweetness. Wonder at His kindness (for you can hardly do anything else), because what He refused to those very holy and ancient men, or did not do for them, He offers to you, since He will offer Himself not only to be seen, but also to be consumed. [f.77r]

After Holy Communion

1. *“a lawyer stood up to put him to the test”* (Lk 10:25).

Consider how often the knowledge of many things is harmful to truth and consequently even to salvation. Hence, due to their excessive knowledge, so many incredulous ones among the Pharisees, so many stubborn ones among the heretics, fell down headlong into the netherworld. Also, not just a few were those who in attacking the sublimity, mystery, and essence of this Most Holy Sacrament were driven there to be punished due to their stubbornness.

You should give great thanks to God for granting you such a great faith, which is required with respect to this most profound mystery. You should make an act of this faith again right now.

2. *“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* (Lk 10:25).¹²⁴

Consider that the question put forth by this young man in the Gospel was motivated more by curiosity than by necessity. For if he had asked seriously about the way leading to salvation, he would have sold everything and followed Christ the Lord, according to the answer given to him.

It may seem to you also that you have approached the sacred table, driven by the zeal of living in a more perfect way. But since you sail the same boat as before, since you abound with the same imperfections, since no improvement has been seen in you, it may be truly understood from such bad results that what preceded them was not good either, namely: that you went to the Most Holy Eucharist out of habit, rather than out of a concern for greater perfection; and this is not at all proper to those striving for perfection.

3. *“You shall love”* (Lk 10:27).

Consider carefully that the love of God abolishes or suffocates the love of the world, for as death separates the soul from the body, so the love of God eliminates from the heart the love of the world and of all vain things. Hence, the saying of Solomon the wise is entirely appropriate: “Love is as strong as death” (Cant 8:6).

Therefore, if some sparks of conceit or of the love of the world are still to be found in you, know that you lack the perfect love of God, although just a while ago you [f.77v] received Him. Nevertheless, the greater the effort with which you search for this perfect love of God, the more certain is this saying of the eternal Truth, affirming that eternal life is founded on the love of God and neighbor.

¹²⁴ In the manuscript this entire second point was crossed out, undoubtedly because St. Stanislaus had mistakenly written about the case of the young man (cf. Mt 19:16-22), rather than that of the lawyer (cf. Lk 10:25-37), which he had been considering in the previous meditation points and which is the proper Gospel for the 12th Sunday after Pentecost.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. “[H]e was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance” (Lk 17:12).

Consider that those lepers, being aware of their ugliness, did not dare to come close to the Savior, but stood afar off.

As for you, how do you dare to bring your mouth near Him, if indeed you have your soul impaired by such a great leprosy of sins? Your leprosy is pride; it is the lack of mortification; the extravagance of the senses; your leprosy is hatred for your brothers; it is envy and furious anger; but especially leprous is any kind of avarice, which was the reason why Gehazi, that servant of God’s prophet, was struck with leprosy (cf. 2 Kings 5:20-27).

But since we read that Pope Deusdedit (or Adeodatus) cleansed a leper with a kiss,¹²⁵ ask the heavenly Spouse at the sacred banquet to “kiss you with the kiss of [H]is mouth” (cf. Cant 1:1), and to remove in this way your spiritual leprosy.

2. “and lifted up their voices and said, ‘Jesus, Master, have mercy on us’” (Lk 17:13).

You have to consider and learn many things here. First of all, why do these lepers appeal to the Master rather than to a doctor? It turned out that they were afflicted also with an internal illness of their souls and believed that, without healing it first, their corporal illness would not be removed. Since a spiritual illness frequently takes its toll in the form of a corporal sickness, they rightly could not hope to get rid of the effect without eliminating the cause. Therefore, they pressed the Teacher to show them first the way to cleanse their souls, [f.78r] and then, once their

¹²⁵ *The Roman Martyrology*, Ed. J. B. O’Connell, Newman Press, Westminster, MD, 1962, p. 244 (November 8 — St. Deusdedit I): “At Rome, St. Deusdedit I, Pope, who was of merit so great that he healed a leper of his leprosy by a kiss.” [Hereafter *The Roman Martyrology* will be abbreviated as *RM*.] Cf. Ireneo, Daniele, *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, vol. I, Istituto Giovanni XXIII nella Pontificia Università lateranense, Roma 1961, p. 251 (s.v. *Adeodato I (Deusdedit), Papa, santo*): “It was inserted by Baronio, who added that with a kiss he healed a leper; but it is not known where Baronio got this news.” [Hereafter *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* will be abbreviated as *BS*.]

souls had been cleansed, to cleanse them also from the leprosy of their bodies. Hence, He ordered them to show themselves to the priests.

Believe that the leprosy of your soul also cannot be cleansed unless, by the admonition of Christ, you go to a priest to do penance.

3. *“Go and show yourselves to the priests”* (Lk 17:14).

O the dignity of priests! It is exalted above that of kings, above that of the angels, and above every dignity of men! It is equal to that of God! The God-Man respects it so much that He makes clear (as if diminishing His own power and declaring that it cannot be extended so far) that someone, asking to be cleansed by Him, would not get his wish granted without showing himself first to a priest.

With what great reverence, therefore, should you respect priests, to whom God Himself granted so much dignity that He did not want to do what belongs to their office.

But, O my Jesus! Since You are also said to be the Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek (cf. Ps 110:4), I go before You today and I want to be cleansed by You from my spiritual leprosy. Therefore, use Your power, office, mercy, and goodness.

After Holy Communion

1. *“Then one of them”* (Lk 17:15).

Consider that Christ healed ten lepers yet only one came back to give Him thanks. The same heavenly Physician also cleansed today the leprosy of many souls throughout the whole world. But there are very many of them who really did not express thanks for such a great benefit; or whose thanks were dry, insipid and scant; there were very many who, immediately after the Lord's banquet, returned to the drinking contests and the muddy cisterns of Egypt, that is, to worldly delights and carnal temptations.

Therefore, you should imitate that Samaritan and continually give thanks to your Physician, Who has returned to your heart and, Who dwells there to heal your spirit. It is better to follow the

example of one unbeliever who showed gratitude, rather than of many believers who left gratitude unspoken. [f.78v]

2. *"Were not ten cleansed?"* (Lk 17:17).

Consider more carefully that ingratitude is the cause, due to which the Divine Goodness departs, or does not grant you greater favors and more frequent graces. For he who is not grateful for one benefit makes himself unworthy of very many benefits. The Gentiles also hated the vice of ingratitude so much that they believed nothing else to be worse than it.

Consider, therefore, what thanks you will give today to the Lord for the gift of Holy Communion. Be careful that you are not worse than dogs that repay a morsel or a crumb of bread thrown to them with at least a gentle wagging of the tail.

3. *"Was no one found to return and give praise to God"* (Lk 17:18).

Consider, that we must exalt God with praises even for a single grace, but we must give Him special glory for a spiritual meal. In this banquet, the gift of creation is remembered, the gift of redemption is brought to memory, and the gift of vocation is recalled to mind.

If you will one day rejoice in the vision of God in Heaven, if you will see there all the graces granted to you and you will try at the same time to compensate for all of them in a special way, why should you not do the same while you hold the same God in your heart?

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *"No one can serve two masters"* (Mt 6:24).

Consider that there are two masters: God and the world, spiritual and carnal desires, the love of God and self-love.

Now, by entering religious life, you adhered to a better Master. Therefore, you should declare war upon the other master. And you should not doubt that heavenly assistance will be provided to enable you to do it constantly and successfully, if only you are

willing to wage the war, as you are morally bound to do. God brings the contest to success for those whom He has called to the fight. Therefore, attack whatever of the world, of perverse [f.79r] desires, or of self-love exists within you, or uproot and bravely beat back whatever attacks your mind, already consecrated to another Master.

Indeed, you should be convinced that you should embrace only those desires that are consistent with your vocation, that lead you to self-contempt, to spreading God's glory and living a zealous ascetical life. Furthermore, you should extinguish your self-love, so that not even a single spark would remain of it. It happens rather often that after a fire has been extinguished, hidden fires are started again somewhere. Thus, a spark of self-love, carelessly left behind, usually inflames a greater fire than the former one. Therefore, ask your Master that He completely annihilate and extinguish these fires in Holy Communion with ample streams of tears.

2. "*for either he will hate the one*" (Mt 6:24).

Consider that when you served the world, you treated God with the greatest hatred. You did not really perceive that this hidden love of the world was nothing else but an open hatred towards the Divine Majesty. For you were unable to love both the world and God; as the sky¹²⁶ does not tolerate two suns; or the heart, two lovers. Thus, by loving the world, which you served; you hated God, without realizing it. Now, having voluntarily become a slave of God, you are morally bound to hand over to Him your whole heart, and henceforth, vice versa, to pursue your former master the world with ceaseless hatred. See to it, therefore, that your actions demonstrate your love of God.

3. "*do not be anxious*" (Mt 6:25).

Reflect attentively on how compassionate and generous the Master is to whom you adhered. What profit did you have until now, when you served the world? On the other hand, this Master

¹²⁶ In the Latin text the word used is *Olympus* — the highest mountain range in Greece and the mythical seat of the gods. Here it is used as a synonym of Heaven. Cf. *FLL*, vol 3, Typis Seminarii, Patavii 1871, p. 485 (s.v. *Olympus*).

advises you not to be anxious about anything, but to leave all your concerns for temporal and eternal goods to Him.

To address your concern for the necessities of the body, He gives you the example of the birds of the air, which neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns, but the Heavenly Father feeds them; in His eyes you are better than many sparrows (cf. Mt 6:26; 10:31; Lk 12:6-7).

As for the necessities of the soul, His goodness will provide for them. It is He who advised [**f.79v**] all His servants: “do not be anxious about your life” (cf. Mt 6:25). Why? Because the same Lord who takes great care of bodies displays even greater care of souls. Behold, He does not admit you to His table today in vain. He is going to grant you many goods indeed, if only you would be properly prepared to accept them.

After Holy Communion

1. “*What shall we eat?*” (Mt 6:31).

Stop it, stop it now, my soul, do not complain any more about your food, but rather think about paying for it. You are already full, and have already drunk; you are no longer hungry or nagged by thirst. You have been most abundantly and most sumptuously fortified and treated. But instead of paying, you must give thanks to your Cup-bearer, your Master of the feast, namely: the Lord, who welcomed you to His banquet, fed you with His Body and gave you His Blood to drink.

Let the little birds of the sky be an example to you: having received food on the ground, they fly up in the air and bring forth a sweet song, as if giving thanks to God, who gives them food. Let the beasts of burden also be an example to you: they recompense their masters for food with the fruits of their hard work. Let the gardens too be an example to you: with their crop they reward their owners’ careful cultivation and irrigation.

You are a bird and indeed a nestling of the Eagle that urges you to flight. Therefore, with affections pointed toward the Heavens, sing sublime thanks to God, Who provided food for you. You are Christ’s beast of burden; therefore, compensate Him for your food

with thousand-fold profit. You are an enclosed garden (cf. Cant 4:12); therefore repay your Gardener, the heavenly Spouse, for cultivation and irrigation, with a great fruitfulness of good deeds.

2. *“What shall we drink?”* (Mt 6:31).

Consider how God, the best provider, never neglects any of the necessities of His faithful ones. I shall not give many proofs of this: you know that the Jews were nourished by Him in the desert with the Heavenly manna, not only to appease their hunger, but also for their delight (cf. Dt 8:3, 16; Ps 78:24; Jn 6:31, 49). You know that water from a rock was given to them to drink (cf. Ex 17:6; Ps 105:41), that they were never lacking clothing (cf. Dt 8:4), never wanting of help in any circumstance; and that they were finally led to the land flowing with milk and honey and took possession of it.

Today you also were made a participant in His Providence: by means of the sweetest drink, for with His Blood, the most provident Lord revived your soul, weak with aridity. [f.80r] He did it not because of necessity, but also because of the delights and consolation to be found in Him. You should know, however, that He did it, lest you seek in vain, other sources of comfort, and detach yourself from Him in times of hardship.

3. *“What shall we wear?”* (Mt 6:31).

Consider that the servants of God do not need to be concerned about food, drink, clothing, and other such things. How could it possibly be that He, who covers the earth with grass, the birds with feathers, the trees with leaves and bark, would not provide clothing for His servant? May it never happen that you murmur on this account against the Moses of the New Testament! Rather make sure that you always live in His grace, that you fulfill His will; and then all other things will be added to you (cf. Mt 6:33). Never is anyone naked, nor thirsty, nor hungry whom grace clothes, refreshes, and nourishes. Therefore, above all, seek grace.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“behold, a man who had died was being carried out”* (Lk 7:12).

Consider that people bewail nothing with more tears, nor experience anything with more pain, than the death of their own family members and the loss of their fellowship.

Would you rejoice at the sight of your soul being put to death through sin? Do you realize that you were deprived of God’s friendship because of it, and that you lost His grace? Mortal sin brings the two greatest evils into the soul: it causes its death and deprives it of unity, intimacy, and fellowship with God. But behold! You have come within sight of the Savior. Oh, how fortunate is the soul that will be raised!

2. *“was being carried out, the only son of his mother”* (Lk 7:12).

There was no hope for life since the dead body was carried to the tomb. If the Lord of life were not to meet that son, the only child of his mother, he would be raised from the dead only on the final day of resurrection. Therefore, to what do we attribute his good fortune, that the Reviver of the dead should meet him when he was being carried to his tomb? Not to a coincidence, but to Divine Providence.

I see, my soul, that it happens with you also. Injured by your evil deeds you died, and perhaps you were to remain in this death, or in a tomb of many evil deeds until the day of the [f.80v] strict judgment, if God’s grace had not met you, drawing you to Holy Communion. You are not only going to recover in it the life you had lost, but you are also going to gain a greater vigor to live in a spiritual way. Certainly, this did not happen by chance, but by the Providence of God, who established in your religious institute this salutary custom of frequent reception of Holy Communion. Hence, what great thanks you should give to Him, that He has placed you here!

3. *“she was a widow: and a large crowd from the city was with her”* (Lk 7:12).

Consider that escorting the dead to the burial place is a great deed of charity, but a greater one is leading their souls out of the tomb of Purgatory by pious prayers. Consider that a deed equal to this one is helping by devout prayer those who are overcome by spiritual death, that is, those in mortal sin, that they may be revived.

You were among such, but the widowed mother (be it the community in which you live or the Catholic Church with her great multitude of the faithful or her saintly Patrons), obtained for you a better life by successfully entreating the Lord on behalf of sinners. Indeed, you should firmly believe that it is due to her prayers that the Lord of life decided to raise you up today, meeting you in the Most Holy Sacrament. See to it, when all is better with you, that you do the same for the others, and that you try to help the souls of the deceased as well as the spiritually dead sinners, through singular diligence in prayer or mortifications.

After Holy Communion

1. *“Young man, I say to you, arise” (Lk 7:14).*

Imagine that today Christ stood by you, put to death by sin, and said to your soul: “Arise.” Perhaps, as usually happens to resuscitated people, the soul was overcome by astonishment and wondered that the force of mind and body suddenly returned to it and that it was called back to life with all its faculties. Truly, those who previously perceived you as dead (persuaded to hold this view by your scandalous behavior) now consider you as one returned to life.

Prove it with your good deeds: do only what is proper to virtue, love mortifications, practice silence, promptly fulfill [f.81r] what is imposed by obedience, dedicate more time to prayer, exercise serious penance, and with the greatest passion seize the heavenly Kingdom, which is to be taken only by force (cf. Mt 11:12).

2. *“And the dead man sat up, and began to speak” (Lk 7:15).*

You, also, start talking, but with God and with yourself. Sit up, you who were dead, and turning to Him, say: Where was I? With what kind of death was I punished? How much did I detach

myself through sin from life, from God, from myself? Behold, by the grace of God I come back from hell itself!

Then, remaining seated, that is gathering together again your thoughts, search for the causes, occasions and learn the manner of your death, so that henceforth you may be able to avoid it, fleeing from those evil deeds that had brought this death upon you.

3. "*And [H]e gave him to his mother*" (Lk 7:15).

Consider that today's dead young man signifies every sinner. For we were struck with the twofold death in Paradise itself: one — the death of the body, which no one can escape; the other — of the soul, which our most merciful Savior overcame by His death.

Nevertheless, this death of the soul happens as many times as a mortal sin is committed. In addition to the act of the Redemption, our Savior instituted the salutary Sacrament of the Eucharist, connected with that of Penance. By this Sacrament Christ resurrected you from the dead today and gave you alive back to the Mother, that is, to the Church. Ask Him, who restored life to you, that He may preserve you in it forever.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. "*they were watching [H]im*" (Lk 14:1).

Just as the Pharisees carefully observed the Savior of the world while He dined at a Pharisee's invitation, realize that many are watching you in the same way, as you go today to the Divine Banquet. The enemy of your soul, that infernal bandit, watches you and thwarts all [f.81v] opportunities for acquiring a good disposition. Achates,¹²⁷ the most faithful guardian angel, watches over and prompts you to make the best preparation for the spiritual wedding. God ensures that He grants you at this sacred table all the graces that you need most for serving Him, just as a friend

¹²⁷ The faithful companion of Aeneas. Cf. *SLP*, vol. I, Wydanie Adama Zawadzkiego, Vilnius 1841, p. 1040 (footnote 182).

would give gifts to a friend or a patron¹²⁸ for his client out of their mutual kindness, either for remembering him fondly or for supporting him in his need.

Lastly, watch yourself more intently: what have you been like till now? How have you used your tongue, mind, heart, senses, will, and the other faculties of your soul? How have you behaved in regard to your vows, deeds of mercy, and good works? And, finally, briefly review your whole life, and in a composed state of mind, as if adorned in a wedding garment, go to the banquet of the Savior.

2. *“And behold, there was a man before [H]im who had dropsy”* (Lk 14:2).

O my soul! How greatly you are beset with an enormous dropsy of sins and imperfections! Hasten, hasten as quickly as possible to Jesus the physician, lest the dropsy penetrate to your very heart, and lest you thereby suffocate yourself. Consider the specific kinds of this dropsy: lust, sloth, gluttony, anger, and other deadly monsters of this kind. Unless they are cured with suitable remedies, there is no hope for your salvation, O soul. Therefore, do not delay, passively waiting for a guide, but by yourself hasten at once to Jesus, the best and most merciful Physician. Prostrate yourself in tears at His feet and cry aloud: “O Lord, heal me, for I have sinned against you” (cf. Ps 41:4).

After Holy Communion

1. *“[H]e healed him, and let him go”* (Lk 14:4).

Consider that every illness of the soul is most certainly cured through the Holy Eucharist. Just as corporeal medicine, spreading all through the veins, chases away any sickness against which it is used, so this spiritual medicine, the Most Holy Body of our Savior, after it hides itself in the heart of the one receiving it, drives out all lusts, bad inclinations, and grumbings that are very

¹²⁸ In the Latin St. Stanislaus used the word *Maecenas* to mean “a patron,” because Clinius Maecenas (or Mecaenas) was the patron of Horace and Virgil (cf. *SLL*, vol. 2, Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii 1758, pp. 3, 15 (s.v. *Mecaenas, Clinius*)). Cf. *CLD*, p. 328 (s.v. *Maecenas, Clinius*).

grave illnesses of the soul. What is it, however, that [f.82r] the sick man should mind most after regaining his physical strength? He should avoid falling into a worse illness than the previous one.

And you shall do nothing different; but aided by Jesus the Physician, be on your guard against even more serious illness since you have been healed with His Body thanks to His grace.

2. *“Friend, go up higher”* (Lk 14:10).

O Eternal Wisdom, my God! You know perfectly well my pride. Even now I have a longing as our first parents: to acquire the knowledge of good and evil. I strive after what is higher, greater, and more praiseworthy among men. The craving for fame, honor, and admiration has not yet left me. When it rises in my mind, innumerable infernal monsters rise with it. Lust wants to follow its mother, pride; lust is followed by stubbornness; stubbornness by incorrigibleness, which is followed by obstinacy; and obstinacy is followed by ruin. I am corrupted with such great and numerous vices! As to the virtues, with which do I shine?

Thus it is, that when I want to move up higher, that You, the adversary of the proud, resist me most justly; and so I become ashamed and cannot be delivered from this confusion, except through Your help.

Therefore, give me that unique ladder with which one can rise above the world, and come to You: **humility**. I think that if I hold on to it, it will be entirely impossible for all the assaults, tempests, and attacks of hell, the world, and the flesh to throw me down from it.

3. *“For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted”* (Lk 14:11).

Behold the truest axiom of Christ’s philosophy! Nobody ascends, unless he descends. Should Peter, the Prince of the Church, have said it, I would be bound to believe him; should the Teacher of the Gentiles, Paul, have said it, I would fear condemnation, unless I believed him also. It becomes much more necessary that I believe when it is stated by Christ, the Heavenly Wisdom, the Teacher of the world, the infallible, immutable, eternal Truth.

Therefore, I acknowledge, most wise Savior, that **humility** is the ladder to Heaven, the door to life, the gate to paradise, and the basis of all the virtues; and lastly that it is a wing by which we are lifted up from the earth. Indeed, the more we submit in humility, the more we shall be raised up. If only I follow and embrace what I acknowledge as good and confess as salutary! [f.82v]

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“And one of them, a lawyer, asked [H]im a question, to test [H]im”* (Mt 22:35).

Consider how great was the misfortune of those who, although they had the living Truth Christ the Lord right before them, they simply did not believe Him and did not sincerely and fittingly welcome Him, but tempted Him instead.

Ponder whether by approaching Him today you do not equally tempt Him? For even now people tempt Christ still, when they approach Him, present on the altar, with weak faith, with an evil intention, and with careless preparation; when, owing to their incredulity, they ask Him something small, while it is fitting to ask the King for gifts of royal size; when they seek only sweetness in the Most Holy Communion, like animals overcome by sensuality, instead of the fruit of improvement and the gift of virtue; when they consume the angelic bread, without raising any ardor in themselves, but with a distracted, cold, and listless mind, and sometimes even aware of a more grave fault. This is exactly what “tempting God” means. As for you, be not “a lawyer.”

2. *“The great commandment in the Law”* (cf. Mt 22:36).

Consider that the Lord evaluates our deeds, desires, wishes, plans, and works, according to our intention, and gives rewards according to it.

A lot of people carry out many remarkable, praiseworthy, and heroic deeds, but with an evil intention. They desire many things, but unprofitably; they work much, but with a vain concern.

This saying may apply to them: "They were deceived in their undertakings," desires and works (cf. Ps 81:13). Learn this truth from an example: this expert in the law from today's Gospel inquires into great things, desires to understand serious things, but does not have a good intention, for he is tempting Christ.

Therefore, together with the royal psalmist, address the Lord humbly, asking Him to give you a right intention in everything: "make [Y]our way straight before me" (Ps 5:8), "Teach me, O Lord, the way of [Y]our statutes; and I will keep it to the end." (Ps 119:33). [f.83r]

3. "*You shall love*" (Mt 22:37).

Consider that loving is a sure method of attaining eternal life. Nobody is nearer the divine glory than God's own friends. But do not think that you should love only God abundantly, and that only those delight in the fruit of charity, whose hearts are continuously fixed on God. The Lord says that loving one's neighbor is much like loving God (cf. Mt 22:39). Indeed, it must be asserted that one cannot exist without the other.

For how could you say that you burn with the love of God, if you burn with unrestrained hatred towards your neighbor? How could you say that you serve God truly, if you refuse the smallest services to your neighbor? Yet sometimes don't you neglect or treat carelessly the things that concern his salvation?

In fact, the love of neighbor does not consist only in that you serve him; but also in that you excuse and endure his faults and consider them worthy of pardon. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2), speaks of the perfect lover of his neighbor.

Hence, earnestly ask the Lord, present on the altar, for the first and the second kind of love, as most indispensable for you.

After Holy Communion

1. *"You shall love the Lord your God"* (Mt 22:37).

If our chief reason for loving our friends is that we are loved by them, why will you not love God, who so loved you that He gave His only Son for you (cf. 1 Jn 4:9-11)? Think, moreover, what you were before He created you: you were nothing, a piece of clay. However, led by His love for you, He made you in His own image. So why would you not love Him?

If vessels knew their makers, if paintings and statues knew their creators, they would know how to talk to them. Certainly, they would greatly love them, if only for the beauty that they received from their hands, and perhaps love them more faithfully than you love your Creator, whom you nevertheless acknowledge, perceive, and contemplate.

2. Consider, if someone ransomed you from grievous slavery, by what services would you try to repay him for this good deed? With what love would you burn towards such a great benefactor of yours?

The Lord Jesus Christ is the one who paid the price of your redemption (when you were in the slavery of eternal death), [f.83v] not with money, but with the treasure of His own Blood. Yet what flames of love for Him did that enkindle in you, truly? Withdrawing from the sacred table completely cold, don't you give yourself at once to vain recreations, talkativeness, laughter, jokes, empty joy, and great idleness?

O you, ungrateful heartless man, deserving only of the perpetual fire of hell!

3. Consider how greatly you would be obliged to thank someone who pulled you out after you had fallen into a cave located in the midst of the wilderness, especially in the thickest forest. Yet, you have received this assistance from the Holy Spirit so many times.

In addition to the vocation to the Catholic faith, by which you were freed from the infernal abyss meant for infidels, He frees you from so many dangers by His daily promptings! And how many times does He mercifully pull you out, after you fall through your

natural disposition into the same infernal abyss, by imparting to you the knowledge of sin, granting you the gift of contrition, and compelling you in a certain way to the frequent reception of the Most Holy Sacraments? So many times you have regained the salvation that you have lost so often. Therefore, convinced by these divine benefits, love God. Shout with David: "I love you, O Lord, my strength" (Ps 18:1).

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. "*Jesus entered into a boat*" (cf. Mt 9:1).

Consider that the Savior of the world would either go to the sea or walk along the seashore more and more often. He did this for various reasons: for He either taught the people from the boat, or showed His omnipotence, when He carried off a great catch from there. Hence those luminaries and pillars of the college of the apostles, Peter and Andrew, along with the sons of Zebedee, were called at sea.

The sea, my soul, is the world. You are the boat, which the heavenly Captain is going to board today, either to subdue the storm of your passions, or to teach the crowd, [**f.84r**] that is, your senses; to guide your heart, intellect, and will; or to enfold the catch, namely you, into the nets of His love. Whatever it is that He is going to do in the end, await it with longing.

2. "*[H]e crossed over [the sea]*" (Mt 9:1).

O happiness of that soul, which has already crossed the sea, which has already reached the heavenly port, and arrived at the shore of eternal beatitude. You, my soul, are still tossed in the very dangerous open sea of the world, and you are being smashed against so many Scyllas,¹²⁹ rocks, and sandbanks of the sea. O

¹²⁹ CLD, p. 509 (s.v. *Scylla*): "Scylla — a lofty rock at the entrance to the straits between Sicily and Italy, opposite to the whirlpool Charybdis, dangerous for sailors." Cf. SLL, vol. 2, Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii 1758, p. 276 (s.v. *Scylla*).

how often you had been near Mount Etna, near the Sicilian rocks, driven to the gate of hell by the storms stirred up by the evil one. And you would have been lost, engulfed by the grave darkness of your sins, in the waves of temptations, if the very bright lodestar,¹³⁰ the Divine Mercy, did not shine for you and did not direct you into the way of truth (namely the rules of perfection) as you were wandering, and did not restore you when you were wounded and weak. Indeed, you were already totally devastated by frequent faults and crashes against the Charybdis of sensual pleasure, against the rocks of concupiscence and the sandbanks of unbridled licentiousness, to which you were driven after the sails of the fear of God were torn, after the mast of charity was broken, after the ropes of other virtues were torn asunder, by which faith and hope, very strong sails indeed, were held up.

Therefore, ask Jesus the Craftsman that He remedy in Holy Communion everything that impedes your voyage to the port of a happy eternity.

3. “*To [H]is own city*” (Mt 9:1).

Ponder that the city of Christ the Lord is that Jerusalem which St. John saw in his vision, “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev 21:2). To this town, then, Jesus has already crossed the sea. But in what way? By what means? Through torments, no doubt. It was necessary that “Christ ought to have suffered these things, and so to enter into [H]is glory” (cf. Lk 24:26).

And you, do you want to be one of the citizens of that city? You easily can be; if having despised the Babylon that is the world, you would enter upon the hard, narrow, and thorny way that leads to life, that is, if you would undertake serious repentance and self-denial. For thus says the Savior: “If any man would come after [M]e, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow [M]e” (Mt 16:24). [**f.84v**]

¹³⁰ Here St. Stanislaus used the word *cynosura*, which is the constellation Ursa Minor, i.e., the Little Bear, or the sign of the North Pole, and this group of seven stars contains an important pole star for navigators, serving as a guide or lodestar. Cf. *SLL*, vol. 1, Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii 1758, p. 206 (s.v. *Cynosura*).

After Holy Communion

1. *"Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven"* (Mt 9:2).

Reflect that this paralytic was also afflicted with an illness of the soul, and had little hope of regaining his physical health, because he felt guilty of some evil deed. But the most gracious Lord, the most excellent Doctor of both kinds of illness, encouraging him to hope for a good outcome says to him: "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." Do not fear, do not waver, do not doubt: I will restore you to health, both of the body and of the soul.

May you merit to hear from Him, whom you already embrace in your heart, these words full of mercy!

2. *"your sins are forgiven [you]"* (Mt 9:2).

I ask: why does the Lord forgive the sins of this paralytic before granting him his health? Undoubtedly, He thereby teaches that we should be more concerned with healing the soul, than with healing the body. He teaches that we should seek remedies for the illness of the soul before seeking those for the wounds of the body.

As for you, are you going to care more for your good health than for your salvation? Are you going to work harder at nourishing and healing your body than at healing the wounds of your soul? To action! First seek the forgiveness of your sins, even those already committed after Holy Communion itself.

3. *"Take heart, my son"* (Mt 9:2).

Consider that presumption, just like conceit, is the worst kind of evil. Indeed, one should be neither too confident nor too skeptical as regards the forgiveness of sins, but should stand in spirit between hope and fear, with some discretion and trust, that each of the two faults may be avoided; since both excessive distrust and excessive confidence have robbed many people of Heaven.

Therefore, even if the Lord said to you today: "Have complete trust, son, your sins are forgiven you," nevertheless exult with fear, and trust not in your merits, but rather in the Lord's mercy. Abide in this spirit, always reminding yourself that you are the greatest sinner. [f.85r]

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast”* (Mt 22:3).

Consider the angels' good deeds and services towards humanity. Since the angels are the servants of God, they are sent to invite men to the heavenly wedding. So extraordinarily do they perform their duty that they omit no occasion for showing us the magnificence, the excellence, and the long duration of that wedding, while demonstrating on the other hand how vain are the joys, delights, and pleasures of the world.

To you also, your personal companion, your guardian angel, provided this kind of service so many times! How often he recommended heavenly goods to you! How often he moved your spirit to contemplate and to seek them, while demonstrating that the world with its goods is but sheer filth!

It is necessary, therefore, that you comply with his wishes, especially today, as the herald of the heavenly wedding calls you to the Lamb's earthly wedding.

2. *“but they would not come”* (Mt 22:3).

Consider that the people invited are called by God to do penance, to perform good works, to avail themselves frequently of the Sacraments, to exercise virtue, and finally to improve their life through angelic inspirations and various other means. Yet, they do not want to come; they reject God's ambassadors and treat His servants with contempt. By immortal God! Beware, lest you become one of their number.

3. *“Again he sent other servants”* (Mt 22:4).

O the folly of these men who, uninvited, deliberately crash the world's wedding party and seek fleeting pleasures! Yet they so disdain the heavenly wedding, and hold in such contempt those perennial delights, that, being invited twice, thrice or even more times, they not only refuse to come, but even kill the bearers of the invitation.

For the goodness of God attempts to draw the hearts of men to His love many times and in many ways; and although they resist the first calling, He calls for a second and third time. Hence, that double call was offered to Saul: “Saul, Saul” (Acts 9:4).

O blessed are those who come to God without being called, and who forsake the world! True, [f.85v] if nobody can come to Him unless called, nay, unless drawn, as declared by Christ the Lord (cf. Jn 12:32), let us rather call blessed those who immediately obey the first calling, the first inspiration instilled in their heart.

Therefore, keep your eyes on the lookout for divine signs and deem it a sacrilege to disrespect them, especially when discerned at the sacred table.

After Holy Communion

1. *“Behold, I have made ready my dinner”* (Mt 22:4).

Consider that you walk away from Holy Communion as if from a divine dinner, in which you were nourished with the Body of God and given His Blood to drink. Wherefore, just like those who, coming from the banquet of a king, speak at length only about the grandeur of the banquet and excellence of the food, about the great number of courses and their taste, and are pleased with such stories as if with the banquet itself, so you also should ponder the magnificence, the sweetness and the excellence of the dinner of the heavenly King. Your mind should be occupied with it, your thoughts should dwell upon it, and your tongue should be busy with praising it.

Although only a single dish was served to you there, it was of such kind that it surpassed any and all of the most exquisite foods for the body. Earnestly desire that it would benefit your salvation. Wish to prize nothing over this dish.

2. *“The king was angry”* (Mt 22:7).

Consider that God cannot be angry. He is, however, very grievously offended, when His will, His command and decisions, and His desires, speaking in human terms, are not satisfied.

He desires that we all aim at greater perfection, saying: “But earnestly desire the higher gifts” (1 Cor 12:31). But when He

sees that we are stuck in the dirt of imperfections and do not lay hold of the inspirations sent by Him, and do not strive after more sublime perfection after being prompted by Him so often, He resents it so much that He seems to be angry. If it is scandalous to cause anger in a man, what an evil deed it shall be to irritate God by not obeying His commands! [f.86r]

3. “*he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers*” (Mt 22:7).

O, the cruelty of these people that killed the servants of the Lord who were so kindly inviting them to the banquet!

You, my soul, are like them when you resist a divine ordinance, whenever you scorn, disrespect, and turn a deaf ear to so many salutary admonitions, exhortations and sound counsels, by which the eternal King invites you to the everlasting wedding feast.

O you miserable one, decide! Do you not fear the army of the One you spurn? Certainly, He has at hand countless punishments by which He may torment you. Thousands of thousands stand by Him, and thousands of thousands serve Him, and yet you would dare to spurn His invitation to good behavior, to the practice of virtue, to heroic deeds, to the heavenly crown! Ah! Consider whether you are of sound mind.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. “*there was an official whose son was ill*” (Jn 4:46).

Behold, my soul, your physician Jesus has opened His pharmacy. Hasten to Him faster than the wind. Like a wounded deer that longs to run to fountains of water¹³¹ (cf. Ps 42:1), so you too, hasten to the fountain of salutary medicine, for if this Doctor restores bodily health to absent people and those far away from

¹³¹ Cf. Stanislaus Papczyński, *The Crucified Orator or The Seven Last Words of Our Lord Jesus Christ explained in as many pious reflections by the Venerable Father John Papczyński, a Polish priest*, in: *Selected Works of St. Stanislaus Papczyński*, Marian Heritage — PROMIC, Stockbridge — Warsaw 2021, pp. 729-730 (Fifth Word, §§ 26-27). [Hereafter *The Crucified Orator* will be abbreviated as CO.]

Him, He will much more quickly care for your salvation if you place yourself in His presence.

Go, therefore, lay bare your wounds, reveal your illness, and you will be healed.

2. "*When he heard*" (Jn 4:47).

Note the great care with which the royal official treated his bedridden son. Having received the news that Jesus drives away all illnesses, he hurried to Him without delay and asked Him to heal his son.

But you do the opposite. Although you should take care of the health of your soul above all, you entangle yourself in other things, while neglecting what is most important. O how very lightly you take illness of your soul! Indeed, if you cherished your salvation, as loving parents usually care for their children, you would visit a physician daily, keeping him very near you in order to receive a remedy against everyday relapses. From now on, learn better what means you should use to combat your illnesses. [f.86v]

3. "*for he was at the point of death*" (Jn 4:47).

Consider how useless medicine is when given too late to those who are already dying. And if penance is the most potent medicine for a soul, believe that it is not at all beneficial if applied too late. For that reason, as corporal medicine will not benefit those who are nearing death, because, having abandoned all hope for living, they are full of sadness and are not well prepared to take it; so the medicine of the soul, penance, does not help men already on the verge of spiritual death. This happens for the following reason: recognizing the multitude and gravity of their evil deeds, they frequently tend to fall into despair. They seem to be unprepared to apply that medicine, compelled to grief by the most acute stings of conscience, which by no means can be driven away.

Therefore rise, rise Jerusalem, my soul, and clothe yourself in fortitude! (cf. Is 51:9, 17; 52:1). Do not delay your penance, but earnestly approaching the heavenly physician and exposing to His view the illnesses of your soul, with the hope of regaining health, say to Him: "Lord, come down before my son dies" (Jn 4:49).

After Holy Communion

1. *“Go; your son will live”* (Jn 4:50).

O how great was the joyful exultation of that despondent father when he heard these words of the Lord: “Go; your son lives.” What joy filled the servants, when they saw that the royal official’s child was recuperating!

As for you, rejoice that the health of your soul has been restored to you in Holy Communion, since heavenly beings also rejoice for the same reason. As you begin seriously to apply yourself to penance, you will fill them with even greater joy, for “greater is the joy in Heaven upon one sinner that does penance, than upon ninety-nine just” (cf. Lk 15:7).

2. *“his servants met him and told him that his son was living”* (Jn 4:51).

Consider that those servants are nothing else than your senses. They hasten to meet their master, that is, the intellect, as many times as a decayed mortification rises up in you again, and, when it revives, they announce that it is alive. If it is necessary that you mortify yourself in all things always, it is much more necessary today when you have the Heavenly Host enclosed in your heart. Not only is it unbecoming, but it is an evil deed to commit even a small act of foolishness in His presence.

Therefore, bridle your eyes, your tongue, your [f.87r] hands, and feet, which are prone to do evil; curb your gluttony, and your irascible and concupiscible appetites; and make good progress every day in the practice of mortification, which is the only thing preventing the death of the soul.

3. *“he himself believed, and all his household”* (Jn 4:53).

Consider that God granted the grace to this royal official as an extraordinary favor so that he would believe. But what was it that led him to believe? The son’s deadly illness brought salvation to the father and to his whole house.

Shall not the death of your soul, which has been already revived by divine grace, serve you as a means to acquire eternal salvation? Yes, it shall if you will believe with your whole house, namely: with the senses and powers of your soul, with

your heart, intellect, and will. But in what will you believe? In internal promptings, by which you are inspired to do good and to avoid evil.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?”* (Mt 18:21).

Ponder this: although it is unbecoming for you to hate anybody or to burn with furious anger towards someone, yet, should this misfortune happen, know that you should not only forgive the one who wronged you countless times, but also wish and do the best for him, praying for him after the example of Christ the Lord, who prayed for those who crucified Him.

Indeed, think of yourself as not only unfit to avenge wrongs, insults, and blows, but also as deserving to be assailed, harassed, and despised by all; and yet you must still pray for them. So where is this virtue of yours? You are more likely to inflict injuries rather than pardon them.

At least now pray before the Divine Majesty for His foes, for the foes of the Church, of your community, and your own.

2. *“one was brought to him”* (Mt 18:24).

Imagine that you are this debtor, the one who owes ten thousand talents; you owe so many virtues and are liable to as many vices. By sinning, you contracted countless debts, and you do not yet begin to repay them, but (O wretched and foolish one!) you amass and increase them. Believe me, you cannot repay your debts by increasing them. Why, therefore, are you [f.87v] so foolish that, having committed so many evil deeds while living in the world, you daily add new debts in God’s house and incur new punishments for yourself?

To action! Turn to the gracious Lord and since you cannot repay Him, pray that He may forgive your debts. But in turn, you must forgive your debtors, if you have any.

3. *“Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything”* (Mt 18:26).

This is how it is, my Lord, my Savior: I acknowledge that I have contracted an incredible debt, that is, I have sinned numerous times before you, and I am insolvent. But, O goodness! O mercy! What good would it do for You, if You would condemn me? “What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to eternal corruption?” (cf. Ps 30:9). If I shall be punished by eternal torments, I shall never be able to repay my debt to You.

Therefore, I have found a different way to appease your justice: forgive me my debts or at least postpone them. Nevertheless, falling down most humbly at your feet, and with as much tears as I can manage, I ask that my debts, namely my sins, be forgiven. Forgive me, forgive, O Jesus! Father of mercy! Forgive the debtor who shall serve You henceforth in a holier manner and with greater fidelity, “the sins of my youth, or my transgressions,” and my wicked deeds, “remember not” (cf. Ps 25:7). Remove the heavy burden of my faults that I may run more lightly, more quickly, and more joyfully after the scent of Your ointments (cf. Cant 1:3), the scent caused by Your footsteps.

I regret that I have behaved badly, and from now on I desire to behave well. O Lord, “deliver therefore not to beasts the soul that confesses to You; and forget not to the end the soul of Your poor” (cf. Ps 74:19).

After Holy Communion

1. *“And out of pity for him the Lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt”* (Mt 18:27).

Consider that the most merciful Jesus was moved with pity for you and made you exempt, through the consumption of His Body (if you have consumed it appropriately), from the eternal prison in which you were about to be thrust because of your enormous evil deeds. If you were to examine attentively your conscience, you would truly find there something deep down that either breathed death or produced it. Although [f.88r] you treat your daily imperfections lightly because they seem very unimportant

to you, yet the gracious Lord, when He carries them away through the Sacrament of the Eucharist, seems to carry hell away from you. It is necessary that you realize that the broad road to condemnation is paved with little and slight faults. The enemy of the soul does not bother himself too much to bind you with a rope or a very strong chain, when it is sufficient for him to hold you fast by a very thin thread or a spider's web.

Saint Teresa, I believe, did not feel herself guilty of any enormous evil deeds, and yet she saw a place prepared for her in hell, if she would not avoid and not correct even quite trifling faults.¹³²

And so, you should conclude that you become exempt from eternal death whenever you become free even from small imperfections; for it is not a trifling thing that God grants you in forgiving them.

2. "*let him go*" (Mt 18:27) [DRB].

Consider that you were released from the infernal prison in the moment when, remembering your sins, you blotted them out with true contrition; or (following the example of the debtor from today's Gospel), when after throwing yourself down at the feet of a confessor acting in the name of Christ, you received the absolution humbly requested from him, for whatever he loosed here on earth, Christ shall loose in Heaven (cf. Mt 16:19).

O how blessed are you to regain such freedom! If you had not experienced any other prisons than the qualms of conscience constantly tormenting your soul, know that they are a foretaste of the countless torturers and tormentors of hell. For even the condemned themselves hardly have a greater punishment than the worms of conscience. What an exultant joy fills your soul now, as you are freed from this bond! Now you are even happier than if you were freed from the cruelest Scythian captivity!¹³³

¹³² St. Teresa of Avila, *The Book of Her Life*, in: CWTA, Trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, 2nd ed. rev., vol. 1, ICS Publications, Washington 1987, pp. 276-279 (Ch. 32, §§ 1-7).

¹³³ This refers to the captivity of the Asiatic Scyths (also called Tatars in English), who made war on Poland during the 13th and 15th.16th centuries, and brought the Polish people into servitude. Cf. *Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna*, vol. 10, PWN, Warszawa 1967, pp. 418-419 (s.v. *Scytowie*). [Hereafter *Wielka*

3. “*and forgave him the debt*” (Mt 18:27).

Behold, my soul, what a great grace your Lord has granted to you! It was not enough for His goodness to forgive the punishment ascribed to you because of your debt, but He also forgave the debt itself. This means nothing else but giving complete amnesty for all your offenses and admitting you to His true and constant [f.88v] friendship.

Worldly masters sometimes remit their debtors’ punishment, but they demand the repayment of the debt nonetheless. If at times, at the request of their friends they verbally forgive the debt, they harbor vengeance in their heart.

This is not how the heavenly Lord dealt with you today: He forgave you what you owed; He took you back into His graces, although you did not merit it; and He has forgotten your wicked deeds faster than you asked for their forgiveness. As for you, do the same for your neighbor.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. “*took counsel how to entangle [H]im in [H]is talk*” (Mt 22:15).

Consider that you should be very cautious in using your tongue, that you should speak very carefully, saying only well-considered words, since the one who listens to you judges you on the basis of what you say. It is commonly accepted that from one’s words we gather one’s internal quality. The tongue indicates what is in one’s heart. The tongue makes many people good; and it corrupts many, even the best, as the Apostle says: “Perverse conversations corrupt good manners” (cf. 1 Cor 15:33).

Now, therefore, ponder the words coming from your lips. Consider, whether you have not ruined more by your words than you have instructed, and whether by telling unnecessary or unsuitable

Encyklopedia Powszechna will be abbreviated as *WEP*.] Cf. *WEP*, vol. 11, PWN, Warszawa 1968, p. 410 (s.v. *Tatarskie...Najazdy na Polskę*).

stories, you did not cause in some at least a great scandal, if not destruction.

2. “*And they sent to [H]im their disciples along with the Herodians*” (Mt 22:16) [DRB].

Consider that the disciples of the Pharisees signify here all hypocrites, while the Herodians — cruel and impure people.

Oh, be on your guard that you do not approach the Lord today in a similar mindset. Leave hypocrisy outside and step confidently into the shrine of Christ’s Body. Throw away impurity, the cause of all evils, and your cruel and unrestrained spirit; because you are going to receive Him, who is pure, who is a meek Lamb, who is without stain, and in whom there is no malice. When you [f.89r] approach Him, remember to pray that He will remove from you whatever you have within you that is pharisaical and Herodian, so that you may be a true disciple of Christ.

3. “*we know that you are true*” (Mt 22:16).

Consider that the Pharisees who otherwise criticize the divine virtues, the truths of faith, and the deeds and miracles of Christ, still ascribe Him truthfulness and declare that it sets Him apart from others: “We know that you are a truthful man.” The reason is that the Truth itself is Humility. Although human tongues infringe, carp at, and lacerate all moral principles of human actions, they cannot attack the Truth.

Therefore, love humility, practice humility, and build upon humility. Thanks to it you will be safe everywhere, even amid the Stygian flames. And if you need it, ask, and it will be given to you by the humble Lord Who is going to enter into your heart.

After Holy Communion

1. “*Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s*” (Mt 22:21).

There were whole days when you were very distracted by countless occupations, sometimes fairly useless ones. Now, you are morally bound to consecrate this day to God and offer it up for the good of your soul, and indeed rightly so, since the Savior calls you: to render “to God, the things that are God’s.” You have

zealously offered so many hours and days of the week to the necessity of the body and the salvation of your neighbor. God rightly claims this day for Himself.

Rest, therefore, put aside all works that conflict with devotion. Enter into your room (cf. Mt 6:6), that is, into your heart. Immerse yourself in sleep; namely, a spiritual one, which is prayer and recollection. Distraction is always harmful indeed, but on the day of Holy Communion it is also sinful.

2. *“But Jesus, aware of their malice”* (Mt 22:18).

Today’s hypocrites also know that there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed; and yet they try to attack secretly and to deceive the Heavenly [f.89v] Wisdom, before whom all hearts lie open.

O human foolishness! O we, the miserable ones, who hide ourselves when we want to sin as if God were not everywhere, as if He did not see our thoughts and our deeds.

You, my soul, do not hide the gift granted to you this day. Do not conceal the graces received at the sacred table. But you will conceal them if you will be silent about them, if you cover them by a veil of ingratitude, if you give no thanks for them.

Appreciate the goods offered to you and use this knowledge, not for puffing yourself up, but for humbling yourself, realizing that you have received tremendous gifts and repaid them by committing countless sins against God.

3. *“[Show] me the coin of the tribute”* (Mt 22:19) [DRB].

Just as the rulers of this world mark the coins with their likeness, so God marked your soul with His own image, both when He created it and when He marked it with the seal of grace at your holy Baptism. Today He also placed a seal upon your heart. What kind of seal? Himself.

Hence, endeavor to make sure that the very cunning evil spirit does not break this heavenly seal by his evil suggestions and does not imprint his likeness on your soul instead. Guard it continuously; contemplate, examine, and watch it carefully.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. *"If I only touch [H]is garment, I shall be made well"* (Mt 9:21).

O faith! O trust! The Pharisees persecute Him, call Him an impostor and refuse to hear His teaching and truth, yet this woman believes firmly that she is to be healed by touching His garment.

As for you, my soul: will you doubt that you are going to be healed by touching Christ's Body, as that woman was healed by touching His garments? You also should trust that the divine [f.90r] help will never fail you, especially in the things that you will do for God's glory, as well as for your own salvation and that of your neighbor. Moreover, consider that trust in prayer is most necessary for you.

2. *"Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well"* (Mt 9:22).

Reflect that faith is the greatest gift and light of God. Once removed, all things will be shrouded in darkness and gloom in the soul. Ponder at the same time that faith saves us; however, it only happens when it shines within us ever so brightly through good deeds. Therefore, resolve to apply yourself to performing good deeds with determination and God's grace. To facilitate putting this resolution into effect, often bring to your mind these words: "their deeds follow them" (Rev 14:13).

Consequently, although you are rather inclined by nature to all evil, keep remembering that you are obliged to do good, and that you have been called to practice only true virtues, and to accomplish heroic actions, like the ones performed by the apostles and great servants of God. Since this is so, you have to apply yourself with much greater zeal and diligence to your daily work.

3. *"[H]e said, 'Depart'"* (Mt 9:24).

Consider: if the noisy multitude and the minstrels were the greatest impediment to the healing of the ruler's daughter, then when your soul is to be relieved of its spiritual fever how great an impediment shall be unsuitable thoughts and distractions? Therefore, chase this noisy crowd away from your heart and soul,

and seriously consider with whom you unite, or for what reason. Call to mind all your faults and the blessings granted to you by God, so that you may give thanks for the gifts, arouse regret for your failings, and ask for the Lord's forgiveness.

Although you have offended Him gravely so many times, nonetheless, lay bare before Him, with great confidence, the illness of your soul and your other necessities, because He comes to you precisely in order to help you in both matters. [f.90v]

After Holy Communion

1. *"who had suffered from a hemorrhage"* (Mt 9:20).

O how happy the woman who had been afflicted by a hemorrhage considered that hour! At that hour she received a complete cure! She had waited twelve years for that hour.

Thus, among the most blessed days you also are given the present day; when your soul, having received spiritual medicine, has been set free from the long-lasting illnesses that tormented it; perhaps since it attained the use of reason. Indeed, it was enriched with a new moral strength; because at the sacred table the Divine Goodness not only forgave your imperfections, as you may piously believe, but also granted you new graces by which you can: resist temptation in the future, mortify your passions, subdue bad inclinations, and even entirely demolish, abolish, and uproot them.

O what a happiness! Hardly anything greater than this could happen to Christ's servants in the world. Therefore, grateful for these graces, assume a new spirit of serving God more zealously, and striving after a greater perfection.

2. *"Take heart"* (Mt 9:22).

Consider that you should not be frightened at all, even if challenged by the whole world and hell; and you should never lose the courage to fight because of fear, since the Lord has the power to help you and to free you. He never abandons you except to prove you for the sake of greater merit. Since you are enrolled in God's army, realize that it is necessary for you to battle a variety of enemies, and to become stronger in virtue in that way.

But put your complete trust solely in Him, in God who fights for you, and not in your own many skills. [Trust in Him] as did those who said on the verge of battle: "Some rely on chariots, others on horses, but we on the name of the Lord our God." (Ps 20:8). Certainly, in this name you will conquer any enemy, having employed the shield of perseverance and the sword of prayer. [f.91r]

3. "*and the girl arose*" (Mt 9:25).

Since it was such a great miracle, ponder with increased attention the deceased virgin brought back to life by the divine power. But an even greater miracle is when the grace of God raises someone from sin to do penance. Realize that this has happened to you. For when you were called to the religious life, you were revived by the grace of God from the death of sin to do penance.

Indeed, today you have consumed the Bread of Life, which is an incentive for doing penance. Wherefore, will you be so foolish as to use the time granted for expiating your faults to commit further offenses? Will you burden your soul with new faults when the penance for your previous evil deeds remains to be done? Come on! In the acceptable time of salvation (cf. 2 Cor 6:2), bring forth worthy fruit of penance (cf. Mt 3:8).

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Before Holy Communion

1. "*When you see the desolating abomination*" (Mt 24:15) [NAB].

Consider that grieving over your soul can be compared with grieving over the city of Jerusalem. For abomination within it is predicted; while such is already found in you. Such desolation oppresses you so that you neither know nor feel how it is to burn with the Spirit of God, and how it is to commune solely with Jesus, the Bridegroom. Your sins have dried up your soul so thoroughly that you can truly say with the royal psalmist: "My soul thirsts for [Y]ou like a parched land." (Ps 143:6).

What, therefore, are you going to do in such a great state of dryness, in such a great abomination of desolation? Flee to the mountain (cf. Mt 24:18) that is Christ living in the Most Holy Eucharist. Flee, “my beloved, and be like a gazelle, or a young stag” (cf. Cant 2:8. 17). So that the ruin of greater evil deeds does not overwhelm you, flee to the high, lush, and fortified mountain. [f.91v]

2. “*let him ... not turn back*” (Mt 24:18).

Consider that sinning is a great evil, but to return to sin often is something worse. A well-known teacher expressed it by saying: “It is a human thing to sin, but to persist in sin is something diabolical.” Realize, therefore, that the greatest part of your sins, if not all of them, certainly will be forgiven you in this present Communion. But you should not go back again to your vomit,¹³⁴ to your former evil habits, to grumbling, to sluggishness, to disobedience, to all kinds of lust, to pride, and to anger.

Let not your soul go back, not only to the world itself, but also to the thought of worldly things. It should not strive after those things, which are of the flesh, but it should walk according to the Spirit (cf. Gal 5:16). Jesus Himself prohibits it, and He Himself will help your soul so that it will not go back to sin.

3. “*So when you see*” (Mt 24:15).

The Lord advises us to flee at the sight of danger. As for you, shall you stand still after noticing the infernal traps set up for you? Will you not flee before the risk of temptation? Know, that nobody gains victory over the temptation quicker than the one who flees. In the wars of this world, fleeing is a vice and not evidence of a heroic spirit. On the contrary, in a spiritual battle, flight demonstrates prudence, fortitude, and ensures certain victory.

For in temptation (as a certain man explains), first a simple notion presents itself, then the consent follows, and the delight appears.¹³⁵ After the notion, consent, and delight, the regret arrives for not fleeing the temptation.

¹³⁴ Cf. Prov 26:11 and 2 Peter 2:21-22.

¹³⁵ Cf. IC, Bk. I, Ch. 13, § 5. St. Stanislaus’ explanation is slightly different from the actual passage in *The Imitation of Christ*, which says: “For first there occurs

Although in many temptations victory is secured by overcoming oneself, yet in the temptation of which the Apostle spoke regretfully: “There was given me a spirit of Satan” etc. (cf. 2 Cor 12:7). The flight alone brings triumph. [f.92r]

After Holy Communion

1. *“let the reader understand”* (Mt 24:15).

Consider that consuming the divine food without experiencing its sweetness is the same as reading something without understanding it. Just as those who read yet do not understand what they read because they read carelessly and with a distracted mind, and who immediately turn from reading to other things without any recollection; so in a similar way, the people who consume the Body of Christ do not taste its Heavenly sweetness, because they consume it heedlessly, with scattered thoughts. Moreover, after the sacred banquet, they go away, without any interior recollection at all, and busy themselves with countless trifles. Therefore, consider now the excellence of this divine food so that you may experience its sweetness.

2. *“do not go out”* (Mt 24:26).

Consider that the Lord does not want you to abandon your good resolutions and deeds easily, even if you are advised against them with seemingly good reasons. The evil one pulls men away from good things precisely by showing them better things.

And this is exactly what he did with our first parents: wanting to deprive them of the grace of God and of their rule over things, he promised them deity, far superior to the state in which they were at that time (cf. Gen 3:5). Thus, he often deceives many, whose mind on the day of Communion diverts to temporal matters, so that they cannot engage in pondering God’s gift.

Refuse to go out of your inner self, even if called to the best things, and abide with Jesus alone.

to the mind a simple thought, then a strong mental image, afterwards pleasure, and an evil impulse, and [finally] consent.”

3. “*so will be the coming of the Son of Man*” (Mt 24:27).

Certainly, a man does not know and cannot know when a thunderbolt will burst forth from the clouds, but detects it only as it resonates and strikes something.

Thus, nobody knows when Christ will to come to judge all men. [f.92v] He will appear at the time when He strikes sinners with a very severe sentence, as if with a thunderbolt.

Wherefore, since the hour of His judgment is wholly hidden from you, you should behave every day as if you were to be judged on that day. Live so that at any given moment, you would be able to render fearlessly to God the Judge an account of your every single action, thought, and word.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY¹³⁶

Before Holy Communion

1. “*The kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed*” (Mt 13:31).

¹³⁶ Rev. F. X. Lasance and Rev. Francis Augustine Walsh, *The New Roman Missal: In Latin and English*, reprint of 1945 ed., Christian Book Club of America, Palmdale, CA, 1993, pp. 1622-1623: [In reference to the old liturgical calendar:] “*The Sundays after Epiphany and Pentecost.*—Easter may occur as early as March 22, and as late as April 25. This movable feast determines the date of other movable feasts such as the Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, and so forth. When Easter is exceedingly *early* there is not sufficient time between Epiphany and Septuagesima Sunday for the *six* Sundays, as found in the liturgy, after Epiphany, whereas after Pentecost more than the twenty-four prescribed Sundays will be needed to complete the ecclesiastical year. It may happen, too, when Easter is *late* that there are not twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost.

“The Sundays omitted after Epiphany are employed, as far as necessary, to make up the number required after Pentecost, that is, the liturgical parts with some slight changes are transferred. When one Sunday only is required, the sixth Sunday after Epiphany is taken; if two are necessary to fill out the ecclesiastical year, the fifth and sixth Sundays after Epiphany are transferred, or, if necessary, the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth.

“[However, b]ecause of the special liturgical features of the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost, this Sunday comes last, though it be the twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, and so forth. The Sundays transferred as above are placed after the twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost.... There may be as few as twenty-three Sundays after Pentecost, and as many as twenty-eight. When there are only twenty-three Sundays after Pentecost, the *twenty-fourth* will retain *Sunday*, while the *twenty-third* will be observed, rubrics permitting, on the day before (Saturday).”

The mustard seed is healthy, but bitter to taste. Thus, those who seek the Kingdom of Heaven must undergo many difficulties and endure many frustrations, crosses, and afflictions. Be not surprised by this.

For if the goods of this world, which are transient and destined to perish, cannot be possessed without great pain and toil, how can one hope to obtain without struggle everlasting, immortal and heavenly goods? Think about how many torments the Son of God Himself endured in order to return to the Kingdom of His inheritance! Do you believe that you will come to it by an easy and delightful path, strewn with roses and lilies, and not studded with thorns?

You, who are about to take the Kingdom of Heaven by storm, get ready for work, mortification, and carrying the cross; and God will assist your efforts. He will impart to you strength, graces and perseverance at His banquet today.

2. Consider how the mustard seed grows to become a tree. First, it is planted in the earth and dies; then it comes to live and gradually develops. You have to do the same [f.93r] if you desire to become the tree of a perfect servant of God. Learn to live in obscurity, learn to die, and rise up little by little as the divine grace waters you. Indeed, always remember this: he who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted (cf. Mt 23:12).

Beseech the Lord, that He Himself lead you to the state of perfection, which is pleasing to His eyes.

After Holy Communion

1. *“the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches”* (Mt 13:32).

May it happen to you upon coming back from the divine banquet that by God’s favor, from now on, or at least today, all your conversation may be in Heaven; that saints may come and dwell with you; that pious, humble, and salutary thoughts may occupy your mind; that your will may be kindled with the desire to suffer for Christ and with Christ; that your heart may be inflamed with

the ardor of a most perfect love; that you may experience what the eternal Truth said: "He who eats [M]e, shall live because of [M]e" (Jn 6:58); that you may sweetly sing: "I live, now not I; but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

2. *"I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world"* (Mt 13:35).

The Savior of the world could not contain within Himself His good things, could not hide them. He used to give them away most abundantly, teaching by word and example, imparting health to the sick, life to the dead, consolation to the afflicted, forgiveness to sinners, grace to the just, and [f.93v] eternal salvation to all by His death.

As for you, show that today you have received Christ the Lord and His power, which cannot be inactive. Otherwise, if you become halfhearted, grieve that you have received the Lord unworthily, and prepare yourself for receiving Him better in the future.

[f.94r-v is empty]

[f.95r]

PART II

Meditations for More Solemn Feasts Occurring Throughout the Whole Year

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[f.96r]

FOR THE FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD

Before Holy Communion

1. "*After eight days had passed*" (Lk 2:21).

Do you hear what was done to the Son of God after eight days? He was circumcised. O you, the fortunate one! The Savior, still a child, pours out His Blood for you at the very beginning.

Do you not circumcise your vices? You want them to grow: you do not restrain your passions, because your effort is meager. You refuse to defy your habits. You are advanced in years, yet you do not want to repress your hot temper; but the eight-day-old Jesus submits Himself to the stony knife. Be ashamed of your sluggishness.

Why are you not running to the most gracious Infant and begging Him for the strength and desire to resist your passions; why are you not fervently pleading that He cut away immediately whatever displeases Him in you?

2. “*it was time to circumcise the child*” (Lk 2:21).

Weep now as you see that God, the Lawgiver, submits Himself to the law; while you were unwilling to take upon yourself every yoke of the cross, to fulfill each and every wish of your Superiors!

Be ashamed of your proud and haughty spirit! God humbles Himself so much under the knife, so that, although He is without guilt, He may provide a remedy for guilt. Would it still be grievous to you to really undertake some mortifications of your will, when the Infant God endures already the wounds of the flesh, offering you the example of obeying and suffering?

There is something else here that you should consider carefully. The reason Jesus pours out blood flowing from the wound in the beginning of His Nativity is so that you can immerse your imperfections in it. The reason that He reddens at His birth is for you to acknowledge that He is the Sun; the reason that He spurts out blood is for you to know that He is the Wellspring. Therefore, go ahead, run to this spring and wash away in it as soon as possible whatever faults, stains, and dirt you have on your soul. [f.96v]

3. “*and He was called Jesus*” (Lk 2:21).

O name sweeter than any honey! More delightful than any ambrosia! More pleasant than any nectar!¹³⁷ Mightier than any thunderbolt! More glorious than all the names of men and angels! It is with the name of Jesus that you should occupy your mind, and even if you reflected on it constantly, you would never comprehend it. You have countless goods in the name Jesus.

Are you sad? Call upon Jesus, and He will console you. Are you being attacked? Invoke Jesus, and He will defend you. Do you desire to be saved? Love Jesus, follow and honor Him: Jesus is the Savior. Are you poor? Run to Jesus, and He will enrich you. Are you naked? Ask Jesus, and He will clothe you. Are you ill? Beseech Jesus, and He will heal you. Are you ignorant? Jesus is the Teacher. Are you surrounded by vices? Jesus is the Lord of virtues. Are you full of sins? Jesus came to save sinners.

¹³⁷ Ambrosia — “thing delightful to taste or smell”; nectar — “most delicious drink conceivable” (F.G. Fowler, and H.W. Fowler, comps., *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 4th ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford 1942, pp. 23, 523).

Therefore, let Jesus be the object of your contemplation, your love, your joy, your refreshment, your life, and your heaven. Embrace Jesus, that He may embrace you; love Jesus, that He may love you; do not abandon Jesus, that He may not abandon you.

Nothing in the whole world and in Heaven is more excellent than Jesus; therefore, may you love nothing more than Him. Give yourself entirely to Jesus and Jesus will be entirely yours.

After Holy Communion

1. *“After eight days had passed”* (Lk 2:21).

Consider that the Lord wanted to be circumcised for the sake of fulfilling the law. Hence draw this conclusion: with what eagerness He would want you to fulfill His precepts, laws, and constitutions, since He wanted to undergo the pains shared by other little Jewish children, although He had no share in their guilt at all.

You, the wretched one, for the slightest reason you transgress against the divine or religious decrees. And sometimes, moved even by quite an insignificant reason, you sin against very important laws. Do you thus value and imitate the example given by Jesus Christ [f.97r] of observing the laws, the example which He showed you clearly in His circumcision?

Come now, at least promise, in thanksgiving for today’s Communion, that from now on you will observe all divine and human laws precisely.

2. *“the name given by the angel”* (Lk 2:21).

If the name of the Lord is to be highly esteemed because it was given and announced from Heaven, how highly should you esteem this sacred Communion, to which you go, called by the inspiration of God Himself and prompted by His decree? Indeed, you would not treat it lightly should some prince personally invite you to a banquet.

And yet, something not unlike this happened to you here. The Prince of Heaven Himself drew you to his banquet table: He Himself brought you to it. What will you do, therefore, to give Him thanks and not slight this Most Holy Sacrament? Bear in

mind the person receiving and also the Person giving, as well as the excellence of the received food, so that you may comprehend the value of the Living Bread.

3. “*Before [H]e was conceived in the womb*” (Lk 2:21).

Consider how Divine Providence acts: the name was assigned to the Savior of the world even before His conception (cf. Lk 1:31).

In the same way, certain graces had been arranged for the salvation of your soul before you were born: the endowments to be at your disposal and the vocation, especially to your present state, God determined for you once, before your birth.

O how greatly you should admire and esteem God’s concern for you, the all-good Father, in anticipation of your birth! With what zeal you should compensate for it! With what conformity of the will you should repay it! At least apply yourself to it so that you do not desist willingly and with deliberation from anything that was arranged for your salvation, and [so that you] zealously cooperate, both with your vocation and with every divine grace! [f.97v]

FOR THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Before Holy Communion

1. “*For we observed [H]is star at its rising, and have come to pay [H]im homage*” (Mt 2:2).

Consider that God did not send an angel to summon the Magi to pay honors to Christ, but showed them a new and unheard of star. Understand, however, that it was done so because in His supreme wisdom God knew that a star would summon them more easily than a different heavenly messenger because they were star experts, and indeed anyone is attracted more easily by something familiar to him than by an unknown thing.

Hence, God usually manifests His will to you through your Superiors because He knows that you more easily believe them than the angels. Therefore, you ought to follow the command of

your Superiors as the Magi followed the command of the star, unless you do not want to find Jesus.

2. *“and they knelt down and paid [H]im homage”* (Mt 2:11).

Learn the manner of praying from these kings: although they were great rulers, yet having recognized the Infant to be God, they fell at once to their knees before Him. And for a good reason: for if on approaching mortal kings, men are accustomed to make a most humble, sometimes threefold bow to them, who would approach the Immortal King without the humblest reverence?

The Apocalyptic prophet¹³⁸ attests to having seen twenty-four elders, who, with inclined heads, were falling down on their faces before the Lord (cf. Rev 4:10).

O, how proud or sluggish you must be if you do not fall on your knees in adoration or in prayer!

3. *“Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered [H]im gifts”* (Mt 2:11).

What kind of gifts will you offer the Lord today together with the kings? Indeed, if you want Him to look at you with the same benevolence with which He looked at the Magi, you have to give Him similar gifts: the gold of praise, the frankincense of prayer, and the myrrh of mortification. But if you have not yet gathered these most precious riches in the blessed Arabia, that is your religious community, work hard [**f.98r**] to gather them; and be eager to imitate the suffering Christ in suffering, the High Priest in praying and the Man most severely tried by adversities in enduring hardships.

Now, if you please, hear St. Gregory, who advises: “to offer gold to the Lord who has been born, so that we may make known that [H]e rules everywhere; to offer frankincense, so that we may believe that [H]e who appeared in time existed as God before time; to offer myrrh, so that we may believe that [H]e, whom we

¹³⁸ St. John the Evangelist, the author of the Book of Revelation (which is also called the Book of the Apocalypse).

believe to be unable to suffer in [H]is divinity, was also subject to death in our flesh.”¹³⁹

After Holy Communion

1. “*And seeing the star they rejoiced*” (Mt 2:10).

If the Magi were overcome by an unusual joy when, having gone out of Jerusalem, they caught sight again of the star appearing to them, then it is also necessary for you to abound with great joy when the Sun of Justice, Christ our God, shines in your heart. If the same kings, the Wise Men, gazing upon it intently, followed that star to where it directed their course, thus you should gaze at the light of Jesus present in you, so that, following its lead, you may attain Jesus Himself, already reigning in Heaven.

Observe this light, lest it vanish from you, and thus deviating [yourself] from the way of perfection you would not find God, when indeed it was by the grace of seeking Him that you made your way from the Babylon of the world to the Jerusalem of the religious life.

2. “*The star, which they had seen in the East, went before them*” (Mt 2:9).

Behold, He who had brought the Magi to Himself by His light shines in you, my soul, in order to bring you to Him. Therefore, after the severe night of so many sins and faults, “Arise,” and “be enlightened, O Jerusalem, because your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you” (Is 60:1).

People say that it is a great vice if someone sleeps after the sunrise and snores loudly. As for you, do not indulge in such sleep after the Sun (that is, God) has risen in you, but awaken and be swiftly [f.98v] enlightened. Oh, how long shall you be fond of the night? How long shall you remain in the darkness? The Pharaoh beseeched Moses to remove the three-day darkness from his

¹³⁹ Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber I — Homilia X (Matth. II, 1-12)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1113 (n. 1470). Cf. *GFGH*, p. 58 (Homily 8).

kingdom (cf. Ex 10:21-24). Won't you shake off sleep after the heavenly light has entered your heart? "Arise, be enlightened."

3. "*They left for their own country by another road*" (Mt 2:12).

Consider that God foresaw the violent death that the cruel Herod was preparing for the Magi, the visitors of the Infant Christ. And so, warned by an angel, the Magi did not go back to the tyrant, but returned to their kingdoms by a different way. The same God foresees your ruin if, incited by your senses, you were to return to your former imperfections. Wherefore, He Himself, enclosed in you, warns you not to go back by the same way, since: "As many as went this way, all perished."¹⁴⁰ Hence, return by a different way to your country.

Your country is paradise or Heaven, where one arrives by no other way than by the way of the Cross. Therefore, having left the path of sensuality, enter the thorny way of the Cross, because this way reaches Heaven.¹⁴¹

FOR THE FEAST OF STS. FABIAN AND SEBASTIAN, MARTYRS

Before Holy Communion

1. "[*And Jesus*] *coming down [from the mountain] ...*" (Lk 6:17) [DRB].

Consider that the crowd could not ascend the mountain after Christ, and this was the reason for His coming down. If He walked in lofty places only, none of the weaker people could keep up with Him, and thus they would be deprived of His salutary teaching. "For how would the crowd see Christ," says St. Ambrose, "unless in a low place? It does not follow Him to the heights, it does not ascend to the lofty places."¹⁴² Indeed, by "the

¹⁴⁰ Cf. CO, p. 723 (Fifth Word, § 4).

¹⁴¹ Virgil, *Eneida*, Trans. T. Karyłowski, Comp. S. Stabryła, Ossolineum, Wrocław 2004, p. 290 (Bk. 9)

¹⁴² Ambrosius, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam: Liber V (Luc. VI, 17)*, in: *PL*, vol. 15, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1845, p. 1648 (n. 1366).

mountain” you should understand the secrets of a more elevated knowledge, which the Teacher, Jesus, used to explain only to the apostles ascending the mountain with Him. Then He would descend from the mountain to explain to the uneducated crowds the truths of faith that were easier to grasp and practice [f.99r] in order to obtain salvation.

And thus, He used to ascend the mountain with the apostles, who were already prepared by God’s grace to comprehend more sublime secrets, and then to descend to the crowds in the flat country, adapting His teaching to their simpler dispositions. He did so to give you the example of adjusting your words and deeds, so that they may bring the fruit of edification and salvation to all; so that you would be simple in teaching and acting among the simple people and would not hesitate to show your education among the learned, not for the sake of praise or admiration, but for advancing the cause of salvation.

Today, however, show yourself before Jesus, the Supreme Wisdom present in the Holy Eucharist, as so weak that it would be altogether necessary that He descend to you. For it serves you more to confess your weakness than to pretend that you are strong, when you are not.

2. “[H]e stood in a plain place” (Lk 6:17) [DRB].¹⁴³

It was proper for the Flower of the plain¹⁴⁴ to stand in a plain place, where all, even little children, could behold him, and where He could refresh and invigorate everyone by the heavenly odor of His examples or His words. If He continued to stay on the mountain, not everybody would approach Him, find Him, and look at Him with admiration, resulting in solace and salvation.

He knew how to adapt Himself; He knew how to benefit people of any state, nature, talents, and capability. He did not hesitate to

¹⁴³ The DRB version of this Scripture passage must be used here, since the commentary is based on the use of the words “plain place,” which are not used in more modern translations.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Cant 2:1: “I am a flower of Sharon”; footnote 2, 1: “*Flower of Sharon*: probably the narcissus, which grows in the fertile Plain of Sharon lying between Mount Carmel and Jaffa on the Mediterranean coast”: NAB, p. 744.

descend to the low places for saving everyone. He did not think it unworthy to turn away from the dignity of His majesty in order to also give a chance for seeking the heavenly Kingdom to the crowds of low rank, even the sinners. And thus, exposing His name to disgrace, He used to eat and associate with sinners, even if this was considered His greatest vice, for which the Pharisees slandered Him.

What will happen when He soon comes to you, one of the sinful publicans? Having abandoned His own highness, He will stand in the plain place of your lowliness in order to elevate you to a higher degree of His love.

3. *“Blessed are you who weep now”* (Lk 6:21).

Consider that by His teaching the heavenly Master wanted to refute completely the teaching of the world. The people of this transient world think themselves most unhappy when assaulted by various adversities, but He says: “When you fall in various distresses, rejoice [f.99v] and exult” (cf. Mt 5:11-12; Lk 6:22-23). Why so? Because “Blessed are those who mourn” (Mt 5:4), who are pressed by countless adversities, who are tested and cleansed by distresses, like gold by fire. And so, when you are unhappy, rejoice and believe that you are fortunate.

Mourn, therefore, if you want to be blessed. Mourn that you live in exile from the heavenly Fatherland; mourn that you dwell in this valley of tears. Mourn, because of those moments in which you fall. Mourn, because you are so weighed down by your imperfections that you are not at all able to ascend after Jesus to the mountain of higher perfection. Mourn, for you will be separated from the highest good for as long as you remain in your mortal body. Mourn, because quite often you offend God, who loves you very much; mourn, because you do more evil than good. Mourn, because by nature you are inclined only to ruin. Mourn, because you delight more easily in sensuality than in mortification. Mourn, moreover, because you approach in such a poor preparation to consume the sweetest food of God. Mourn, finally, because you have countless reasons for mourning, and yet you are not able to mourn, but rather you laugh and rejoice.

After Holy Communion

1. *"Blessed are you who are poor,"* (Lk 6:20).

Consider that the Lord said that the poor are blessed, but not those poor that lack in material goods, but those who are poor in spirit (cf. Mt 5:3). He who has nothing yet seeks to have everything is not blessed, but miserable; while the one abounding in riches is blessed, if he does not immerse his heart in them.

The Apostle said about such men: "Having all things, and possessing nothing." Do not think that someone who left behind all things for the love of Christ, but held back a great desire for possessing some trinket or swelling his own honor or dignity, is truly poor in spirit! Oh, what a hypocrite this poor man is! He deceives himself!

As for you, you shall be blessed and truly poor if you are happy with Jesus alone, received in the sacred banquet. Therefore, together with St. Bonaventure, ask Him to be your portion, your possession, and your treasure, in which your mind and your heart shall be fixed, firm, [f.100r] and always immovably rooted.¹⁴⁵

2. *"Blessed are you when people hate you"* (Lk 6:22).

Consider that human ways of thinking are often contrary to divine actions. Hence, it is no wonder that people hate those who seek to please God. Yet those whom the people hate on account of God are certainly blessed. Just as the people, who do not favor their king, do not favor the royal servants, so the world that is unfriendly to God is also unfriendly to God's servants. Then, as the king greatly esteems his servants, who did not abandon him

¹⁴⁵ In the 1962 Roman Missal and prior editions, there is a prayer entitled *Alia Oratio* ("Another Prayer") from the section *Gratiarum Actio Post Missam* ("Thanksgiving After Mass"), which has been ascribed to St. Bonaventure. Cf. *MIR*, p. li (*Gratiarum Actio Post Missam — Alia Oratio*). Cf. Rev. F.X. Lasance and Rev. Francis Augustine Walsh, *The New Roman Missal: In Latin and English*, Reprint of 1945 ed., Christian Book Club of America, Palmdale, CA, 1993, p. 1812: Here are the beginning and ending of this prayer: "O sweetest Lord Jesus, I implore Thee, pierce the very marrow of my soul with the delightful, health-giving dart of Thy love ... Be Thou alone and evermore my hope ... my portion, mine own possession and my treasure. In Thee, O Lord, may my mind and my heart remain fixed and firm, and rooted immovably for ever more. Amen."

because of the people's hatred, so Christ calls "blessed" those of His servants who adhere to Him inseparably even though they lose favor with people or become hated by them on His account.

Wherefore work hard so that the world pursues you with hatred if you want to please God and be "blessed"; since "blessed" are those whom "men hate," you should value human hatred more than favor.

3. *"And all in the crowd were trying to touch [H]im, for power came out from [H]im and healed all of them"* (Lk 6:19).

If the touch of the Lord is such that virtues are acquired and diseases are chased away through it, how fortunate therefore, are those who quite often not only touch Him, but also consume Him; and more fortunate those who do so every day. Indeed, they are adorned with virtues more than the others, and they are completely healed should they be afflicted with some diseases of the soul.

Know that today you were made a sharer in this happiness, and therefore, give to Christ the Lord the greatest thanks that you can for His permitting you not only to touch, but also to consume Him.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. AGNES, VIRGIN AND MARTYR

Before Holy Communion

1. *"they took no oil with them"* (Mt 25:3).

Truly St. Matthew, the most zealous herald of the Lord's Word, quite rightly labels "foolish" these virgins who did not prepare any light while going at night to celebrate the wedding with [f.100v] the bridegroom when they did not take with them any oil for their lamps.

Oh, how often this foolishness befalls you as well! How often this ridiculous foolishness takes possession of you when you approach the table of the immaculate Lamb, the wedding of the

immortal bridegroom, without oil, without light, in the darkness of the spirit!

Be on your guard so that the same does not happen to you now, when if you wish to receive the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist full of distractions and without concentration, it may be said to you: "I do not know you" (cf. Mt 25:12), and the grace and also the virtue, which this heavenly food causes, be denied to you.

2. "*all of them became drowsy and slept*" (Mt 25:5).

Marvel at and bewail your idleness, because as soon as you see the others rest, you take your leisure at once. Oh! Don't you know that inactivity is not advantageous for everybody? You don't know that in order to rest, some people must necessarily interrupt their labors, while for others, uninterrupted labors are necessary.

Behold the whole group of virgins slumbered, but this rest does not benefit all of them, for five of them were cast off and rejected from the wedding. Why? It was because they allowed themselves to sleep deeply, while the oil had to be prepared, while good works had to be practiced. It was possible for the wise ones to rest for they had with them everything prepared for the celebration of the wedding. It was not possible or beneficial for the foolish to rest.

Therefore, you should love and devote yourself to your works lest, being recognized as a fool for lacking in good works, you be excluded from the heavenly court. Spoiled salt is good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men (cf. Mt 5:13). Do you think that you are so frequently refreshed by the heavenly food for any other reason than to be more suitable for your works? Beware that you do not eat in vain this bread of angels. [f.101r]

3. "*Our lamps are going out*" (Mt 25:8).

O my Light! My Sun, most gracious God! How fittingly this sentence can apply to and be said about me: "Your lamp is going out!" The light fails you, and you find yourself in more darkness than the Cimmerii.¹⁴⁶ For where is my progress? Woe to me!

¹⁴⁶ According to Homer, a darkness prevailed in the mythical country of the Cimmerii, located north of the Black Sea. Cf. *Dizionario Enciclopedico Italiano*, Vol. III, Istituto Dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1956, p. 215 (s.v. *Cimmeri*). Cf.

Because I am destroyed from day to day, and my work is getting worse. O Lord, my lamp is going out. The light of my eyes is not with me (cf. Ps 38:10). I get cold, I grow weaker, and I am already overwhelmed by my sins, not merely my imperfections. All that you had given me as gifts and helps so that I would tend to greater perfection now decays. My race ends.

To action! Rush forward, my soul! Why do you want to be plunged into darkness? Kindle your lamp by the desire to approach the Most Holy Eucharist, so that it does not lack light. Your lamp goes out when you burn with little or no desire to receive the Lord's Body.

After Holy Communion

1. "*The Bridegroom comes*" (Mt 25:6).

Behold, already Christ is celebrating the nuptials with your soul. He already entered its dwelling, even now He remains in its embraces and gives it His most sweet kiss as a token of peace and love. But this wedding, this union with you, requires your faith, charity, and obedience. Once you used to walk as you pleased; now you have to walk in the ways of His commandments. Previously you opposed His inspirations and admonitions, both internal and external; now you are bound to serve Him with faithful submission, lest you be like an adulteress and a prostitute. Before you were detached and laid-back; now, inflamed by the fire of charity, you have a task [f.101v] of doing good to all, but especially to those of the household of the faith (cf. Gal 6:10).

Therefore, divest yourself of the old man, passionate and imperfect (cf. Eph 4:22; Col 3:9), and put on Jesus Christ. Is it not fitting that you shall be transformed into Him, whom you have received?

2. "*But at last come also the other virgins*" (Mt 25:11).

Consider, that postponement and slow execution of good resolutions is greatly harmful and nearly similar to the foolish-

SLL, vol. 1, Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii 1758, p. 141 (s.v. *Cimmeri*).

ness of those who do not leave the harbor with a favorable wind; and thus, having let pass the best occasion for sailing, never get another equally good chance.

Refrain from such behavior, but hastily sail away from the harbor and undertake the good work to which you are inspired as soon as the divine inspirations are sent upon you. For the grace of the Holy Spirit does not recognize late efforts: it abandons the ravens that are idle and put their work off to the next day; it vomits the lukewarm (cf. Rev 3:16). If the masters of this world highly value an eager servant and despise the lazy one, it is fitting that you be much more eager, you who boast of being a servant of the Immortal King who detests tortoises. He does not put off His graces till tomorrow, so why do you put off your good works till tomorrow?

3. “*Watch!*” (Mt 25:13).

Consider that the King of Heaven is an unrelenting enemy of sleepiness. Hence, when He kept vigil in the Olivet Garden,¹⁴⁷ He was so annoyed at the sleepiness of the disciples that with a complaint, or rather a rebuke, He said: “Could you not watch one hour with [M]e?” (Mt 26:40). Nobody would be rebuked for saying that in Peter’s case the reason for denying Christ was his nap in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Eternal Word’s admonition is: “Watch and pray that you do not enter into temptation” (Mt 26:41). It is quite obvious that sleep is a father of temptation, while temptation is the mother of sin.

Who would doubt that because of sleepiness you either have lost or stand the risk of losing many gifts of God, if you will not keep vigil? Learn, therefore, from the experience of today’s foolish virgins, who because of the sweetness of sleep, lost their chance to see and meet the Bridegroom. [f.102r]

¹⁴⁷ The Garden of Gethsemane, which lies at the foot of Mt. Olivet.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL, APOSTLE

Before Holy Communion

1. *"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute [M]e?"* (Acts 9:4).

Consider that it is customary for God to rouse up great sinners by powerful inspirations or words that crush their heart like a hammer. Consider now, whether He does not cry out against you too in the same words: "Why do you persecute [M]e?" Through grace I made you my friend; yet you behave as an enemy by turning away from me to vain things, to frivolous amusements, to the world, and to sensuality? For you I carried the Cross and was hung upon it; and you, embracing your own will, treat the spiritual cross and mortification with abhorrence. "Why do you persecute [M]e?"

2. *"Who are you, Lord?"* (Acts 9:5).

It is proper to a wise man who wants his soul to be converted to look for good inspirations and to embrace and fulfill them. But as for you, are you not indeed neglecting divine inspirations? When a thought inspired by God comes to you, for example this or a similar one: "Wake up from your sleep" (Eph 5:14), will you wake up, you, who are oppressed by the sleep of so many imperfections? Won't you jump up? Won't you cry out, sighing: "Truly the Lord has spoken"? "I will rise," therefore, "and will go about the city: in the streets and the squares; I will seek [H]im whom my soul loves" (Cant 3:2); and the later I start looking for [H]im, the more urgently I will try to find [H]im.

3. *"Lord, what do you want me to do?"* (Acts 9:6).

Behold, how quickly Saul is transformed into Paul: he casts away his own will, and he seeks the divine will. He does not want to persecute Christ anymore, but instead he wants to follow Him.¹⁴⁸

O you, most fortunate one! If you would have today such noble intentions of denying yourself! If you would change from a

¹⁴⁸ In the Latin there is a play on words that cannot be translated: "*non vult amplius Christum persequi, vult sequi*."

carnal into a spiritual man! If you would stop persecuting Jesus and begin to follow Him! If you would say wholeheartedly: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" Do you really say it? [f.102v] Do you seek Him? Therefore: "Arise, and go into the city, and there you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:7).

Descend, I say, into your very soul, and there you will learn from God visiting it what you shall do, what manner of life you shall undertake and in what way you shall uproot your passions and plant virtues, namely; through the abnegation of your own will.

After Holy Communion

1. "*And Saul arose from the ground*" (Acts 9:8).

Saul certainly arose from the ground, for he no longer followed earthly desires. Indeed, he says, also lifting up the others from the ground: "I beseech you ... brothers, by the mercy of God, that you offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasant to God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed in the newness of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God" (Rom 12:1-2). These are the words uttered by someone who truly arose from the ground, who was caught up to the third heaven (cf. 2 Cor 12:2).

Come now! Pick yourself up from the ground as well. Christ calls you: get up from the ground and "Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth" (Col 3:2).

2. "*He was there three days without his sight*" (Acts 9:9).

No wonder that Saul's eyes were darkened; that he rapidly became blind, since he was trying to look too quickly with a mind yet unadjusted at the heavenly light, as a sunflower does; he was trying to follow at once Jesus the Sun, as he says: "What do you want me to do?"

Note that this happened in order to warn you, so that you would not seek too much enlightenment before you are cleansed, lest you attempt to enter the way of light before you free yourself from darkness. What would a picture painted with the most excellent colors be without a background? Your soul is the image of God.

Do not attempt to adorn it too soon [f.103r] with brilliant qualities, until it has been well washed and cleaned with the tears of repentance.

Thus, see that you don't go blind by seeking to obtain light as soon as possible.

3. "*And he neither ate, nor drank*" (Acts 9:9).

Such is the conduct of the truly converted spirit; it abstains from things permitted, when a little while before it treated itself to unlawful things. It does not eat or drink, since it once worshiped as a god the belly and gluttony. The Truth Himself speaks through the prophet: "Be converted to [M]e with all your heart, in fasting, and weeping, and mourning" (cf. Joel 2:12). Behold the drink of those who are converting themselves to God: weeping and mourning! Behold the nourishment, which is wholesome and salutary: fasting!

Therefore, in like manner, you should restrain the gluttony of your belly if you greatly desire to obtain the true conversion of your soul to God.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Before Holy Communion

1. "*they carried [Jesus] to Jerusalem*" (Lk 2:22) [DRB].

Why is He who walks upon the wings of the winds being carried? (cf. Ps 104:3). Why is He who is present everywhere being carried to Jerusalem? Why does the Lawmaker succumb to the law?

All of this has to do with humility alone, and it has your instruction in view. The Child Jesus gave you an example, so that you would act as He Himself acted. Do not be ashamed to learn from the Child, indeed from the wisest Child, because He is meek and humble of heart (cf. Mt 11:29). Listen, listen to Him: unless you become like this Child, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (cf. Mt 18:3).

And what would be your reason for approaching Him today if not to learn from Him the virtues which He exercised in the purification of His Mother, so that you also may practice them from now on?

2. *“this man was just and devout”* (Lk 2:25) [DRB].

It is a sufficient enough eulogy to be called just and devout by the Holy Spirit. This is greater praise than to be called by the world the strongest, [f.103v] wisest, most distinguished, most excellent, most gracious, most dignified, and most eminent.

Therefore, imitate Simeon in his justice, so that you may flourish like a palm tree, be exalted and grow like the cedar of Lebanon (cf. Ps 92:12; Eccl 24:17). Imitate him in fearing God that all may be well with you at the end of your life. In today’s Gospel there are many masters of virtue who teach not by words, but by their examples: you have Jesus, you have Mary and you have Simeon.

If, conscious of your frailty, you do not dare to imitate Jesus, since He is God, or Mary, since she is the Mother of God; then as a man, imitate at least Simeon, who is a man, so that you may be just and devout like him.

3. *“waiting for the consolation of Israel”* (Lk 2:25) [DRB].

Take note of the burning desire of this very holy old man, Simeon, to see the true Messiah. Undoubtedly, it was so great, so unfailing, and so pleasing to God that it merited to receive a reply from the Holy Spirit that he, Simeon, would not see death until he sees Christ the Lord. Hence, realize that the benefit we gain from Holy Communion is given according to our desire to receive Christ.

Why then are you so spiritless? Why do you approach the sacred banquet with such great coldness and apathy? Rouse in yourself ever-greater zeal to receive the Body of the Lord, so that you may feel that you received a greater benefit from Him.

After Holy Communion

1. *“he took [H]im up in his arms”* (Lk 2:28).

O what reverence! What joy! What exultation! Such were the words of that holy old man, when he held in his arms the Mes-

siah, now born and presented to him! He says: “Lord, now let [Y]our servant depart in peace, according to [Y]our word; for my eyes have seen [Y]our salvation!” (Lk 2:29-30). He wishes to be dismissed from His service, as he carries in his arms the Author of freedom. He wants to die already, since he has seen the Savior. He does not wish to await redemption among the living, but he wants to be on his way to the deceased Fathers, intending to bring to them the message of redemption [f.104r].

These are the effects of Christ’s action when He remains in the arms of a soul:

the desire “to depart and be with Christ” (Phil 1:23);
 the wish to die to the world and to live for Heaven;
 the belief that everything that is not Christ is death;
 the belief that all things are vain, except the love of God.

Indeed, anyone who has received Jesus may rightly exclaim: “Lord, now let [Y]our servant depart.”

O sin! Which hitherto reigned over me, now let your servant depart when he holds in his arms His own Lord of the soul! O unclean world! Which I have served too greatly, oh, too long and foolishly, now let your servant depart since he turned his heart over to Another, a better and more steadfast Master, his true Lord, intending to serve from now on no one else but Him alone.

2. “[came] for the fall, and for the resurrection of many” (cf. Lk 2:34) [DRB].

Saint Ambrose puts it very well: “Behold, Simeon prophesies: that Jesus Christ came for the fall and for the resurrection of many, that [H]e may discern the merits of the righteous and the faults of the wicked, and according to the quality of our deeds, being the true and just Judge, [H]e may decree punishments or determine rewards.”¹⁴⁹ God leaves nothing bad unpunished nor anything good unrewarded.

¹⁴⁹ Ambrosius, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam: Liber II (Luc. II, 34)*, in: *PL*, vol. 15, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1845, p. 1574 (n. 1301).

Wherefore you, if you are so prudent that you wish to get from Him a reward rather than a punishment, work hard, as much as your strengths allow, at doing good deeds and avoiding evil ones.

Therefore, resist your passions and work hard with great strength to acquire virtues, so that this just Judge, judging you according to your actions, would not mark you for the fall, but for the resurrection.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. MATTHEW, APOSTLE

Before Holy Communion

1. “[*You have*] revealed them to little ones” (Mt 11:25) [DRB].

Consider, that heavenly wisdom and prudence is always contrary to worldly wisdom and prudence. Hence, those who place their trust in human wisdom and count on it are not fit to comprehend the Divine Wisdom, as we see from the example of the Pharisees, the Jewish Scribes, and Doctors. [f.104v] Since they regarded themselves as wise and prudent, the eternal Father has hidden from them heavenly secrets and the mysteries of His wisdom and has revealed them to the little ones, to the simple and illiterate fishermen. If human wisdom mostly brings forth pride, the Divine Wisdom can remain only in a humble mind. They disagree so completely with one another that one must be inevitably abandoned so that the other may be possessed.

Therefore, bow your head now. Put aside the prudence swelling with pride and become a little one as you approach the source of Divine Wisdom, so that you may fruitfully draw from it the wisdom that is useful for you and for many others.

2. “*Come [to Me]*” (Mt 11:28).

Consider, that the Most Holy Eucharist refreshes the soul not unlike corporal food refreshes the tired limbs. As the latter would grow weak from their labors if they were not rather frequently refreshed, thus the spirit would be entirely extinguished in us if it were not nourished by this heavenly food. Wherefore, just like a good householder that usually calls the workers to table after they

have completed their works, this heavenly Lord invites the wearied spirits to the sacred banquet, saying: "Come to [M]e, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).

Oh, how many are the foolish that seldom respond to the Lord's invitation and, snubbing His banquet, allow their souls to die of spiritual hunger.

As for you, rise swiftly, hasten to where you are called, that refreshed by the heavenly nourishment you may work more efficiently in the vineyard of the Lord.

3. "[M]y burden is light" (Mt 11:30).

Jesus says this very justly. For He Himself carries the person who is carrying his burden and sustains him by His grace in such a way that the person feels the weight of the burden to a very small degree. And if sometimes Jesus makes this burden (such as: distress, tribulation, temptation, and any cross) painful and heavy for us, this happens for our greater good and merit, since the reward is given to the one who carries the burden according to its weight.

Therefore, take the burden of Christ upon yourself; take the cross upon yourself. Although it will seem rather heavy to you, nevertheless Jesus will make it lighter by the sweetness of His consolation, and He will reward you with the eternal vision of Himself. For no other reason does He call you today to His table other than to make His burden light for you and to grant you new strength for bearing other burdens, should He impose them upon you. [f.105r]

After Holy Communion

1. "[You have] hid these things from the wise and prudent" (Mt 11:25) [DRB].

Ponder that the mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist was not revealed to any of the wise and prudent, because they prefer to scrutinize the facts rather than to trust in faith. But in this Sacrament, which is so mysterious and concealed, faith completes what the senses lack.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Cf. The hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi*, verse 5, has the same words: "*praestet fides supplementum sensuum defectui*," which in *LHE* (vol. III, p. 598) are trans-

However, someone who does not really believe that the true God-Man is here and who, having received Him, does not behave as the angels behave in His sight: that is, someone who is dissipated and proud, who does not occupy his mind in considering such a great benefit, and lastly, who in the presence of the God received by him, is neither inflamed by the fire of love, nor glows with the ardor of devotion, but is convinced that it is sufficient if he gives thanks for the Communion with a only a little prayer, and then is absorbed at once by other matters. Indeed, the mystery of the Lord's Body is concealed before such a wise and prudent man. Oh, flee from such a wisdom and prudence!

2. "*learn of [M]e, because I am meek, and humble of heart*" (Mt 11:29) [DRB].

Listen most attentively, learn, and put into practice the lesson that the heavenly Teacher imparts to you now from the pulpit of your heart.

He says: be humble and gentle, avoid the things that are high and lofty and instead steer towards the lowest things. Do not be puffed up because of your knowledge or other extraordinary talents granted only to you and not to the others, or because of the grace of devotion, or a large number of friends, or the loftiness of honors, or favor with people, or whatever else; but be humble of heart. Attribute to Me your virtues, to yourself your vices; to Me good things, to yourself evil things; everything to Me, nothing to yourself.

Learn from My example to be humbled in all things, despised, embarrassed, to choose cheaper things, to always want what others despise: "Learn from [M]e, because I am meek, and humble of heart." "[A]nd learn from [M]e," as St. Augustine explains: "not to form the world, not to create all visible and invisible things, nor to do miracles in the world itself and to make the dead rise; but that 'I am meek, and humble of heart.'"¹⁵¹ [f.105v]

lated: "Faith our feeble senses aiding" (the Hymn for Evening Prayer I for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi).

¹⁵¹ Augustinus, *Sermones: Classis I. De Scripturis — Sermo LXIX (Matth. XI, 28-29)*, in: *PL*, vol. 38, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1865, p. 441 (cap.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. CASIMIR, CONFESSOR

Before Holy Communion

1. "*Let your loins be girt*" (Lk 12:35) [DRB].

Consider, what a great value the angelic virtue possesses, to which the heavenly Teacher so fervently encouraged His disciples. "We gird our loins," says the Roman Doctor, "when we curb through modesty the dissoluteness of the flesh."¹⁵²

Truly, nothing is more precious, more excellent, more pleasing to God than chastity. Know, that St. Casimir valued it even more than his own life. When he was bedridden, the doctors advised him to contract an appropriate marriage as the most effective remedy for his deadly disease. He rejected high-mindedly the disgraceful medicine and uttered that maxim to be admired by all ages and imitated by all who are bound by law to chastity: "I prefer to die, than to be defiled." He said so and supported the words by deed.¹⁵³

Oh, how happy you shall be, if in aspiring to such a great virtue you will equal this most irreproachable saint, at least when you are attacked by impure spirits!

2. "*your lamps burning*" (Lk 12:35).

Reflect, that next to the girdle of chastity, St. Casimir was far from lacking the lamp of good deeds. In addition to other

I, § 2): *Humilitas fundamentum ædificii spiritualis*. ("Humility is the foundation of the spiritual edifice.") A footnote also refers the reader to see St. Augustine's Sermon 10 — *De Verbis Domini*. Cf. Augustinus, *De sancta Virginitate — Liber Unus*, in: *PL*, vol. 40, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1865, p. 416 (cap. 35).

¹⁵² Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber I — Homilia XIII (Luc. XII, 35-40)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1123 (n. 1481). Cf. Cornelius à Lapide, *The Great Commentary of Cornelius à Lapide: S. Luke's Gospel*, Trans. Thomas W. Mossman, 4th ed., vol. 4, John Grant, Edinburgh 1908, p. 301 (Ch. XII, 35): "*Mystically*. We gird our loins when we restrain the luxury of the flesh by abstinence (continentiam), says S. Gregory (*Hom. xiii*)."

¹⁵³ Cf. L. Siekaniec, *NCE*, vol. III, p. 178 (s.v. *Casimir, St.*): "Not wishing to renounce his celibacy, he rejected his father's plans for him to wed the daughter of Emperor Frederick III of Germany." Cf. *BLS*, (s.v. *March 4 — St. Casimir, King*): "At the age of twenty-five, sick of a lingering illness, he foretold the hour of his death and chose to die a virgin rather than take the life and health which the doctors held out to him in the married state." Cf. *IC crit. ed.*, p. 226 (footnote 22).

works, he promoted the true religion with such a great zeal and endeavored to eradicate the schisms with such eagerness, that he earnestly asked his father, the King, and the Polish Senate for a decree totally forbidding the followers of the Greek Schism in Russia, by which means he hoped to put an end to the schism.¹⁵⁴

Oh, may the Most Holy Eucharist also rouse you to good works, so that your soul may shine with them before men, and thus our Heavenly Father may be glorified.

3. "*You yourselves like men who wait*" (Lk 12:36).

Consider, that St. Casimir already enjoys the beatific vision and immerses himself in the comforts of the glory of the heavenly Fatherland, whereas you are still waiting [f.106r] to contemplate God face to face, the same God Who you are about to receive under the species of bread. Truly, this happiness of yours will be great if only you try to prepare yourself to receive Him worthily.

Oh, if only you had a little bit of that ardor with which this saintly prince was burning for the Holy Sacrament! Oh, if you possessed even the smallest spark of love, with which he was glowing towards the Mother of that Lord whom you are about to receive! He gave witness to that love in a splendid hymn which he personally composed and which was buried with him, and then found on his chest, completely intact, many years after its author's death!¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ The Greek schism began in 1054, when Leo IX excommunicated the patriarch M. Cerularius, who in turn excommunicated the Pope. Cf. M. D. Knowles, and D. Obolenski, *Historia Kościoła*, Trans. Ryszard Turzyński, vol. II, Pax, Warszawa 1988, pp. 248-249; cf. Romuald Gustaw, ed., *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk (1458-1484)*, in: *Hagiografia Polska*, vol. I, Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, Poznań 1971, pp. 742-743.

¹⁵⁵ Paolo Rabikauskas, *BS*, vol. III, Istituto Giovanni XXIII nella Pontificia Università lateranense, Roma 1963, 903 (s.v. *Casimiro (Kazimieras, Kazimierz)*, *principe..., sancto*): "Some attribute to Casimir the canticle '*Omni die*.' In favor of this opinion there seemed to be a rubric in the prayer book of Casimir's brother, Alessandro, written in 1490 ... where the canticle is introduced with the note: '*Alia oratio Illustris principis Kazimiri, Serenissimi Poloniae regis nati. Oratio quotidiana*'; the hypothesis also seemed to be supported by the fact that when the saint's tomb was opened in 1604, a copy of the same canticle was found in it. It is now known that the hymn originated in the 13th or 14th century, but it is due to the

Ask through the intercession of St. Casimir that God pour into you this ardor and love, and entrust to his protection your earthly Fatherland.

After Holy Communion

1. *"finds awake"* (Lk 12:37).

Just like a householder detests a lazy farmhand, and a master a sluggish servant, so God detests a negligent soul. Indeed, just as they promptly remove such men from their household and dismiss them from services, so God also keeps at a distance those who are sluggish and slothful in divine matters, according to the words: "So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth" (cf. Rev 3:16).

On the contrary, promising certain beatitude to the fervent and diligent servants, He says: "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he comes," and knocks at the door, "shall find watching" (cf. Lk 12:37).

Therefore, take care lest you become tepid in the divine services, especially since He admits you to His Most Sacred Table so frequently and with such great graciousness.

2. *"If he comes in the second watch"* (Lk 12:38).

Consider that a continuous ardor and, in time, a greater progress in virtues is required from you. For what commander would be so imprudent as to lavishly reward a soldier who was only good, industrious, and obedient at the beginning of his military service, but sluggish afterwards? God, wishing to bestow upon you eternal reward, wants you to watch continuously, to be zealous, to work, and to make progress. [f.106v]

It is not only worthless, but downright degrading for God's soldier to be fervent at first, to repel temptations bravely, to train himself promptly in all kinds of mortification and prayer, to practice every virtue, but to collapse shortly after, and to give the palm of victory to the enemy as if with powerless and restrained hands.

great Marian piety of Casimir, that the hymn '*Omni die dic Mariae*' is still known and sung by the faithful today."

Prepare yourself, therefore, for greater toils, for severer temptations, for prolonged isolations. Since it regards perfect beatitude, you must be continuously watching: in the first watch, that is, in the religious novitiate; and in the second, that is, after profession; and lastly in the third watch, that is, close to death when your life is coming to an end.

3. *“But know this”* (Lk 12:39).

Consider, that the Divine Word made known, often with help of parables, the story of no small importance about the thief and the householder. He teaches us there that we should never be unprepared for the day of death. Since, as the very patient and wise Job testifies: “The life of man upon earth is a warfare” (Job 7:1) [DRB]; we must always remain watchful. This is what the heavenly Teacher asserts, speaking of the householder who would certainly deny himself the whole night of sleep should he know that a thief was coming to break into his house.

Therefore, as it is proper for men to keep watch day and night so that they would not lose their temporal goods, thus you ought to pay attention every moment, lest you lose immortal goods and gifts, and so that death would not catch you devoid of merits.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Before Holy Communion

1. *“When [H]is mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph”* (Mt 1:18).

It is not up to you to inquire into the profound mystery of the virginity joined with maternity and the maternity with virginity. Instead, you should be overwhelmed by astonishment [f.107r] that this was done for your salvation.

What is it? What does this mean? The Virgin remains undefiled, and yet she is a Mother; she has a Spouse, and yet she is a Virgin. Both the Husband and the Wife present the incorrupt

lily of virginity, and yet, between them, the Son appears in the middle and is adored. O most wonderful mystery, full of wonder and worthy of admiration! The Virgin did not know man, and yet she carries in her womb God who is at the same time Man, and Man who is at the same time God. He is God, born of the Father before the ages without a mother; He is Man, created in time in the Mother without a father, by the action of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, there is no other mystery that we revere and admire more, and which amazes us more. None of the divine works is grander.

And you, dust and clay, do you see what God did for your sake? To what extent the Son abased Himself? How far does the omnipotence of the Father reach? Shall you not love Him for this?

2. *"She was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit"* (Mt 1:18).

The wives of the ancient pagans pretended that they bore (children) from gods. This is false, impious, and a pagan deception.¹⁵⁶ The Most Holy Virgin Mary is with child, the Son of God, through the Holy Spirit. It is a mystery, a grace, and an article of faith. Indeed, it is justly said that she conceived through the Holy Spirit; she who was full of grace and full of the Holy Spirit.

Oh, if only this could be affirmed about your actions: that they proceed from the Holy Spirit, that they are made perfect by the Holy Spirit! Truly, it is a great happiness to possess the Holy Spirit; greater still, to act according to the Holy Spirit; and the greatest, to finish one's own days in the Holy Spirit. What shall I say or think about her who carries in her virginal womb the Son conceived by the Holy Spirit? O happiest of virgins! O most blessed of mothers!

From the depths of my heart I rejoice with you, Mary, for such a privilege granted to you alone among the entire multitude of Holy Women. Bring it about that we live and die according to the Holy Spirit.

3. *"[he] resolved to put her away quietly"* (Mt 1:19).

Even the saints may easily become suspicious of the saints, especially if there is an external reason to do so. Who was holier

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Parandowski, p. 173.

than Joseph? Who was purer than the Most Holy Virgin? Yet, he wanted to leave her clandestinely. But how prudently and righteously he wanted to do it! He did not want to separate from her openly, lest she be defamed, but clandestinely, that she may preserve her good name.

You ought to learn from this holy and just Man: although the deeds of others may seem evil [f.107v] to you and are said to be imperfect, you should judge them secretly, not openly, and judge in such a way that neither your conscience nor their good name be hurt. If you do so, you will not lack the light you need to judge rightly; as the righteous husband of the Most Holy Virgin did not lack the light to comprehend the truth about how she had conceived.

After Holy Communion

1. “Whereupon Joseph her husband, being a just man, did not want to bring disgrace upon her” (cf. Mt 1:19).

Consider, that the saintly Old Man¹⁵⁷ did not want to bring disgrace upon the Most Blessed Virgin, not out of scheming, but out of the greatest charity, because he was a just man.

Yet, if you unfairly inquire into another’s actions, if you have a wicked habit of bringing disgrace upon others, or at least if you suspect somebody imprudently and without foundation, know that you deviate far from the course of justice and you are unworthy of the eminent title of just man. Therefore, imitate St. Joseph, and bite your tongue before you pass judgment on the conduct or deeds of the others.

2. “an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream” (Mt 1:20).

¹⁵⁷ St. Stanislaus speaks here about St. Joseph, using the Latin term: *Senecio*, which is a diminutive (used affectionately) of *Senex* (“an old man”). “Art and popular imagination have usually pictured Joseph as an old man. But this is surely a false idea. The rabbis at the time of Christ commonly taught that men should marry between the ages of 13 and 19, and Joseph, as a ‘just’ (i.e., law-abiding) man, would no doubt have conformed to this practice” (F. L. Filas, *NCE*, vol. VII, p. 1107 (s.v. *Joseph, St.*)). Cf. Gaetano Stano, *ECat*, vol. VI, Ente per l’Enciclopedia Cattolica e per il Libro Cattolico, Città del Vaticano 1951, pp. 791ff., 795f. (s.v. *Giuseppe, santo*. — *Sposo di Maria Vergine*).

See how he who did not want to be an eager informer nor a defamer merited the help of a heavenly adviser. Divine Goodness usually reveals the truth to those who cautiously question it and are not quick to admit suspicions.

It is right, therefore, to heed this warning of the Religious Master: "We should not believe every word or suggestion, but we ought to carefully and patiently ponder the matter according to the mind of God."¹⁵⁸ "Oh, how good and peace-causing it is to keep silence about others; and not to believe everything immediately."¹⁵⁹

3. "[H]e will save [H]is people from their sins" (Mt 1:21).

O words, full of hope! They raise the spirits of the fallen, strengthen the weak, and fill the righteous with joy! If this is the same one, your Lord and Savior, whom you received corporally and hold within your inmost heart; if this food is also your salvation, then what else could you beseech from Him but salvation? He personally tells you to ask for it when, as He says: "seek first [H]is kingdom" (Mt 6:33).

Therefore, let the others ask for the transient riches of the world, whereas you ask for the eternal wealth of Heaven. Let them entreat [f.108r] honors and dignities, but you, through your self-contempt, try to reach Heaven. Let them entreat long life, learning, and whatever their heart desires, while you seek a happy eternity and ask earnestly for the divine will to be done to you. Beseech only salvation, the salvation of your soul. You will have the Infant Savior as the mediator in your entreaties, as the purveyor of your desires.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. *IC*, Bk. I, Ch. 4, § 1.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Bk. III, Ch. 45, § 5.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Before Holy Communion

1. *"The angel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary"* (cf. Lk 1:26-27).

Consider, that this great commander of the angelic army¹⁶⁰ was sent on a most solemn mission to the untouched Virgin because of the magnificence of the divine plans and the mystery of the Word Incarnate, and also because of the excellence of the most Holy Virgin Mary herself. Just as the kings of this world usually send to dignified persons only men renowned in name and in deed and of great authority within the state, so the greatness of Divine Majesty and the excellence of the Most Blessed Virgin, most eminent among all men, demanded that a distinguished archangel be sent to her.

But you, what distinguished messengers do you send to her today, and for what reason? Instead of distinguished envoys, send your most fervent promises and humble entreaties in the matter of salvation. Or rather, approach her yourself, imagining yourself to be one of the murderers who took refuge in the cities of asylum,¹⁶¹ and knocking at the door of mercy, call out in solemn words: "Holy Mary, Mother of God pray for us sinners," etc.

2. *"she was greatly troubled at the saying"* (Lk 1:29).

Consider, that there were two reasons why the Most Blessed Virgin was troubled in her spirit. First, she was worried, because

¹⁶⁰ The word St. Stanislaus used here in Latin was *Polemarchum*. In ancient Athens the Polemarch "was one of the nine Athenian magistrates. ... Originally the polemarch ... was the commander of the army and had the supreme direction of the war": cf. Ugo Enrico Paoli, *El*, vol. XXVII, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1935, p. 616 (s.v. *Polemarco*). Cf. Jan Tokarski, Ed., *Słownik wyrazów obcych PWN*, PWN, Warsaw 1980, p. 585.

¹⁶¹ The cities of asylum were "designated sanctuary cities in Israel that took the place of local altars in offering protection to the involuntary manslayer who fled for his life from the blood avenger" (J. E. Steinmueller, *NCE*, vol. I, p. 993 (s.v. *Asylum, Cities of*)). Cf. Jan Szlaga, *EK*, vol. I, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1973, p. 1221 (s.v. *Azył*). Cf. Dt 4:41-43; 19:1-3; Num 35:9-34; Josh 20:7-9.

she feared the infernal deception and was on her guard against it. Secondly, she was troubled because she heard the heavenly messenger [f.108v] praising her, and she did not want to hear those praises because of her low estimation of herself and of her profound submission.

Behold the spiritual teaching that you learn from this wisest Virgin! Her fearing the Angel teaches that you ought to be afraid and cautious at the sight of any figure,¹⁶² even if it seems to be a holy one. She teaches to avoid the infectious waft of public praises and to detest entirely praising oneself.

If she who excels among all creatures by singular endowments fears hearing praises of herself, even if they were deserved and although there was nothing in her that did not correspond with angelic praises, then how is it possible that you shall seek praises; by what right shall you be carried by the wind of vainglory and either personally extol or rejoice at somebody else's accolade, when, in fact, nothing can be found in you that would be even deserving of a little praise.

3. *"considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be"* (Lk 1:29).

Ponder that the Most Blessed Virgin does not immediately assent to the angelic salutation, but considers it first to recognize whether that vision is heavenly and good or rather an infernal temptation and evil deception.

For this reason, you should similarly take note of all internal inspirations and prior to putting them into action consider whether they truly come from God. Since the Most Blessed Virgin was not unaware of the fact that the angel of darkness quite often takes on the guise of an angel of light, she realized that she should not immediately believe that messenger, lest she be either deceived or act heedlessly in matters of great importance.

Wherefore, think first before carrying out any suggestions. Test the spirits, whether they are from God, and do not readily

¹⁶² It seems that St. Stanislaus is referring here to apparitions.

follow an internal command, minding the countless examples of those who were thus deceived. [f.109r]

4. *“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to [Y]our word”* (Lk 1:38).

O sublime lowliness! O profound disdain of self! O inexplicable humility of the Most Blessed Virgin! The Angel addresses her as the Mother of God, and she declares that she wants to be God’s handmaid, or even a handmaid of God’s Mother.¹⁶³ She is called “full of grace” (cf. Lk 1:28), and she proclaims herself to be most despicable. She is declared to be the abode of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:35), and she lowers herself beneath everything. Since at least with respect to creation, any man can call himself a son of God, yet, this most humble Virgin asserts that she is only a handmaid of the Lord: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.”

How then will you deal with proud or presumptuous thoughts about yourself hereafter, when you hear that the most noble of virgins, indeed the most excellent of all creatures, was thinking so humbly about herself?

O my soul! I implore you: do not ever boast that you are a friend of God nor call yourself even His handmaid, but only the dust to be trodden upon by everybody’s feet. Unless God would perhaps want you to do something, for then you will be allowed to say: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.” Nothing, in fact, impedes you from using these words in the present Holy Communion. However, when you see yourself unworthy in every respect to receive such a great Lord, when He really wants, or rather urges you to hasten to receive Him, then say from your innermost heart: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; be it be to me according to [Y]our word.”

Do you want me, O Lord, to give you a dwelling in my heart? Yet it is impure and full of different filth; nevertheless, you urge and call: “give me your heart” (Prov 23:26). “Behold, I am the

¹⁶³ Evidently, by referring to this supposed declaration of Mary, St. Stanislaus wanted to stress Mary’s great humility in that she was ready to serve not only God, but also to be “a handmaid of God’s Mother,” as she thought herself not worthy to be God’s Mother.

handmaid of the Lord;" "My heart is steadfast, O God" (Ps 108:1); "be it done to me according to what is pleasing to you." [f.109v]

After Holy Communion

1. "*Do not be afraid*" (Lk 1:30).

Consider how the archangel encourages the Most Holy Virgin and exhorts her not to fear any deceit and fraud. On which account? "For [you have] found grace with God," (Lk 1:30) [DBR] he says. Hence, know that those people who are in the state of grace, should fear nothing, not even hell itself. They can say with Paul: "If God be for us, who is against us?" (Rom 8:31). Truly "**he rides quite safely, who is carried by the grace of God.**"¹⁶⁴

Therefore, having praised the Most Blessed Virgin for her great and singular graces, ask her to obtain for you a continuous state of grace, that you may not fear the world, hell, and death.

2. "*behold, you will conceive*" (Lk 1:31).

Consider, that having conceived the Son of God, the Most Blessed Virgin was filled with greater gifts and favors and adorned with greater sanctity than before. As the trees are adorned primarily by their fruits, so she received an unheard of beauty, grace, and sanctity from the holiest Fruit of her womb.

You also should hope for similar effects from the reception of the Most Holy Eucharist. Indeed, while the humble, obedient, steadfast, and patient Jesus is a guest in your inmost heart, you should not do anything to impede your becoming more humble, more obedient, more steadfast, and more patient than you have ever been before.

3. "*of [H]is kingdom there will be no end*" (Lk 1:33).

How greatly you should rejoice at seeing yourself as a soldier, or rather as a son, of this Ruler who shall reign forever! All faithful Christians are His adopted children and coheirs of the heavenly Kingdom. [f.110r] However, a great such right belongs to the religious who, having embraced the evangelical counsels and

¹⁶⁴ Cf. IC, Bk. II, Ch. 9, § 1.

made a profession upon an apostolic rule, strive to imitate the life of Christ the Lord exactly.

If, therefore, the subjects rejoice greatly about having such a king, under whose temporal sovereignty they enjoy peace and prosperity to the full, would you not rejoice about having that Lord who has prepared for you the eternal Kingdom, if you do not shake off His yoke? Now, lastly, you hear that the heavenly Kingdom shall have no end; make sure that you do not fear approaching it aggressively with great force and seizing it with violence (cf. Mt 11:12), just as people undertake so many hardships, expose themselves to so many dangers, and wage so many wars for kingdoms that are going to perish!

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. ADALBERT, ARCHBISHOP AND MARTYR

Before Holy Communion

1. *"because he is a hireling"* (Jn 10:13).

Examine the intention with which you serve God in the religious life: is it that of a son led by filial love or of a hireling wanting some temporal reward, namely: honors, knowledge, benefits, and other similar transient goods.

Moreover, you would be a hireling if you performed your duties carelessly and halfheartedly and only outwardly acted as a religious. If, however, the only reward that you expect for your labors (which you should undertake only out of love for the crucified God) is the one about which the Lord says: "My reward is exceedingly great" (cf. Gen 15:1),¹⁶⁵ then you are truly a servant of God, and not a hireling.

Such a reward was not taken away from the man to whom (when he presented his writings before God) it was asked: what reward would he like for them, since through them he gave the

¹⁶⁵ From the context, it is understood that God Himself is this "exceedingly great reward."

most accurate explanations and elaborations according to the mind of God? He wished for God alone.¹⁶⁶

Reflect, whether you too would obtain this reward justly. Even though you would be doing everything for the sake of the Lord, if you do it unworthy of the Lord, He shall not be your reward. [f.110v]

2. “*cares nothing for the sheep*” (Jn 10:13).

Reflect, that God admits to His sheepfold both the hirelings and the true shepherds; but He will separate them on that day in which the goats will be separated from the lambs, the good from the bad, the righteous from the wicked, the elect from the reprobate (cf. Mt 25:32-46).

Thus, should you be a hireling, He can also endure you among His sheep (that is, the religious). He is not, however, going to admit you with the true religious to the rewards and to the heavenly sheepfold, unless you completely shed off the moral nature of a hireling who is lukewarm, inconstant, negligent, and very imperfect. However, He still offers you a great favor by admitting you, unworthy and nearly His enemy, to the sacred table together with His friends. Make sure that you are not deceived by this generosity. The Lord grants many goods and gifts to many people, He calls to His banquet many people, disregarding their perverse and evil conduct; but later He shall judge them most strictly.

I beg you: be careful and work diligently, lest both the religious state and the very frequent use of the Sacraments bring you, a hireling, to ruin.

¹⁶⁶ St. Stanislaus is speaking here about St. Thomas Aquinas. Towards the end of St. Thomas' life, when he “was at Salerno and was busied with the third part of his Summa[,] which deals with Christ's passion and resurrection, a sacristan saw him at night kneeling before the altar in ecstasy. Then a voice, which seemed to come from the crucifix, said aloud: ‘You have written well of Me, Thomas; what reward would you receive from Me for your work?’ He answered, ‘Nothing but You, O Lord.’” *BLS* (s.v. March 7 — *St. Thomas Aquinas*). Cf. Guilielmo de Thoco, *Vita S. Thomae Aquinatis — VII Martii*, in: *Acta Sanctorum Martii*, Ed. Ioannes Bollandus, vol. 1, Victorem Palmé, Bibliopolam, Parisiis et Romæ 1865, p. 669 (Ch. VI, n. 35).

3. “[M]y own know [M]e” (Jn 10:14).

Consider carefully that you are a true sheep of God only if you know Jesus, your Shepherd. On the contrary, you do not belong to His sheepfold if you do not have any knowledge of Him. But how could you know God if you still do not know yourself? How could you understand the power, the eminence, and the dignity of this Sacrament that you approach, if you do not perceive, acknowledge, and eliminate the vices, which greatly hinder your mind from knowing God?

Therefore, if you want to know God then acquire first the knowledge of yourself. Acquire the knowledge of your passions and imperfections if you have the intention of knowing divine powers and perfections. After you have toiled enough in getting this knowledge of yourself, then you will easily know God. You take your pains in vain, really, when you want to attain to the notion of divine things without self-knowledge. If you will not strive to get knowledge of yourself, you will not know God. Woe to you, who do not know your Shepherd, for neither will He know you as His sheep. [f.111r]

After Holy Communion

1. “*I lay down My soul*¹⁶⁷ *for My sheep*” (cf. Jn 10:15).

O what love! O what generosity! O what an incredible and unheard of grace! Do you hear, my soul, what your Savior says, and says from His Heart? “I lay down My soul for the sheep,” He says. Something great and inexplicable is concealed in these words. It is not the matter of the body to be crucified, but of the soul of the Good Shepherd to be tormented for the sake of His sheep. It is as if He were saying: “For you, my sheep, I surrender not only the limbs of My body up to unimaginable torments, but also all the parts and powers of My soul.”

¹⁶⁷ In Latin: “*Animam meam pono pro ovibus meis.*” The word *anima* can be translated as *soul* or *life*, but St. Stanislaus bases his commentary here on the meaning *soul*.

But you will ask: How could He surrender the life of His soul? Just as He ordered you to pursue your soul with hatred, namely: mortifying your evil feelings, passions, eager desires, intellect, judgment, and will; thus He Himself laid down His soul for you when He endured wicked tongues, detractions, abuses, and the blasphemies of the Jews and Pharisees, which He suffered not in His body, but in His soul. Is there more? If nothing else, note His sadness and anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane. There, you shall discover that the entire soul of Jesus was dead.

Therefore, look how much you owe to the Lord who loves you so, and pay off your debt.

2. *“And I have other sheep”* (Jn 10:16).

Consider, that the most gracious Savior of the world cares for the salvation of all people and takes into consideration the happiness not only of the just, but also, or particularly, of the sinners. He is the one who then brings about this happiness as He converts them to Himself through their frequent participation in the Most Holy Sacrament, through various inspirations, and His countless benefits poured out upon them. And thus, it happens that these sheep, which the evil spirit had already marked with his sign, are led back to the sheepfold of Christ and saved.

Oh, how often He called you back from far off, alienated through quite grave sins! How often He drew you back from the sheepfold of the infernal hireling! How often He looked for you as a lost sheep and, seeking you out, He found you with the greatest effort; and once you were found, He nourished, pastured, and guarded you. Oh, how often, alas, have you departed from such a good Shepherd through sin! [f.111v]

3. *“For this reason the Father loves [M]e”* (Jn 10:17).

Christ the Lord says that the reason why the Father loves Him is because He gave up His life for the salvation of men.

Indeed, you shall experience God’s love for you in no other way than if you shall care for the salvation of your neighbor, and if, out of love for him, you shall accept and endure all that is hard, difficult, and burdensome. For he who does not love his neighbor is unworthy of being loved by God. He who, for the sake of the

Highest Good, does not treat with love those who do him evil, does not merit to be loved by the Highest Good.

Do you want God to love you? Love your neighbor for the sake of God. Indeed, if you daily receive from the hand of God so many good things, why would you not do good to others as well? God sacrificed His life for obtaining your salvation; and you flee from light labors on behalf of your neighbor's salvation? Believe me: in [doing] this, neither do you love God, nor will God love you. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST

Before Holy Communion

1. "*I am the true vine*" (Jn 15:1).

Imagine a farmer boasting of the goodness of his vines, exulting in the arrival of the produce, taking delight in the abundance of the grapes, but also inviting the harvesting workers (if he were not a miserly Euclio)¹⁶⁸ to take some for themselves.

Think about it, I say, but also, turning yourself to Christ, listen to Him as if He were speaking to you from the altar: He declares to be the true vine, and for this reason, He invites you gently and sweetly to approach Him. Hasten, therefore, to drink from the fruit of this Vine not only for pleasure, but also for quenching your thirst.

2. "*Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, [H]e takes away*" (Jn 15:2).

Take note and strive to make your frequent Communions as fruitful as possible, for you have heard with what undoing Christ the Lord threatens [**f.112r**] the branch that does not bear fruit in

¹⁶⁸ Euclio — "A penurious old [miser] in one of the comedies of Plautus (*Aulularia*): Ebenezer Cobham Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, PA, 1894, p. 428. Cf. Titus Maccius Plautus, *M. Actii Plauti Asinii Comici clarissimi comoediae quinque*, Colophon, Argentorati 1514, pp. 73-101 (III. *Aulularia*).

Him. If the householders have a good reason for reproaching the lazy and inept servants for eating their bread in vain while doing no work at all; then, if there is no fruit from your Communion, would not Jesus be right to blame you for consuming the angelic bread to no avail?

Ah! Be on your guard, lest what happened to those branches also happen to you, for they were expected to bring forth grapes, and yet produced the wild grapes (cf. Is 5:2, 4).

3. *“every branch that does bear fruit [H]e prunes, that it may bear more fruit”* (Jn 15:2).

Reflect, how pleasing to Him are the branches that bring forth fruit; how worthy of love are those servants who work in the vineyard of the Lord. How acceptable to God are those religious who cooperate for the salvation of souls to such an extent that, even though through frailty they brought on themselves some stains of imperfection because of dealings with the imperfect for the sake of their salvation, He purges them so that they “may bear more fruit.” Oh, if you could be one of these who does their best for the Lord in order to show themselves to be fruitful branches!

After Holy Communion

1. *“You are already made clean”* (Jn 15:3).

Christ said these words to His disciples: “You are already made clean.” But why are they clean? “By the word,” He says, “which I have spoken to you” (15:3).

Would you who let the whole Christ into your heart still be unclean? For if the word of the Lord is so effective that it cleans the hearers, how much better can the same Lord clean those who receive Him! He who touches the tar is smeared by it; on the contrary, he who touches the Immaculate Lamb, who consumes the cleanest Bread, will be completely cleansed. Do not create obstacles in this matter, I say: when the Lord wants to clean you, do not get more filth on yourself, do not let vain and worldly things affect you, and do not devote your heart to them.

2. *“Abide in [M]e, and I in you”* (Jn 15:4).

Sometimes you unjustifiably complain or grumblingly accept that the Lord [f.112v] abandons you and withdraws His presence from you, while it is you who abandon Him and cause your solitude.

Abide in God, and God will abide in you. Do not depart from His Heart, and He will not depart from yours. Fix your mind on Him, and He will fix His eyes on you, also. Without reason you grumble that He does not dwell with you, while you do not want to dwell with Him. You gave up the abode of your heart to vanities, and you desire that Christ abide with you? If you say: “Abide with me,” say at the same time: “and I will be with [Y]ou always.”

Oh, if only today you would abide spiritually with Him, while He abides bodily with you!

3. *“apart from [M]e you can do nothing”* (Jn 15:5).

Cast away the idea that you are somebody, that you can, and know how, to do something. Oh! The miserable one, what are you without Christ? What are you able to do without Christ? What would you do without Christ’s help? Shame on you! For you have glorified your deeds sometimes, as if you really can do something all by yourself, other than sin.

Therefore, do not steal another’s glory in the future nor ascribe somebody else’s credit to yourself. Do not steal the glory due to God, for it is God who works all good things in you. Do not adorn yourself and be pleased with another’s feathers, O little crow! Your nature knows, the world knows, Heaven knows, that you are nothing, that you are incapable, that you do nothing good. Kindly realize that fact and fully believe it. May you desire that the glory for all good things be given not to you, but to the Name of God.

[f.113r]

FOR THE FEAST OF STS. PHILIP AND JAMES, APOSTLES

Before Holy Communion

1. *"Let not your hearts be troubled"* (Jn 14:1).

Consider that, perhaps, the Lord's disciples were anxious to know something about His Father (cf. Jn 14:8), as well as about the heavenly Kingdom, of which they knew nothing. But the Lord, having first consoled them most sweetly, exhorts them to be cheerful and to lay fear aside. He tells them that they shall obtain, learn, and accomplish more than they could wish for.

You, on the other hand, allow your heart to be upset by vain worries and ensnared by tumults, which render it unfit for God's service. What is there under the heavens that could disturb and make anxious a servant of Christ, who is completely relying on God? No cross or momentary evil. Eternal happiness is your one and only concern, the concern which you also should entrust to the all-good and greatest God, rather than to your prudence and diligence. There is no doubt, that if you do all that God called you to do and demands to have done, the reward of rejoicing in God will be given to you together with all the elect.

2. *"believe also in [M]e"* (Jn 14:1).

Contemplate that God demands a great faith from you; greater indeed than from others whom He did not call to the religious state. But along with good and great faith, He also demands good and great works. He tells you to believe in Him; but at the same time, He instructs you to act the way He acted. As somebody said rightly: "faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:20) [DRB]. The apostles believed, but they were not saved only for that reason, but also because they fulfilled the law and the will of God. Christ wanted all of them to accomplish many things, to endure many things, and finally, to die for His Name.

Consider, therefore, where your evil deeds are going to lead you. Indeed, you will not be saved solely by faith if in your life you do not do good things. Is it at all possible that you have good

faith without good works? Can someone hope for salvation if the worm of remorse condemns his soul? [f.113v]

3. "*In [M]y Father's house are many rooms*" (Jn 14:2).

It really is so: the most spacious Kingdom of Heaven has countless dwellings, but those who seek a dwelling in the world, who run by a broad way and who strive after sensual pleasures, are not admitted to them. Nobody rises to Heaven unless he dies to earthly things. Just as an ensnared bird cannot fly into the open, so the human spirit enticed by sensual pleasures, entangled in worldly allurements and immersed in sins, cannot lift itself to Heaven. The heavenly Master teaches that the grain does not bring forth fruit unless it has died (cf. Jn 12:24-25). Thus, a man that loves the worldly life, and a luxurious one at that, shall not possess life eternal.

Oh! Therefore, today when you approach the heavenly Lord, the Son of the eternal Father, say: "Most merciful, most gracious, the very best Jesus! If there are in the house of Your Father so many ample buildings, so many perennial mansions, I beg your Majesty most humbly not to exclude me from this house.

"Although on account of my sins I have deserved hell and the worst habitation among the damned spirits; for the sake of your Passion and death, give me nevertheless Heaven and an eternal stay among its most blessed inhabitants."

After Holy Communion

1. "*I go to prepare a place for you*" (Jn 14:2).

In order to keep the disciples from being greatly saddened by His departure, their Master tells them where He goes and for what reason, namely: to the Kingdom of the Father, to prepare a place for them to dwell with Him there forever. "I go," He says, "to prepare a place for you." It is as if a commander would say, leading his soldiers to winter quarters for rest after the battles and hardships of war: "You, my bravest soldiers, are to be led to the place of eternal repose after the admirable battles carried out on my behalf. Since such ceremonies are to be carried out

with a remarkable triumph, whereas the entrance to the heavenly Capitol [f.114r] cannot stand open to anybody before I enter it in triumph and for that reason I will precede you to the Kingdom of My Father, to arrange for your entrance there, when you arrive after Me.”

Do you want to follow Christ’s soldiers to their winter quarters? Follow them to battle. If you fight well, you will also merit participation in the triumph and repose.

2. “*where I am you may be also*” (Jn 14:3).

Consider that you must strive on the paths of the Lord to enter with Him the Gate of Life. It shall happen if you would make a serious effort to acquire the virtues; if you would be seized with the greatest desire to carry the cross and carry the one imposed upon you with untiring zeal; if you would work solidly in the vineyard of the Lord, and if you would, unsatisfied with just any ordinary perfection, strive after a higher one.

For if the Lord said that someday His disciples will perform greater miracles than He Himself performed (cf. Jn 14:12), He certainly wants you to work hard at attaining more sublime virtues and to break with the ordinary manner of living. He wishes that you even surpass Him, as much as it is possible for a man, by your virtues and saintly deeds: so that due to your virtues and saintly deeds you may also be where He is, in that very same place.

3. “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life*” (Jn 14:6).

The Lord rightly calls Himself the way: for wanting the whole human race to attain the everlasting glory, He descended to earth from Heaven, not only to show us the way, but also to pave it and make it secure, marked with so many Sacraments and branded with so many traces of His virtues.

But why does He join together these three things: the way, the truth, and the life? Because He wants to teach you that you should seek the truth if you want to have life; that you should walk in the way of the Lord if you want to find the truth. Hence, He says to you: “Follow me” (Mt 8:22), “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”

Without the way, one cannot walk; without the truth, one cannot learn; without the life, one does not live. I am the way, which you should follow; the truth which you should believe [f.114v]; the life that you should hope for. I am the imperishable way, the infallible truth, and the endless life. I am the straightest way, the supreme truth, the true life, the blessed life, the uncreated life.

If you will follow this way, you will come to know the truth; and the truth shall set you free (cf. Jn 8:32), and you will attain eternal life.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE FINDING OF THE HOLY CROSS

Before Holy Communion

1. *“there was a man of the Pharisees”* (Jn 3:1).

Consider that Nicodemus was attracted to Christ by an extraordinary grace of God. For who was he? “A man of the Pharisees.” Pharisees were the kind of people always opposed to Christ: haughty, infected by hypocrisy, full of deceits and fraud. However, by the power of grace, the Divine Goodness drew to Himself this man of the Pharisees just as a magnet attracts very hard iron, and then He taught and enlightened him.

Consider that the same thing happens to you today: being made an adversary of your Lord by sin, you did not behave honestly towards Him in anything. Once, it was through the greatest fraud in Adam, now of your own accord, you passed over to the side of His enemy, since there was nothing easier and sweeter to you than to disobey His commandments and to make little account of the rule of living that He proposed to you.

Nevertheless, behold, He again calls you to Himself and enkindles in you most ardent flames of desire to receive Him. Therefore, go to Jesus, O Nicodemus the Pharisee, and open your heart to His teaching, which is instilled in you in the present Communion. Try to practice it yourself and humbly pass it on to the others.

2. “*This man came to Jesus by night*” (Jn 3:2).

Consider the reason why Nicodemus came to the Lord by night: he feared the hatred and harassment from the Jews, and especially from those of the Pharisaic affiliation. If they saw him listening attentively to Christ’s words, they would undoubtedly persecute him very severely, as they had already done to others. Thus, base fear sometimes takes away morally upright people’s courage so that they neither dare to hear or say the truth because they believe that they would be in some sort of danger.

Therefore, ask the Lord to completely remove and eliminate from your heart, after He enters it, the groundless fear both of hearing and of saying the truth. [f.115r]

3. “*came to Jesus by night*” (Jn 3:2).

Evidently, Nicodemus was living then through a double night: natural and mystical; but the second was more serious than the first. However, the “Light,” which illuminates every man coming into this world (cf. Jn 1:9), dispersed the darkness of his soul.

Entreat this Light during the Holy Communion to take away the night from the eyes of your soul and disperse whatever cloud is darkening your intellect. Entreat, I say, with the king: “lighten my eyes,” O Lord, “lest I sleep the sleep of death; lest my enemy say, ‘I have prevailed over him’” (Ps 13:3-4).

But beseech an even better life from the Lord of Life on this most opportune occasion; namely, when we celebrate the day of the Finding of His holy Tree, on which death died, when Life had died.¹⁶⁹

So that you may obtain it more easily, greet Jesus in this way, once crucified for you, now present in the Most Holy Eucharist: “Hail, saving Sacrifice, offered to the eternal Father on the Cross for me and for the entire human race; hail, glorious Pelican, my

¹⁶⁹ Cf. *LHE*, vol. IV, p. 1396 (Sept. 14 — Feast of the Triumph of the Cross: Evening Prayer II — Antiphon 1): “Death itself died when life was slain on the tree.”

Jesus, you bring back to life your chicks, the dead children of Adam, with Your own Blood.¹⁷⁰

Come, come my Beloved: nourish with Your Body my languishing soul, refresh it for it is thirsty, and wash it with Your Blood; grant me for my salvation, remission of sins, improvement of life, and everlasting friendship

After Holy Communion

1. *“unless one is born anew”* (Jn 3:3).

Consider what the Savior said to Nicodemus as being said to you, my soul. For you ought to be born again. But in what way, since you were already washed in the font of the sacred Baptism? Understand it thus: the Lord asserts that Nicodemus should be born again through Baptism, and that other men were bound thus to be born again a second time because He wanted them to live not only by the law of nature, but also according to the law of grace, to which they can submit themselves only through faith and Baptism. Also through this bath, the stains of the soul incurred thus far, and especially original sin, are removed from adults, so that they are entirely born again. Therefore, Nicodemus and the others were bound to be born again this way, if they wanted to enter the dwelling of everlasting life.

But you, my soul, will be revived differently. You will have recourse to a different spring, by which you should wash away all faults: to the spring of tears. You ought to be born again if you want [f.115v] to enter the glory of God, but through the Sacrament of Penance, not of Baptism. Have you suffered the shipwreck of vir-

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Martin R.P. McGuire, *NCE*, vol. XI, p. 60 (s.v. *Pelican*): The pelican is a particularly apt symbol of Christ the Redeemer, in wide usage in Christian literature and in Christian art, because: “The little pelicans strike their parents, and the parents, striking back, kill them. But on the third day the mother pelican strikes and opens her side and pours blood over her dead young. In this way they are revived and made well. ... Christ deigned to ascend the cross, and, when [H]is side was pierced, blood and water gushed forth unto our salvation and eternal life.”

tues? Grasp the second plank,¹⁷¹ thanks to which you will be able to attain holy riches and find your lost salvation. Be born again in the spirit of humility and a heart filled with contrition, and God will not despise you: He will give you pardon, will grant grace, and will not exclude you from glory.

2. “*of water and the Holy Spirit*” (cf. Jn 3:5).

Behold the best way of healing the two chief vices! An angry disposition is brought about when the element of water prevails in a man. Hence those inclined to anger are called lymphatic,¹⁷² as if swamped by excessive waters, they overflow beyond the shore of reason and are similar to a sea that is restless and shaken by tempests.

Lust is not only generated from fire, but it is fire itself. Hence somebody, rightly prescribing a remedy for it, said: “Withdraw firewood from the fireplace,”¹⁷³ calling lust a bonfire. Since opposites are, in fact, healed by opposites, you too, be reborn in water and the Holy Spirit; the Spirit having descended upon the apostles in tongues of fire (cf. Acts 2:3).

With the flow of tears from your eyes wash away the sins you have committed through fire. Make up by the fire of charity for whatever you, as a lymphatic, committed through the abundance of water. Demand both things earnestly from the Lord, while He is with you as your Guest. Kindle, O Jesus, in the inmost part of

¹⁷¹ Cf. Francis X. Murphy, *NCE*, Vol. XI, p. 85 (s.v. *Penitential Controversy*): In the Penitential Controversy, we read that Tertullian “spoke of *duabus plancis* [(i.e., two planks)] in the sense of Baptism and one other chance for safety given to those who relapsed into grave sins after the total forgiveness in Baptism.” What he meant is that the first plank is Baptism and the second plank of rescue is the Sacrament of Penance, by which those grave sins are remitted.

¹⁷² *Lymphaticus*, according to *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*, means “raving, raging, insane, mad, [or] frantic” and *lymph*a means a “clear spring or river water” (*CLD*, p. 327). St. Stanislaus makes a connection between these meanings of *lymphaticus* as related to anger and *lymph*a as related to water. However, “lymphatic” nowadays is understood of persons in a contrary sense, namely as “sluggish, without energy,” and “a sluggish condition was formerly thought to be due to too much lymph in the body” (*Webster's New World Dictionary of American English*, Eds. David B. Guralnik and Victoria Neufeldt, 3rd ed.). Cf. *FLL*, vol 3, Typis Seminarii, Patavii 1871, p. 136 s.v. *Lymphaticus*).

¹⁷³ This is probably taken from a poetical source.

my heart, the flame of true charity, and with it overwhelm the waters of my irascibility and furious anger.

Bring forth the saving waters from the hard rock of my heart, O wonderful Moses! Strike it with the rod (cf. Num 20:11) of penance and fear of You, so that it may send forth an abundant flow, by which the fires of furious lust may be extinguished.

3. *"If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"* (Jn 3:12).

Despite the solid and clear reason given by the heavenly Teacher, Nicodemus did not feel convinced of the necessity for a man to be reborn. Not yet understanding such a great mystery of faith, he inquired into the matter: "How can these things be done?" (Jn 3:9). The Lord, perceiving his incredulity or his ignorance, rightly reproached him: "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this?" (Jn 3:10).

Beware, lest it be said to you: you wear a religious garment and you do not know what it means to be a religious, what it means to obey, to strive after chastity, poverty, [f.116r] humility, and the mortification of the senses? And yet, you still desire to probe the heavenly secrets, to know the profound mysteries of God, to attain the abundance of heavenly delights, and to enjoy them to the full. But how can these things happen if you do not believe and you disobey, while you ought to despise and trample underfoot earthly things?

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. STANISLAUS, BISHOP AND MARTYR, THE PATRON OF POLAND

Before Holy Communion

1. *"I am the good [S]hepherd"* (Jn 10:11).

Just as our Redeemer set His own example for all Shepherds to imitate, so you should assume as your example for imitation today's Holy Bishop and Martyr. You shall find something to imitate in

the Bishop, while in the Martyr you shall find something to strive after. You shall find in both admirable things, at which you should marvel and which you should proclaim. Therefore, imitate the Bishop in vigilance, teaching, governing, helping your neighbors, and in practicing humility, modesty, zeal, conscientiousness, and other virtues.

Strive after the Martyr in suffering, persevering, fortitude, firmness, charity, and those kinds of qualities proper to a Martyr, so that you may safely say: "I am the good shepherd," not so much of the sheep of Christ, as of my senses; not so much feeding the flock, as imitating the Good Shepherd.

2. "*The good [S]hepherd lays down [H]is life for the sheep*" (Jn 10:11).

Note, that nothing pleases the Divine Majesty more than charity towards your neighbor, which entails that we endure all inconveniences, slanders, and even blows out of love for neighbor. Just as Christ's greatest virtue was His willingness to suffer death on the Cross out of love for us; so, likewise, we will have no more excellent an act of virtue than to endure something for the sake of our neighbor. "Greater love has no man than this," says the eternal Word, "that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).

Oh, if you would lay it down for your enemies, who definitely are your neighbors! If you could die, praying for them at this moment in the sight of Divine Majesty. [f.116v]

3. "*good [S]hepherd*" (Jn 10:11).

Saint Stanislaus fulfilled every duty of a Good Shepherd. He refreshed his own sheep with the nourishment of the Divine Word, since he himself always preached it in a sermon. He quite often visited his sheepfold, crossing the whole diocese on foot. He zealously healed the disease of the flock, supplying the remedies for the distressed conscience: sometimes by giving admonitions, sometimes by administering the Sacraments. Next, when he saw that some sheep were so corrupted that absolutely no medicine could heal them, he used to drive them away from the sheepfold of Christ, lest they infect the whole flock, doing it so skillfully,

that he was not afraid to remove them from it even if one was the king who was corrupting the whole sheepfold.¹⁷⁴

Finally, the last thing that remained for the good shepherd to do was to lay down his life for his sheep, when in defense of truth and justice he courageously stood up to the most rapacious wolf in order to be devoured.

Oh, how many the good qualities in one shepherd! They are most worthy of praise and not too difficult to imitate.

After Holy Communion

1. *"I am the good [S]hepherd"* (Jn 10:11).

Consider that our Savior rightly calls Himself the Good Shepherd, for He refreshed you today with such abundant nourishment of His Body and Blood. You suffered from enormous hunger, your strength was failing you, you were weak, and you were totally unfit for any spiritual exercise. By inviting you to His table, He strengthened you with the sacred food and drink. As He refreshed Elijah with a hearth cake in past times (cf. 1 Kings 19:5-8), so He lifted you onto your feet and refreshed you with the angelic bread, so that you may follow pleasantly, firmly, and perseveringly the long way of perfection that lies ahead for you.

Once, Jacob demanded remuneration from Laban for taking care of, breeding, and feeding the latter's herd (cf. Gen 30:25-43). What are you going to give to Jesus the Good Shepherd in return for caring for your soul? Give Him yourself.

¹⁷⁴ This was Boleslas II, the King of Poland, of whom we read: "After many acts of lust and cruelty, he outraged the whole kingdom by carrying off the wife of one of his nobles. Against this public scandal the chaste and gentle bishop ... openly rebuked the king for his crime against God and his subjects, and threatened to excommunicate him if he persisted in his sin.... Boleslas made a show for a while of a better life. Soon, however, he relapsed into the most scandalous excesses, and the bishop, finding all remonstrance useless, pronounced the sentence of excommunication. In defiance of the censure, on May 8, 1079, the king went down to a chapel where the bishop himself was saying Mass ... and slew the Saint at the altar with his own hand" (*BLS* (s.v. *May 7 — St. Stanislas, Bishop, Martyr*)).

2. “*lays down [H]is life for the sheep*” (Jn 10:11).

Consider how much you would feel obliged to a sovereign, who [f.117r] having invited you to his own table, would treat you most sumptuously. Then he would load you with most abundant gifts and send you off in the royal carriage escorted by his guardsmen to your pitiable hut. You would understand this as the greatest favor. Indeed, the heavenly Sovereign showed you this kind of favor today. He invited you to the heavenly table; He fed you with the heavenly dishes and endowed you with great gifts of graces.

Finally, instead of a carriage, having added to you the wings of love, He conducted you back to your chamber and remained with you, dwelling with you and wishing to be with you always to make you enjoy the delights. Oh, what a favor! What will you do for this Guest in turn? Give Him your heart.

3. “*I know [M]y sheep*” (cf. Jn 10:14).

I think that **obedience** is the true sign and hallmark of the sheep of Christ for He says: “I know My sheep, and My sheep know Me” (cf. Jn 10:14) and “hear My voice” (cf. Jn 10:27). It is as if He were saying: “Those who are obedient to My orders are My true sheep. Souls that are rebellious, stubborn, despising My yoke, following their own will, are not My sheep. My sheep are these, who ‘hear My voice.’”

It is precisely so: he who is not obedient to Christ and to the Deputies of Christ; that is, to any Superiors, does not belong to the flock of Christ. Saul disobeyed the voice of the prophet, or rather the voice of God speaking through Samuel, therefore he was reprov'd (cf. 1 Sam 15:1-28); and it seems that he was expelled forever from the sheepfold of God.

Oh, whatever indications of sanctity you have, whatever good works you do, remember that you are not a sheep of Christ and do not carry His true distinguishing mark, unless you are obedient, unless you hear and follow His voice, regardless of the one through whom He speaks to you.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE APPARITION OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL¹⁷⁵

Before Holy Communion

1. *“unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (Mt 18:3) [DRB].

What does it mean, my soul, that the Teacher of Truth exhorts His disciples to become like little children? Is it because the heavenly door is narrow, hence only little children can enter by it? Indeed, it is so. If somebody shuts the keys inside a room with a very narrow window, he seeks a small child [f.117v] and asks him to get inside and open the door. Thus, only little children can enter the heavenly door, which the Savior Himself asserts to be narrow (cf. Mt 7:13-14; Lk 13:24).

Therefore, O my soul! You should immediately shed obesity, if you have any, such as vainglory, boasting, and hubris, for the souls inflated by them are totally unable to enter either the small heavenly gate or the narrow way of perfection. At the same time, ask the heavenly Architect in the present Communion to shape you in a different form, and to make you so thin through the virtues of humility and obedience, that you might pass without difficulty through the narrow entrance of the royal celestial castle.

2. *“as little children”* (Mt 18:3).

Consider that it is proper to little children to abound in sincere simplicity. They believe anyone, they trust everyone, they do not think evil about anybody nor wish evil to anybody; they are obedient to elders, they do not give scandal to anyone, they do not

¹⁷⁵ Saint Michael the Archangel was venerated in the West “as the head of the heavenly armies and the patron of soldiers. This veneration may be traced to a popular cult arising from an alleged 5th- or 6th-century apparition of Michael during the distress caused by invading Goths (on the coast of southeastern Italy, Gargano or Monte Sant’Angelo; probable source of Mont-Saint-Michel tradition, Manche, France, A.D. 709)” (T.L. Fallon, *NCE*, vol. IX, p. 794 (s.v. *Michael, Archangel*)). The Church has been encouraged in the devotion to St. Michael the Archangel “by several apparitions of this glorious archangel. Among others, it is recorded that St. Michael, in a vision, admonished the Bishop of Siponto to build a church in his honor on Mount Gargano, near Manfredonia, in the kingdom of Naples” (*BLS* (s.v. *May 8 — The Apparition of St. Michael, the Archangel*)).

know the difference between good and evil, because they do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, that is, they do not sin. Finally, they accept with gratitude even the punishments inflicted on them by their parents and do not offend people or God, either by word or by deed.

Therefore, you should be simple, faithful, peacemaking, obedient, perfect, innocent, patient and gentle if you desire to enter the heavenly paradise.

3. “*their angels always behold the face of [M]y Father who is in heaven*” (Mt 18:10).

O how good and kind is the Lord who thus exalted childhood, who praised it so much! O fortunate childhood, which merited having such a Patron and Eulogist! Certainly, you should know that God always protects those who either do not know how to defend themselves because of their simplicity, or do not want to do it because of their innocence. But if the Lord attests that the angels of little children always see in Heaven the face of the Heavenly Father, think how gravely those people sin who scandalize little children; and again, how much merit those gain who instill them with virtues, with upright conduct, and with piety joined to learning,¹⁷⁶ because their angels present to the eternal Father both scandals and good examples, both bad and good instruction.

Ask the Lord through the intercession of the Prince of the Archangels to grant you the grace of exerting upon little children a beneficial influence through good example, and also to make you into a little child.

¹⁷⁶ It must be remembered that St. Stanislaus was telling this to the Piarists, i.e., the members of the Order of Pious Schools, in which the education was based on the principle established by its Founder, St. Joseph Calasanz, namely that the students of these schools had to be imbued with both learning and piety: “*Si enim diligenter a teneris annis pueri pietate ac literis imbuantur, felix totius vitae cursus procul dubio sperandus est*” [(“If we impart knowledge to a student together with piety from very early on, we may hope that his entire life will be happy”)] (*Constitutiones Congregationis Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum*, in: *Clericorum Regularium Scholarum Piarum I. Constitutiones cum Notis. II. Regulæ et Ritus Communes*, ..., s.l., 1768, Prooem., I). [Hereafter *Constitutiones Congregationis Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum* will be abbreviated as *ConstSP*.]

After Holy Communion

1. *“Woe to the world because of scandals”* (Mt 18:7) [DRB].

Weigh carefully, which scandals the Lord means here, or rather points to: those, of course, by which we scandalize others. Sometimes, these disgraces secretly cling to us and, although we do not realize it, because of them we still offend many people. Hence, we are similar to the numb soil that conceals the lost nails and innate thorns, not knowing that many [f.118r] are wounded and injured by them.

There are scandals of another kind, which, while remaining in us, are as harmful to us as stones to a field. As to them, the Savior rebukes us, saying that they must be removed: “if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it from you” for “it is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire” (Mt 18:9).

2. *“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”* (Mt 18:1).

Please turn now your attention to the apostles’ audacity, due to which it so happened that they asked their Master about such a subtle and downright difficult matter. With that audacity, or with a similar confidence, you could also inquire from the same Lord at the sacred table not about the place where He would put you in His Kingdom, but about which of your faults displease Him most.

But if you were not so prudently audacious, know nevertheless that, compared with other faults, pride displeases God in the highest degree and hinders your salvation very much. It is the divine word and decree that only the humble who are like little children shall enter Heaven.

3. *“See that you do not despise one of these little ones”* (Mt 18:10).

Consider that you never have a just enough cause for despising somebody, although he may be utterly unfit. Even if you may have many endowments, are they really yours? Could their Giver not take them away from you at any moment? It often happens that after pouring wine out of vessels, the same are then filled with water.

If, therefore, vessels cannot brag of containing the most excellent wine for a moment, because they will hold the dregs a short while later, then how can you boast of abounding in many gifts of God and despise another that has none? For these goods may be soon taken away from you and granted to him.

We are vessels. The liquid of talents and virtues that we contain can be changed into the dregs of vices, or be poured out according to the will of God. Consequently, let us not exalt ourselves because of these goods nor despise any of the little ones.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Jesus appeared to them”* (cf. Mk 16:14).

Consider that Jesus Christ quite often appeared to the disciples after His Resurrection in order to both perfect and confirm them, still unskilled and imperfect, in their faith; or to encourage them by visions and sweet exhortations to endure many sufferings for His name.

It is for no other reason that He arranges so often the holy banquet for you [**f.118v**] and wholly unites Himself with you in a most divine way, but that you may remove the old leaven of malice and appear more perfect in each virtue, as well as bear with a steady mind any adversities befalling you, because one passes into a place of refreshment through fire and water (cf. Ps 66:12).

2. *“[H]e upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart”* (Mk 16:14).

As a teacher justly scolds a disciple and a superior his subordinate, when noticing that the latter does not behave in the manner that was so often impressed upon him, thus the Lord justly reprehends the apostles. Indeed, although they have seen Him after the Resurrection so many times; have been with Him for a long time before His death; have witnessed the miracles that He had performed; and have heard the words by which He announced that He would rise from the dead and restore in the

three days the temple of His body destroyed by the Jews; yet they still did not believe those who announced that He had risen from the dead.

Oh, how justly the Savior should rebuke you too at today's Communion! For you have received from Him so many graces, so much light, and so many favors; you have come to Him so many times to be with Him and be enlightened by Him; you have received the rewards for good deeds and the punishments for evil ones; you have read about or observed so many of His miracles; you have heard and have experienced the grave threats, by which, as He publicly declared, He would punish the imperfect; and yet you are still more lukewarm than all those who even today for the first time have converted themselves to God. Neither the fear of infernal torments nor the striving after heavenly glory is able to arouse you from a sound sleep in the filthy dung of your vices, passions, and imperfections.

Fear, lest your incredulity be not reproached, but punished.

3. "*and hardness of heart*" (Mk 16:14).

O my soul! What do you hear? When the disciples took flight as Jesus was seized, they did not hear any reproach. But when He hastens not to His Passion, but to His glory, He reproaches them for their incredulity and blames their hardness of heart. O good Jesus, I believe that as they ran away from that repulsive and unexpected tragedy, You had consideration for their frailty and also for their pusillanimity. But now You cannot bear their hardness of heart, when they do not believe what they have seen.

Oh! My Savior, how can You endure, or will You endure, or have You endured my hardness of heart? For because of this I was still committing innumerable, very shameful and very grave sins, although I knew that You are the greatest enemy of sin; although I saw, I knew, I read, and I heard that others were doomed to eternal punishments for their less serious sins; [f.119r] nevertheless, as if sleeping and as if intoxicated from wine, I did not arouse from my evil deeds, I did not return to You when called, enticed, and frightened. Moreover, having entered the way of uprightness thanks to Your mercy, how often have I gone astray?

How often have I deviated from the right way? How foolishly! How offensively! How obstinately! How harshly! O hardness of my heart! When my conscience, moved by You, reproaches me, I feel regret and a sense of dread, for my sins fill me with great fear. What will You finally do with me, the hardened one?

O Goodness, O Benevolence! O Jesus, You are the immaculate Lamb! You are the Lamb who was led to the slaughter without complaint. Therefore, as I hope, trust, and humbly beseech You in supplication; remove the hardness of my heart, when You nourish it with Your Most Holy Body and revive it with Your Blood in this Holy, admirable Communion, full of love and clemency. Just as the hard diamond can be broken only with the blood of a goat,¹⁷⁷ thus You, the Lamb of God, soften my heart and shatter its hardness by sprinkling it in a mystical way with Your Blood.

Do this, my Jesus, lest my conscience reproach me for my hardness forever, lest it tell me that I did not want to improve when I had time. Although as a sinner I consider myself unworthy of any of Your graces, it is really befitting You, as Savior, to impart them to me. Therefore, I hope for Your graces, I hope for salvation, because I desire to consume You, O Lord, who are grace and salvation themselves. Even though You were the One to reproach the hardness of the disciples, yet You have placed them in the heavenly Kingdom.

After Holy Communion

1. *"Go into all the world and preach the [G]ospel"* (Mk 16:15).

Consider how good and compassionate is the Lord whom you serve: He condemns sins and immediately shows the way to atone for them. Behold, He reproached the apostles' incredulity and hardness of heart, but what does He do next? "Go," He says, "into all the world and preach the [G]ospel to the whole creation." This

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *FLL*, vol 1, Typis Seminarii, Patavii 1864, p. 71 (s.v. *Adamas*): "For a diamond, unbreakable by any other force is broken by the blood of a goat." Cf. *SLL*, vol. 1, Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii 1758, p. 17 (s.v. *Adamas*). Cf. Sir Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, 6th ed., J.R., London 1672, pp. 87-100 (Bk. II, Ch. V).

is as if He were saying: "You have sinned by incredulity; make up for your sin by faith, proclaiming Me and My salutary teaching to the whole world. You have failed by the hardness of your heart, but go now to open the hearts of men and break their hardness with the hammer of the Gospel." This is exactly what it means to rebuke a vice and to suggest at once a remedy; to recognize the sickness and to immediately apply the medicine.

Apply this to yourself and to the others, so that having detected and reproved your own or someone else's imperfections, immediately show the way to remove them and to atone for them by true virtues. Imitate Christ the Lord in this regard; imitate good physicians whose diagnosis of a sickness would be useless unless they also provided a medicine to the sick. [f.119v]

2. "*but he who does not believe will condemned*" (Mk 16:16).

You are very fortunate for at this time you contain within yourself the Lord of Heaven and earth. You are fortunate for having such a Guest, fortunate for having such a Lord! But what made you a part of this good fortune? Faith alone. "Blessed are those," (says your Most Holy Guest) "who have not seen and yet believe" (Jn 20:29).

Thanks to your faith in the existence of God, Whom you have not seen with your eyes, you have been made fortunate. Since you have this faith from God Himself, what worthy thanks will you give to Him, especially after hearing that those who "do not believe" shall be condemned? Indeed, you would not be able to repay this divine benefice in any other or more appropriate way than by praying for the infidels, that they may be enlightened; or by contributing to their conversion though your own work as did the one who, having become an Apostle after being a publican, was bringing the publicans to Christ for the sake of their conversion in order to repay in this way the gift of his own vocation. He wished unto others what he deemed salutary for himself.

3. "*preach the [G]ospel to the whole creation*" (Mk 16:15).

How great is the kindness of the Son of God towards all mankind! He does not want to exclude anybody, not even the most miserable and despicable, from the heavenly Fatherland since He

commanded those whom He honored with apostolic dignity to proclaim the Gospel to every creature: to kings and to citizens; to rulers and their subjects; to masters and to servants; to the rich and to the poor together; to old people and also to children; indeed, to all men, to everyone!

Decide for yourself how great would be the impious deed committed by you, if at the moment opportune for fulfilling your duty regarding salvation, you preferred the magnates to the plebeians, and the wealthy to the poor!¹⁷⁸ How much would you deviate from the celestial Master's teaching if you seek only noble houses because of their sumptuousness and avoid with contempt the humble ones; if you did not serve the little and the great with an equal disposition!

On account of our religious vocation, by which we are equal to the apostles, it is fitting indeed that we show to God at least this kind of gratitude of not treating any of His creatures with contempt and not neglecting their instruction in salutary commandments and provision with necessary aids, in so far as it is our duty.

FOR THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

Before Holy Communion

1. *"behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age"* (Mt 28:20).

Consider that on His departure to Heaven the Redeemer could not possibly leave us any more pleasing, sweeter, and excellent token of remembrance than His true Body, which was tortured to death and pierced for our salvation. [f.120r]

Indeed, as nothing is dearer and greater than God in Heaven, thus nothing is more worthy and more excellent here in the

¹⁷⁸ Although the original Latin says the opposite (*pauperes locupletibus*), it is presumed that this was a mistake and that St. Stanislaus wanted to say: "and the wealthy to the poor," which corresponds to the general context of the exhortation.

world, than this most precious Treasure, in which the God-Man is concealed.

The Church Triumphant glories in the beatific vision of the Most Holy Trinity. The Church Militant also glories in the participation in the gifts of God, which she obtains abundantly from this treasury of the Most Holy Body. From there indeed, perfect charity comes; patience is obtained; hope is strengthened; faith beams forth, and from there the meekness, humility, obedience, and other virtues proper to Christians are also drawn. From this treasury is obtained the forgiveness of sins, remission of punishments, improvement of life, illumination of mind, and the salvation of the soul. Since this treasury is never exhausted, it will be with us to the consummation of this transient world. Oh, the true Church of God is most fortunate because of this alone!

Go now and obtain from this treasury whatever would be pleasing to your soul.

2. *"Let a man examine himself"* (1 Cor 11:28).

Consider that preparation for Holy Communion is not only a useful thing, but also necessary, as by commandment, for these reasons:

1) Since Most Holy Communion is a heavenly banquet; therefore, could those attending this banquet come unprepared for it?

2) Just as kings are not to be approached inconsiderately, much more so is the Sacred Eucharist God, where the true God and Man is present.

3) Since the Most Holy Body of Christ is a medicine for souls, those who will take the medicine must prepare themselves well for it.

4) Since this is most sumptuous food; therefore, somebody wishing to experience its heavenly taste should consume it with a recollected mind.

5) Although this is the "Bread of Life," yet those who eat it without previous proper preparation of their soul cannot be vivified by it.

6) If every divine work is to be approached with great deliberation and preparation of soul, therefore it is more applicable to the consumption of the Divine Body.

Thus, do not approach the sacred table thoughtlessly. Consider Who is the One Whom you are going to consume, and why you are going to consume this Food.

3. *"Take and eat"* (cf. 1 Cor 11:24) [DRB].

O love! O affection! O generosity with which you, Jesus, dispense Your Body to us! You invite us, lest we, wretched men, aware of our worthlessness, fear to be partakers of Your divinity. You encourage us, lest we, men with defiled lips, fear to taste the Most Holy Banquet. You say: "Take and eat," lest we hesitate to eat the bread of angels, deterred by Your majesty. As a yet greater proof of love and generosity is the fact that You do not exclude anybody from Your Sacred Table, You say to all: "Take."

Therefore, overcome by the great benevolence and affection of the One who invites, [f.120v] although a man of unclean lips (cf. Is 6:5), I open nevertheless to You, God of all goodness, my mouth and heart; let it be done to me according to Your word (cf. Lk 1:38).

After Holy Communion

1. *"[M]y flesh is food indeed, and [M]y blood is drink indeed"* (Jn 6:56).

The Savior affirms justly that His Body is a real food and that His Blood a real drink. Just as bodily foods nourish the body, which becomes weak if they are withdrawn from it, thus the flesh of Jesus Christ nourishes our souls; and, if not fortified by it quite often, they become languid, ailing, and weakened. Oh, this truly is real food of the soul! The food that vivifies, sustains, and preserves it from death! This is truly a real drink, which has the power not only to extinguish the thirst for evil things, but also to wash away stains; if some have adhered by forgetfulness or negligence to the soul that departs from the sacred tribunal of confession.

O my Savior! With what can I repay You for this most sumptuous nourishment, this most exquisite banquet? I give infinite thanks to You, and I pray humbly at the same time that I, who am about to enter the way of eternity, may deserve to be refreshed, equipped, and sustained by this most real, most salutary, and most holy food and drink.

2. *“He who eats [M]y flesh ... has eternal life”* (Jn 6:54).

Realize that this heavenly food is much healthier than the manna from Heaven, which was given to the Jews in the desert. Indeed, the king and psalmist, retelling that story, said that our fathers “did eat” manna, “and were filled exceedingly,” etc., but “while the food was still in their mouths, the anger of God rose against them and [H]e slew the strongest of them, and laid low the picked men of Israel” (cf. Ps 78:30-31).

This is not the effect of consuming the Divine Body. To those who eat it, the manna of the New Testament imparts life, not death; salvation, not destruction; Heaven, not hell. As for you, burst forth here with expressions of love and gratitude, remembering that although God chose and loved the Jews more than other nations, nonetheless He did not nourish them with such salutary heavenly food as He does Christians.

3. *“They who eat unworthily, eat condemnation for themselves”* (cf. 1 Cor 11:29).

Ponder this: although the Savior promised life to those who receive His Body and Blood, nevertheless He emphasized through the Teacher of the Nations that those who would treat unworthily the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist (as well as the others), shall bring His condemnation upon themselves. Truly, it is out of His goodness that He gives life to those who receive Communion; [f.121r] but choosing death and condemnation should be attributed to the malice of those who receive Communion unworthily. In this, we seem to resemble a sick person who turns into poison a wholesome medication by not taking it in the appropriate manner. Thus, the flesh of Christ, which most certainly contains life, becomes however, a reality of condemnation and death for those who eat it unworthily, or even

immediately go from the sacred table back to the ignominious abyss of vices.

As for you, try not to turn to vain things immediately after Holy Communion, so that you will not turn the most healthful medicine into a most horrible poison. At the same time beg Jesus that He deign to preserve you from the unworthy reception of Himself.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“your prayer is heard”* (Lk 1:13).

Consider how many people complain about their prayers not being heard. But the reason why a prayer is not heard lies with the man, and not with God. The reason is none other than a mortal sin, a wicked deed. God does not favorably hear sinners, namely those who are obstinate in their lack of contrition. Hence, notice how great a justice we need so that our prayers may be favorably heard. Indeed, the voice of a just man praying pierces the clouds (cf. Sir 35:21). Consider, however, what this justice consists of: you must be without grave sins and in the state of God’s grace, as is evident in case of John’s parents: “they were both just” (Lk 1:6) [DRB]. If nothing is to be obtained from an angry friend, so much less from the offended God.

Try, therefore, to keep yourself in the state of grace so that your prayers may be always heard.

2. *“he shall drink no wine nor strong drink”* (Lk 1:15).

Consider how God, about to choose the son of Zechariah to be a great herald of Christ, predicts his future temperance and abstinence. Deduce, therefore: nobody can become a true promoter of the Divine Word without temperance and abstinence.

Still, this task requires wisdom; but in fact, wisdom cannot be attained without abstinence. Now, if the task of a preacher is to convince the people to turn from vices to virtues, he should first

show by his life's example what he is about to preach by word. Indeed, deeds teach better than words, since they are more moving.

Hence, the heavenly Teacher used this method in teaching His disciples, as He said: "For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (Jn 13:15). [f.121v]

3. "*And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God*" (Lk 1:16).

Consider that those who attribute little value to or have no love and zeal for the matter of converting sinners and those deviating from the way of perfection act foolishly and are not yet truly enlightened. Yet, this work is of the utmost importance, inasmuch as in it contains both the love of God and of neighbor, on which all perfection depends. Indeed, consider that those who call the morally ruined back to the path of eternal life truly cooperate with Christ the Lord in the salvation of souls.

For Christ assumed human flesh for no other purpose than for saving what was lost (cf. Lk 19:10). Hence, the repentant king, wanting to reconcile the angry God to himself, uses no other means than the intention of converting sinners: "I will teach," he says, "transgressors [Y]our ways, and sinners will return to [Y]ou" (Ps 51:13).

Stir up in yourself this most perfect desire to convert the morally fallen and make sure that it increases each day. While you intend to do this, first turn yourself back to the Lord wholeheartedly.

After Holy Communion

1. "*you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass*" (Lk 1:20).

Consider how strongly the incredulity, hesitation, and doubt in divine matters must have displeased God, if indeed He punished Zechariah because of them. He takes away from him the use of speech because Zechariah did not believe the words of the angel, as he was justly expected to do. Hence, be convinced that you should not hesitate at all in matters of faith. As indeed, in executing the orders of Superiors, avoid all mental debate, but receive them with simple faith and fulfill them with simple obedience.

2. *“and he will go before [H]im”* (Lk 1:17).

Consider this: similar to the marshals that usually go first, repelling the crowds and clearing the way for the kings, so this holy Forerunner of Christ took upon himself the duty of a marshal in paving the way for the immortal King who was about to come to mortals. Hence, he called himself the Voice of one crying in the wilderness (cf. Jn 1:23): “Prepare the way of the Lord, make [H]is paths straight” (Lk 3:4).

As for you, acknowledge those impulses which incite you to rigor of life, to repentance, to a stricter way of perfection, to be the marshals of the divine grace that is about to come to you, and be obedient to them by all means. [f.122r]

3. *“And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her”* (cf. Lk 1:58).

Imagine how friends, families and neighbors all rushed together to Elizabeth; imagine them rejoicing, applauding, and congratulating their relative, friend, and neighbor, because she who was barren gave birth.

Oh! When will you refresh your brothers and neighbors, closest relatives, and finally the saints in Heaven with an equal joy? Oh! When will you give birth, having overcome your barrenness? When will you bring consolation to this community and to the heavenly community through your constant exercise in virtues, abundance of good works and wise abundance of mortification, as if by a certain fruit of your barren spirit? Woe to you, if you would never cease to be barren! Woe, if you would never give birth!

FOR THE FEAST OF STS. PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Who do men say that the Son of man is?”* (Mt 16:13).

Consider that the Lord was born not of a human father, but of God. Nevertheless, He was regarded as the Son of man, the son of Joseph (cf. Lk 3:23; Jn 6:42). Thus, the human intellect is certainly blind, since it considers human what is divine. But Peter,

more enlightened than the others, took away that faulty opinion about Jesus, declaring Him to be the Son of the living God. For this declaration he obtained the highest position in the Church (cf. Mt 16:16-19).

It is fitting that you also approach the sacred table with a similar faith and that you confess that Christ, hidden under the species of bread, is true God and Man. Truly, as great as the faith is which you bring here, so great are the gifts that will you take back from here.

2. *"For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but [M]y Father [W]ho is in heaven"* (Mt 16:17).

Consider that those steeped in flesh and blood are unsuitable to comprehend heavenly things, and that divine things are grasped not so much through diligent study, as through zealous mortification. Hence, the wise man says: "the spirit of wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul, nor dwell in a body enslaved to sin" (cf. Wis 1:4). As it is rather typical of someone foolish to prefer earthly knowledge to heavenly; so it is by no means fitting for a prudent man to seek the knowledge of the mysteries of God, and yet not to strive after mortification upon attaining it.

Since it was not the flesh and blood that revealed Christ's divinity to the first Apostle, the second one said, in order to comprehend heavenly things: "I pommel my body and subdue it" (1 Cor 9:27). [f.122v]

3. *"You are Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Mt 16:16).

Consider the firmness of St. Peter, with which he declares that Christ the Lord is the Son of the living God while His adversaries call Him the son of a carpenter (cf. Mt 13:55) and avow that He was casting out devils by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils (cf. Mt 9:34; 12:24). Here is a lesson for us: we should never recoil from the truth, even if our temporal life may be endangered; and we should not be afraid to advance the honor and glory of God. Because it was about loving God that Solomon sang: "love is strong as death" (Cant 8:6); from this confession it is to be understood that this love should evidently be so strong that even death cannot deter us from it.

But if a man professes God above all by honoring His glory and fulfilling His commandments, then consider out how great a firmness you should demonstrate in these matters. Indeed, you will be able to use this most powerful act of professing God if, coming today into the full mystery of the presence of Jesus Christ, you will exclaim with love: “You are Christ, the Son of the living God.”

After Holy Communion

1. *“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”* (Mt 16:19).

Consider how great was the providence and wisdom of God, which appointed the sinner Peter, who denied Christ as the supreme head of the Church, leader of the Christian hosts and His Vicar. He did not appoint the innocent John, or the righteous James. For certainly, we needed such a Shepherd, one who would know how to forgive the straying sheep and to admit them most kindly into the sheepfold of Christ, as they showed repentance. Since he himself had sinned in the past, he knew how great the proclivity to sin was in men, the ease of their moral failure, and the will of doing good, once they have risen!

Hence, you ought to learn to empathize with sinners rather than to be angry with them. Since it is the rule with Divine Providence to seriously tempt or possibly allow to fall, the men who are just and most desirous of perfection as well as others such as the Superiors, so that, coming back to their senses and not being ignorant of evils, they may help others and know how to assist the wretched ones.

In fact, you should know that sometimes sins are means for or ways to salvation. As someone has said: “For many it is better not to be too free from temptations,” (and even to fall sometimes), “but often to be tried lest they become too secure, too filled with pride.”¹⁷⁹ [f.123r]

2. *“whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven”* (Mt 16:19).

¹⁷⁹ Cf. IC, Bk. I, Ch. 20, § 4.

Consider that the Lord gave with these words a supreme power, indeed nearly a divine power, to St. Peter as well as to his legitimate successors and even to each priest.

Since the forgiveness of sins belongs to God alone, who would not consider it divine that St. Peter, as well as his successors and their coworkers, can remit sins, or not remit them whenever they decide that they should not be remitted. Indeed, in this way God left it to their decision, nearly committing Himself entirely to them: what they wanted here, He would want in Heaven; what they decided in the world would be confirmed and fixed in the council of the Divine Trinity; and the contrary.

Oh, how foolish, tactless, and miserable are those who make it a pleasure to slander, attack, and deride the priests, their life and conduct, and to treat with disregard those to whom God granted the highest power of loosing and binding!

As for you, learn and desire to venerate them as heavenly beings, and even more.

3. Consider the circumstances of the apostles from today's Gospel, before their vocation. Namely: one was a fisherman, the other, a persecutor.

Nevertheless (O God's goodness, wisdom, and design!), out of Saul He made Paul, a vessel of election (cf. Acts 9:15), Teacher of Pagans, a great Apostle; and out of the other, a fisher of men (cf. Mt 4:19; Mk 1:17), the rock of the Church (cf. Mt 16:18), the Prince of the Apostolic Senate, and the gatekeeper of Heaven.

He attracted Paul with the bands of love (cf. Hos 11:4); He strengthened Peter with the grace of a renewed calling. He charged both with the task of converting the most powerful princes of the world, the most eminent nobles, and the greatest sinners. He appointed each of the two, a Prince over the whole earth. Thus, God really chooses what is weak in order to confound the strong (cf. 1 Cor 1:27).

Apply this to yourself, realizing that an equal generosity was shown to you, both in your religious vocation and in your reception of today's Holy Communion.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Mary arose”* etc. (Lk 1:39).

Mary rose up, intending to be on her way to Elizabeth for this reason: to help her, the weaker one, and to offer to her cousin the greatest assistance of charity.

As for you, likewise rise up to help your soul, for nothing should be closer and dearer to you than your soul. Therefore, visit it as quickly as possible, examine it and see what it needs, and at the same time, provide for its needs. But if you notice that it is filled with good desires, as if pregnant with them, ask Jesus, coming to you in the present Holy Communion, to sanctify, as He sanctified the Holy Infant in the womb of Elizabeth, your desires and to help and increase those already born. In fact, ask that He purify and justify you from all sins with the same grace by which He freed John from original sin. [f.123v]

2. *“went with haste into the hill country”* (Lk 1:39).

Behold, the most Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, gives you two ways of striving for perfection which are mutually complementary. The first is to despise the low-lying valleys and to ascend the hill country; that is, to always choose a higher degree of perfection and try to reach it. The second is to work with haste for the salvation of yourself and your neighbor, and not allow, in a lazy delay, the loss of most precious time which is to be used only for meritorious deeds.

But if the burdens of passions overwhelm you, and do not permit you to fly out to the highest summit of perfection, pray to Jesus, that, after He has come into your heart, He would set you free from all burdens just as He freed His Most Holy Mother walking through the hill country to such an extent that she, pregnant with the divine proof of love, finished the journey not feeling any burden.

3. “*she entered the house of Zechariah*” etc. (Lk 1:40).

Consider with what affection this guest from afar, the Virgin Mother of God, greeted Elizabeth upon entering into the house of Zechariah, and finally, what was the result of this greeting: namely, the sanctification of the Infant still concealed in the maternal womb.

You too, gather all forces of your soul; and with all possible focus, humility, and diligence, prepare yourself to greet Jesus who is soon going to meet you, so that the greeting, rich in sublime feelings and in sweet words, may result in the sanctification of your soul and in its strengthening for all difficulties.

After Holy Communion

1. “*the child leaped in her womb*” (Lk 1:41).

Consider that there was no other cause for John’s joy (who leaped in the maternal womb) than the arrival of Christ the Lord, also confined under the maternal bosom.

Oh, how much you should rejoice that inside your heart dwells the One Who was hidden behind two walls, that is, behind two breasts, and yet He made John so joyful that he who still did not speak nor see the sunlight, leaped with joy because he felt the closeness of the Sun of Justice!

But I believe that you lost spiritual joy for the sake of transient and vain delight, although the delights of the whole world cannot be compared even with the least particle of the heavenly joy. Oh! If you are just, as one living among just religious, why do you not rejoice in the Lord alone? [f.124r]

2. “*was filled with the Holy Spirit*” (Lk 1:41).

After the joyful leaping of the Infant, the Mother is filled with the Holy Spirit, that is with the Spirit Who infused the Infant, sanctified him, and made him cheerful. For joy is, as it were, a companion of the Holy Spirit, and vice versa, He is a companion of joy; and joy is certainly a fruit of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal 5:22).

Nevertheless, consider that neither should sadness be always avoided, nor is it always bad. Sometimes, a great and true spirit is concealed in a sad heart and restrains it with sadness, lest it be

dissipated; otherwise, it is destined to be dissipated by joy. And thus, realize that joy is not always good, and sadness is not always evil, since the wise man himself said that “it is better to enter into the house of mourning than into the house of feasting and joy” (cf. Eccl 7:2).

3. “*Blessed are you among women*” (Lk 1:42).

Behold, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit; and yet, on that account, she does not place herself above the most Holy Virgin but deems herself lower, and proclaims her blessed and most holy among women.

This is truly the impact of the Holy Spirit: to bestow praises upon another and not slanders, to credit them with the goodness in which they abound instead of denying it out of envy. This is the sign of the heart possessed by the Lord: if it gives itself completely to praising the others, and forgets praising itself.

You, learn to praise the virtues of others (excluding, however, any kind of flattery), and hide and excuse their vices. Doing this, you might believe that you are full of the Holy Spirit.

FOR THE FEAST OF (ST.) MARGARET, VIRGIN AND MARTYR

Before Holy Communion

1. “*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field*” (Mt 13:44).

Consider how the heavenly Master teaches you to hide the heavenly gifts when He compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a treasure hidden in a field. Truly, as the finder conceals the discovered treasure and does not show it to anyone for fear of being deprived of it, similarly, the gifts of the divine generosity, which are the virtues, talents, and graces, ought to be hidden lest the infernal thief, seeing us displaying them, despoil us of them; or God Himself, perceiving our boasting in them, take them away from us.

Therefore, should you find this treasure, hide, conceal, and do not show it. [f.124v]

2. “*who, on finding one pearl¹⁸⁰ of great value,*” etc. (Mt 13:46).

Consider how Jesus, according to His customary way of speaking in parables, compared the religious vocation to a pearl of great price in a beautiful simile. He says that a man who was occupied with seeking pearls, having found one of great price, sold all his possessions and bought this pearl.

Who else is that merchant who quite urgently seeks the Kingdom of Heaven, if not a Christian? Having found the way of attaining it, namely with his divine vocation, which is like the most precious jewel, he immediately sells all that he has and then submits himself to the yoke of religious life like a slave, so that he may delight in this jewel of incomparable price (his vocation), and may be saved in accordance with it.

O you, the blessed one, who have found this one pearl of great price! But you shall be more blessed if you do not lose it and do not stain it with defects contrary to your state.

3. “*sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad*” (Mt 13:48).

Consider that God is not the cause of anyone’s damnation, and thus each of us is the author of our salvation or of our eternal death. For you hear what the heavenly Truth says about those saved and about the condemned: “[They] sorted” He says, “the good into vessels, but threw away the bad.” It is as if He were announcing a verdict: all the righteous shall be saved; all the wicked shall be cast into eternal fire. But since each man is evil on account of himself and not because God created him so, then it is he who condemns himself by his malice; for God, Who is the highest goodness, cannot create evil.

As for you, flee from evil, do good in your life, and undoubtedly you shall not be able to lose your everlasting salvation.

¹⁸⁰ It is to be noted that the reason for choosing the Scripture passage about a “pearl” here seems to be the fact that the name “Margaret,” corresponding to the Latin *Margarita*, means a “pearl.”

After Holy Communion

1. “*who, on finding one pearl of great value, went*” (cf. Mt 13:46).

Consider that the pearl of great price signifies the divine consolation and that there is no other way of acquiring it except by selling all that you have and buying it. That is, if you desire to abound in heavenly consolations, it is necessary that you say goodbye to other delights and that you reject all vain, little consolations.

Indeed, you should listen to the rebuke of the mellifluous Doctor: “Divine consolation is a pearl of great price, but it is not given at all to those who receive contrary consolation.”¹⁸¹

Hence it is that, although a little while ago you came back from the sacred table, you nevertheless feel no abundance of heavenly sweetness because you try to fill your heart with vain (and hopefully not decidedly evil) enjoyments.

Oh, if only you were a good judge of things! Sell everything and buy this precious jewel of divine consolation. Having it, you would certainly be very richly endowed.

2. “*separate the evil from the righteous*” (Mt 13:49).

Consider that you will appear at the divine judgment with those who were your companions in this life. Therefore, if you do not want to be associated with and condemned with the impure, irascible, gluttonous, and proud in that dreadful tribunal, [f.125r] flee not only their company, but also their vices.

May you be helped rather by the company and imitation of the just; that is, of the obedient, of those intent on mortifications, those striving after humility, poverty, modesty, patience, charity, and purity of soul; so that you may appear to be judged among them and may be taken up on high into the air, to the heavenly Fatherland.

But today, first and foremost converse with Christ, Whom you have received, so that He may admit you among the righteous and receive you into the inheritance of His Kingdom.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Bernardus, *Gaufridi Abbatis Declamationes De Colloquio Simonis cum Jesu — Ex S. Bernardi Sermonibus collectæ*, in: *PL*, vol. 184, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1862, p. 472 (n. 309): where the Latin text is slightly different, but the meaning is the same: “*Pretiosa siquidem divina consolatio est, nec omnino tribuitur admittentibus alienam.*”

3. *“throw them into the furnace of fire”* (Mt 13:50).

Consider that the souls of the condemned indeed are most miserable on account of the cause of their damnation, because they are sentenced to eternal fire on account of trivial and short-lived pleasures. They are so greatly tortured that should anyone of them be given a chance to return to life and do penance, he would most willingly undergo such a punishment as having, for example, his body torn apart and rebuilt daily for even as long as a thousand years, provided that he could avoid the infernal fires and torments.

How blessed are you who, by a very small mortification received and undertaken with joy, are able to be exempted from those eternal torments. On the other hand, you are foolish if you do not want to suffer here, so that you may not suffer in hell.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE

Before Holy Communion

1. *“And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner”* (Lk 7:37).

Consider the effect of the Divine Word, and likewise of love in St. Magdalene. When she heard Jesus preaching, she was touched with such a passionate love of God that, having taken the most precious ointments and thrown herself at His feet, she washed them with tears, wiped them with her once cherished hair, and anointed them with a balm, or with the no less fragrant and precious oil of pure nard. She did all this in a place where many people were gathered; especially the Pharisees, Christ's enemies. She was mindful of her sin, forgetful of her own honor, she thought nothing of herself, but valued greatly the Divine Mercy and the liberation of her soul from seven impure spirits, and indeed from eternal damnation itself.

Oh, how many are the things that you can learn from this public sinner who was already doing penance publicly! Namely: serious conversion, true self-abasement, self-contempt, reverence and love of God; hatred, abhorrence, and confession of sin; desire of

salvation, [f.125v] improvement of life, and penance that is not perfunctory.

Go, therefore, go to Jesus and prostrate yourself on the ground, saying: Most merciful Savior, I throw myself at Your feet together with Magdalene and I strike my breast together with the publican (cf. Lk 18:13). Be merciful to me, a miserable sinner.

2. *“Who is this, who even forgives sins?”* (Lk 7:49).

Consider that the Pharisees, prompted not by admiration but filled with envy, raised this question about Christ and sought to know who He was, for He did what they were not able to do: He forgave sins, and they did not have the authority to forgive them. In fact, they themselves, being very wicked, needed the remission of sins.

You, on the contrary, make the decision to praise, and not to undermine the admirable deeds of others, and to pity sinners, according to what St. Paul said: “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2). Since you are also in need of Divine Mercy, approach today the Majesty of God hidden under the species of bread in order to obtain it.

3. *“I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much”* (Lk 7:47).

Oh, the most fortunate of all days, abounding in greatest joys to the highest degree! For if you look into Heaven there is great rejoicing, as the heavenly King Himself testifies: “there will be more joy (in Heaven, of course),” says the eternal Truth, “over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (cf. Lk 15:7). Therefore, you will hardly imagine the joy which the heavenly beings experienced from the conversion of the sinner Magdalene.

If, on the other hand, you look on the earth, it also exults with no lesser joy because the true Messiah was already sent to it; He Who comes to save not the just, but sinners. Here you have the stunning example of Divine Goodness that so graciously accepted the greatest sinner in the city of Jerusalem when she repented; for not only did He forgive all her sins, but He also defended her from the Pharisaical denunciations.

Who among sinners would despair here, since Jesus not only easily forgives very evil deeds to the truly repentant one, but also undertakes the defense of sinners? Indeed, the prophet often calls out quite rightly: "O give thanks to the Lord, for [H]e is good; for [H]is mercy endures for ever!" (Ps 105:1).

After Holy Communion

1. "*Your faith has saved you*" (Lk 7:50).

Consider that all sins of Mary Magdalene were forgiven, together with their punishment, [f.126r] and she was immediately admitted to the most perfect union of love. Nevertheless, after the ascension of the God-Man to Heaven, she withdrew to a distant and solitary mountain, and she compensated there for the evil deeds of her life by very severe practices of penance and by washing away the stains of her past life with daily tears.¹⁸²

Evidently, this example was given to you so that you would not withdraw from the exercises of penance and the strict lifestyle that you have begun, although you might have been certain that the forgiveness of all evil deeds was already granted to you. This is what a man did who, having been given the girdle of purity, never ceased to watch for dangers which could expose his protected virginity to some harm.¹⁸³

2. "*for she loved much*" (Lk 7:47).

Consider that the measure of graces depends on the greatness of love. Hence, it happens that the one who is led by greater love toward the highest Good receives greater favors and more ample rewards of love. O my soul! What do you hear? What do you make of this matter? Are you still going to be so foolish and sense-

¹⁸² Victor Saxer, *BS*, vol. VIII, Istituto Giovanni XXIII nella Pontificia Università lateranense, Roma 1966, p. 1092 (s.v. *Maria Maddalena, santa*): "III. La Leggenda. ... 2) In Occidente. ... a) A text of the 9th century: *Vita eremitica* (*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis*, vol. II, Socii Bollandiani, Bruxelles 1900-1901, pp. 805-806 (nn. 5453-5456). [Hereafter *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis* will be abbreviated as *BHL*.]). It was said that Mary Magdalene withdrew to an unknown hermitage after the Lord's Ascension and lived thirty years of penance without clothing and food."

¹⁸³ It is possible that St. Stanislaus is speaking about himself here.

less that you will not offer yourself wholly to the divine love in order to obtain the whole God? Shall you continue to do your own will to your own destruction, instead of fulfilling the orders of the One Who offers you His love along with salvation? Will you not leave all things, so that you may find all things? Will you not deny yourself, that you may gain yourself and Him who created you?

O truly profitable love of God! By it you attain Him Who is loved! O, it is truly good to love the infinite One and to be loved by the infinite One! O love insatiable, sweet, firm, generous, peaceful, laudable, and unlimited! Allow me to experience You, allow me to taste You, allow me to always seek You; to burn always with Your ardor and never to be consumed; to thirst for You always and to never be satiated!

O God! Bring about that one day at last, by truly loving You and serving You out of pure love, I may sing loudly forever in the most blessed region of Your vision the sweetest song of love: "I found Him whom my soul loves. I held Him, and would not let Him go" (cf. Cant 3:4).

3. "*go in peace*" (Lk 7:50).

Consider that, having defended the repentant sinner from the cutting remarks of pharisaic tongues, our Savior also liberated her from the seven demons (to be understood as seven principal sins), and finally let her go in peace and provided for her safety in the future.

No differently did things work out for you today. For what else did you bring to the divine table besides countless sins? And behold, from there you return freed from them, as if from cruel chains. What did your heart bring besides bitterness? And behold, already it has been filled with sweetness. You went there wrapped in the darkness of many defects; you come back clothed with the sun as if with a mantle. You went to Holy Communion agitated by an internal struggle; after receiving it, you were filled with the sweetest peace.

Oh, what thanks will you give to God for such a great gift? Love Him wholeheartedly, love Him perfectly, and love Him very loyally! [f.126v]

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. JAMES [THE GREATER], APOSTLE

Before Holy Communion

1. “Then came to [H]im the mother of the sons of Zebedee ... adoring and asking something of [H]im” (Mt 20:20).

Look at the mother who beseeched on behalf of her sons not without mighty adoration, and yet she met with refusal, because she asked for things that revealed a desire for eminence and the motive for her request proceeded from an evil passion.

As the wise Chrysostom¹⁸⁴ observes, the sons of Zebedee intended to obtain through their mother the highest position in the heavenly Kingdom. He says: “They wished, since they had heard that the disciples should sit upon twelve thrones, to obtain the primacy of that seat [(cf. Mt 19:28)], and they knew that they would be preferred before the rest with the exception of Peter. [B]ut fearing that Peter was preferred before them, they dared to say, ‘Grant that one of us may sit on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left’” (cf. Mt 20:21).¹⁸⁵

Moreover, according to him, the reason why they strove after the honors was because they had not yet received the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁶

As for you, therefore, when you approach the Lord, be more cautious in stating your requests and ask only for the things regarding eternal salvation, and not temporal advantages.

¹⁸⁴ The manuscript of *Inspectio Cordis* erroneously gives the name: “Hieronymus” (Jerome); cf. *IC crit. ed.*, p. 278 (footnote “a”).

¹⁸⁵ Cornelius à Lapide, *The Great Commentary of Cornelius à Lapide: S. Matthew’s Gospel — Chaps. X to XXI*, Trans. Thomas W. Mossman, 4th ed., vol. 2, John Grant, Edinburgh 1908, p. 382 (Ch. XX, 21). Cf. Cornelii a Lapide, *Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram: Commentaria in Evangelium S. Matthæum*, vol. 15, Ludovicum Vives, Bibliopolam Editorem, Parisiis 1891, p. 448 (Ch. XIX, 8). Cf. Chrysostomus, *Homiliarum in Matthæum: Homilia LXV al. LXVI (Matth. XX, 17-28)*, in: *PG*, vol. 58, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1862, p. 619 (n. 665). Note: The Latin translation of this text of St. John Chrysostom in *PG*, vol. 58, p. 619, is somewhat different; see: *IC crit. ed.*, p. 278 (footnote 64).

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Joannes Chrysostomus, *Homiliarum in Matthæum: Homilia LXV al. LXVI (Matth. XX, 17-28)*, in: *PG*, vol. 58, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1862, p. 619 (n. 665): this text can be found in *IC crit. ed.*, p. 278 (footnote 65).

2. *"You do not know, what you are asking"* (Mt 20:22).

Consider that the Savior used great prudence in dealing with this request of this mother beseeching on behalf of her sons. The disciples were watching and awaiting the response, which was to be given to the ambitious claim of the relatives. Whereas He, to avoid stirring any suspicion in their minds, answered in quite a divine manner, showing that no human feeling towards these brothers remains in Him: "You do not know, what you are asking." Evidently, He censured the ambitious request.

But at the same time, He wants to teach you the feeling and intention, with which you should do good to others and with which you should treat people, namely: not out of regard for blood relation or friendly feeling, but out of regard for justice and charity.

3. *"Can you drink the chalice, that I shall drink?"* (Mt 20:22).

Consider that by these words, the Savior clearly indicated to us that the heavenly Kingdom and all its magnificence are based on much patience. Thus, the number of the predestined is composed from "those whom [God] foreknew," as the Apostle asserts, and "also predestined to be conformed to the image of [H]is Son" (Rom 8:29).

In this testimony [f.127r] the following meaning is concealed: those who accept and drink with all resignation the chalice of suffering as did the Son of God; those who are repaid with evils for their good deeds; those who are unjustly accused and condemned; those who meet with groundless hate and derision; those who in imitation of Christ, with cheerful spirit sustain for the love of Christ any contempt, adversities, labors, afflictions, crosses, and persecutions; such as these will possess heavenly glory and be the coheirs of the Son of God.

Do not prepare yourself, therefore, for quiet, but rather pray to the Lord Who is about to come to you, that He may prepare your soul for a trial.

After Holy Communion

1. *"For whom it is prepared by [M]y Father"* (Mt 20:23).

Consider that in this most blessed Kingdom the dwellings are prepared by the eternal Father Himself for the true followers of Christ the Lord. Hence, notice how much the Heavenly Father values those whom He knows firmly adhere to His Son.

Consider at the same time what great happiness awaits the unhappy in Heaven; what great joy for the afflicted; what rewards await the coworkers of Christ, whom He adopted here as His own coheirs of the heavenly Kingdom. Indeed, since they were the companions of His afflictions in the world, He will have them in Heaven as companions of His consolations. If they were here the participants of His work, there He will share the respite with them. If, finally, He has them as participants of His persecution, He will also share beatitude with them.

2. *"He that would like to be first among you, shall be your servant"* (Mt 20:27).

Consider that the heavenly Master teaches His disciples and wants them to abide by a manner of living that is contrary to the one accepted in the world. The magnates of this world do not like to serve anyone and would consider it an indignity if they rendered any kind of service to their subjects.

But the eternal King instructs His disciples in an alternative moral philosophy, which greatly differs from this one, and lays it down as a law, saying: "He that would like to be first among you, shall be your servant." It is as if He were saying: "It is fitting that the chiefs of My servants be not so much rulers and lords, as assistants and servants. For I Myself came not to 'be served by others, but to serve'" (cf. Mt 20:28). Indeed, this is so, because three most excellent virtues are contained in this free servitude: obedience, humility, and charity. [f.127v]

3. *"We can"* (Mt 20:22).

O fortunate apostles, who were so spirited that they nobly asserted their readiness to drink from the chalice of the Lord.

You however, how weak in undergoing mortifications you are! Nothing comes to your mind in regard to bearing some suffering

for the love of Christ! How disgracefully you tremble before the smallest adversities! And yet, you are not ignorant of the fact that nobody shall possess the heavenly goods without having endured the evils of this world with resignation; that nobody shall arrive at a place of respite, unless they pass through water and fire. This statement is very true: "If you are excluded from the suffering caused by the scourges, you will be excluded from the number of sons."¹⁸⁷

To action! When you possess within your heart Strength itself, say indeed: "I can do all things in [H]im who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. ANNE, GRANDMOTHER OF CHRIST THE LORD

Before Holy Communion

1. *"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field"* (Mt 13:44).

Consider that this field is the womb of St. Anne; the treasure is the Most Holy Virgin, for nothing in the world and in Heaven is more precious than she. Wherefore, understand that the more eminent angels were appointed to guard this field, just as the rich usually protect with the best guards the place in which they store their treasures.

Hence, learn to guard with as great a diligence as is possible for you the gifts and graces granted to you by God, which are the most noble treasures, lest they be carried off secretly by the thief, namely, by your vainglory.

2. *"Sells all that he has, and buys that field"* (Mt 13:44).

These words could be quite justly applied to St. Anne, whose womb God chose from among His creation and deposited in it

¹⁸⁷ This is a slightly modified quotation from St. Augustine's Sermon 46. Cf. Augustinus, *Sermones ad Populum: Classis I. De Scripturis — Sermo XLVI (Ezechiel XXXIV, 1-16)*, in: *PL*, vol. 38, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1865, p. 276 (cap. V, § 11): "*Si exceptus a passione flagellorum, exceptus a numero filiorum*."

the Virgin, the most eminent of all creatures. And afterwards so that He might possess her, He was forgetful of His divinity, uniting it to our humanity. Oh, you would call truly blessed this womb, from which came that Virgin in whose womb reposed Blessedness itself. Indeed, more fertile than Arabia Felix¹⁸⁸ was this field, in the middle of which the vein of purest gold was found, so precious, so priceless and so dear to God.

Therefore, prepare your field for receiving the heavenly [f.128r] treasure by which you shall become richer if, on approaching the sacred table, you will have fewer of the riches of the world, that is, worldly thoughts.

3. “*Sells all*” (Mt 13:44).

Similar to those who eagerly desire to possess the treasures hidden in the field, and who, for the sake of obtaining this field, forgo and give up many things and sometimes exchange a better field for the one more richly endowed. Thus, my soul, if you would like to acquire the treasures concealed in the field of the Most Holy Eucharist, you ought to sell all that you have, as the holy Doctor orders: “Forsake all things, and you will find all things.”¹⁸⁹

Therefore, you have to deprive yourself of self-love if you want to be inflamed with the divine love; you have to renounce your own will if you want to live in conformity with the divine will. Lastly, it is necessary that you wholly deny yourself if you desire to possess the whole Christ, the priceless treasure of Heaven.¹⁹⁰

After Holy Communion

1. “*When he had found one pearl of great price*” (Mt 13:46).

Examine yourself to see which jewels you have taken away from this treasury that God opened for you today at the sacred table. Have you acquired a virtue, perhaps, of devotion, resignation, or humility? These are certainly the jewels with which Jesus adorns the souls of those who receive Him devotedly.

¹⁸⁸ Arabia was divided by the ancients into Petraea, Deserta, and Felix. Arabia Felix was the fertile portion of Arabia, as opposed to Arabia Deserta and Petraea. Cf. M. Rościszewski, *WEP*, vol. 1, PWN, Warszawa 1962, p. 325 (s.v. *Arabia Felix*).

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *IC*, Bk. III, Ch. 32, § 1.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Bk. III, Ch. 32, §§ 1-3; Bk. II, Ch. 7, §§ 1-3.

Like the merchants at the end of a market-day, who usually subject both the expenses and the profits to a strict reckoning, thus you should identify what profit you have obtained from Holy Communion. Have you found there any jewel? Guard it.

2. *“They chose out the good into vessels, but the bad they cast forth”* (Mt 13:48).

Reflect profoundly on this parable about fish and, calling to memory the election of a fisherman to be the Highest Chief of the Apostles and the Church, consider carefully that the Teacher of Truth compared people to fish here.

As, therefore, fishermen throw away bad fish and store good ones in vessels, thus the Supreme Judge of deeds is going to do with all men, admitting the righteous with Himself into the dwellings of the heavenly Kingdom, and thrusting the scoundrels down to hell.

As for you, among which of these would you be numbered today? Truly, if you feel yourself striving for virtues and desiring to improve, [f.128v] rejoice: you are not to be counted among the unworthy. To be sure, God has already adopted you as chosen for Himself, putting Himself as a sign over your heart.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE BASILICA OF ST. MARY OF THE SNOWS¹⁹¹

Before Holy Communion

1. *“While Jesus was speaking to the crowds”*¹⁹² (cf. Lk 11:27).

Consider that Christ the Lord was burning with such a great desire to gain souls that He would not pass by any group of people without instructing them in the salutary truths of faith.

Consider that you, too, should not omit any occasion of gaining your neighbor; and therefore, whenever you have dealings

¹⁹¹ The Basilica of St. Mary Major (Santa Maria Maggiore) in Rome.

¹⁹² These exact words are not found in the Gospel, but rather St. Stanislaus based them on the context of the episode with the woman in the crowd, which begins with: “And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice” (Lk 11:27) [DRB].

with others, especially with laymen, you should talk only of salutary things, so that your dealings with persons may be holy and agreeable to God and men.

But at this sacred table, pray to the Lord that He subdues the rebelling crowd of your senses not so much with words, but with the efficacy of His power and represses them in holy submission. If they keep on resisting, pray that He mortifies them.

2. “*A woman ... lifted up her voice*” (Lk 11:27).

Look at the praiseworthy and magnanimous devotion of that woman, who praised the Lord with words full of divine inspiration in front of such a great crowd of people, although Christ’s adversaries might have been, perhaps, among this crowd.

You should likewise, to the best of your abilities, eagerly spread the glory of God at every occasion. And now, as He is coming to you personally, are you not going to welcome Him with great feelings, desires, and praises? Come now, whatever ability, eloquence, devotion and generosity can be found in you, express it all, while greeting your Jesus.

3. “*Blessed is the womb, that bore [Y]ou*” (Lk 11:27).

It was not only in the opinion of that woman, much enlightened by the Lord, but was also confirmed by pious Christian teaching that the Blessed Virgin was adorned with a greater sanctity and a greater number of graces after the Incarnation of the Son of God than she was before. Therefore, see that you do not create any obstacle for the Lord coming down to you, and thus impede Him from enlightening you more than you have been before, [f.129r] and from sanctifying you and making you purer, more obedient, devoted to discipline, humble, poor, meek, and more mortified.

Although it is proper to all sanctity, and especially to that of the Saint of Saints, to make His companions holy, yet it is well known that sometimes people themselves create such obstacles and impediments that God, although He would like to make them holy and save them, cannot do so because of their own fault.

May you not fall into this misfortune, at least today!

After Holy Communion

1. *"Blessed is the womb, that bore [Y]ou"* (Lk 11:27).

Consider that the most Holy Virgin was blessed indeed from her very conception, even being conceived in a blessed way, but she became ever more blessed as she conceived the Son of God, the author of blessedness. Hence, this woman from the crowd rightly proclaims in a raised voice: "Blessed is the womb, that bore You!" It is as if she were saying: "O fortunate! O blessed that Mother, whose womb You (who are so holy) sanctified still further, although it was already holy before it carried You!"

Your heart is also blessed, because it contains today the Son of God. Beg that He remains in it always so that you may be blessed always.

2. *"Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it"* (Lk 11:28).

Hear the words of Christ the Lord, speaking inside you and giving you instructions: "Your happiness depends on keeping My words. My words are those that you find in religious books, in My commandments and evangelical counsels, as well as in your rules, which are further inculcated by your Superiors. As in times past I spoke to the Jews and set forth My commandments to them through Moses, so now I speak and reveal My will to My chosen people; to My servants, namely: to the religious, through their Superiors and spiritual directors. Therefore, he who hears the Superiors, as if he would be hearing Me, is blessed."

Oh, you are more than blessed if you set your present beatitude on this foundation! If you hear your directors as God, if you submit to them, as to God! [**f. 129v**]

FOR THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

Before Holy Communion

1. “[H]e was transfigured before them” (Mt 17:2).

Consider that Christ’s disciples believed that they associated only with a man and not also with God; and for that reason, Christ was transfigured before them, so that they would recognize that He is both man and God; and so that having recognized it, they would profess it; and having professed it, they would preach it.

Thus, when the same Christ sometimes gives you in Holy Communion signs of His divinity, that is, spiritual delights, He does it so that you may suffer more willingly for Him, and having suffered, you may profess Him, since nobody professes Christ better than he who follows Him through adversities.

2. “[H]is face shone like the sun, and [H]is garments became white as light” (Mt 17:2).

Consider that light and whiteness particularly suit divinity. For that reason, the God-Man Jesus appears to the disciples with a luminous face and in shining white clothes. Therefore, these two attributes, light and whiteness, are the true signs of the true servants of God: the light of good work, and the whiteness of innocence and honesty.

May Christ transform you today into Himself so that your soul may shine with the light of virtues and your heart may become white with candid intentions! Truly, you should work hard that you may be similar to God in your countenance and in your behavior, that you may appear, both internally and externally, a true servant of God.

3. “there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with [H]im” (Mt 17:3).

Ponder this: if you want to see the transfigured Christ in Heaven, in conformity with the evangelical teaching, you should pay attention to the observance of the law and strive for contemplation. It is not without reason that Moses and Elijah appeared, conversing with Christ, to Christ’s disciples. Through Christ the evangelical counsels are indicated; through Moses, the divine

commandments; and through Elijah, contemplation. Hence, you should learn obedience, poverty, and chastity, which Christ taught by example and word. You must add to them the observance of the divine laws.

However, you will not yet be perfect: unless you also add the desire for contemplation; unless you unite your active life with a life of meditation. Where Christ is, Moses and Elijah should be. You say that you follow Christ because you observe the evangelical counsels; but you do nothing remarkable unless, at the same time, you observe the commandments of God and give yourself zealously and frequently to contemplation. [f.130r]

After Holy Communion

1. *“Lord, it is good for us to be here”* (Mt 17:4) [DRB].

Consider that human nature is instinctively inclined toward what is sweet and soft and avoids what is hard and bitter. Yet, it must be led to where it refuses to go; and it must comply with what it refuses to bear. Thus, the mountain of Tabor, full of heavenly delights, with a wonderful vision, pleased the Prince of the Apostles, wherefore he says with feeling: “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” But to Christ the Lord, who was Courage itself, the mountain of Calvary, where He was to suffer for the salvation of humankind, was more pleasing.

Following the example of Christ: you should flee from easy things; love what is difficult; avoid rest; desire to labor; contemn sensual delights; welcome the Cross. Abounding in delights shall come in the future and not in the present life. It is characteristic of the true follower of Christ to say not in prosperity, but in adversities: “It is good for us to be here.”

2. *“let us make here three tabernacles, one for [You], and one for Moses, and one for [Elijah]”* (Mt 17:4) [DRB].

Consider that solitude meant so much to St. Peter that he wished still to remain in it. It should not be annoying for you, either. But, ponder how it is proper for you to behave in a solitary place; say, in your cell (that is, in the earthly Heaven). You should have three tabernacles built up there: one for Christ, one

for Moses, and one for Elijah. For indeed, you should observe obedience every moment; possess nothing contrary to poverty; preserve chastity with great care since the evil spirit attacks it more in solitude. This is the tabernacle of Christ.

Moreover, you should continuously have the divine commandments before your eyes and mind so that neither in your mind, by mouth or by deed do you commit anything against them. This is the tabernacle of Moses.

Finally, you should make time there for pious contemplations: sometimes turning in your mind to the rewards of Heaven; at another time, to the punishments of hell; sometimes to the Passion of Christ; at another time, to the life of the Virgin, to the life of the saints and to your own life; sometimes to the beauty of virtues, and at other times to the foulness of vices. This would be the tabernacle of Elijah.

This, therefore, is the way of life in solitude that is meant by: "It is good for us to be here."

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. LAURENCE, DEACON AND MARTYR

Before Holy Communion

1. *"Unless the grain of wheat falling to the earth dies, it remains only a single grain"* (Jn 12:24).

Consider that persecutions and afflictions are necessary for attaining eternal glory. Without them, it would be impossible for somebody to be a follower and disciple of Christ and a true Catholic, and to reach the dwelling of eternal salvation.

The Savior declared this in today's Gospel by giving a beautiful metaphor about the fruitfulness of a grain of wheat that dies, and the uselessness of the one remaining alive. [f.130v] It is as if He wanted to indicate that a man couldn't enjoy the fruit of virtues, nor God the fruit of a man, unless the man dies; that is, unless he would be oppressed by various afflictions and would forsake the life proper to lovers of the world. In this sense Ignatius of

Antioch speaks about himself: "I am Christ's wheat, [and] shall be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, so that I may become [Christ's] pure bread."¹⁹³

As for you, approaching the sacred table, request from the Lamb, slain for you, that He gives you the grace and strength to suffer for His Name and to endure bravely daily adversities.

2. "*He that loves his life, shall lose it*" (Jn 12:25).

To love life means to follow one's feelings, to indulge one's pleasures, and to care for one's self only.

Oh, how long I took to wake up! Although I am a religious, the road I follow is not all that dissimilar. Under my praiseworthy garb I carry a vain name and, after so many years of being exercised in the school of virtues, I only now begin to be a religious!

Do not be so foolish as to destroy yourself, my soul; you will surely do so, if you continue loving yourself. Why do you not ask to obtain death today from Jesus the Life, and why do you not begin to die spiritually, so that you may live forever?

3. "*He that hates his life in this world keeps it to life eternal*" (Jn 12:25).

Consider that the salutary hatred of life does not only consist of somebody's laying down his life for the faith, for God's worship, or for some virtue; but it also consists of bearing with a serene spirit the internal afflictions, scruples, fears, anxieties and temptations, and not consenting to any obvious evil. Thus, treating one's life with this kind of "hatred," one shall save it. Removing from the soul such things that please it, but harm or scandalize a neighbor, offend God, and endanger one's salvation means hating our life prudently, that is, saving it.

Examine yourself, whether at any time you carried on anything of this kind? And looking with admiration at this very holy

¹⁹³ Cf. Ignatius Antiochenus, *Prolegomena — Veterum Testimonia de S. Ignatii Epistolis: Hieronymus, lib. De viris illustribus (cap. 16)*, in: PG, vol. 5, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 15 (VII). Cf. St. Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Romans*, in: LHE, vol. IV, p. 1490 (Oct. 17 — Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop and Martyr: Office of Readings): "I am God's wheat and shall be ground by their teeth so that I may become Christ's pure bread."

and very steadfast Martyr, suffering great torments inside and outside,¹⁹⁴ blush with shame that you slacken in smaller ones.

After Holy Communion

1. *“If any man serves [M]e, let him follow [M]e”* (Jn 12:26).

Consider that the Lord wants all the religious who have devoted themselves truly to the service of God to follow Him in their actions and also in their suffering. As to the first, they should keep the rules precisely, which are guidelines defined by God for their actions; just as David desired not to deviate from the norm of life prescribed to him even in a small matter, and therefore he prayed to God: “Make me understand the way of [Y]our precepts: and [f.131r] I will meditate on [Y]our wondrous deeds” (Ps 119:27).

As to the second, God wants the religious, who serve Him, to follow Him in suffering: carrying the cross, whichever would be imposed upon them, not only bravely, but also cheerfully. He requires it, when He says: “If any man will come after [M]e, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow [M]e” (Mt 16:24). And not without reason: for the trait of a servant who is faithful and endowed with admirable virtue is that he adheres to the Lord with the same spirit, both in joyful and in painful circumstances, both in success and in adversities. But indeed, deserving of a shameful mark of dishonor is the one who follows the Lord going to the feast, but flees from Him when He is falling under the weight of the Cross.

2. *“Let him follow [M]e”* (Jn 12:26).

Consider what a great desire to suffer for Christ was burning in Laurence, the very faithful servant of God. When he saw his Bishop [Pope] Sixtus led to the place of martyrdom, he shouted with grief and pain: “Where are you going, a father without his son? Where are you hastening, a priest without his deacon?” He

¹⁹⁴ *RM*, p. 168 (August 10 — St. Laurence): “fulfilled martyrdom ... after many torments — imprisonment, various stripes, scorpions, rods and scourges and burning torches — being last of all roasted on a gridiron.”

was lamenting and loudly complaining that he, who was the Bishop's minister at the altar, was not his companion in the torments.¹⁹⁵

O true Christian spirit and soul! This is what it truly means to follow Christ: not omitting any occasion to suffer for Him, but fervently wanting to carry the Cross.

As for you, be ashamed, because you are so delicate that you flee from the smallest mortification and bear even slightly unkind words with a wrinkled forehead and much grumbling, both outward and inward.

O you, admirable follower of Christ! What would you do if subjected to scourges? Or are you simply ignorant of the fact that the way to Heaven is accessible only through thorns?

3. "*Let him follow [M]e*" (Jn 12:26).

Consider that for those who are to follow Christ, the greatest impediments are wealth, friends, and whatever is loved besides God. Hence, He said to the young man striving after perfection and wishing to attain eternal life: "Sell all, ... and follow [M]e" (cf. Mt 19:21). Hence, it is clear that nobody can truly follow Christ, unless he is free, poor, and naked.

Just as baggage weighs down travelers and slows down their journey, thus, temporal goods, worldly matters, and love of the world greatly burden those who follow Christ and do not permit them to reach Him.

Why then do you wonder that Laurence hastened cheerfully through the flames to eternal glory? He was naked, did not possess anything, and had distributed everything to the poor, before he made himself ready for the way of the cross.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Ambrosius, *De officiis*, in: *Opera Omnia IV*, Romae 1582, p. 24 (Bk. I, Ch. 41). [Hereafter *De Officiis* will be abbreviated as *ADO*.]

¹⁹⁶ Cf. *ADO*, pp. 46-47 (Bk. II, Ch. 28).

FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Jesus entered into a certain town”* (Lk 10:38).

Imagine that you are a town into which the highest Monarch, Jesus, is going to enter today through the gate of your mouth so that He can rest on the pleasant throne of your heart. If it were announced to you that a king of this world, or even a lesser prince, wanted to visit you, would you not clean the place in which he would have to be entertained? Would you not put on the best attire? You would scatter the most fragrant flowers to refresh the arriving guest by their scent. You would meet him half way, you would receive him with all reverence and due kindness, and you would bring him into your house.

Behold, the greatest of kings is about to come into the dwelling of your soul. Clean by penance the heart in which [f.131v] He is going to take His seat; sprinkle upon it the fragrance of good desires. Rush forward to meet Him with the greatest feelings of love, and think of a word of welcome with which you are going to receive Him.

2. *“A certain woman named Martha, received [H]im into her house”* (Lk 10:38).

Consider that Martha, the sister of Magdalene,¹⁹⁷ was indeed good and holy, but did not pay as much attention to contemplation as to her domestic matters. Hence, the Savior said to her: “Martha, Martha, you are anxious, and are troubled about many things” (Lk 10:41). Nevertheless, this anxious woman very often received the Lord in her house, to such an extent that the home of Martha was in a way Christ’s inn.

Here is a lesson to you of how to communicate and unite with Jesus through frequent inner recollection, although you may be

¹⁹⁷ The author mentions Mary Magdalene here. Many authors have identified Mary, the sister of Lazarus, with Mary Magdalene: see *RM*, p. 157 (July 29 — St. Martha).

distracted by many external occupations. It pleases God very much to remain with the anxious Martha or other very busy people, and He rejoices that their hearts, troubled with so many things, do not lack a dwelling place for Him.

3. *“Received [H]im into her house”* (Lk 10:38).

And you, my soul, although you are distracted by many worries and you are not seriously devoted to holy contemplation, do not be afraid to invite Jesus to yourself and to receive Him. He loves equally the contemplatives and those who lead an active life if both honor Him with equal effort through their service and offices. He endows the souls devoted to constant prayers and those serving their neighbors with the same reward of beatitude. He blesses with the same reward of His vision both the hermits given to contemplation, and the husbandmen active in his vineyard.

If, therefore, you do not have a small bunch of the myrrh of love, if you do not have the precious ointments of prayer, if you do not have tears to wash his feet together with Magdalene, then offer to Him with Martha your domestic works and the attention which you devote to your neighbor's salvation. If you lack even this ability, He would be satisfied with your good will.

After Holy Communion

1. *“Martha, Martha, you are anxious, and are troubled about many things”* (Lk 10:41).

Consider that the Savior greatly commiserates with us when, due to temporal and corporeal necessities, we are compelled to neglect, or to forsake altogether the interests of the soul and the care for eternal goods. For the Eternal Wisdom knows how great are the damages that we sustain and the losses we suffer by neglecting spiritual practices.

Wherefore the Master of Truth descended to you today, that you might learn from Him the method of a more recollected life and of detachment from needless occupations, and even of employing at least a part of this hour to conversation with Him.
[f.132r]

2. *“Mary has chosen the best part”* (Lk 10:42).

Consider the good Teacher’s kind judgment: He said that Mary had chosen the best part; at the same time, however, He did not condemn Martha although she was distracted by so many worries while Mary devoted herself to spiritual things only.

From this learn that saints are not only those who, given to solitude, attend only to their salvation. Truly, the righteous are also those who, leading an active life, cooperate with Christ in the salvation of souls. Indeed, Mary signifies those who lead a contemplative life; while Martha, those who lead an active life. Still Christ loved both, rewarded both with Heaven; and the Church honors each one of them as a saint.

Do not worry too much, therefore, if sometimes, on account of the salvation and spiritual benefit of your neighbor, you cannot devote yourself entirely to spiritual matters.

3. *“But one thing is necessary”* (10:42).

O this one thing! Rarely sought out, found by just a few, and neglected by countless people! The advice of Christ is: “Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these other things shall be given you besides” (cf. Mt 6:33). But, alas! The world seeks first and always “these other things,” and never “the Kingdom of God.”

As for you, since God has called you out of the world, do not foolishly imitate the world and do not postpone caring first for the Kingdom of God. You say: where shall I seek the Kingdom of God? It is inside you. Dwell within yourself always, and you will always have the Kingdom of God. Truly, the peace born in your soul once your passions are subdued is the Kingdom of God. Seek this one necessary thing.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE

Before Holy Communion

1. *"He went out to a mountain to pray"* (Lk 6:12).

Consider that the words of the king-prophet can be applied here to the Christ, praying on the summit of the mountain: "On the holy mount stands the city [H]e founded" (Ps 87:1). For Christ sanctified various mountains in different ways: the mountain of Golgotha, by His Passion and death; the mountain of Tabor, by His Transfiguration; and the one of today, by His prayer. On this mountain He laid the foundations of the Church when, having said the prayer here, He appointed and chose the twelve apostles who were going to sustain it.

Oh! It is to be regretted that you, I believe, burdened by the load of your passions, cannot follow Jesus to the mountain! You cannot, I believe, devote yourself to sublime contemplation and rise on high in your mind. Therefore, with sorrow and desire wait for Him in the valleys at least, until, moved with mercy, He descends to you and draws you with Himself to higher pinnacles of contemplation.

2. *"He passed the whole night in prayer to God"* (Lk 6:12).

Having considered the place where the prayer is to be offered, think about the most appropriate time for doing it, namely at night. Night is extremely propitious for prayer: at night nobody sees you praying, and you fulfill that well-known advice: "When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to pray standing in the synagogues and at corners of the streets, that they may be seen by people" (Mt 6:5). Nobody impedes you, and you will obtain that: "All things, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you shall receive; and it shall be done for you" (Mk 11:24).

Notice that prayer is the first means to accomplish great things. Was there a greater undertaking than the founding of the Church? And Christ began this with a prayer. Hence, rightly does Ambrose admonish: [f.132v] "O Christian, the idea is given to you, the manner prescribed, which you should imitate. For what ought you to do for your salvation, when Christ for you

spends the whole night in prayer? What is it fitting for you to do, when you want to undertake some dutiful action of mercy; since Christ, about to send out the apostles, first prayed, and He prayed alone,”¹⁹⁸ spending the whole night in prayer?

Indeed, you should not approach to receive the present Holy Communion without a fervent prayer.

3. “*And Bartholomew*” (Lk 6:14).

Consider how great a grace was granted to St. Bartholomew when he was called to the office of the sacred apostleship. For by receiving the high rank of apostolic dignity he seemed to gain possession of the heavenly heritage, and at the same time, to ascend to the eternal Kingdom.

O the blessed religious, who are almost considered as the apostles’ successors in the sense that anyone called to the religious status is regarded as if called to the office of the sacred apostleship.

Realize, therefore, how highly you should value this benefit of the religious vocation and how seriously you should respond to it.

After Holy Communion

1. “*He went out to a mountain*” (Lk 6:12).

You already have the Savior present in you; you already embrace Him with both arms. Do not let Him go, but follow Him to the mountain, having laid down the burdens of your passions and imperfections at the sacred table. “All great people,” says the Bishop of Milan, “all the eminent ones ascend to the mountain.”¹⁹⁹

Why do you not assume great and sublime dispositions, and why do you not follow Christ to the mountain? “Not in physical footprints, but rather in sublime deeds.”²⁰⁰ Oh! The passions still overwhelm you and cast you back on the ground!

¹⁹⁸ Ambrosius, *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam: Liber V (Luc. VI, 12)*, in: *PL*, vol. 15, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1845, p. 1648 (n. 1366).

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1647 (n. 1365).

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*: St. Ambrose continues: “ascend to this mountain, and follow Christ, that you yourself can be a mountain.”

2. “*All the multitude sought to touch [H]im*” (Lk 6:19).

Consider that the multitudes following Jesus greatly sought and endeavored to touch at least the hem of His garments (cf. Mt 9:20; Lk 8:44). They deemed it to be a gift of greatest happiness. And no wonder since: “virtue went out from [H]im, and healed all” (cf. Lk 6:19). Oh, if only it would come out this time and heal the recurring disease of your passions!

Indeed, since this was the special intention of the people following Jesus, “to be healed of their diseases” (Lk 6:18), whenever you approach the sacred table, you also should intend nothing else and desire nothing else except that the diseases of your soul and heart be wholly healed. I believe that the heavenly doctor will bring this about easily, if only you seek the chance, if you desire to and are able to touch Him. You will certainly touch Him, if you follow Him.

3. “*Those who were troubled with unclean spirits, were cured*” (Lk 6:18).

Since your Savior delivered today so many men from being possessed by unclean spirits, you too should ask Him with earnest tears, that He deign to free you from the evil and harsh thoughts harassing and nearly tearing your soul; or rather, that He would grant you the fortitude and steadiness of enduring them, which is a greater grace (because combat is more meritorious than rest).

Indeed, as you consider the torments of today’s [f.133r] Apostle, that (O unheard of pain!) he was flayed alive for Christ,²⁰¹ the desire should grow in you to endure bravely all adversities that are occurring and which shall occur to you. For should you lack them, you would also have to give up the heavenly Kingdom, into which nobody enters, in which nobody is crowned, except the one who has legitimately contended.

²⁰¹ Cf. *RM*, p. 180 (August 24 — St. Bartholomew).

FOR THE FEAST OF THE BIRTH OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN

Before Holy Communion

1. *"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ"* (Mt 1:1).

O eternal Son of God! Upon what kind of work are You embarking? What admirable venture are You taking upon Yourself? Behold, out of love for men You intend to be a man and to clothe Your Divine Majesty in human baseness. I am uncertain whether it is for concealing it or to make it more clearly visible? Today that perfect Ark already appeared under the sun, in which You are going to remain for nine months. Today the Sanctuary, which your presence will sanctify more, was erected in the middle of the Church. Today, the work of the right hand of the Most High, the most excellent work of all, filled with admiration and joy the heavens, limbo, and the people waiting for the Messiah.

O my soul! I do not know where you shall direct your joy: whether to the future Mother of God born today? Or to the future Savior still awaited? Choose the former; and, joining the angels and the newborn Virgin in the cradle, compose a grateful song for her on the day of her birth and say: Hail, Morning Star, most bright forerunner of the eternal day! Hail, most brilliant Moon, which illuminates the long night. Hail Mary, the greatest adornment of the heavens and the earth, you shall bear the true Savior! In addition to other titles, I greet you with the title of the Refuge of sinners. O what a great number of sinners await you, the city of refuge, you who are to preserve them from eternal death! Among them I, the first of all, fly to you.

2. *"Abraham begot Isaac"* (Mt 1:2).

Both Jesus and Mary were descendants of two ancestries: royal and priestly. She is the Daughter, He is the Son of Abraham and Isaac; they are the most obedient from among the most obedient. He always followed the will of the Father; she never followed her own, but did only the will of God. And she gave evidence of this, even to the very messenger of the Savior's Incarnation, saying: "Be it done to me according to [Y]our word" (Lk 1:38). Undoubtedly

it was only fitting for these two, who were to renew the whole world through their obedience, to be offspring and descendants of the most obedient parents and ancestors.

Be born again with the Virgin being born and obtain from her at least obedience! It belongs among the great virtues; beseech it humbly from the little infant Virgin Mary, because she, still in her cradle, is generous toward men. [f.133v] If you have obtained obedience, believe that you have obtained all the virtues. Do you ask for the reason? Obedience is the mother of all the virtues.

3. "*David ... begot Salomon, of her that had been [the wife] of Uriah*" (Mt 1:6).

May human magnificence blush with shame here; may honor lose value; may the tongue be silent about fame, great pedigree and illustrious birth when the Son of God enumerates His and His Mother's ancestors, members of the same lineage and relatives, some of whom were stained with a certain sin. David was a king, yet an adulterer; Solomon was a king, yet born from an adulteress, and he was a worshiper of foreign gods; Manasseh was a king, yet he was also a great sinner. O the extraordinary clemency of God! In order to prepare for sinners a broad way leading to Him, He wanted sinners to be recounted in His genealogy.

As for you, forget boasting of your ancestors or your pedigree and do not despise those who commit sins, but with gentleness and kindness, insofar as you are able, call them back to the way of salvation, as you are now about to receive Him, who wished to be the debtor of all, so that He might bring all to salvation.

After Holy Communion

1. "*At the time of the Babylonian exile*" (Mt 1:11).

Consider, that neither the long Jewish captivity nor its hard yoke were contrary to the promise of Messiah and to His Nativity. From this, you shall be able to learn that, in your case, all things shall happen to you which God arranged for the salvation of your soul even if you shall find yourself outside of your religious house and separated from other house members who serve God in community, provided that you do it not out of

your own will, but according to God's plan, for example, out of obedience.

There is another thing that you should consider, namely: there were many Jews who could not be brought, either by threats or by flatteries, to worship the pagan gods in the pagan country, or to depart from their religious ceremonies and laws. Because they adhered firmly to the ancestral laws, they did not lack the divine help in accomplishing it: and thus, three young men were preserved from the flames (cf. Dan 3:19-95), and Daniel was protected from the rage and the teeth of the lions (cf. Dan 6:16-23).

You too, trust that God's care, providence, and protection will accompany you whenever on account of community business or for the salvation of your neighbor you shall go to Babylon outside of the monastery walls, provided that you are mindful of the divine and universal laws; and that you do not adore the statue set up by Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Dan 3:1-7) and abstain from forbidden meats.

2. *"And after the transmigration of Babylon"* (Mt 1:12).

Consider this: as soon as the Jews were liberated from Babylonian captivity and arrived in Judea, the first matter which they set about to accomplish was to arouse the praise and worship of God in the whole [f.134r] nation, and to rebuild, or rather to raise up from its foundations, the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem: "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and Levites, and every one whose spirit God had raised up, to go up to build the temple of the Lord, which was in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:5).

You should do the same whenever you come back from Babylon, which signifies the world. Namely, you should renew your spirit and at least repair the damages if not the deep wounds of your soul, so violently shaken by the waves of worldly storms. From this you also need to learn, having considered everything of lesser importance, that you should never cease in promoting the divine honor even though you may be hindered by somebody; just as the impiety of the pagans living on the other side of the river by no means thwarted the work of the Jews, who

bravely resisted those pagans and continued the construction of the temple.

3. "*Of whom was born Jesus*" (Mt 1:16).

Consider the dignity of the Mother, which she received from the eminence of the Son. Due to the very fact that she became the Mother of the Son of God, the Lord of the angels and the King of the universe, she became not only the Bride of God, but at the same time the Mistress of the angels and the Queen of all creation. Therefore, all the Virgin's honors, favors, prerogatives, privileges, and exemptions depend solely on her Maternity just as your whole salvation and the means of salvation depend solely on the redemption accomplished by her Son, whom you have received today.

Thus, rejoice with the Virgin Mother about such a remarkable Maternity. Moreover, on your part, rejoice in such a fortunate, salutary, and excellent redemption. Give thanks to the Mother, that she provided her most pure blood for creating and shaping the body of your Savior. Moreover, ceaselessly give thanks to the Son who poured out for you, from the same Most Sacred Body, abundant streams of the Most Holy Blood.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Before Holy Communion

1. "*Now is the judgment of the world*" (Jn 12:31).

Consider that the judgment on the world was indeed established by Christ the Lord, when He came to destroy its works and to hand down to men a new rule of life, according to the spirit and the flesh. But He still postpones His judgment on you so that you would judge and punish yourself, leaving Him nothing to punish at the end of your life. Therefore, judge yourself now; apply yourself now to the examination of your conscience that you may appear justified in the sight of the highest Judge. For "the mind of the just" (says Gregory the Great) "always anxiously

directs its thoughts to the future judgment: for they do all with fear, while they consider cautiously before how great a Judge they will stand.”²⁰² [f.134v]

2. “*Now shall the prince of this world be cast out*” (Jn 12:31).

Now, realize that through Holy Communion whatever hold the flesh, or the demon, or the world had over you will be cast off; yet only if you prepare yourself worthily to receive it. For he who does not apply any care in preparing himself does not merit receiving any grace in Holy Communion. Therefore, for want of proper preparation, so many shall perish among those unworthily approaching Christ’s table!

Let Judas alone be an example for you: the reception of the Lord’s Body at the Last Supper did no good to him, since he was already resolved to hand over to the Jews the One he received.

The most beneficial remedy of the Divine Body will not heal your soul, if you are afflicted with the illnesses of envy, rancor, or hatred. Therefore, do you want the prince of the world to be cast out from your heart? Cast out first whatever animosity you nourish deep in your soul.

3. “*When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all to [M]yself*” (Jn 12:32).

Consider how effective afflictions and persecutions are for the edification of your neighbor! Indeed, seeing somebody in a sorry plight, people not only sympathize with him, but also wish that they could learn from similar afflictions, perceiving a great hope of salvation to be stored in them.

Wherefore Christ the Lord, when He willed to don the glory of Divinity on Mount Tabor, took only three disciples as witnesses of His Transfiguration (cf. Mt 17:1-2) because He realized that it would result in rather small advantages for people’s salvation. But indeed, when He was to suffer, then He was lifted up from the earth, placed on a high tree, crucified on a lofty mountain in the metropolitan city of Judea, and tormented in a place much

²⁰² Gregorius Magnus, *Moralium Libri: Expositio Librium B. Job — Liber VIII* (*Job VII, 8*), in: *PL*, vol. 75, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1862, p. 820 (n. 256).

frequented by people, because His Passion was truly like a strong chain, with which He was to draw to Himself all of the world. Rightly, therefore, He says: “When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all to [M]yself.”

As for you, desire that today He draw your heart and unite it to Himself.

After Holy Communion

1. *“I shall draw all to [M]yself”* (Jn 12:32).

Consider that Christ’s humanity truly acquired omnipotence and obtained power over all creation after He was lifted up on the Cross and put to death by unheard of torments. Similarly, the Most Blessed Virgin was named the Queen of Heaven after the Resurrection of her Son. Nevertheless, she was not adorned with this title by the heavenly messenger when he promised her a pure maternity, revealing only the fullness of grace. Undoubtedly, it seems that she obtained the scepter of the heavenly Kingdom through the pains endured [f.135r] during the Passion of Christ the Lord.

Hence, learn that: the graver are the crosses that you endure on earth, the greater shall be the rewards that await you in Heaven. Indeed, we are led to the heavenly Kingdom through afflictions.

2. *“Walk while you have the light”* (Jn 12:35).

Consider specifically that you are supposed to cooperate with divine graces, not suffocate them; as Paul reproved Timothy: “I admonish you, that you stir up the grace of God which is in you, by the imposition of my hands” (2 Tim 1:6).

For this reason, the more talents you feel you received from the Lord, the more profit you are bound to make. This means not letting the grace of God wither away, but putting to use the talents granted.

Think about another thing: while the light of divine grace serves us, we should be walking by the way of virtue with a great stride. At that time, also, we are to do penance, while we enjoy the light and abound in strength, for a late penance is seldom serious, and

one voluntary act of penance can be worth a thousand punishments in the other life.

Walk, therefore; walk while you have the light!

3. *“That the darkness does not overtake you”* (Jn 12:35).

Consider that you alone are to blame whenever the light of your soul is snatched away and darkness sets in. For as soon as you return from the sacred table you busy yourself with so many worthless matters and having barely withdrawn one foot from the Sun you already glide headlong into the abyss of night because you do not take any care either to keep in mind the Divine Presence or to increase your perfection. Therefore Jesus, the Sun of Justice, rightly cautions you today that you should walk carefully in order not to fall into darkness.

You should make an effort, therefore, not to be distracted willingly or overwhelmed by the clouds of useless worries. The lost light returns slowly, and what you have first received gratuitously, if lost, can be barely regained afterwards through many prayers.

Come now, my soul, gaze attentively at the Sun, lest the darkness engulf you.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“[Jesus] saw a man sitting in the custom house”* (Mt 9:9) [DRB].

Consider that by using the word “man,” St. Matthew wanted to indicate his insignificance. When the others [f.135v] called him a “tax collector,” he called himself only a man, because he knew well that one who is a man, is a sinner. Indeed, he would not be counted among them, to whom it was said: “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you” (Ps 82:6).

The only reason he was called a tax collector is because he managed a tax office and collected tributes and taxes from the Jews, to which they thought they were not obliged, as the chosen people.

Oh! You would be called by the name of sinner if your evil deeds, which are revealed only to God alone, would now stand open to the whole world! Therefore, ask Jesus that, looking at you with the eyes of His goodness, He cleanse you of your secret sins.

2. “[H]e said to him, ‘Follow [M]e’” (Mt 9:9).

Consider that the evidence of a true conversion is the true imitation of Christ the Lord. Judas Iscariot was not converted, because although he followed Jesus, he was following Him deceitfully; he followed Him with a false disposition, thinking of his moneybags. Saint Matthew, on the contrary, was a true follower of Christ because, getting up, he followed Him. From where did he get up? From sin. To where did he follow Christ? To the virtues.

Behold, a simple rule of following Christ is given to you: get up and follow Him. If you have not gotten up, you will not follow Him, even if it would seem that you are keeping at His heels. If you have the moneybags of your own will, of self-love, and similar things, you do not follow, you do not truly go in the footsteps of Christ, although you wear a religious habit, although you boast that you have taken the vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty. Get up, therefore, and follow Him; because you will by no means follow Him, unless you get up.

3. “*many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus*” (Mt 9:10).

Consider that not a few tax collectors and sinners still come to Jesus, namely when they come to the Sacrament of Penance. But after the same men recline at table with Jesus and participate in the heavenly banquet, they become just, ceasing to be tax collectors and sinners.

Why would you wonder at people’s evil deeds and rebuke them with excessive zeal? Some of today’s sinners will be, perhaps, tomorrow’s saints; right now they are worse than demons, but soon they will be more just than angels. They do not need to take great pains for this: if only they will come to Jesus, they will recline at the table with Jesus, and already they will be cleansed

from sins and adorned with virtues. Magdalene also approached Jesus as a sinner and went back justified.

O happy access²⁰³ to Jesus, through which the recess from sin is acquired! O Holy Sacrament, which turns a sinner into the one who loves; a servant of the world into a servant of God; a son of darkness into a son of light; a slave of the devil into a freedman of Christ! [f.136r]

After Holy Communion

1. *“Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”* (Mt 9:11).

Do not be too surprised that the pride of the Pharisees was thus agitated and raged against the tax collectors. The Pharisees were servants of the devil; therefore, perfectly imitating their master, they persecuted not only the Son of God, but also those sinners who wanted to be converted and obtain God’s mercy. Oh, how grievous is the vice of pride! Truly, the proud envy others even for their salvation; perhaps because they cannot attain it themselves, since they do not want to ask for it humbly.

You, on the contrary, rejoice at the conversion of sinners and labor for it, as did St. Matthew, who after Christ converted Him, invited the tax collectors to the banquet, so that they might likewise be converted by eating together with Christ.

2. *“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick”* (Mt 9:12).

Behold, the heavenly Teacher Himself answers the question of the Pharisees: asserting that, since He is the Doctor of souls, He was sent not to the healthy, that is, to the saints; but to the sick, to the ailing sinners.

Indeed, you have experienced it yourself, since both at another time and today you approached this most clement Doctor not without wounds, and you were completely healed by the well-proven medicine of His Body and Blood.

²⁰³ St. Stanislaus uses the words “*accessus ... recessus*.” Literally: “going to ... going away from.”

O your happiness! You always have with you this Doctor who can cure even the many illnesses of your soul at every moment!

3. *"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners"* (Mt 9:13).

Consider that God cannot be sadder than when He sees those, for whose salvation He gave His life, succumb to perdition by their own accord. Therefore, lest anyone, tossed about in the immense sea of vices and fearful of the divine judgments, fall into despair of his salvation, the Savior of the world wanted to openly confirm that He has come not to call by grace the righteous, but sinners. Since the righteous are certain of salvation, whereas sinners of punishment, He openly declares that He is particularly working and caring for the salvation of sinners, as He desires all to be saved. Therefore, the way to Heaven is not closed to anyone, if only he wants to enter it and abandon someday at last the infernal way of sensual pleasure. Here, sinners can rejoice, because the Son of God, coming to call and to save them, left the throne of glory and came to a prison of degradation.

But you shall have the most miserable future if you wickedly destroy the sheep, which the heavenly Shepherd came to find. [f.136v]

FOR THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFER OF THE BODY OF ST. STANISLAUS, BISHOP AND MARTYR²⁰⁴

Before Holy Communion

1. *"I am the [G]ood [S]hepherd"* (Jn 10:11).

Consider that the Divine Goodness shone forth very much in the creation of the world and in giving it to humankind to inhabit; in providing numerous pastures for the same, namely, so

²⁰⁴ P. Naruszewicz, *BS*, vol. XI, Istituto Giovanni XXIII nella Pontificia Università lateranense, Roma 1968, p. 1365 (s.v. *Stanislao, vesc. di Cracovia, santo, martire*): "St. Stanislaus' body was transferred from the cemetery beside the church of St. Michael (the place of his martyrdom) to the Cathedral church of Wawel in Krakow (1088)." Cf. B.B. Szczesniak, *NCE*, vol. XIII, p. 642 (s.v. *Stanislaus of Cracow, St.*).

many created things; and in ruling and governing all mankind by the Divine Spirit; and in feeding the flock as the Good Shepherd.

How many special proofs of His goodness did He show to you, the lost sheep! First of all, as you were wandering through the devious paths of the world, He brought you into the sheepfold of the religious life through a holy vocation. Then, how gently, sweetly, and safely He guides you in this sheepfold; either through the laws of the Constitutions, or through the commands of the Superiors, or through His inspirations! At last, He provides for you the best pastures (apart from those concerned with the body).

Do you not experience this today also? When He invites you to His table and urges you not to be afraid to approach it, He says, so that you would advance more eagerly: "I am the [G]ood [S]hepherd."

2. "[G]ood [S]hepherd" (Jn 10:11).

Oh, my soul! How can you hesitate or fear to approach your Jesus because of the outrages you committed? For you hear that He clearly acknowledges being the Good Shepherd; and He does not avoid you, for He gave His life for you, the lost sheep.

Run, run to this Good Shepherd, who will heal the pain of your conscience. He will remove all internal diseases, whether of imperfections, or anxieties, or of whatever misfortunes.

If you feel dejected because of your weaknesses, He is so much more concerned about the method and means by which He might speedily cure them. He cares about your healing much more than you could expect or think. Therefore, with shouts and groans already known to Him, hasten swiftly to your Shepherd, because He has waited for you with longing and expectation.

3. "*lays down [H]is life for [H]is sheep*" (Jn 10:11).

Your Savior, the best Shepherd, gave His life and expired for you. He did it for this reason especially; that you, being redeemed, would not refuse to sacrifice your life for Him and for your neighbor. For He expects this from you when He says: "Look and make them according to the pattern, that was shown you on the mountain" (cf. Ex 25:40). Which mountain? On Golgotha. What

was shown? Christ, the Son of God, crucified for you and for all mankind. Look at Him! It is fitting and necessary that you imitate Him, not sparing yourself for the salvation of your neighbor, treating everyone kindly, praying for your enemies, exposing yourself to the divine justice for sinners, taking refuge with God in afflictions, [f.137r] and persevering in good works. This pattern and model was shown to you on the mountain. If you refuse to imitate it, then desist from your intention of consuming Christ. For he who hides himself to avoid working with Christ and for Christ is unworthy to be nourished by Christ.

After Holy Communion

1. “a hireling” (Jn 10:12).

That Great Bishop of the world most clearly and truly depicted the hirelings, saying: “He is called a hireling, who not out of deep love, but for temporal rewards pastures the Lord’s sheep.”²⁰⁵

As for you, be on your guard that you serve the Lord with no other intention than the pure love of Him, so that you do not earn the name of a hireling and do not lose the reward. For what does it mean to be God’s hired servant? It is to hunt after a little glory from good deeds; to boast; to deny oneself untruthfully; to be inconstant in rejecting the world; to hope for honor as a reward for one’s works; not to be completely dispossessed; to look backwards.

A hireling is crafty. He first puts his hand to the plow, and then, either prompted by a hope for better comfort, or deterred by the enormity of work, or allured by the sweetness of leisure, or charmed by the sweetness of his previous vices, he flees, forsakes his religious cross, runs away, and thus loses and does not save his soul; neither does he save the soul of another.

See to it, therefore, that you are steady in whatever work you do, so that you may receive not only the name of a good shepherd

²⁰⁵ Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber I — Homilia XIV* (Joan. X, 11-16), in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1128 (n. 1485). Cf. *GFGH*, p. 108 (Homily 15).

or worker, but also as the reward for your works: God Himself, and everything else with Him.

2. *“Sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and runs away”* (Jn 10:12).

Consider that the wolves are the evil spirits who covet our souls day and night, not only seeking treacherously to catch them, but also to snatch them by force and to devour them. Therefore you, the shepherd of your soul, ought to be most vigilant and having foreseen from afar the cunning tricks of the evil spirit, make yourself ready to resist him strongly, and not to let him inside your heart’s stronghold; but to defeat him outside the walls, as someone warned: “We must be on our guard especially at the beginning of a temptation, for then the enemy is more easily overcome, if he is not allowed in any way to enter the door of our mind.”²⁰⁶

Therefore, do not be a hireling; catch the coming wolf while it is still afar, fight nobly, conquer bravely. Beware, lest you leave the sheep and run away.

3. *“The sheep do not belong to him”* (Jn 10:12).

It is certain that your soul is not your own sheep. For Christ bought it for Himself at the immense price of His Blood. Yet, since it has been given over into your custody, you should care for it all the more, the more you recognize that it does not belong to you. If you had somebody else’s garment, you would use it with great caution, so that it may be returned to its owner clean and spotless. God also will require your soul from you in a pure condition.

Look at the soul He handed over to you today: how charming, beautiful, how perfectly purified by His blood from all stains of imperfections; He will demand such a soul back. And if you stain it, He will treat you as a hireling. If you preserve it pure, He will admit you as a very good shepherd, guardian, and servant, to eternal joys. [f.137v]

²⁰⁶ Cf. IC, Bk. I, Ch. 13, § 5.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. WENCESLAUS

The Meditation Before and After Holy Communion is found in the Common of a Martyr, [see] below (ff.153r-154r; pp. 475-477).

**FOR THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION
(OF THE BASILICA) OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL**

The Meditation is found above, (ff.117r-118r; pp. 371-374), on (the Feast) of his Apparition.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. HEDWIG, WIDOW

The Meditation is above (ff.124r-125r; pp. 390-393), as on the feast of St. Margaret.

**FOR THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFER OF
[THE MORTAL REMAINS] OF ST. ADALBERT**

The Meditation is found in the Common of a Martyr, [see] below (ff.153r-154r; pp. 475-477).

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. LUKE

As in the Common of an Evangelist, [see] below, (ff.152v-153r; pp. 474-475).

**FOR THE FEAST OF STS. SIMON AND
JUDE, APOSTLES**

Before Holy Communion

1. *"This I command you, to love one another"* (Jn 15:17).

Consider that you are obliged to love your neighbor by a double precept of God: in the Old Testament, the eternal Father laid down

the law of loving one's neighbor; while in the New Law, His eternal Son bound you by the precept of the same mutual love.

Would you dare now to slander somebody else's good name; to censure the lifestyle, conduct, and morals of another; to avenge the insults, and to hate your brother? For Christ, the Judge of all, commands something opposite when the unchangeable Word calls forth: "This I command you, to love one another."

2. *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated [M]e before it hated you"* (Jn 15:18).

Consider that by "the world," Christ the Lord means wicked people committed to the world, eager for vainglory, envious and subject to similar vices; those whom His heavenly life displeased; whom His divine actions so moved to anger that, after abuses, insults and so many hostile actions, finally they put Him to death.

Wherefore, He admonishes you rightly, having Himself previously endured such enemies, that you should know as a true imitator of Christ, that the world and its followers will be hostile to you. And indeed, you should always be ready to overcome them, or at least, following the example of Christ, to endure them patiently.

3. *"I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you"* (Jn 15:19).

This is the reason, the fault, and the evil due to which the servants of the world persecute with hatred the servants of God! It is because the latter do not busy themselves with worldly things, because they avoid the former's company, and because they would like to live piously in Christ. For that reason, they suffer persecution. But the greatest consolation for the servants of God is this: "If they persecuted [M]e, they will persecute you" (Jn 15:20). What causes dread to their persecutors is this: that at some time God will finally punish the wrongs done to Himself and to His servants.

However, in the present Holy Communion pray to the Lord for those who persecute you. You would never vindicate them better than if you reconciled them to God. You will never prepare yourself better for enduring [f.138r] persecutions, than when,

following the example of Jesus, you would pray to the eternal Father: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Lk 23:34). And truly it is fitting that you forgive your debtors, if you want God to forgive you your debts.

After Holy Communion

1. *"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin"* (Jn 15:22).

Consider that the Jews' conscience is burdened more than others because they saw and heard Jesus, and yet did not believe in Him.

Thus, you sin more gravely if, frequently receiving Christ the Lord in your heart, you do not become more perfect and conversing with Him so frequently, does not make you better, more obedient, more humble, and more zealous. O you, the miserable one! What a great account shall you give for so many Holy Communions if you do not now become better?

2. *"but now they have no excuse for their sin"* (Jn 15:22).

Consider that ignorance might be helpful for many; but for you who are more enlightened, more cognizant of divine laws, what excuse shall be of able use when you will be judged for your faults? Therefore, see to it that you do not heedlessly violate the commandments of God, the precepts of the Church, and your religious Constitutions; since you will not be able to say at the judgment: I did these things out of ignorance.

But realize that most of all today you should guard against imperfections, because you have received and keep in your heart Jesus, perfection itself.

3. *"if they kept [M]y word, they will keep yours also"* (Jn 15:20).

Regard it as the most certain proof that someone does not neglect the will of God when he does not despise the admonitions of the servants of God, especially of Superiors.

On the contrary, not at all fit for fulfilling the divine commands is the one who rejects fraternal admonitions and not only turns a deaf ear to them, but moreover grumbles against and derides the one who admonishes him.

In vain, therefore, will you call out and pray: “Speak, Lord, for your servant hears” (1 Sam 3:9), when you refuse to welcome the admonitions of others. In vain you will beseech: “Your will be done with me” (cf. Mt 6:10; 26:42; Lk 22:42), when you are so oversensitive that you are not able to hear with good grace, or at least patiently, one word said by someone to bring about your improvement.

But what shall result from this attitude, only time will tell. [f.138v]

FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”* (Mt 5:3).

Consider that the Heavenly Wisdom put this beatitude first, for no other reason than to show that as compared to the others it pleases Him best. For He wanted, as St. Basil says: “to be born to a poor Mother in a poor stable, and being wrapped in cheap swaddling clothes, to be laid in a manger.”²⁰⁷

As to clarify that poverty does not consist in possessing nothing, Jesus said that blessed are “the poor in spirit.” He indicated thus that someone is also poor and enjoys the beatitude of poverty who, possessing many things, is not emotionally attached to them, regards them as transitory and entrusted to him for distribution, and generously gives them out to the needy.

You, however, follow in the footsteps of the apostles who, traversing various countries of the world, were told to abstain from using even a walking staff and a traveling bag. In practic-

²⁰⁷ Cf. Lk 2:7. This quote was not found in the general index for the works of St. Basil the Great under the word “poverty” (*paupertas*), nor was it indicated in his comments on Lk 2:7 or Mt 5:3. However, a similar idea was expressed in his homily on humility: Cf. Basilus Magnus, *Homiliæ et sermones: Homilia XX — De Humilitate*, in: *PG*, vol. 31, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 535 (n. 161): “*imitantes Dominum, qui de coelo in extremam humilitatem descendit ... Infans cum esset, statim in spelunca, et ne in lecto quidem, sed in praesepe jacuit.*”

ing the utmost poverty, do not fear the shortage of things, since according to that well-known author: “A monk stripped-bare is the lord of the whole world.”²⁰⁸

2. *“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”* (Mt 5:4).

Consider, that Christ taught meekness both by words and example. He taught it verbally, by saying: “Learn from [M]e, for I am meek” (Mt 11:29) [DRB]. He taught it by example when He, as a Lamb, was led to the slaughter and did not open His mouth before His shearers (cf. Is 53:7).

Therefore, meekness is expected of you in suffering insults and false accusations, so that you endure them in silence, rather than magnify them by anger. It is also expected when giving answers and commands and when admonishing and rebuking; unless the necessity indicates perhaps that zeal is to be used in place of meekness. Although the heavenly Master was converting sinners and tax collectors with kindness, He sometimes also harshly reproached, especially the Pharisees. For what cannot be broken with a supple wooden tool must be broken with a hard hammer.

3. *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”* (Mt 5:5).

Consider that mourning is not a bad thing. After all, we live in a valley of tears; hence, sometimes we are bound to break down in tears, caused either by piety or distress. In fact, you should desire to grieve. For if mourning comes first, happiness will follow; if there is an affliction, a consolation will not be lacking.

Now, if the sweetest delight of heavenly consolation cannot be gained in any other manner except by mourning, why would you consider yourself unhappy while mourning, when [f.139r]

²⁰⁸ In the manuscript's margin, St. Stanislaus writes “Cassian,” but according to available resources this quote comes from a book entitled *Scala Paradisi*, by John Climacus. Cf. Joannes Climacus, *Scala Paradisi: Gradus XVI — De Avaritia*, in: *Doctoris Ecstatici D. Dionysii Cartusiani: Opera omnia*, Ex Editione Coloniensi ed., Typis Cartusiae S. M. de Pratis, Tornaci 1905, p. 570. Cf. *IC crit. ed.*, p. 313 (footnote 89).

you are then indeed blessed? It is painful to mourn, but it is very sweet to be consoled, and to receive this consolation neither from a human being nor from the world, but from Heaven, from God. At the end of joy comes mourning, but at the end of mourning comes joy.

After Holy Communion

1. *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness"* (Mt 5:6).

What does it mean to hunger and thirst for righteousness? Certainly [it means] nothing else but striving wholeheartedly and with all of one's desire and will for the perfection of life. If servants upon receiving new clothing from their lords or the soldiers upon obtaining increased extraordinary wages from the commander pledge themselves to serve better, thus you, stripped of the old garb of wicked habits and adorned at Holy Communion with the fresh attire of virtues and blameless attitudes, should necessarily serve God more fervently than before and continue being more skillful, more diligent, and more laborious in the ranks of the Lord of hosts.

Why do you seek rest? Idleness is the most poisonous plague of your way of life. In Christ's wrestling school, they who exert themselves rest while they sweat. Follow your Commander who, exercising Himself in hardships since His youth, ended the course of His life amid the greatest hardship of the work of salvation.

2. *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"* (Mt 5:7).

Consider that this world would have been annihilated long ago if clement mercy had not mitigated the austere severity of the divine justice. For when God sees that people have mercy on others, He alters severe decrees and disregards the sins of those who show mercy to their neighbors. He has mercy on those who are merciful, but indeed on account of the merciful, He also has mercy on others. And thus human mercy gains Divine Mercy for men, the severity of justice becomes milder, and punishment is transformed into pardon.

As for you, if you do not have anyone to show mercy to, have mercy on your own soul, so that you do not lose that which Love redeemed. But you lose it unless you shall have lost it because the unchangeable statement of the Truth is: "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for [M]y sake will find it." (Mt 10:39).

3. "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*" (Mt 5:8).

This gradation used by Christ the Lord, the heavenly Teacher, is worthy of the greatest consideration. After poverty, meekness, mourning and mercy, He comes at last to purity of heart. To the poor He promised the Kingdom of Heaven; to the meek, the possession of land; to those who mourn, eternal consolation; to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, satiation; to the merciful, mercy. But what does He promise to the pure in heart? For them He destined the beatific vision.

Since you see, therefore, that the greater rewards are set up for purity, be more diligently watchful over the custody of your heart, because to stain the heart [f.139v] means to be deprived of the vision of God; to preserve it pure means to be certain of the beatific vision.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. MARTIN, BISHOP OF TOURS

Before Holy Communion

1. "*No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar*" (Lk 11:33).

Consider, that you have no right to reproach those who place themselves in public sight as if out of boastfulness; instead, you should excuse them, for they do not want to hide and bury the talents received from the Lord, but want to share them with their neighbors, so that their talents bring profit to the Lord.

Indeed, it is useful for certain persons to be hidden; yet God puts some persons before the eyes of all, so that their works may be seen by all and that the Heavenly Father be glorified, in Whom, by Whom, and for Whom all things work (cf. Prov 16:4; Heb 2:10).

2. *“that those who enter may see the light”* (Lk 11:33).

Ponder what a great evil blindness is. For what a great affliction it is to be in the light and not to perceive the light! To be in the world, and not to see the world! To talk with the people, and (if one may explain it in a human way) not to see them! But such blindness is sometimes to be desired, inasmuch as it is salutary.

You should rather pray to God, that He may not punish you by the kind of blindness, by which, when approaching the uncreated Sun, you do not recognize Him; when receiving the God-Man, you do not perceive Him; when receiving the Bread of Life into your heart, you do not feel His relish, and sweetness, and taste. For such a blindness of the soul surpasses all of the gravity and unhappiness of a bodily blindness.

3. *“No one lights a lamp”* (cf. Lk 11:33).

Consider how very angry, and deservedly so, a bridegroom celebrating his wedding feast would have to be with his servants, if none of them were present and ready with torches. Or, how rightly that bride, who, waiting in darkness for the bridegroom to come to her, would say: “No one lights a lamp.”

Consider also whether you, miserable one, cannot say to your senses at the time when the heavenly Bridegroom is about to descend to you: “No one lights a lamp?” Your eyesight is blinded, the touch defiled, the sense of hearing overwhelmed with many trifles and vanities, the taste dulled by the bitterness of the world, the sense of smell is overcome and subdued by various allurements. Alas, miserable one! No one lights a lamp for the Lord coming to His bride, my soul, no one. At least you, my most eager will, hasten to meet Him with the light and preceding Him with the torch of good desires, bring Him into [f.140r] the dwelling inside of your heart, that He may enter into it, and He Himself will illuminate it better.

After Holy Communion

1. *“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar”* (Lk 11:33).

Your lamp is Christ, who began today to shine in the house of your heart. See to it, therefore, that you do not put this lamp in

a cellar; that is, that you do not obscure and cover it by the darkness of imperfections and vain thoughts, by distracted senses, by clamoring occupations, by disputes, talkativeness, and other defects or transgressions; and thus, deprived of all light, you would deviate from the true way of perfection and you would fall into the dark abyss of so many errors.

Indeed, that would happen to you which usually happens to those who, walking by night, do not know where to turn, when their light goes out accidentally.

2. *"If your eye is simple, your whole body will be filled with light"* (cf. Lk 11:34).

Consider, that here the eye signifies a right intention, according to which we should direct all our actions and interpret those of the others. And indeed, this intention is of such great importance that all our perfection, merit, and reward depend upon it entirely.

See, therefore, of how great a fruit of merit you deprive yourself when you do not establish in advance a right intention for your actions. In truth, a right intention is an intention focused not one's own interest but on that of another, and on the glory and pleasure of God Himself.

This is exactly what St. Martin teaches by his example. Asked by his disciples to beseech God for the prolongation of his life, he thus prayed: "Lord, if I am still necessary for your people, I do not refuse the labor."²⁰⁹

3. *"Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness"* (Lk 11:35).

Consider these words as being said to you, in whose heart the uncreated Sun is contained: that Light, "that enlightens every man coming into the world" (cf. Jn 1:9). This is the Light, which was sent from Heaven to enlighten the Gentiles (cf. Lk 2:32). "Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness" and that the Egyptian darkness, such as in times past that punished the evil deeds of the Pharaoh, and especially his incredulity (cf. Ex

²⁰⁹ This phrase is contained in a letter by Sulpicius Severus and it is somewhat differently translated in *LHE*, vol. IV, p. 1553 (Nov. 11 — Martin of Tours, Bishop: Office of Readings) as: "Lord, if your people still need me, I am ready for the task."

10:21-23), does not overwhelm you after the great illumination, which you have obtained today in Holy Communion from the Sun of Justice. If you immerse yourself in immense imperfections; if you do not listen to Moses, that is, to internal inspiration, the heavenly light will abandon you, and you will be surrounded by darkness. [f.140v]

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. ELIZABETH, WIDOW, PATRONESS OF POLAND

See above, (ff.124r-125r; pp. 390-393), on the Feast of St. Margaret.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Before Holy Communion

1. "*The book of the genealogy*" (Mt 1:1).

My soul, you've been clinging so far to books containing various kinds of knowledge, but today look into a new book, a fresh book, unknown to you so far: the most Holy Mother of God. I'll tell you that this book is written, illustrated, and published by God Himself. Could you find elsewhere what you could not get from Mary? Could anyone else give to you what Mary can?

This is a book of virtues, of every perfection. It has as many chapters as the number of virtues it discusses. Thus, immerse yourself completely in the reading of this book and gather from it the flowers necessary to your state of life.

2. "*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ*" (Mt 1:1).

You should also consider that Christ the Lord wanted to mention in His genealogy some sinful people, women and men, perhaps for the reason that none of those who are truly doing penance would fear to approach Him.

As for you, therefore, approach Him today with confidence, hoping that the forgiveness of your imperfections will be granted

to you. If you despair of being successful in your cause, assume as your Patroness the Refuge of sinners. But if you are still not secure, summon from the family of Christ the saints, women and men, who are former sinners: they will sponsor your cause. Neither ignorant of evils, nor lacking the experience of faults, they will hasten to help the miserable; they will strive to make the fallen rise.

The most holy from among them, David, promises help saying: "Then I will teach transgressors [Y]our ways, and sinners will return to [Y]ou." (Ps 51:13).

3. "*the son of David*" (Mt 1:1).

Consider, that David is mentioned here before Abraham, the sinner before the righteous. This is so that you may know that sinners, if they do a worthy penance, are not only restored to grace, but afterwards they are not held in the lowest honor but rather are seated on high thrones in Heaven. For as the will of the proud angels, obstinate in wickedness, deserved and obliged that they be plunged into the deepest hell, thus on the contrary, the humble confession of contrite sinners carries them up to the lofty thrones of heavenly glory.

Realize [f.141r] that this happens so that you, being burdened with evil deeds, do not despise the remedy of penance because you consider God as an excessively severe Judge. The truth is that He mercifully calls everyone to Himself and does not will to be the author of anyone's condemnation, but desires that everyone be saved. He helps those who strive for perfection and is very merciful to those who repent.

After Holy Communion

1. "*Abraham was the father of Isaac*" (Mt 1:2).

Consider, that both Abraham and Isaac were very devoted to the virtue of obedience. The first, being called by God, departed from his native land, leaving behind his friends, relatives, and close acquaintances (cf. Gen 12:1-5). The other, being led out by his father to Mount Moriah, offered himself as a victim to be slain in sacrifice, in order to be obedient both to God and to his

father (cf. Gen 22:1-19). Each of them was an image of the all-good Savior.

Abraham, obeying the divine will, went out of Haran in order to go to the land of Canaan; Jesus, following the same will of the eternal Father, descended from Heaven to this sublunary sphere,²¹⁰ in order to assume a human body from the Virgin. Already totally resigned, Isaac put his head under his father's sword on the summit of Moriah; Jesus with a better effect gave Himself over entirely to be tormented and crucified on Mount Golgotha for the salvation of humankind.

As for you, embracing the cross and renouncing your will, you will imitate at the same time, Abraham with Isaac, and also Jesus.

2. "*Isaac the father of Jacob*" (Mt 1:2).

Consider that in the same way that Jacob, son of Isaac, was fleeing before Esau, his brother (cf. Gen 27:41-43), so you should convince yourself that you must flee before the tempter, whom you would not be able to vanquish. Just as Jacob's mother, Rebecca, helped him greatly in receiving his father's blessing (cf. Gen 27:1-29), so you should beseech and seek God's blessing through nobody else, but the Rebecca of the New Testament, who is the Mother of God, the most Holy Virgin. Follow the example of that man, who gave us somewhere this prayer: "Through you, (O Mary!), may we have access to your Son, O blessed you that have found Life, Mother of salvation! That through you He may receive us, [W]ho through you was given to us."²¹¹ [f.141v]

3. "*Of whom Jesus was born*" (Mt 1:16).

Rejoice with the Most Blessed Virgin about this privilege; that is, of becoming the Mother of God, the Savior, with the flower of her virginity completely unspoiled.

In a perfect disposition of submission and trust commit to her all your needs, not doubting that they will turn out in the best way. Learn also to take refuge in her in case of doubts, anxieties, and

²¹⁰ The notion that the universe is composed of harmonized spheres (the earth being under the moon) was taken from Aristotle. Cf. G. Reale, *Historia filozofii starożytnej*, Trans. E.I. Zieliński, vol. II, RW KUL, Lublin 1996, pp. 449-451.

²¹¹ The author of this prayer is unknown.

difficulties, and to give continuous thanks to the Lord, because He chose and made her His own Mother and our advocate.

But desire this, as a most important thing: that you may avail yourself to the full of her power and most effective aid in that difficult, dangerous, and last struggle, in which you are going to depart from this life.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. CATHERINE, VIRGIN AND MARTYR

Before Holy Communion

1. *"Five of them were foolish"* (Mt 25:2).

Consider that one who seeks vainglory from his works is foolish. For while we strive after the glitter of our own glory, we neglect the oil of divine love, for the sake of which we should do everything. Vainglory's fumes greatly darken the beauty of holy deeds.

If you say that you serve God, then you should seek God's glory in everything, not your own. If you seek your own, you insult God and harm your salvation. Let the foolish virgins be an example to you, as St. Gregory says: "while on account of their virginity they seek glory from the outside, they forgot to have oil in their vessels;"²¹² and with their oil failing, they did not merit to enter the marriage feast with the bridegroom.

Learn, therefore, that it is better to blush with shame on account of imperfections, than to be lifted up with vain boasting on account of virtues. The feeling of shame coming from the knowledge of sins is salutary; the glory rising from the boasting of virtues is detrimental.

2. *"and five were wise"* (Mt 25:2).

Consider, that the first group of virgins earned the name and the fate of the foolish ones, because they wanted to be praised for their virtues; on the contrary, those in the second group were

²¹² Cf. Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber I — Homilia XII (Matth. XXV, 1-13)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1118 (n. 1476).

called wise and were admitted to the marriage feast of the Lamb (cf. Rev 19:9) because they mortified their desire for all kinds of praise and loved to be disdained.

Hence, learn what value worldly esteem and worldly contempt have with God. [f.142r] Ordinarily, God has in contempt those whom the world esteems highly; and on the contrary, God values greatly those whom the world holds in little regard. God hates those whom the world loves, and despises those whom the world admires.

Think, therefore, what you would rather want to achieve: whether to be slighted by the world and esteemed by God, or to be slighted by God and esteemed by the world? It is more profitable to displease the world, than God: the creation, than the Creator.

After Holy Communion

1. *“went in with him to the wedding”* (Mt 25:10).

Consider that the admittance to celebrate the wedding solemnly with the immortal Lamb makes the wise virgins very happy. You also may consider yourself a participant of such happiness. For what better wedding would you want to have besides Most Holy Communion? There you have the divine food, the heavenly drink, a full measure of delights, an abundance of graces and goods. This is why you may congratulate yourself and applaud, since more than a few unwise souls were unable to obtain this benefit which you obtained today, because of negligence or because of rejection.

Beware, lest after this mystical wedding you become foolish, remembering that the salt that lost its savor is good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden upon (cf. Mt 5:13). Therefore, you were admitted to God’s banquet for the sake of your prudence. Be on your guard, lest you lose it after the banquet.

2. *“and the door was shut”* (Mt 25:10).

When you hear the words of the Savior about the shutting of the wedding banquet-room doors, you ought to think also about the enclosure of your heart. When the sons of this world celebrate a wedding feast, they make sure that the doors of the house

are bolted so that someone uninvited would not enter, or that something would not be utterly ruined in the confusion.

Therefore, you should also close the access to your heart so that you may quietly celebrate your spiritual wedding with Jesus, the Bridegroom of your soul; and that some impudent guest from hell would not let himself in upon finding the heart open; or at least that something would not be lost to you from among the wedding gifts collected today, having not guarded your senses. Therefore, be cautious with respect to external matters, that you may not sustain damage in internal matters. [f.142v]

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. ANDREW, APOSTLE

Before Holy Communion

1. “[H]e saw two brothers” (Mt 4:18).

Consider how fortunate is the soul upon which God fixes His gaze; and not in vain is David’s plea: “Do not hide [Y]our face from me” (Ps 102:2), “Turn to me and be gracious to me” (Ps 119:132). Indeed, imagine that unfathomable abyss, surrounded on all sides by darkness, from which all things were formed. You will say then that such is the soul lacking the light of the divine gaze. But indeed, when that uncreated Sun would turn the light of His grace upon someone, soon, having dispersed the darkness, it gives form to the formless matter and instills it with two principles: faith and love, from which all virtues spring.

Let today’s Apostle be an example: as soon as the Incarnate God looked at him attentively, he immediately followed Him, having left everything (cf. Mt 4:20). He believed and, at the same time, fell in love.

Undoubtedly, if you compare your present state with the past one, you will attribute to the divine gaze the fact that you were carried from Babylon to Jerusalem, from the abyss of confusion that is, from the world to the beloved tabernacles of God.

2. “for they were fisherman” (Mt 4:18).

Turn your attention to the divine providence, wisdom, and

plan. For the difficult work of subordinating the world to Himself, the Lord does not choose princes, does not call rulers, does not send invincible commanders, but fishermen.

1) He did it so that the called ones would realize that they were raised to the highest dignity from such a low state; so that by recognizing the benefit of such a great vocation, they would love the gracious Lord ever more, and by fulfilling His will they would more steadfastly overcome all dangers.

2) He did it so that His power would shine more, when He would subjugate through these ordinary and simple men so many kings, rulers, and philosophers, indeed the whole world.

3) Finally, He did it in order to show us that:

- We should not despise people of a lower state and take them away from heroic works, which they take upon themselves by the grace of God; and that we should not spurn them if they would admonish us in some matters; and that we should not dismiss them empty handed if they would request something;
- He does not favor anybody: He truly imparts His grace to whomever He pleases; raises whomever He chooses; and chooses whomever He wishes.

As for you, learn to esteem not the origin of people, but their virtues; to do and follow not the words of God's heralds, but the deed of a great man. Then, being aware of your worthlessness and wickedness, give thanks to God, that He has called you along with other better people to the religious state (which is like the apostolic state), and that He is going to soon invite you to His table; you, whom not long ago He was justly obliged to sentence to infernal torments. [f.143r]

After Holy Communion

1. *"Immediately they left their nets and followed [H]im"* (Mt 4:20).

Think attentively about the haste and self-renunciation with which the disciples, Peter and Andrew, the brotherly souls, obeyed the voice of the Lord and followed Him. They immedi-

ately obeyed His call; and having left everything, whatever they possessed in this world, not only nets, and disregarding their own will above all, they followed in His footsteps.

They could have responded to the one calling them: "You want to make us fishers of men, and yet happy is he who holds the present; we do not want to forsake what is certain for what is uncertain. We are satisfied with catching fish; we do not desire to catch men." None of those objections were made by the holy fishermen; instead, "immediately leaving their nets, they followed [H]im."

As for you, how long will you refuse to forsake your passions and to follow in Christ's footsteps? Will you ignore with deaf ears the call of Christ, speaking in your heart? Hear what the Word says to you: forsake yourself, and you will find me; forsake concupiscence, and you will find rest; forsake everything, and you will have everything; empty yourself, and you will be filled.

2. "*Hail, the cross! ... accept the disciple of the one who hanged on you, my Master Christ.*"²¹³

The holy Apostle uttered these words. He flung these darts and arrows of ardent love up to Heaven, as he was to be fastened to the cross.²¹⁴ He went to hang on the cross with as great a joy as others may hasten to a high royal rank; indeed, he accepted the ignominious death with eagerness greater than that of others accepting worldly honors.

Evidently, by his example he wanted to teach you that you should gladly anticipate each approaching cross, that you should accept it with joy, and that you should carry it with thanksgiving. Since, as the African Doctor proclaims: "There is nothing more blessed than the tongue, which in adversities gives thanks to God."²¹⁵

²¹³ It is the *Benedictus* antiphon "*Ad Laudes matutinas*" for the feast of St. Andrew, Apostle (Nov. 30). Cf. *LH*, vol. IV, p. 1293.

²¹⁴ Cf. *BLS* (s.v. *November 30 — St. Andrew, Apostle*).

²¹⁵ Undoubtedly, "African Doctor" denotes St. Augustine. However, this saying does not come from St. Augustine, but rather from St. John Chrysostom. Cf. Joannes Chrysostomus, *In Epistolam ad Colossenses: Homilia VIII* (Col. III, 5-15), in: *PG*, vol. 62, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1862, p. 357.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS (OF BARI), BISHOP

Before Holy Communion

1. *“and be like men”* (Lk 12:36).

Consider when it is fitting for us to be like men, and when it is detrimental.

First of all, we certainly become like men when impelled by our nature and passions we fall on various rocks of imperfections and even sins, such as: disobedience, grumbling, display of impatience, refusal to do mortifications, neglect for heavenly matters and pursuit of the earthly things, such as wealth, honors, fame and the like; such as: sensual delights, vain pleasures, excessive relaxation, and assisting lay people in transgressions.

In the second instance, we become similar to men when, exercising the rules of discretion [f.143v] we excuse somebody else's defects, admitting that we would commit worse things if we were not helped by God; when we easily endure wrongs done to us, realizing that we wronged God more often; when we empathize with other people's faults, remembering that to fall is human; when we pray for sinners, in keeping with this apostolic maxim: “Bear one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2).

As for you, find out in which way you are like other men. If it is in the first manner, get rid of it as soon as possible and put on the man shaped in the second way: a true Christian, a true pious Religious.

2. *“Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes”* (Lk 12:37).

Consider that the happiness of God's servant consists in fasting, vigils, and prayers, if they all aim at the fulfillment of the will of God. Indeed, there is no happier soul than the one that watches every day at the door of the heart, waiting for the manifestation of the Lord's will, whether through heavenly inspirations or other signs, in order to fulfill it immediately.

For example, you accept an affliction with joy if God wants you to suffer a little; you take on the work with delight if God

wants you to work; you gladly embrace a sickness if God wants you to be sick; you eagerly solicit contempt if God wants you to be slighted; you treasure mortifications if God wants you to be mortified. Finally, you do whatever God commands; you reject whatever God forbids.

Oh, happy indeed is such a soul. Blessed is God's servant who thus watches, and he is wholly fearless of his destiny; while on the contrary, it seems to be a certain sign of eternal condemnation if one neglects to fulfill the divine will. We are taught this by the example of Saul, to whom the prophet Samuel said: "Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, [H]e also rejected you from being king." (1 Sam 15:23). Therefore, you will be happy if the Lord finds you always watching, and especially today.

After Holy Communion

1. *"he will put on his apron and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them"* (Lk 12:37).

Behold, the reward earned by the soul of the servant, who watches for the commands of the Lord, namely: the Lord Himself provides him with repose and interior food. Look at it in the following way: persons obedient to God's inspirations, which for the most part are given through the direction of others, acquire the greatest peace of heart. The pious follower of Christ provides this manner of acquiring peace when he says, speaking on behalf of Christ: "If you will hear me and follow my voice, you shall be able to enjoy great peace."²¹⁶ He advises precisely the same elsewhere: "Strive to do the will of another rather than your own."²¹⁷

"Desire always, and pray that the will of God be perfectly fulfilled in you. Behold such a person enters into the highest degrees of peace and quiet,"²¹⁸ when the Lord makes such a servant sit down at His table. Indeed, He waits on him when, as to the obedient one, He gives to him in abundance many [f.144r]

²¹⁶ Cf. *IC*, Bk. III, Ch. 25, § 1.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Bk. III, Ch. 23, § 3.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

inspirations; and often He visits, instructs, illuminates, consoles, strengthens and encourages him, doing so as if in passing.

O most gracious Lord! "I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commands from me!" (Ps 119:19).

2. "*be ready*" (Lk 12:40).

Consider that Christ the Lord exhorts you to be ready at any moment to obey Him by showing obedience to your Superiors. At the same time, He also means those who, when given a task, grumble, find excuses, and procrastinate. They believe to have adequately satisfied the vow of obedience, because on one occasion they did show true obedience; and indeed, they view themselves as saints if perhaps they gave to others one example of genuine obedience.

Whereas the Lord declared blessed those, whom He found watching upon His coming not only on the first watch (that is, in the period of religious formation), but also on the second and the third (cf. Lk 12:38), that is, throughout their whole life.

Be ready, therefore, to obey at any moment. Now, you truly hold in your heart the Teacher of obedience, Who was also most readily obedient to His torturers and executioners.

FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Before Holy Communion

1. "*I grew tall like a cedar in Lebanon*" (Sir 24:17).

Consider that the Most Blessed Virgin is compared to a cedar not without a good reason. Just as the cedar is the most splendid among the trees, so the Most Blessed Virgin is among all beings. Moreover, you know the value which Solomon, the richest and wisest of all people, attributed to the cedar timbers that he chose for the decoration of the interior of that first and most famous temple on earth (cf. 1 Kings 6).

Therefore, why would not the Most Blessed Virgin be called a cedar, since she, likewise, is a temple? Greeting her by this name,

a certain most pious servant said: “Hail (Virgin) Mother! Temple of the Trinity.”²¹⁹

As for you, proceed to this temple today with great haste, certain that you will obtain whatever you ask.

2. “*Like a terebinth I spread out my branches, and my branches are glorious and graceful*” (Sir 24:22).

Who, being oppressed by the burden of sins or worn out by a multitude of worries, would fear to approach today the most gracious Queen of Heaven? Behold, she extends her hands and calls out: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden” (Mt 11:28).

She compares herself to a turpentine tree stretching out its branches that are indeed the branches of honor and grace, so that you may hasten to her with greatest trust, and she will obtain for you every kind grace from God and the honor of eternal blessedness. For what would she not obtain from her Son for mankind, especially on this day; on which by a unique privilege [f.144v] she was exempted from the common lot of all men; on which she was conceived without the original sin; on which she was adorned and crowned with countless gifts of grace and raised entirely above all creation?

3. “*my teaching is sweeter than honey*” (Sir 24:27).

This is what the true Church professes, when addressing the Most Holy Virgin as “clement” and “loving,” it also adds “sweet.”²²⁰

Oh, you are truly sweet, Virgin Mary! Was there anyone, filled with bitterness, who ever had recourse to you and went back without a most sweet consolation? Who approached you filled with worry and was not immediately comforted? Who was tormented by bitter temptations, and did not experience sweetness in your bosom? You console, refresh, help, and lift up the disheartened,

²¹⁹ *Officium Parvum Immaculatae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae correctum*, Lucae 1679, (*Ad Sextam, Hymnus*). It is to be noted that the word *Virgo* (“Virgin”) was omitted in *IC crit. ed.*, but was supplemented here from the original Latin text of this Office.

²²⁰ Here St. Stanislaus is referring to the words of the *Salve Regina*: “O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary” (*LHE*, vol. III, p. 1288 (Night Prayer: Antiphons in Honor of the Blessed Virgin)).

the grieving, the tempted, and the depressed. You are gentle to all, sweet to all.

If only I could express how sweet I comprehend you to be! The entire Christian world experiences and tastes your sweetness and draws from it, but cannot express it. Therefore, O clement and loving and sweet Virgin! Show unto us Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb, reconciled with us today and gracious in the hour of death.

After Holy Communion

1. *"I came forth from the mouth of the Most High"* (Sir 24:3).

Consider, that the Blessed Virgin came forth from the mouth of the Most High, that is, she was promised by an oracle of God even to our first parents, when He foretold that the fault, of which the woman was the culprit, would be blotted out by means of another, better woman. He said to the serpent: "I will put enmities between you and the woman ... she shall crush your head" (cf. Gen 3:15). Since that time when the divine command was broken in Paradise, all men became friends of the infernal serpent, and, indeed, enemies of God. The Most Blessed Virgin alone was hostile to the devil from her very beginning since she was conceived without original sin. She, therefore, crushed the head of the serpent both at her beginning and when she gave birth to the Savior of the world.

As for you, be on your guard lest you contract worse stains than the original stain if you make yourself a friend of the serpent; if, I say, you do not refuse conversing with the tempter of your soul and dwelling on sinful thoughts.

2. *"I ordained that an unfailing light should arise in the heavens"* (Sir 24:6).

Consider and think with devotion about how the Most Blessed Virgin contributed not an insignificant help for the rise of the uncreated Sun, so that the people, who had walked in darkness, may see a great light (cf. Is 9:1). Undoubtedly, she prayed to God that He would bestow the promised Messiah as soon as possible, and that He would send a "Light to the revelation of the Gentiles" (cf. Lk 2:32) [DRB].

Oh, if by her prayers she would obtain for you today that the unceasing light may rise in [f.145r] you; that the darkness of injustice may never overwhelm you after the Son of Justice has been given access to your heart; and that your good works may shine before men forever, so that they may glorify your Father, who is in Heaven (cf. Mt 5:16).

3. "*as a cloud I covered all the earth*" (Sir 24:6) [DRB].

O saving cloud, through which the most desired Dew came down on earth. This cloud protects and wonderfully irrigates the entire world, since not only does it turn the darts of divine anger away from it, but also provides many good things for it.

To her Son she shows her maternal breast, and the Son shows His wounds to the Father; thus the Father forgives those who sin; thus He heaps His gifts onto the ungrateful; thus, expecting our improvement on account of the merits of the Son and the entreaties of His Mother, He transforms punishment into forgiveness. Oh, how many of the condemned would burn at the stake if this most propitious mist did not shield them!

As for you, therefore, having received the Son, pray to the Mother, since she protects the whole earth, that she be willing to shield you too under the shadow of her wings and preserve you from the eternal fire.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. THOMAS, APOSTLE

Before Holy Communion

1. "*Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came*" (Jn 20:24).

You can imagine that St. Thomas was somehow unhappy, because He was not together with the other apostles at the time when the Lord appeared. Perhaps, this absence, due to which He did not participate in the gathering of His companions, was the cause of His hesitation, doubting, and incredulity.

Look how many spiritual benefits you lose by withdrawing sometimes, out of negligence or out of imprudence, from the

communal exercises: for example, from prayers, from conferences, or the declaration of faults.²²¹ This gives rise to the dryness of spirit in you, out of which comes the darkness of ignorance, out of which flow the waves of improper thoughts.

Wherefore, correct this failing, so that you may avoid such a misfortune and not nearly fall into despair on account of seeking to recover the grace of devotion and getting rid of your imperfections. Try to be present at the communal exercises, and together with the king-psalmist, pray to the Lord today: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit." (Ps 51:12).

2. "*Unless I see in [H]is hands the print of the nails*" (Jn 20:25).

Consider that Divine Providence willed, as Gregory the Great teaches, that "this [f.145v] disciple;" namely, St. Thomas, "was absent then: that whereas coming later he heard, that hearing he doubted, that doubting he touched, and touching he believed." For, indeed, by this means, every reason for incredulity was overcome for us "[b]ecause when he was led back to belief by touching, our minds were relieved of all doubt and made firm in faith."²²²

Do not be afraid to reveal your doubts to others more experienced than you, and to get advised either by them or by God Himself. This way you not only do good service to your salvation and obtain experience, but through your doubting and exploring the truth, you may at some point bring great benefit to others.

3. "*I will not believe*" (Jn 20:25).

Consider, that this audacious way of the Apostle's saying: "I will not believe," did not please the Lord, and therefore the Lord

²²¹ This proclamation of faults took place in the "chapter of faults" (*capitulum culparum*), which was prescribed both for Marians (*RL*, p. 78 (Ch. IX, § 3)) and for Piarists (*ConstSP*, P. I, Ch. XI, nn. I-II). The faults that were "confessed" in the "chapter of faults" before the entire community, were faults which an individual religious had made in the external forum (i.e., public transgressions against the Rule) and not sins regarding the internal forum.

²²² Cf. Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber II — Homilia XXVI* (*Joan. XX, 19-31*), in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1201 (n. 1556). Cf. *GFGH*, pp. 206-207 (Homily 26). Cf. *LHE*, vol. III, pp. 1516-1517 (July 3 — Thomas, Apostle: Office of Readings). Cf. Jn 20:19-31.

reproached him afterwards, when, having seen, he believed. “You have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” (Jn 20:29).

You, on the other hand, try to eagerly and immediately open your heart to God’s inspirations, as well as to the admonishments and encouragements of your Superiors. Beware not to say the same words, “I will not believe.” Beware not to murmur inside yourself, “I will not obey,” especially in this Holy Communion, when the Lord may expect many things from you.

After Holy Communion

1. *“Jesus came”* (Jn 20:26).

Consider this: as the Lord appeared to the apostles, they were filled with joy that was as great as the desire with which they awaited to see Him. But consider also their immense gratitude at seeing the Lord coming to help the doubting St. Thomas by showing him His sacred side.

Would you not rejoice since you have the same Lord in your heart? Would you not be grateful to the One Who has driven away from your soul all the darkness of improper thoughts, restored the calm of your spirit, imparted the grace of devotion, and placed His whole self within you?

Come now! Give thanks to God and, embracing Him with your whole heart, cry out together with St. Thomas: “My Lord and my God” (Jn 20:28); having pity on my soul, He came to me; I will hold Him, and I will not let Him go.

2. *“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe”* (Jn 20:29).

Consider that the Son of God also had you in mind then; for although you did not see Him among men with your corporal eyes, yet today you believed that He, concealed under the species of bread, is present [f.146r] on the altar; and you adored Him and hospitably admitted Him into your heart.

Praise the Lord for this illumination, and honor Him in the highest degree. From now on act in such a manner that He would not have to say to you something like: “blessed are they who have

not received Me nor have been enriched by my favor today, and yet they love Me more than you do; they are eager to please Me more than you are; they suffer and do greater things for Me than you do; finally, they attend more zealously to their perfection than do you."

3. "*Receive the Holy Spirit*" (Jn 20:22).

If, perhaps, the evil spirit was deceiving you until now as you followed your own passions, then starting today, having received the God-Man, you should put on a different man. For, if He gave His Spirit to the disciples by breathing on them, He will certainly not deprive you of the same Spirit, since He incorporated Himself into you in a certain way.

Consider, therefore, that opposing the will of the Superiors is of the evil spirit, while obeying all of them, even those in the lowest office, is of a good spirit. A disposition alien to the religious life is [inclined] to taste, seek, and choose loftier things. The Spirit of God [inclines us] to think, to want, and to embrace humble things. It is of the infernal spirit to want to rule over others, to comprehend the sublime, to be placed before everyone, and to receive the greatest praise among all.

It is of the holy and divine Spirit to agreeably bear the yoke of the Crucified; not to seek to explore the Divine Majesty; but to desire to be esteemed less than anyone, and to consider oneself as most worthy of the greatest contempt among all.

You should follow such a spirit in the future if you desire to be a true disciple of Christ. For what good does it do to pretend to be a religious on the outside, if inside you are worse than the worst of laymen?

FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST THE LORD

Before Holy Communion

1. *“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled”* (Lk2:1).

Consider that just as peace was thriving in the whole world at the time of Augustus, when Christ was going to be born, and thus the census of all its inhabitants was being made; in the same way, today you should calm all [f.146v] the powers of your soul and your senses and try to procure great peace in your heart, while recording all the defects, imperfections, and stains of your soul, so that on the Birthday of the true God-Man, you would be ready to receive Him.

Therefore, examine your conscience; so that, having wiped away all its stains through the Sacrament of Penance, you may be reborn into a new man; so that with the newborn Jesus you may exercise the virtues and produce better fruits of perfection.

2. *“Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened”* (Lk 2:15).

If the shepherds had such a great desire to see the newborn Jesus that they urged each other to be on their way to Bethlehem, with what great eagerness then are you obliged to receive today the One Whom they encouraged each other to go greet? You should be ashamed of your great tepidness, with which you prepare yourself as if sleepy to approach the heavenly King. Is there anything under the sun that tastes sweeter than this bread, which you are about to receive? Is there anything more salutary, more sumptuous?

Come now! Drive away spiritual laziness; rush forward, lest the shepherds, that is, the lay people whom greater devotion can move to receive Christ today, precede you to Jesus. Hasten your step, lift up your mind, animate your heart, and say to all your senses: “Let us see this thing that has happened.”

3. "*all things were made through [H]im*" (Jn 1:3).

Today do not hesitate to ask something of the said Infant, as little as He is poor! Behold, the holy Evangelist says that all things were made by Him. Therefore, go to Him with your requests. Indeed, the holy Baby Boy smiles and stretches out His hands with childish affability, so that He may attract to Himself many supplicants.

Perhaps, you are wary to ask something for yourself. Nevertheless, come near. At the cradle of the Child King you will find the best advocates: Mary, the Mother of Grace and the Mother of Mercy, and also the most clement Mediatrix, and Joseph, the holy steward and administrator of heavenly gifts. Through them, you will obtain what you would not be able to get by yourself.

Yet I advise you to ask of the Infant Jesus not some few, but rather all things; namely: ask for Himself, so that He may give Himself to you; for if you have Him, what else can you be lacking? Therefore, as you receive Him from the hands of the priest, imagine that you receive Him from the hands of Joseph and from the bosom of His Mother; and that all things come to you with Him. [f.147r]

After Holy Communion

1. "*peace to men of good will*" (Lk 2:14) [DRB].

Consider that such people, who do the will of others and not their own, always enjoy peace of mind. Since the men of good will are the ones who flee from their own will as from something worse than a raging dog or a snake.²²³ And indeed, the heavenly peace is granted them today. The proud, the irascible, the gluttonous, the rebellious, the quarrelsome, and the stubborn have no peace. The humble, the obedient, the meek, the laborious, the gentle, the soothing, the moderate, and the resigned enjoy the greatest peace to the full.

²²³ The original Latin, "*cane ac angue peius aliquid evitare*," refers to a proverb from Horace (cf. footnote 67 (p. 178)).

And such shall you be in the sight of the Lord today, namely, full of good will, if you want “the Prince of peace” (cf. Is 9:6) to offer you the sweetest kiss of peace.

2. “*And the Word became flesh*” (Jn 1:14).

Beg Jesus, now a grown man established in the pulpit of your heart, to teach you the same virtues, which He, as a child in the cradle, taught the whole world. For Whom do you have with you as a Teacher? It is He Who, while He was limitless, was confined in a tight manger; the one who, while being God, Creator and Possessor of the universe, was made Man and did not have a place to lay down in the town of Bethlehem (cf. Lk 2:7); the one who, as the highest, invincible Emperor, instead of fasces²²⁴ had swaddling-cloths²²⁵; the one who, after associating with the Father and the eternal Spirit among the angels, was laid between an ox and a donkey and existed simultaneously in Heaven and in the stable.

Learn from the naked Infant to foster the utmost poverty; from the heavenly King reclining in the manger a true humility; and from the most obedient Son of God the obedience worthy of the crown.

Learn from the silent Word to keep silence. Learn from the Savior burning in the middle of winter with great desires to redeem all people and imbue yourself with the divine love and the love of neighbor. Obtain from the highest Sovereign of the world, exposed to the winter colds, hunger, thirst, and smelly stable, the strength to bear adversities joyfully. Finally, learn true wisdom from the Eternal Wisdom that came down into the world.

3. “*laid [H]im in a manger*” (Lk 2:7).

Consider that the Lord of the whole universe, born and laid down in a stable presented a sight worthy of admiration. But more admirable is that the same Lord remains today in your heart.

²²⁴ Fasces: “a bundle of rods containing an ax with the blade projecting, borne before Roman magistrates as an emblem of official power:” Sol Steinmetz, Ed., *Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Random House, Inc., New York 1997, p. 700 (s.v. *fasces*).

²²⁵ There is a play on words here in Latin that is lost in English: “*qui fascium loco fascias manu gerebat.*”

There was fetid muck in the stable; in your soul, the muck of sins. There was rough hay for the Infant; here, a hard heart for the Redeemer. There were standing nearby, an ox and a donkey that knew nothing about gratitude; here roam half-heartedness, indolence, indifference, and lethargy. There was the choir [f.147v] of angels singing praises (cf. Lk 2:13-14); here no sound is heard of a tongue giving thanks. There was Mary kissing the Child, there was Joseph worshiping Him; here appear no signs of love or reverence.

Oh, you truly are a stinking stable! Ah miserable one! Beg God with tears that He, who today assumed the likeness of man, may give you a resemblance to God.

**FOR THE SAME SOLEMNITY
(OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST THE LORD):
ANOTHER MEDITATION**

Before Holy Communion

1. *"the crooked shall become straight, and the rough ways plain"* (Is 40:4) [DRB].

Consider this: just as bad roads are fixed for the kings and rulers who are about to travel on them; so you also should repair and adorn the road of your heart, because here comes to you the tiny Little Baby, indeed a newborn, but the One Who carries Dominion on His shoulders and His name is: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Father of the world to come, and the Prince of Peace. I say, here comes to you the King of Kings.

Therefore, make the crooked roads straight and the rough ones flat. Should you be unable to do it by yourself, ask the same King of Kings Himself, since He is the Wonderful one, to make a wonderful transformation of your roads. Since He is the Counselor and the Mighty God, ask Him not only by His counsel, but also by force to impel and compel you to flee the evil and embrace the good, avoid eternal ruin, and attain salvation.

Moreover, since He enjoys the name of the Father of the world to come, beg Him with the humblest prayers to inscribe you into

the book of His sons, as He Himself was reckoned today as a son of Joseph, and Joseph was listed among the sons of David.

Finally, ask the Prince of Peace for peace; not the peace that is wholly without any adversity, but such as attained by tireless struggle; because He Himself, still in the cradle, experienced the snares of enemies, the winter colds and the rudeness, or rather the greatest wickedness, of people. He was laid down in the manger because there was no place for Him in the inn.

2. *“every mountain and hill be made low”* (Is 40:4).

May He impart this grace to you, the One Who is still laid in His cradle yet Who already entreats: “Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart” (Mt 11:29): that He may grind, make low, and carry off all your pride, which lies heavily upon your soul like a hill or rather some very heavy mountain, like a gigantic Etna!²²⁶

Truly, who among people would dare to be haughty, seeing the Lord of Heaven and earth being thus humiliated; for his sake, lowering Himself from the throne of His heavenly Kingdom to the corner of a stable, from the angels to the sheep; and that He, being always immortal, wanted to be clothed in mortal flesh? Does not His unheard of humility penetrate you; does it not persuade you to love and imitate Him? [f.148r]

3. *“Let us go over to Bethlehem,”* etc. (Lk 2:15).

Behold the great prudence with which those holy shepherds were endowed. Having heard the voice of an angel by which they were prompted to see the newborn Messiah, they did not at all neglect or postpone this matter; instead, they mutually exhorted each other, saying: “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us” (Lk 2:15).

Oh, if only you would use such great prudence in following good impulses or inspirations; if only you would have such great

²²⁶ According to the Greek mythology, the giant Typhoeus, the youngest son of Tartarus and Gaea, tried to force Jupiter (Zeus) from heaven. But Zeus, after a violent encounter, succeeded in destroying him with a thunderbolt. Then this giant was buried beneath Etna, a volcano in Sicily. Cf. *FLL*, vol 4, Typis Seminarii, Patavii 1887 (s.v. *Typhoeus*).

eagerness in undertaking mortifications! But perhaps you are weakened by spiritual famine, and thus are powerless, hesitant, and unsuitable for anything.

Therefore, make your way to Bethlehem; that is, to the House of Bread,²²⁷ to the altar of God, and in that place consume with the greatest desire, love, longing, reverence, respect and trust, the Living Bread which came down from Heaven (cf. Jn 6:41) for you, as the manna did for the Jews in the times past (cf. Ex 16:15) and which appeared in the world for the first time today. Undoubtedly, He Who is most eagerly expecting you there under the external appearance of bread, will refresh your soul with internal satiety.

After Holy Communion

1. *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light"* (Is 9:2).

Note that the same can be said about you, for such a statement about you is not completely without reason. For what were you before the Sun of Justice entered the chamber of your heart? A total night, the Cimmerian or Egyptian darkness.²²⁸ Yet now you are surrounded with the light of eternal day as with a mantle; illuminated by the uncreated Sun that shone upon the world in this night, your soul gleams again like a sun. O you, the fortunate one, who were made a participant of such a great light! May it bring forth an everlasting day for you.

2. *"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God"* (Is 40:1).

Thus, it is indeed: you are going to obtain a new bliss, to be filled with a new and unusual joy, the only cause of which is that God, today's Guest of the world, made His way to many people, and also to you. For who would not exult with joy at his king's visit to his house? You have your King with you. Who would not rejoice at being visited by some great and distinguished guest?

²²⁷ This is the meaning of the word "Bethlehem" in Hebrew.

²²⁸ For the expression: "Cimmerian darkness," see footnote 147 (p. 331). As for the expression "Egyptian darkness," it most probably derives from Ex 10:21-22: "And the Lord said to Moses: stretch out your hand towards heaven ... and there came horrible darkness in all the land of Egypt."

You were visited by the greatest and worthiest guest, Jesus, coming from high Heaven. Who would not give himself wholly to joy, when walking at night, wandering through dense and dark woods, he would see a light somewhere nearby?

This has happened to you; to you who were not just wandering at night, losing your way through the retreats of the dark woods with trembling and confusion, but were already dwelling entirely in the dark region of death, truly surrounded by the darkness of so many and such great imperfections and passions; to whom the Light arose. It will lead you, not like Ursa Major leads sailors to the port, but like that rare Star that led those three Princes to the Boy-God Himself, not lying down and whimpering in the stable in Bethlehem by then, but seating and ruling on the throne [f.148v] of everlasting glory.

Rejoice, therefore, rejoice and rise! Follow this Light. Put on your fortitude, put on the garments of your glory, Jerusalem, pious soul: the city, the abode, the dwelling of the Saint of the Saints. For if you will rise and follow this light, namely the will of God, your Savior will no longer permit the obstinate spirit of wickedness to pass through you and the unclean longing to be your master.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

Before Holy Communion

1. *"Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town"* (Mt 23:34).

Consider that the "prophets" are divine impulses and inspirations which the Lord sends to you sometimes in order to raise you up from your sins, to incite you to penance, to bring you back from evil to good works. The "wise men" are the counsels of your spiritual fathers and injunctions of your directors along the way of God's commandments. The "scribes" means the reading of the sacred books which instruct you, that you may live more per-

fectly; teach you to know, love, and worship God and endeavor, having forsaken the world, to reach Heaven and aim for it, and finally, to arrive there at some time.

Do not dare, therefore, to kill these envoys of God, that is, do not treat them with disregard and neglect them by not following them to the end; but welcome them willingly, and submit to them in the smallest things. Yes, behold, the God-Man Himself in His own Person comes to you and is already at the door.

Go, hasten, invite and receive Him, but not with the resolve of killing nor with the intention of crucifying Him.

2. *“that upon you may come all the righteous blood”* (Mt 23:35).

Take into consideration what kind of action you undertake, for what kind of work you make yourself ready. Do you want to receive the Body of the Lord and to drink His Blood at the same time? Examine what you are like and put yourself in order, lest the righteous Blood fall on you, and lest it contribute, like for Judas, to your punishment in hell, instead of salvation. Thus, prepare yourself for receiving Jesus, so that you gain enormous benefit from His Communion, namely: the benefit of improvement, of progress, and of eternal life.

Be on your guard, lest an accusation, similar to that with which Christ complained about the Jews that they had deprived of life many of the just, apply to you; lest you be tormented with a punishment similar to that which fell on those who took His Blood upon themselves and upon their children (cf. Mt 27:25). Instead, work hard so that you may belong to the number of people about whom it was said: “They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion” (Ps 84:7).

3. *“whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar”* (Mt 23:35).

Oh, how often the innocent Lamb Jesus is slain and crucified again between the temple and the altar, and not only between the drinking-bouts and revelries of those who receive [f.149r] Holy Communion unworthily! As for you, be on your guard; beware, lest you commit anything of this kind. The impious Joash, King of Judah, commanded that Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, be killed

in the temple, being unmindful of the good things that his father had done for him (cf. 2 Chron 24:20-22).

As for you, flee from and avoid similar ingratitude and such a great crime, mindful of the salvation which God's Son, whom you are approaching, obtained for you, having poured out His Blood most abundantly. Having forgotten the many benefits obtained from His sacred table so many times, you crucify today, between the temple and the altar, through the most unworthy preparation and reception, the child of the eternal Father, by Whom you have been created and placed above all creatures of the world.

After Holy Communion

1. *"all the righteous blood shed on earth"* (Mt 23:35).

If the shedding of the blood of the righteous killed by the Jews was so important to the Lord that He says that anywhere this happened the same blood will be required from their hands, then ponder: with what rigidity of justice would He demand His Blood from you, the Blood that He gave you to drink today at the holy table, or with which He washed your soul entirely from all stains of imperfections?

However, you tarnished it again by no small filth of faults. Oh, how most justly and not without threats could He say to you inside your heart: Do you who are earth and dust, not fear that the Just Blood, which was shed upon the earth, should fall upon you? Are you not afraid that it will be for your condemnation, unless you immediately repent, improve upon repenting, and advance and persevere in virtues upon improving?

2. *"Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate"* (Mt 23:38).

Christ the Lord promises and predicts desolation to the inhabitants of Jerusalem because they withdrew from Him and did not want to live under His laws.

You too shall feel a great desolation of your soul and shall not escape from it, unless you first avoid whatever disperses the spirit, whatever does not unite you with God and does not allow your senses to rest constantly under the feathers of His will like chicks under the wings of the hen (cf. Mt 23:37); unless you flee

from vain conversations; avert all curiosity from superfluous talk and useless reading; unless you divert your sight, your hearing, and your step from useless viewing, listening, and wandering; unless you renounce seeking and divulging rumors that bring forth great distraction leading to desolation; unless, finally, you remove from yourself all that can and usually does impede devotion and estrange your mind from God.

3. *“How often would I have gathered your children together”* (Mt 23:37).

The Lord always tried through the lawgivers and the prophets to bring the Jews into union and to His love, while they resisted Him [f.149v] and through mutual hatred also lost their state. Being deserted by Him, they perished.

He does the same to you, when He tries through such frequent reception of Holy Communion to focus your senses on His love alone, to drag you away from worldly things and from self-love, and to bring you to devotion.

You resist it, and you create for yourself the cause of your internal desolation. But see to it, lest perhaps the Lord finally abandons you because of this more stubborn negligence, and never (or indeed very late) comes back to you.

FOR THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Peter turned and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved”* (Jn 21:20).

Consider that the reasons for the love that the Son of God bestowed on the holy Evangelist were his numerous virtues.

As the first, we may ascribe to him, although being younger than the others, the virtue of following Jesus most promptly. He left his work of fishing (cf. Mt 4:21-22), and afterwards never wanted to withdraw from His Lord’s sacred side.

The second is that of a generous and resolute spirit, with which he offered himself to suffer with Christ and for Christ, and to carry

any cross. He eagerly answered: "We are able," when the Savior asked him and his brother: "Are you able to drink the chalice that I am to drink?" (Mt 20:22).

The third reason is that he was the most chaste, and hence the Lord, nailed to the Cross, committed the Virgin Mother to the virgin disciple (cf. Jn 19:27).

The fourth is the great spiritual love, on account of which (and not out of natural love, because he was possibly His brother),²²⁹ he accompanied his Teacher, Who he recognized as the Son of God and worshiped as the true Messiah. Moreover, he proved his love at the time when all other disciples had scattered in flight, and he alone followed Jesus to the High Priest,²³⁰ to the Judge and to the Cross; and he never left Him until he had performed what was due to the Most Holy Body.

As for you, if you would like to be loved by Jesus, highly esteem and practice the virtues which John himself practiced.

2. "*who had lain close to [H]is breast at the supper*" (Jn 21:20).

Of all the Evangelists, St. John was the one who handed down to the world the most sublime teaching, the teaching that he drew indeed from no other source than the most divine Heart on which he rested.

Think, therefore, how great would be those gifts, talents, and graces; what sublime knowledge would be acquired by those who prepare themselves adequately for introducing [f.150r] the Lord into their hearts. Oh, if you want to draw today from the Heart of the Savior the waters of heavenly wisdom, drive away worldly knowledge from yours, so that upon His coming He may find it clear and imprint on it, as if on a clean tablet, whatever He wills!

²²⁹ The assertion that John was possibly a brother of Jesus is explained in the following way: "[T]he mother of the brothers [(John and James)] may have been the sister of the Virgin Mary, and ... therefore, the brothers may have been cousins of Jesus" (R. E. Brown, *NCE*, vol. VII, p. 1005 (s.v. *John, Apostle, St.*)). In Polish, a first cousin is said to be a brother from the side of the aunt ("*brat cioteczny*").

²³⁰ Cf. Jn 18:14-15, where when "another disciple" is said, the Evangelist himself is to be recognized.

3. "*what is that to you?*" (Jn 21:22).

Consider, that human curiosity greatly displeases the Divine Majesty. Consequently, St. Peter, although already appointed the highest head of the Church, having inquired into the kind of death of John, was given the answer: "what is that to you?"

Therefore, you should be concerned only with your own life, conduct, and actions. When you approach to receive the sacred mysteries, you should examine only your own conscience. Apply yourself zealously only to your own preparation; do not inquire how others prepare themselves for the sacred banquet. Indeed, reflect on yourself only: do you conform to the divine will? Do you perform your duties properly? Do you satisfy your obligations? Do you fulfill the duties of your office? Of your vocation?

Let others live according to the divine disposition; as for you, be content with the one planned for you. Let them enjoy rest, peace, and consolations and let them be treated more gently; as for you, carry the cross placed upon your shoulders. For the Lord knows what He shall do with you and the way by which He shall lead you to Himself; if you spurn it, you deviate from eternal happiness.

After Holy Communion

1. "*Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?*" (Jn 21:20).

With anxiety and zeal as great as were St. Peter's when he inquired about the traitor of Christ, you should take care not to betray Christ, whom you have received today, for this may happen if you dedicate yourself to nonreligious occupations and indulge in external things. There was a doubt among the twelve apostles as to who would be the one to betray the Teacher, the Truth.

Here, today, you alone shall be Jesus' betrayer if you were to do something unacceptable in the face of this heavenly Guest whom you have received. Therefore, be careful not to depart from your heart, not to interrupt the conversation with the Guest of your heart. Converse piously and sweetly with the One on Whom the angels desire to gaze.

2. *“Jesus said to Peter, ‘Follow [M]e’”* (cf. Jn 21:19).

When the Lord commands Peter to follow in His footsteps, He at the same time exhorts you not to follow your senses and your desires, nor your own will, nor the allurements of the world, nor the attractions of the flesh, nor finally all that is transitory, vain, unstable; but follow Him alone, Who is eternal, immortal, wise, just and good in the highest degree. [f.150v]

He commands you to take His road, the road of afflictions, calamities, adversities, slanders, mocking, reproaches, false accusations, and to bear with equanimity all the inconveniences of the present life.

Consequently, don’t hesitate to accompany and to help the Lord Who carries the Cross to the top of mount Golgotha, and Whose presence refreshed you today.

3. *“we know that his testimony is true”* (Jn 21:24).

Consider the praiseworthy modesty of the holy Evangelist. He does not say openly that he was Christ the Lord’s beloved disciple, confidant, and friend, and yet, since he could not conceal the truth, he reveals it in such a way as to hide himself, about whom it is true. He looks after his modesty, and manifests nevertheless the glory of Christ.

As for you, learn from this not to think ambitiously, and much less to speak about your works. Declare the divine graces in such a way that the glory redounds to the One who operates, and not to the one who cooperates.

FOR THE FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Rise, take the [C]hild and [H]is mother, and flee to Egypt”* (Mt 2:13).

Consider that God wants you to be a zealous servant not only of His Son, but also of the Mother of God. He respects the Mother so much that He does not want her to be without the Son, nor the Son without the Mother. Hence, He commands Joseph to take

the Mother together with the Son away from the danger and to lead them away to a safe place in Egypt.

Wherefore, since according to your devotion you are about to let the Son into the inner dwelling of your heart today, remember also the Mother and give thanks to her for having fed with her breast this Lord and Redeemer of yours, who will support you by His wounds, will nourish you by His Flesh, and will give you His Blood to drink.

2. “*remain there*” (Mt 2:13).

Perhaps, you may be astonished that the angel sends the parents of Jesus Christ to the regions of Canopus,²³¹ and yet does not promise them any money or food for their road; does not guarantee any assistance, but commands them to remain longer as poor and without means, devoid of any human support and help, while staying among idolatrous people. Nonetheless, without opposing the divine command, without grumbling in their hearts, without pleading their lack of means nor revealing it to the angel; they went on, to where they were sent, full of confidence, because they were full of obedience.

Learn to always embrace the divine disposition most zealously and to be very content with it. Although you may feel perhaps that you are too weak and unqualified to do the things that God charges you with through His deputies, for example, the Superiors, nevertheless, placing your concerns in the Lord (cf. Ps 55:22), trust that He will come to your help. Beware never to slight the dispositions of the One on Whom your salvation undoubtedly depends. [f.151r]

3. “[*He*] took the [*C*]hild and [*H*]is mother” (Mt 2:14).

Consider that St. Joseph endured most agreeably the very grievous hardships, difficulties, anxieties, and toils of the journey, refreshed only by the sight of the most admirable Child Jesus. Therefore, so that you can also bear with satisfaction the harsh annoyances, crosses, difficulties, and calamities of this life, behold the same Jesus, who left Himself to you in the Eucharist,

²³¹ CLD, p. 82 (s.v. *Canopus*): Canopus — “is a city in Lower Egypt.”

so that you may be consoled by delighting in Him, refreshed by seeing Him, restored, and strengthened by receiving Him. Thus, you have a great consolation for your road, by which you strive toward eternity: the Son of God present on the sacred altar.

Oh you, the blessed one! If only you would not drink the turbid water of Egypt (cf. Jer 2:18), but seek refreshment only from Him! If only you would not seek the consolations of the world, but be content with the consolation of God, though sometimes He would deny it, because He is wise and just, then you still shall be blessed, if you conform your will to His.

After Holy Communion

1. *“an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream”* (Mt 2:13).

If St. Joseph resolved immediately to be obedient to the friendly warning, although he could reject it with a just excuse since it was given to him in sleep and during such time that many men can be deceived by the infernal illusions; would you hold in little esteem the evident voice of the Lord, rather His very Person? Enclosed in your heart, this person exhorts you to flee to Egypt, that is, to tear yourself away from sensual pleasures and to attach yourself to the cross, for Egypt does not signify anything other than difficulties and grief. Hence, when the Lord wants you to flee to Egypt, He teaches by His example that you should despise the treacherous allurements of this world and continuously love and carry the cross from which you are to be recalled afterwards to the eternal region of joys.

And so, always choose suffering rather than abounding in consolations, since by the judgment of the wise man himself, mourning is always preferable to joy (cf. Eccl 7:3), and indeed more beneficial.

2. *“[Herod] killed all the male children”* (Mt 2:16).

You should be stirred and troubled by a feeling of shame, because you still have not suffered anything for the name of Jesus. Behold the little children, two years old and younger, who were snatched from the breasts of their mothers and professed the Messiah with their blood. They did not yet know Him, nor

were they able to invoke Him, yet they already die a cruel death for Him; and what ought you to do, a grown man?

These little boys, who have not yet strong hands, attack and capture Heaven by force, and enter it; shall you lead a lazy life and not join such contestants?

To action! Be inflamed by a holy jealousy, and whereas they arrived through grace, you should try to arrive through victory. Conquer the world, conquer the demon, and conquer yourself. As to the threefold enemy, if you would want, you can win with the help of God the threefold victory, the threefold crown.

Rouse yourself to battle! Tell yourself: they could, why would not I be able? The little children won the battle; and I, a grown man, shall not win? The little boys are crowned, why shall I not be crowned?

[f.151v is empty]

PART III

Meditations for the Commons

FOR THE FEASTS OF THE APOSTLES OUTSIDE OF AND IN PASCHAL TIME

Before Holy Communion

1. *“This is [M]y commandment, that you love one another”* (Jn 15:12).

Consider that no community can endure without love. For this reason, Jesus wanted to compel the apostles to mutual love, not only through exhortations, but even giving a commandment. Just as the parts of human body live in harmony with one another, constantly helping and serving each other; likewise, the people in God’s Church and in any Order, Congregation, and Society, of which they are constituents, as if the parts of a body, should together manifest mutual love and render service to each other. Realize, therefore, that you have as much perfection in you as you have love.

2. Consider that he who does not abound in love for his neighbor does not abound in love for God. In a certain way, the love of God depends on love for human beings. For if we have no love for a human being, whom we have before our eyes and whom we see shaped in all respects in the same image as we are, how can we love God, whose likeness we do not see (cf. 1 Jn 4:20), and whose essence we do not comprehend? Hence, a certain man rightly exhorts: “All people should be loved with a true love. And there is no reason for you to hate someone else on account of some

unpleasant words said to you that caused your dissatisfaction,”²³²
**for in the heart where there is no love for neighbor, God also
 is not there.**

After Holy Communion

1. Consider that the manner of making divine friendship is not unlike the one by which people make friends. People believe someone else to be their real friend, who complies not only with their requests, but also with their wills. Thus, God calls his friends such people whose will He perceives as matching His own in all things; as is clear from the exhortation to the apostles: “You are [M]y friends if you do what I command you” (Jn 15:14).

How many are those who seek various ways of insinuating themselves [f.152v] into the friendship of princes and other people. As for you, you can easily become a friend of the immortal King if only you do His will. Indeed, what would you not be willing to do to become a friend of God and to have His favor, when you see indeed how servants do extraordinary, and sometimes lowly, duties in order to gain the favor of their lords?

Beware, lest the sons of darkness be more prudent than you, who are a son of light (cf. Lk 16:8).

2. Consider that God shows you kindness out of pure love for you. Hence, it so happened, that He did not leave you in the world to perish, but called you to the religious life; that He did not rightly punish you there while you were sinning, as He usually does with many; that He was very patiently waiting for your improvement, whenever you fell and deviated from the way of perfection; that He enriched you each day; indeed, each moment, with graces; and He does so out of pure love of you.

²³² A note in the margins of the manuscript attributes this quote to St. Philip Neri. Although this exact quote is not found among his sayings, something similar is found. Cf. Carlo Gasbarri, *Filippo Neri nella testimonianza dei contemporanei*, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1974, p. 66: “As for tolerance towards others, Philip said: ‘How much patience Christ the King and Lord of Heaven and earth must have had with the Apostles, suffering from them many incivilities and bad manners ... how much more should we put up with our neighbor if he is uncivil with us.’”

Wherefore it is also a right thing for you to do all good things, to endure all harsh things out of pure love for God, as did today's Apostle; whose immense hardships, torments, and death were carried and soothed by the love of God alone.

FOR THE COMMON OF AN EVANGELIST

Before Holy Communion

1. "*The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few*" (Lk 10:2).

Consider that God is extremely angry with negligent laborers, because they see the great harvest and yet do not put their hands to it; namely, they give listless care to the salvation of souls and let the grain of the elect be snatched away by the evil spirits.

Therefore, be convinced that you are admitted today to the table of the Lord for that reason, that you may labor more zealously and assiduously in the field of the Lord and not neglect any occasion of coming to the aid of your neighbor for his salvation.

2. "*Carry no purse, no bag*" (Lk 10:4).

Consider that your purse and traveling bag are your own will and self-love. For as a purse and a traveling bag may contain many different things, so can your own will and immense self-love; indeed, they comprise all vices to such an extent that no imperfection, no defect, no fault, and finally, no sin proceed from anywhere else than from your own will and self-love.

Therefore, when you go to the table of Jesus Christ, do not wish to carry this purse and traveling bag with you, but make a generous decision to lay them aside in such a way that you do not pick them up again. [f.153r]

After Holy Communion

1. "*salute no one on the road*" (Lk 10:4).

Consider that the Lord wants us sometimes to forget the usual rules of politeness, lest out of being polite we become worldly. Therefore, He forbids His disciples, who were to go into the whole world with the holy Gospel, to greet the people along the

way. Although the greeting in itself is good, yet, an enormous evil can come out from this good. For we know, especially from experience, that from these little greetings people go to chats, from chats to slanders, and afterwards to quarrels, altercations, hostilities, abuses, and blasphemies.

Let us assume that these things are not found in the servants of God; and yet the Lord forbade the disciples to greet people along the way, lest they procrastinate in the work entrusted to their completion, so that, while doing it, they would not waste time even on sincere greetings.

Conclude from this, what a great caution you should adopt as you leave the table of the Lord, that you do not lose yourself in unnecessary conversations, not busy yourself with vain small matters, not allow your mind to be distracted by useless things. Greet no one along the way, but do what needs to be done.

2. *“First say, ‘peace be to this house!’”* (Lk 10:5).

Note what the Lord said to you: that in the course of all things you must look after the peace of your spirit and not get freely involved in conflicts. For it is fitting to enjoy internal peace in the highest degree as you have in your heart the Prince of Peace. At the same time, you must fervently endeavor not to disturb in any way the peace of the house, namely of the community, in which you live.

Rather, make it your foremost effort amongst all others to bring people’s hearts closer to each other. For “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Mt 5:9).

FOR THE COMMON OF A MARTYR

Before Holy Communion

1. *“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after [M]e, cannot be [M]y disciple”* (Lk 14:27). [f.153v]

The words of the Savior, Who greatly desires your salvation, are most clear: He informs you that no one can become His disciple if he is not patiently brave and bravely patient. Almost foolish

can seem the one who, wanting to make progress in the school of the cross with Jesus as the Teacher, would not want to endure anything adverse, harsh, and painful. Truly, here only the patient is wise.

Therefore, in the present Communion do not look so much for the heavenly delights and pleasant sweetness, but ask rather that your heart and spirit be strengthened for suffering.

2. *“For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete?”* (Lk 14:28).

Consider that you should first seek the means for attaining perfection of religious life before you start climbing to the summit of perfection. For as there is no building without funds, so either is there no virtue without means. However, do you want to know which means are to be used towards perfection? None other than the rules that God gave you for observing.

For no perfection is greater than the genuine observance of the rules. Hence, he who stays outside of the Rule finds himself outside of the way of perfection and closer to hell than to Heaven.

Therefore, may nothing be more sacred in your life than the observance of the religious Rules and God’s commandments, for you shall make as much progress in the love of God as you observe the Rules.

After Holy Communion

1. *“will not sit down first and take counsel”* (cf. Lk 14:31).

As one needs peace of mind before starting a job in order that the method of accomplishing it may be better considered; similarly, one must go back to the same peace, after the business has been accomplished, in order to ponder what was lacking in it, what could be best added or avoided. [f.154r]

O my soul! Do you realize from what task you are returning? Your undertaking was with God Incarnate, Whom you have consumed. Therefore, stand still for a moment and, recollecting your senses, consider how you have conducted yourself in this undertaking, in what manner you managed it. If something was

lacking in your preparation, if in the very act of consuming the Eucharist you did anything inordinate, now is the time to make up for it with your thanksgiving.

2. *“asks terms of peace”* (Lk 14:32).

You would not act wrongly if you, having seen that your forces for conducting war with temptations are meager, asked the eternal Lord to preserve you in peace and to restrain for you all the fury, audacity, and attacks of the enemy of your soul. Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit; peace is a sign of the sons of God; peace is always a necessary good.

Inapt for continuing the war, inapt for bearing tumults and for enduring disturbances, one prays for things that bring peace, although you should remember that God gives peace not as the world gives it (cf. Jn 14:27). Namely, he who desires eternal peace, seeks peace in this life nowhere else than in tribulations, and then he thinks that he is pleasantly at peace when he suffers some adversity.

FOR THE COMMON OF A MARTYR IN PASCHAL TIME

As on the feast of St. Mark the Evangelist, see above (ff. 111v-112v; pp. 357-359).

FOR THE COMMON OF SEVERAL MARTYRS

Before Holy Communion [f.154v]

1. *“when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be terrified”* (Lk 21:9).

Consider that the present life is a warfare (cf. Job 7:1). Namely, we have to wage war, if not against adversaries, then certainly against our passions. Thus, we indeed always have the opportunity both for patience and for fortitude. The whole thing consists in magnanimously bearing whatever annoyances happen to us, and not being anxious about the cross, which God sent us in order to bring us through it to the heavenly Fatherland.

2. *“for this must first take place”* (Lk 21:9).

Consider that as it is necessary for the water to be stirred, lest it go stagnant by standing still, so it is necessary to stir man’s spirit by various waves of afflictions; lest it would be corrupted if undisturbed. The wind clears the air and a tribulation clears the mind.

Recognize, therefore, what an enormous benefit is granted to you by God when He permits you to be harassed by some kind of annoyance. Are you internally tormented? These things are bound to happen. Are you externally disturbed? These things too are bound to happen. Does a man bother you? This evil, as it seems, is necessary for you. Do temptations, scruples, or evil spirits torment you? Do not believe that without them you may be saved, because your soul is to be possessed in steadfast patience (cf. Lk 21:19).

After Holy Communion

1. *“the end will not be at once”* (Lk 21:9).

Note, that you should avoid arrogance of spirit and excessive self-assurance, as if, having your passions already mortified, you should not fear any enemy or be afraid of any danger. For this is not yet the end of your life, and as long as you will lead this life of misery, you should always be afraid of some fall and be on your guard against it.

Do you believe yourself to be humble? But suppose that a certain root of pride is still hidden in the bottom of your heart. Do you think that you are patient? Of course, so far until [f.155r] an occasion occurs to explode with anger. Do you think that you are resigned to the divine will? Very likely a time will come when you shall seek your own [will] in a matter of the least importance.

Thus, always fear some enemy; be on your guard against yourself. There is not yet an end to your passions’ domination. They will come to life again, and they will wage wars against you again.

2. *“do not be terrified”* (Lk 21:9).

Consider that the Savior deservedly exhorts us that we should not be terrified upon hearing of wars, not so much bodily as

spiritual. For He Himself is our Leader, He Himself gives us help. He overcomes the enemies whom He allows to attack us, so that the merit of fortitude may increase for us and the multitude of thanksgiving may increase for Him. For as in the pillar of fire by night, and in the pillar of cloud by day, He was preceding the Jewish people going to the Promised Land (cf. Ex 13:22) so that He might not only show them the way as a faithful guide, but also destroy their enemies; so He never abandons any of His servants at the present better time, especially in conducting spiritual wars. Indeed, as He shows us the way leading to the heavenly Fatherland, He also gives us help, fighting against our enemies of any kind.

For this reason, He invited you to His table today, that you might be illuminated by Him on the way and strengthened for the battle.

FOR THE COMMON OF SEVERAL MARTYRS IN PASCHAL TIME

Before and After Holy Communion, as on the feast of St. Mark the Evangelist (see above, ff.111v-112v, pp. 357-359).

FOR THE COMMON OF A CONFESSOR BISHOP

Before Holy Communion

1. *"a man going on a journey"* (Mt 25:14).

Consider that you are a wayfarer, a pilgrim on the earth, and that you do not have a permanent abode. For your body, since it is from the earth, hastens to go back there from whence it came, while the soul that derives its origin from Heaven [f.155v] ought to tend toward there as toward the center.

As for you, work hard, that your soul does not take itself away from this center, dragged downwards by carnal delights. Also, as pilgrims do not negligently pass any inn in which they know that they are going to be well treated, and in which they will provide

for themselves so that they may not fail on the way; thus you, miserable pilgrim, strive with all your strength to take part in the present Communion fruitfully and to refresh yourself by the Sacred Eucharist, so that you may advance more bravely in the course of your pilgrimage.

2. “*entrusted to them his property*” (Mt 25:14).

Consider and appreciate the talents received from the Lord and use them properly. Think, of the end for which He has made you fit so that you would not prove yourself useless.

Listen to Gregory who seriously reflected on this short utterance of the Savior and, not speaking lightly, said: “(The Savior) urges us to remember that we, realizing that we have received something more than the others in this world, may be judged, therefore, more severely by the Creator of the world.” And as reasoning, he adds: “For when [H]is gifts increase, the responsibility of accounting for them also grows greater.” And he thus concludes from this: “Everyone must then be more humble and more ready to serve God because of [H]is gifts, the more he realizes his obligation to account for them.”²³³

Ponder these words well, and indeed, cooperate most assiduously with the talents granted; especially because also in the present Communion the Lord is going to grant you some new grace.

[f.156r]

After Holy Communion

1. “*He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them*” (Mt 25:16).

Consider that the diligence of a good servant involves increasing his master’s revenues, not diminishing them. Similar diligence

²³³ Cf. Gregorius Magnus, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia: Liber I — Homilia IX (Matth. XXV, 14-30)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 1106 (n. 1463-1464).

is expected from you so that, with the help of God's grace, the greatness of perfection may abound in you according to its measure. Therefore, if you are skilled in language, speak; if you are good with your hands, work with them; if you are intellectually gifted, make use of it. This way, by employing your talents you shall gain new ones.

2. "*Behold [I have gained] two more*" (Mt 25:22).

Note, that the Lord does not expect from us anything beyond our might, since He gave no smaller reward to the servant who gained two talents than to the other, who had gained five. He did so, because each one proceeded according to the talents entrusted to him.

Hence, you should rejoice greatly, because you are going to enjoy the same beatific vision in Heaven (if you would yet persevere in good) enjoyed by the holy Martyrs, who endured almost intolerable torments for the name of Christ. Take care only that you may not receive the grace of the Lord in vain, lest it would be found fruitless in you.

FOR THE FEAST OF A CONFESSOR

[WHO WAS] NOT A BISHOP

As on the Feast of St. Nicholas, see above [(ff.143r-144r; pp. 447-449)].

FOR THE COMMON OF VIRGINS

Before and After Holy Communion, as on the Feast of St. Catherine, [see above] (ff.141v-142r; pp. 442-444).

FOR THE COMMON OF NON-VIRGINS

As on the Feast of St. Margaret, [see above] (ff.124r-125r; pp. 390-393).

FOR THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

Before Holy Communion

1. “*So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore*” (Lk 19:4).

Consider that in Latin, sycamore means foolish fig,²³⁴ and thus, we are instructed to embrace things that seem foolish to the world, if we would wish to gain possession of the true wisdom of God (cf. 1 Cor 3:18-19).

Consider that the sycamore also signifies [f.156v] the Cross of Christ and His teaching; which men, intent on the world, find to be the greatest foolishness altogether (cf. 1 Cor 1:23). But in truth, God could not be perceived without it, as Zacchaeus could not have seen Him if he had not climbed the sycamore. Hence, St. Gregory rightly says: “The little Zacchaeus climbed the sycamore and saw the Lord, because those who humbly choose what the world holds for foolishness, shall be precisely the ones who subtly contemplate the wisdom of God.”²³⁵

2. “*make haste and come down*” (Lk 19:5).

You too should hastily come down into your heart, because the Lord invites Himself to you, as He invited Himself to Zacchaeus. Therefore, run as fast as possible to the room of your heart, and prepare a dwelling there for the great Guest: for today He should stay in your house. How fortunate it will be if He finds it swept with the broom of self-examination, washed with the water of contrition!

Come down, therefore, come down in haste to your house, you who are about to welcome the heavenly Guest there. Let not your abode displease Him!

²³⁴ Cf. *SLL*, vol. 2, Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii 1758, p. 358 (s.v. *Sycomorus*): “*Quasi fatuam ficum dixeris.*”

²³⁵ Gregorius Magnus, *Moralium Libri: Expositio Librium B. Job — Liber XXVII (Job XXXVII, 24)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 445 (n. 890).

After Holy Communion

1. “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor” (Lk 19:8).

Do you see Zacchaeus’ generosity; he who shares all his goods with the poor after the Savior’s visit to his house?

You should certainly do the same; you should share with the poor, namely, with sinners, all the charisms that you have obtained at the present sacred banquet. As the poor returning from the banquets of great people usually share the remaining loaves of bread with their companions, thus you should not enjoy alone the light of God that was begged for and obtained in the Most Holy Eucharist; but you should bring the light to others also, especially to those who do not have such a great opportunity as you to receive Holy Communion so often.

2. “I restore it fourfold” (Lk 19:8).

“Behold, the camel” (says that well-known Venerable Doctor, admiring the sudden change in Zacchaeus) “has laid down his burden, and passed through the eye of the needle — [f.157r] that is, he gave up the love of riches, and received the blessing of the Lord’s adoption.”²³⁶ For as soon as he welcomes Christ the Lord with hospitality, immediately he feels that greed is banned from his heart. Wherefore he repays the ones he deceived with an overgenerous compensation.

You too, restore to God what you have received; to your neighbor, what you owed; to God, the debt of gratitude; to your neighbor, the edifying example, lest it be judged otherwise that Christ the Lord’s stay in you was in vain.

3. “I restore it” (Lk 19:8).

He gives back the profits from usury; he compensates abundantly and excessively for past swindles.

²³⁶ Cornelius à Lapide, *The Great Commentary of Cornelius à Lapide: S. Luke’s Gospel*, Trans. Thomas W. Mossman, 4th ed., vol. 4, John Grant, Edinburgh 1908, p. 455 (Ch. XIX, 8). To be noted is the expanded version of this pericope in: Venerabilis Bedæ, *In Lucæ Evangelium Expositio — Liber V (Luke XIX, 1-4)*, in: *PL*, vol. 92, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1862, p. 559 (cap. XIX).

Will you not make quadruple amends for your sins? Will you not multiply the fruits of penance? Will you not help those whom you drew from the way of virtues to the precipices of vices and impelled from Heaven to the infernal regions by bad example; will you not bring those living in sin back to the improvement of life, or will you not impel those who offend God to reconcile with His Majesty, urging them by advice, motivating them by exhortations and enticing by examples?

O Lord, "I will teach transgressors [Y]our ways, and sinners will return to [Y]ou." (Ps 51:13).

[ff.157v-159v are empty]

PART IV

Meditations for Weekly Retreats

[f.160v]

BEFORE ANY MEDITATION

INVOCATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT²³⁷

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Who through the diversity of all tongues have brought the nations together in the unity of faith.

V. Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created.

R. And You will renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O God, Who instructed the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit. Grant that, by the gift of the same Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

²³⁷ Cf. *The Liber Usualis with Introduction & Rubrics in English*, Eds. Benedictines of Solesmes, Desclée and Co., Tourani 1952, pp. 1837-1838 ("Invocation to the Holy Ghost").

PREPARATORY PRAYER²³⁸

We beseech you, O Lord, to anticipate all our actions with Your inspiration and to support them with Your assistance, that every prayer and work of ours may always originate in You and likewise end in You. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

[f.161r]

MEDITATION I ON THE UNIVERSAL BENEFITS

1. Consider what you were before God created you; or who was He Who created you. It was God, the being most absolute of all beings, without any beginning and origin; the most perfect Goodness and Wisdom; infinite Love and Omnipotence.

So it is He, Who is, that created you, and you, who were nothing, were created. Know that you were created from nothing, formed from utterly worthless matter; nonetheless, you were made so beautiful by the sagacity of the Maker God, that except heavenly beings, you surpass by your looks all other creatures.

Also ponder the kind of soul that He breathed into you: it was formed in His image and likeness. And indeed, He endowed it with intellect for you to comprehend that God is your Creator. He granted you a heart that you may love. To the same soul He affixed a will, in order to show clearly that you possess freedom, and you are not subject to anything, and that you are permitted: to strive for whatever you would want; to choose whatever you would strive for; to love and follow whatever you would choose. Finally, to this divine image He added memory, with which to reflect upon His benefits granted to you, and to remember that He is your Creator and that you were once dust and shall return to dust, as He Himself once declared to the first Parent, saying: “you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3:19).

²³⁸ Cf. *MIR*, p. 82 (*Sabbato Quatuor Temporum Quadragesimæ — Oratio*). Cf. *MIR*, p. 1 (*Gratiarum Actio Post Missam — “Actiões nostras ...”*).

2. Consider the benefit of Redemption, how the Son of God, equal in all things to the Father, was willing to assume human nature in order to bring you, a rebellious man, back to the Fatherly abode and to free you from the prison of everlasting limbo or hell. Being infinite, He was enclosed in the Virgin's womb; being impervious to suffering, He suffered all His life various persecutions, hardships and misfortunes: the cold at His birth, the knife at His circumcision, the inclement weather and many difficulties during the flight to Egypt; in teaching, He had to bear the evil tongues of the godless, to avoid being pelted with stones, to endure the temptations of hell, and to receive the very worst in return for all His goodness.

Then, when you come to the mystery of the Passion, you will be astounded, realizing that your mind is unable to grasp the torments, tortures, and sufferings of the God-Man. May it suffice for you to comprehend that He endured countless tortures in order to atone for countless sins. Consider with devotion that in order to redeem human kind from hell and eternal death He bore more torments, or at least as many, as are born by the condemned in hell.

Revealing His sufferings, He exclaimed: "Whoever loves Me, see if there is any sorrow like My sorrow" (cf. Lam 1:12).

3. Consider your twofold vocation by which you have been called to the Catholic faith and to the religious life. Think of the countless unbelievers condemned because they were not perfected by the benefice of a vocation to faith, [f.161v] many of whom still remain in the darkness of faithlessness and find themselves in the same danger of eternal condemnation. You, on the other hand, have been richly endowed by the grace of the Holy Spirit with such a great gift and light.

As to the religious life, consider attentively that it is a haven towards which one makes his way from the very dangerous sea of the world and in which he evades the insurmountable waves of great storms. It is the holy city of Jerusalem; it is the gate of Ezekiel (cf. Ez 44:2; 46:1), through which the access is open to the abode of eternal life. Then remind yourself that many have

departed from this life without repenting for their sins and died, losing their salvation. Whereas you have been called out from the world to do penance and were received into the beloved tabernacles of God: where you may live more purely, fall more rarely, rise more quickly, be sprinkled with grace more often, walk more speedily, die with hope, and be saved more assuredly.

Let your colloquy consist of the deepest feelings, elicited from your heart and expressed by the force of gratitude and love.

1 Our Father, 1 Hail Mary.

MEDITATION II ON PARTICULAR BENEFITS OF GOD

1. In addition to the benefits of creation, redemption, justification, and the vocation to faith and the religious life; consider individually the other benefits that the Lord granted you, especially: the daily graces by which He preserved you from sins, inspired you to virtues and good works, helped in your progress and [in your] achieving success.

At the same time, consider your lack of gratitude: how very little thanks you give Him for the many graces, indeed none; not considering, neither knowing nor understanding, that you have been directed, guarded, enriched by Him with so many goods and preserved from so many evils.

Stir up in yourself a sorrow for this negligence, and ask that in atonement for it you may be moved to serve the Lord with greater zeal and ardor throughout the remaining days of your life.

2. Consider the outside misfortunes from which not only have you been shielded, but also delivered by the power and aid of the most admirable God, your best Parent and Protector. To apply your mind more and deepen this consideration, recall to memory: your journeys, places, actions, conversations, and dangers, and focus your thoughts on them.

And the more you perceive the Divine Providence's care and the strong hand of the highest and best God, the greater will be

the emotion moving you to Him; and you will hasten to offer Him a loving thanksgiving with your whole heart. For why should you not love Him, Who has loved and still loves you so greatly that He never removed from you His most gracious and most benevolent eye?

3. Bring back to memory the gifts, charisms and all the favors that the Lord has bestowed on you up to this point. Consider their greatness, multitude, value, and excellence; and blush with shame because [f.162r] not only do you not repay Him, but you also do not even show due gratitude. Remember Teresa, the saint who loved God so much, she who upon considering the divine benefits bestowed upon her, cried out and begged that they be limited.

Do not forget all that God, the most provident Creator, has supplied so abundantly and sufficiently for your bodily needs and amenities without any concern or effort on your part. Hence, stir up in your soul a great desire to repay Him by any possible means so that you do not allow the benefits of the infinite and most merciful Benefactor to pass you by.

Let your colloquy contain expressions of thanksgiving and resolutions to strive for more perfect things and to apply yourself better and more perfectly to the works of charity.

1 Our Father. 1 Hail Mary.

MEDITATION III

THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE TO BE MADE CONCERNING VIRTUES

Firstly: On Obedience

1. Consider that only a pure conscience shall fear nothing on the last day, the Day of Judgment. Since you do not know at what moment you will be carried away from the living and pass through the door of eternity; shall you not apply yourself wholeheartedly in this most blessed time, granted to you solely for putting your conscience in a holy order, as to free it from any fear? Yet, since

your enemies will accuse you particularly before God, the highest Judge, in regard to things that you willingly vowed, submit your vows to a proper and careful examination and see how resolute you have been.

To begin, examine your obedience, the mother of virtues, on which the other two vows depend.

Therefore, first recall to your mind whether you obeyed your Superiors, God's commandments, and rules promptly, cheerfully, completely, and steadfastly? Did you not grumble sometimes? Did you not resist? Be convinced that a lack of obedience is certainly the greatest of all faults: recall that Saul was rejected because of the lack of obedience (cf. 1 Sam 15:22-23). The people of Israel were called and regarded as stiff-necked people, and they were very nearly cast off, if only Moses, their most humble leader (cf. Num 12:3), would have consented to it (cf. Ex 32:9-14; 33:3-5).

Finally, consider that affirmation of the Divine Spirit: "Obedience is better than sacrifices" (1 Sam 15:22) [*DRB*]. Giving us the reasoning, the Roman Doctor says: "Because another's flesh is slain through sacrifices, but one's own will is slain through obedience."²³⁹

2. Ponder whether out of love for this virtue you have sometimes bravely undertaken things contrary and naturally opposed to your disposition; or rather, have you desisted from them out of negligence? For "to the victor is given the manna" (cf. Rev 2:17).

If you do not overcome yourself in anything, know that no laurel crown is in store for you, no reward of the subjugated and conquered self-will is assigned to you. Indeed, if you realize that you still did exercise any act of obedience, know that you did not merit anything, you are not yet destined to Heaven, and your beatitude is still uncertain, although you have entered the Order to obtain it. For only the obedient man receives Heaven by

²³⁹ Gregorius Magnus, *Moralium Libri: Expositio Librum B. Job — Liber XXXV (Job XLII, 11)*, in: *PL*, vol. 76, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 765 (nn. 1155-1156).

hereditary right. He alone [f.162v] can say resolutely to Christ: I did what You commanded; grant what You promised.

Oh you, the miserable one! For however many occasions as you disobeyed, so you will suffer the loss of as many eternal rewards.

3. Call to mind and ponder the Lord's saying: "If any man would come after [M]e, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow [M]e" (cf. Mt 16:24). From this you can easily deduce whether you follow Christ, whether you have been carrying His cross at any time, and whether you have been denying yourself out of love of Him. For leaving behind in the world all your resources, wealth, honors, neighbors, and friends is of little importance in striving for the height of perfection and sanctity, unless you forsake in the Order yourself and your will, also. Christ did not save the world just because, leaving Heaven He descended to earth and assumed human form, but because He suffered while doing the will of the Father.

And so, consider how, with what zeal and ardor, you shall exercise this virtue, shown to you and proved by the word and example of Christ.

Let your colloquy include repentance for moments of disobedience and the resolution to be more faithfully obedient in the future.

1 Our Father. 1 Hail Mary.

MEDITATION IV ON OBEDIENCE

1. In this meditation on the same virtue, ponder the six points by which true obedience is reached and perfected

The first one is: **obey totally**. Examine particularly whether you always so perfectly discharge the works imposed upon you by obedience that a greater perfection would be impossible, namely: without a loss, in the best way, with extraordinary industry, diligence, and accuracy.

The second one is: **obey lovingly**. Find out from yourself, if you were obedient to your Superiors out of the pure love of God and your neighbor and respect for obedience, and not from some other consideration, namely: out of hope for a vain praise or a temporal gratification, as if they were the motive for your vow of obedience.

The third one is: **obey promptly**. Check your conscience whether you obeyed quickly, without being repeatedly told, pressed, or additionally motivated. For you should remind yourself what the vow of obedience obliges you to, namely: upon hearing the community signal, to leave unfinished the letter you had begun. Think whether you did at any time what is required of you by law for the perfection and the crown of obedience.

2. Consider the remaining points of obedience.

Firstly: did you display obedience **constantly** without discontinuing the already-started works, being overcome by reluctance, weariness, or instigation of an evil spirit or, perchance, some other illegitimate reason drew you away from obeying? Did you suppress the grumbles of dissatisfaction arising in you and not let them overcome you?

As to the second point regarding the obedience, check if you obeyed **bravely**, that is, if you applied your spirit to doing harsh and difficult things, and even more willingly so, in case of matters imposed upon you out of obedience; did you ever shrink and excuse yourself from undertaking hard things without any sufficiently important reason for opposing and resisting the spirit of obedience?

Finally, consider this last point: have you **faithfully** persevered and persisted once you have begun and until now in the exercise of this virtue? It is not up to you to investigate and examine why you had to be subordinated to somebody; yet, you ought to recognize your defects of obedience, identify, [f.163r] remove, grieve and atone for them.

3. Consider that those souls are happy, who embrace willingly the sweetest yoke of obedience. For to obey is to fly with someone else's wings; to lean on another's shoulder; to be carried

in someone else's arms; it means always walking and delighting in the pleasantest paradise of inner peace; having Heaven in the earthly life; it is, finally, subduing passions and gaining virtues. Obedience, as somebody said, introduces other virtues into the soul, protects those introduced and crowns those protected.²⁴⁰ Finally, obeying is being an angel in human flesh and a true imitator of Christ the Lord. Moreover, he who makes his steps under somebody else's leadership advances in the securest way, and this is what the obedient ones do. No one whose conscience is held in another's hands and directed by another's judgment shall run or fear any danger to salvation. The obedient distinguish themselves by this happiness.

Therefore, grieve with a sincere heart your every shortcoming in obedience and eagerly desire to possess this virtue. Ask for it through the merits of the obedient Virgin Mary, and promise to exercise it in imitation of the most obedient Son of God, your Lord and Savior.

1 Our Father. 1 Hail Mary.

MEDITATION V ON THE VIRTUE OF CHASTITY

1. Consider that this is an angelic virtue; indeed, more than angelic with regard to the fragile vase in which this very precious and very fragrant liquid is contained. Consider that you should observe chastity not because you treasure it, but because you promised so under oath; and not only by the precept of virtue, but also by the power of vow.

Ponder this: as compared with others, chaste souls please God more, those given to impurity displease Him and move Him to repugnance. Consider here, therefore, how you have fulfilled this vow.

2. Consider that everybody is obliged to preserve chastity not only out of Divine Law, but also out of the laws of nature.

²⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 765 (n. 1155).

You, indeed, are impelled to guard chastity for a threefold reason, namely: in addition to the above-said laws, you are also bound by the vow. Hence, the greater is the danger of breaking it, the graver is your sin, because you committed a sacrilege. Understand that you have sinned no differently from Lucifer, who aspired to the throne of God (cf. Is 14:12-14), nor from any other angel that would rebel against God.

And if, by divine permission, you are not tempted in this virtue, you may know that you are undeserving or too weak for being tempted. However, if you are, it is due to the great grace of the good and most provident God, and therefore, give Him the greatest thanks.

3. Consider whether you have employed the means intended for the protection of this virtue. Have you controlled your eyes, restrained your hand, watched your thoughts so that they stay unblemished and pure; have you abstained from a softer garment, refined food, and leisure, which are the robbers of chastity; have you avoided indecent reading?

Although all this should be absent and far away from you as a religious, nonetheless, since you have read, heard, and now learn that similar causes made the others to fall into a grievous precipice, scrutinize yourself as to these things, which place a chaste mind in great danger.

1 Our Father. 1 Hail Mary. [f.163v]

MEDITATION VI ON THE SAME VIRTUE

1. Try to evaluate all your thoughts, if perchance they did not bring a stain into your heart. In the case of the virtue of chastity, an impure thought not only cherished in your heart, but also in some way received into the mind is a very grave thing because it ruins the soul as much as an impure act.

It is also pertinent to this end to verify how you have guarded and used your senses since they bring into your soul every good

and every evil: your eyesight and hearing, which, as if a kind of amber, attract everything nearby; your sense of touch which is as a poisoned snake; your sense of taste, not the last enemy of purity; and the sense of smell, a dangerous obstacle for the same chaste mind.

For you notice how much harm David's prying eyes have done to him (cf. 2 Sam 11:1-12:23). May not the end to which the Mother of the human race was brought by desire to taste something escape your notice (cf. Gen 3:1-24). Do not forget how many are exceedingly tormented by infernal punishments because of their unguarded ears; how many have been condemned because of their unrestrained hand; and how many were thrust into the stinking prison of hell because of the hurtful pleasure of smell.

Consider these things and examine your conscience faithfully and constantly, and take action while there is still time for penance.

2. In the same vein, run through your mind the sins and faults against chastity that are committed both out of human negligence and by the divine permission.

Sins are committed out of human negligence when a person makes little account of small things, which is very dangerous in this case. For he who scorns small things, as the Wise Man says, shall fall little by little into greater things (cf. Sir 19:1). Now the small things, of which one makes little account, are these: a restless gaze rushing in all directions; initial and small assaults of the evil spirits that are not countered and not zealously resisted; negligence of prayer; indulgence in idleness; a wandering mind without occupation.

By God's permission one falls into a sin against chastity: on account of pride (sometimes very slight) just as Eve sinned in Paradise when, overcome by the temptation to gluttony, she wanted to be like God.

And very many other people sin every day because of grumbling, which also was the cause of the idolatry of the Jewish people; because of excessive confidence placed in one's own strength to oppose the temptation of the flesh. Mostly such people sin this way, whom God's grace rightly abandons on account of their

being conceited out of disobedience, as we read about a monk, who brought with him to the monastery from the world a son of disobedience.²⁴¹ Finally, people sin out of sluggishness and apathy, as the Lord says: “because you are lukewarm, I will begin to vomit you” (cf. Rev 3:16), which means to withdraw graces.

For he who prefers himself to another, if only in thought, prepares a grievous sin for himself. He who relies on his prudence, circumspection, and foresight, easily falls if abandoned by divine assistance; as it was said: “O my God, in [Y]ou I trust, let me not be put to shame” (Ps 25:2). Well, the sin of the flesh always accompanies the disobedient, because the means prescribed for protection against it are shattered by disobedience. A Christian poet states about sluggishness or apathy: “The apathy of a soul is a perverse pestilence: with its unnoticed spike, it makes wounds.”²⁴²

As for you, consider the occasions and causes of carnal sin; see whether some of these do not rule over you and eliminate them.

3. It will not hurt to consider, while stirring up your contrition and zeal for this virtue, the infernal fire, which is prepared especially for the immoderate. “As much as she hath glorified herself, and lived in delicacies,” (says the Apocalyptic bard) “so much [f.164r] torment and sorrow give ye to her” (Rev 18:7) [DRB].

That well-known devout Follower of Christ, elaborating on it to a great length, says: “What else will that infernal fire feed upon but your sins (and especially the carnal ones)? The more you indulge yourself and yield to your flesh now, the more severely you will pay for it later on, and the more fuel you accumulate for the burning.” And he further says: “There,” that is, in hell, “the luxurious and the lovers of pleasures shall burn in the blazing

²⁴¹ No reference is given in *IC crit. ed.* as to a source from which this story is derived.

²⁴² This quotation is taken from Marcus Fabius Quintilian, *Palaestrae Oratoriae Liber III*, in: *Institutio Oratoria*, Rome ca. 96 AD, p. 641. On page 640, the author states that the examples are taken from some poets (“*Poetarum*”), but the poet in question is not named there, and about him it is only said: “*alius otii perniciosi insectator*.”

pitch and putrid sulfur, while the unjust will howl in pain like mad dogs.”²⁴³

Therefore, considering these punishments and torments protect yourself with all your strength against impurity, for nothing is more swiftly punished with infernal torments, nothing is more swiftly condemned. And do not think that God, or the help of the Blessed Virgin, or the intercession of some patron saint would keep you after death from the punishments reserved for the most insolent flesh, unless you guard yourself from them by avoiding the way leading to hell, atoning for past sins, and avoiding future sins.

1 Our Father. 1 Hail Mary.

MEDITATION VII ON THE VIRTUE OF POVERTY

1. You should make the most careful meditation with regard to this virtue. For the better hidden the desire and love of possessing is, the more intently it should be tracked down, revealed, and eliminated. Consequently, ask yourself whether you are emotionally attached to a certain thing, even if the possession of it was approved.

Just as the great and numerous lawfully possessed material goods are least harmful to many people; to you, on the contrary, even the smallest thing can cause great damage if you passionately seek or get attached to it. For many it is a matter of honor to possess many things; while in your case, a religious bound by the vow of poverty, the longing even for the necessary things, such as some clothing, has to be curbed and reproved.

As far as those things contrary to poverty that you most clearly see that you possess, think that they are nothing other than snakes, which shall swiftly bring ruin to you and to your Order.

²⁴³ Cf. *IC*, Bk. I, Ch. 24, § 3. In this quotation, St. Stanislaus used two different words than in the original text, and he also added the word “infernal” that was implied by the context; cf. *IC crit. ed.*, p. 371 (footnotes “d-d,” “e,” “f,” “g”).

Therefore, get rid of them immediately and remove from your cell, lest the most precious pearl of evangelical poverty lose its value and its brilliance fade.

2. Consider whether you had a particular attachment to a certain thing that you cannot leave or, should you have to let it go, you would only do so with sadness and upset spirit? This, indeed, is graver and much worse than possessing the whole world without being attached to it.

Also examine yourself, whether you were the cause of someone else's violating or spurning the vow of poverty by letting him keep something contrary to it, or by arranging for its lawful possessory, or by bringing to the Order or to the house even trifling things discordant with sacred poverty. Next, see if you have not concealed from your Superior some things that you could certainly lawfully possess; or, if you did not turn over for the common use the things which were offered to you by other people, while trying to prevail upon the Superior with annoyance and bitterness so that you yourself could use them.

Think, however, that as you came naked out of the earth, you shall also return naked to the earth. For you, having left Heaven, Christ was born naked in the stable so that you may imitate Him in this nakedness and that, having nothing, you may have all; according to this saying: "A destitute monk or a religious is the lord of the whole world."

3. You should especially rejoice that God has summoned you to the most fortunate state of poverty and its most excellent [**f.164v**] vow, since it obtains for you the highest peace, serenity, and joy.

You know, on the contrary, that the possessors of many treasures, accumulated at the cost of great effort, are tormented; they guard these possessions with excessive care, dread, and vigilance; and should they lose them, they would become greatly distressed and commit suicide sometimes. Why? Because regardless of all their wealth they cannot possess God, the Highest Good. Because nobody can serve God and mammon (cf. Mt 6:24); and nobody can follow Jesus and attain Jesus, unless he goes and sells everything (cf. Mt 19:21).

Besides, the Truth Himself openly testified that it is very difficult for the rich to enter into everlasting life: “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Mt 19:24). On the other hand, the same Truth says that the poor are heirs to everlasting wealth: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3).

1 Our Father. 1 Hail Mary.

MEDITATION VIII ON THE SAME VIRTUE

1. Consider that you shall render to God a strict account of all virtues, and especially of poverty. For He cherished this virtue beyond all others; He particularly recommended it in His evangelical counsels and commandments, since He ordered the apostles to walk without a traveling bag and walking stick (cf. Mt 10:10; Lk 9:3) and wanted those who would like to follow Him to renounce the world, their friends, their riches, and all things (cf. Mt 16:24-26). As for you, having followed the teaching and encouragement of the Savior, you have dispossessed yourself on account of Him, denying, forsaking, fleeing from the world and its goods and your parents living in this world.

Wherefore it would be disgraceful and abominable should you now seek these things, or things indeed viler than those which you have nobly and more than heroically spurned and abandoned out of the love for God Himself, and not for some friend. Therefore, make a self-examination now: First of all, of your **feelings**: whether you have not developed an attachment to things that were given to you for use?

Secondly, of your **desire**: whether you have not desired things that another possesses by the Superior's permission; and whether with some dejection, not to say grumbling or pain, you have parted from things you lost or received?

Thirdly, of your **will**: whether you intended to acquire and possess such things that are indicated and declared contrary to poverty by your *Constitutions* or by ecclesiastical law; and whether when you receive other things that you are able to and are supposed to have, you do so with the love of Christ made so poor for you, and remove from yourself all desire of possessing.

2. Consider now things which pertain to the upkeep of cleanliness in poverty, namely: whether you have kept your room, your habit, and other things very clean, mindful of the saying of that known saint: "Poverty has always suited me, but a clean one."²⁴⁴

Then see, whether you wished for some exquisite food, not common for others, to be provided for you with no just cause, but only to kindle your gluttony; or perhaps you consumed ordinary food, but not agreeably and with some distaste.

Finally, whether, only out of sheer curiosity, you amassed many books, even the pious ones, and crammed your room with them, as well did not always try to ascend to a more perfect and higher level of sublime poverty. [f.165r]

Having made this meditation, be sorry that you persisted in some of these defects and resolve to seriously practice poverty henceforth.

3. Continue pondering the same virtue, which the numerous holy Fathers highly revered after the example of Christ, partly because the mind not snared by any earthly things more accurately contemplates, desires, and conceives celestial things; partly because those who spurn transient things stay irreproachable in each virtue and magnanimously undertake, accomplish, and complete all difficult things.

²⁴⁴ The source of this saying could not be determined. It is known, however, that St. Joseph Calasanz prescribed in the Constitutions of the Piarists that their garments "simultaneously shine out with poverty and cleanliness," "so that the cleanliness will decorate the purity of the poverty of your wardrobe" (cf. *ConstSP*, Pars II, Ch. VI, nn. I, V). St. Stanislaus, in *The Rule of Life* (i.e., *Norma Vitae*), also prescribed for the Marians in regards to their garments that "the greatest cleanliness of them should be observed, because dirty poverty can please no one" (*RL*, p. 66 (Ch. IV, § 4)).

Therefore Christ, the highest Wisdom, chose poor men for His apostles, because He could convert the world through them more easily than through rich men who are so desirous of wealth. Indeed, because He wanted His apostles (as well as the other faithful) to be dedicated to the Spirit alone, He taught them not to slight this virtue; He showed how it should be taken care of, and He commanded them to preserve it.

For this reason, it also happened that upon His coming into the world, He chose poor parents and avoided dealing with the proud and rich Pharisees, except for the sake of their salvation. For they were teachers of greed and not of charity, and they were hirelings and not the true shepherds.

Finally, consider that Judas' horrible downfall had its origin in nothing else but in avarice, which is the enemy of poverty. Prompted by it, he even sold his Teacher, the Lord, Redeemer and Creator, for such a vile and meager price.

Compose your colloquy using your affections for the poor Jesus and Mary, and magnanimous resolutions pertaining to poverty, and ask to be struck by death rather than by the wicked desire of seeking and possessing material things.

1 Our Father. 1 Hail Mary.

MEDITATION IX ON CHARITY

1. Now consider that virtue by which every creature has been created, the earth and Heaven have come into existence, and man has been formed; God became Man, and although He was impervious to suffering, He suffered and was killed in His passible human body; immortal, He died for you not as God, but as a man. By this virtue the heavenly Light, the Teacher of Truth and Spirit of all knowledge was brought down from Heaven upon the apostles and other disciples; by this virtue the one body of the Church of God was brought together with the most diverse peoples of the nations as members and so many sacred

associations, Congregations and Orders join together and live deeply united in one spirit and in the love of the one God.

You must consider that this virtue discourages rebellions, averts wars, begets peace, loves laws, highly esteems the neighbor, embraces the enemy, wishes well and does good to all.

Therefore, meditate on how you should practice this virtue with such great zeal, steadiness, perseverance, and courage. Examine yourself and demand from your hands the works of charity, which are:

- loving God above all things;
- avoiding sin and any imperfections above all evils;
- helping your neighbor as you can; working for the common good;
- responding to your vocation; always exerting yourself to live more perfectly;
- resolving not to harm, [f.165v] nor vitiate, corrupt, or bring to moral ruin anybody by thought, word, deed, suspicion, bad example;
- loving the good and the righteous; praying to God for those who fall and for evil people; visiting the sick; teaching the illiterate; rebuking the perverse; providing help and counsel to those in need and those deprived of human assistance; freeing the captives; visiting the prisoners; consoling the afflicted; restraining the excessively and wickedly joyful; doing to others what we wish to be done to us; and not wishing nor imposing upon others what we truly detest and avoid.

How many are these most excellent deeds of charity! How rarely have you sought them and done them!

2. Consider the defects of charity, which is contrary to the love of God:

- tepidly proceeding on the way of perfection, which you entered out of love for God;
- not spreading the glory of God;
- weakening your religious community;

- attaining only inferior perfection due to negligence or pusillanimity;
- putting up obstacles that do not allow the good and almighty God to freely access your heart, dwell in and rule over it;
- longing for, or praising, or relishing the world anew if only in your thoughts;
- refusing to avoid and eliminate any sin (whether grave or small) and the slightest imperfections and their occasions.

All of the above are especially adverse to the love of God and they infinitely offend the infinite Goodness.

As to the love of neighbor, consider this: whether you are ruled by such faults as anger, grumbling, indignation, envy, hatred, suspicion, irreverence, lack of mercy, lack of compassion, distrust, treachery, slander, defamation, especially of the dead. Perhaps, you accused him unfairly, treated him with irritation, ridiculed him in an ugly manner, were impatiently angry; or did not congratulate him on something well done, did not rejoice in his happiness, did not help in need, did not alleviate his affliction; disregarded or neglected to honor him, did not endure his flaws, or did not pray to God for him. Maybe, you envied or slandered the gifts of good fortune, God's talents, indignantly dragged down and slandered the reputation not only of persons, but also of their works; did not keep your word, did not cooperate, and did not rescue your neighbor from a grave danger to his salvation in whatever way, even by the use of extreme means.

3. Consider that aggrieving someone for undue reason is against charity, for example: distressing your Superiors, peers or inferiors for some invalid reason; perturbing the whole body of the Order, Province or house in which you live, and being the cause of some degree of concern on your account. Perhaps, you offended the sight and spirit of others by your less than religious and exemplary life and conduct, and thus injured, lest I say shattered, the bond of the most eminent, most precious, and most divine of virtues.

Then consider if you were the origin, instigator, or cause of some commotions; if you disturbed the peace and quiet either

internal, that is, domestic, or external: that is, among lay people or people of a different status. Perhaps, you did not perform your duties to everyone's satisfaction in accordance with the grace and diligence granted to you; or perhaps you did not deter with all your strength and skillfulness the common harms threatening you. Maybe, you did not adorn, advance, or help the Order and the house where you live, but most of all the Church of the Lord, in accordance with the quantity and quality of talents received from God or from nature, when you justly were able and obliged to do so; or if you hindered, or did not help others, in advancing these things, etc.

Considering the above-said and many other transgressions against charity, which the Divine Spirit will put as a reproach to your mind, mourn fully the defects discovered in you and resolve [f.166r] to atone for them and to renew the practices of holy charity.

In the colloquy, rejoice in the Lord with the greatest love according to the dictate of the intellect, and in an impetus of love, give free rein to the affections of your heart, eliciting from both an act of love.

MEDITATION X ON THE SAME VIRTUE

1. Consider those words of St. Paul: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor 13:1-2). By these words you are taught that a man without charity, a religious without love, is a shadow without the sun, the body without a soul: indeed, he is nothing. What the soul is to the body, this charity is to the Church, religious institutes, and religious houses. Rightly indeed, a certain man said in recommendation of this virtue: "Take the sun away from the world, and

you have taken away all; take charity away from a man, and you have left nothing.”²⁴⁵

Charity is the soul, light, and life of religious Institutes and of any human association; consequently, he who injures charity seems to injure life, to extinguish light, and to deprive the soul of life. It happens thus, because the lack of charity in one member simultaneously injures the whole body. It can be seen in human body: if only one finger is injured by septic iron, the poison, creeping little by little throughout the whole hand, would take over the whole body and all of its limbs will feel the wound of its injured part. By means of charity, one body of a religious order is formed from individual persons; its members: the Superiors, peers, and inferiors.

Now, hatred is contrary to charity. Hatred is more poisonous than any poison, deadlier than any pestilence. Christ gravely exhorts us to avoid it, when He says: “leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt 5:24).

Oh, how most justly and appropriately the Savior commands it! For he who does not have love for his neighbor is unworthy of God’s love. It is thanks to this love, that God wants to reconcile to us, do us good, and be merciful to us. Therefore, whatever evil you did against this most excellent and most admirable virtue, whatever offence, even very mild, you have committed, atone for it as soon as possible. And firmly believe that nobody can find the way to the heavenly region and inheritance who is not led and accompanied by charity: because the way to and gate of the heavenly dwelling was found and opened by Charity, namely: by Christ.

2. Seriously consider what damages the violation of charity brings about and of what goods it robs us.

That dreadful example of the presbyter Sapricius teaches you about this. When he refused to be reconciled with the subdeacon

²⁴⁵ The author of this saying is not known. St. Stanislaus himself expressed a similar idea: “Each of you should keep in mind that the soul of his Institute is love, and to the extent that he withdraws from love, he withdraws from life” (*RL*, p. 60 (Ch. II, § 4)).

Nicephorus and he let slip from his hands the palm of martyrdom, which many men strive to obtain with such great effort and zeal, he assented to idolatry, fell, and denied the Savior.

Alas! He was shipwrecked in the very port, because he broke the sail of charity by which his ship, that is, his soul, was rigged and driven! He lost the rope with which he was to tie his boat to the shore!

The Lord withdrew from him the gift and grace of persevering in the tortures because he was not willing to forgive the servant and the brother for the sake of the Lord and the Father. He refused to forgive the brother, so pious and very humble, and to forget the offense imputed to him, although this brother entreated him humbly with many [f.166v] tears.²⁴⁶

Who can foretell, whether those last graces, which, like a gentle wind, are to bring your ship, that is your soul, to the port of the most blessed eternity, would not be withdrawn from you too, unless you surely repair the broken sail of charity?

3. You will not be wrong to believe that the man who has no charity has no virtue. Hollow and unfruitful is the teaching which charity does not impart. False and useless is the obedience that is not undertaken and practiced out of charity. Vain and deceitful is the humility mixed up with hatred. Frail and puffed up is the chastity without the companionship and protection of holy love.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Joseph-Marie Sauget, *BS*, vol. IX, Istituto Giovanni XXIII nella Pontificia Università lateranense, Roma 1967, pp. 870-871 (s.v. *Niceforo, santo, martire di Antiochia*): "It is precisely in Antioch, in fact, ... that the episode described as his passion takes place. Nicephorus had a friend, the priest Sapricius, who, through the wickedness of the devil, turned his friendship for him into hatred. When the persecution came, Sapricius was arrested and subjected to torments. Once Nicephorus, through an intermediary, asked for reconciliation, but the priest refused. When he was led to the torture, Nicephorus himself went to throw himself at the feet of the one who was to be martyred, but Sapricius was once again adamant, refusing to apply the precept of forgiveness for his enemies. The punishment was not to be long in coming, taking a more than shameful turn for him. Sapricius, in fact, deprived of God's help, did not have the courage to face the final torture and begged the executioners to let him go free with the promise that he would sacrifice to the gods. Nicephorus who witnessed the scene presented himself to the executioners confessing his faith in Christ and died beheaded." Cf. *BLS* (s.v. *February 9 — St. Nicephorus, Martyr*).

Wicked and abominable is the poverty that is not practiced out of love. Faulty is the gentleness which is not begotten by love. Rigid is all perfection, virtue and action that is not warmed by love.

Realize with regard to these things that it is impossible for us to carry out any work to a heroic degree without charity. And consider that it is why it happens that many remove their hand from the plough, stop at the middle way of perfection and dishonorably abandon their pious works; because charity does not help them, does not motivate them, does not support them, and does not strengthen them.

I do not hesitate to assert that not even our good Savior would have been ready to accomplish the greatest work of human salvation without charity. Indeed, the case presents itself thus: how could He accomplish what He undertook for that reason, moved by the greatest motive of charity, without the same virtue? Whatever He did, underwent, and endured for our life, all this is to be ascribed to charity, which alone accomplished it.

O charity, you most excellent leader of virtues and teacher of perfection! O holy charity, eternal ardor, salutary flame, feeder of souls, mother of peace, bond of peoples and minds, the one which unites our spirit to God!

May you never, in relation to God the highest Goodness or my neighbor, weaken or die out in my heart! May you be present as my companion everywhere, in my every thought, resolution, intention, and action!²⁴⁷ May you never depart from me! Let learning, prophecies and revelations go away, but you, O charity, do not abandon me! May I enter with you into the abodes of the Blessed and into the kingdom of charity, from which, O most powerful virtue, you have brought the divine Offspring down to the world's kingdom. Amen.

²⁴⁷ Cf. *RL*, pp. 59-60 (Ch. II, § 3).

MEDITATION XI

ON RELIGIOUS HUMILITY

1. Consider that humility is a peculiar and, in a certain way, natural virtue of any Religious. As the instruction of our holy Father²⁴⁸ teaches you, it stands out as the most important thing, both of your religious vocation and of your perfection. Now concentrate your mind upon its exercise.

1) Remember, therefore, that characteristic of humility is to truly and not fictitiously believe oneself to be inferior and more despicable than all creatures; and on the contrary, wanting to be placed above all is characteristic of pride.

2) The marks of a humble spirit are: engaging in rather commonplace tasks; being content with things spurned by others; shunning from recognition; avoiding self-praise or attributing praise solely to God; wishing to be spurned. You should never want it to be recognized that you accomplish something out of humility nor to be considered humble; instead, you should rather endeavor to have ascribed to a divine arrangement, and not to your humility, all things that the others believe you have said or done out of humility.

3) In short: humility consists in an open, honest, genuine, and sincere spirit, and in similar actions [f.167r]. For humility (as a certain Doctor teaches on the basis of the observation and revelation of St. Teresa) is nothing other than the truth.²⁴⁹ For, if out

²⁴⁸ The words: “our holy Father” probably referred to St. Joseph Calasanz (d. 1648), whose cause of beatification had been initially considered in 1650 and was introduced in 1667 in part with the help of Fr. Papczyński (cf. *Positio*, pp. 72-74). It is no wonder that Stanislaus, once a Piarist, had a great affection for the Order of Pious Schools and retained calling St. Joseph Calasanz “our” Founder. St. Joseph Calasanz gave to those in formation this Instruction on the necessity of humility for progress in religious perfection, in his letter dated June 13, 1648 to Fr. John Dominic Franchi. Cf. Giuseppe Calasanzio, *Epistolario di San Giuseppe Calasanzio*, Ed. Leodegario Picanyol, SP, vol. VIII, Editiones Calasanzianæ, Roma 1955, p. 434 (n. 4557). [Hereafter *Epistolario di San Giuseppe Calasanzio* will be abbreviated as *EGC*.]

²⁴⁹ St. Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, in: CWTa, vol. 2. ICS Publications, Washington, DC, 1980, 2012, p. 420 (6th Mansion: Ch. 10, § 7): “Once I was pon-

of contempt we estimate ourselves to be worms, this is most true; or if we judge ourselves deserving of any punishment, affliction, cross, and oppression, neither is this discordant from the truth of the matter. Certainly, we, as individuals or a community, offend God, the Father of all, and hurt Him by our serious evil deeds; we are deserving of all torments, hardships, and tortures.

If you have your soul already trained in this aspect and you perceive these things, you should give the greatest thanks for them to the Highest Good, or you should at least try to do so. If, however, you find it to be different in your case, you should lament very much that you did not succeed and that you were not permitted to imitate your most humble Savior in the holy virtue of humility. Now, resolve to start truly building your perfection from this virtue, as from the foundation of all other virtues, lest, building on the air, you be dashed down, ruined, and perish, even by the least blowing of pride or vainglory.

2. To let the white shine even more in comparison to the black, focus your mind on examining pride. Consider how much more your spirit should seek the sublime now, when you are already in the sacred Order, as opposed to the time when you wandered along the crossroads of Babylon, that is, the world. How important you felt, how puffed up with pride then! With what arrogance you always wanted to be placed above everyone, subject to no one; to be always singularly admired, never despised. But now, since the time of your admission into religious life, think how many times you bore derisions, or perhaps, how many times you were angry only because some things were contrary to your honor, reputation, and authority? And if you did not use any occasion to lower and humiliate yourself, consider who and what kind of person you would be if you used such occasions to your advantage.

dering why our Lord was so fond of this virtue of humility, and this thought came to me — in my opinion not as a result of reflection but suddenly: It is because God is supreme Truth; and to be humble is to walk in truth, for it is a very deep truth that of ourselves we have nothing good but only misery and nothingness." The identity of this "certain Doctor" is not known.

Moreover consider, according to the opinion of Hugo, that pride is an ignoble exaltation, which, despising the inferior in rank, strives after and desires to be placed before equals and superiors in rank.²⁵⁰ Indeed, it is so hidden that sometimes you do not perceive at all that you are afflicted by this vice.

The daughters of pride are: vainglory; disgraceful and dishonest ambition; love of honor; vain, useless, and inordinate hunger for knowledge; the desire to outshine others by erudition; the wish to have a more dignified position, and to be prized, honored, and more important than the others; to not assent to other people's very sensible and sound counsels; to be opposed to the more probable opinions, and to spurn, contradict, and reject with unyielding obstinacy those opinions that are probable: all of these are the most evident signs of no insignificant conceit.

Also pertinent are the following: bragging of one's learning, showing off one's intelligence with witticisms and salty jokes, mocking others, and praising oneself.

O my swaggerer, O my learned one! O my intellectual! Let's suppose that you can compete with Plato and Tullius (Cicero); let's suppose that you are a brilliant and perceptive theologian; let's suppose that you are very well trained in all sciences and fields of arts. Do you already cease to be dust and ashes for that reason, and before that, something smelly, horrible, and mud-like?

"You are dust" (your Creator exhorts you), "and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19).

3. Consider how often you have lost the opportunity for practicing humility. How often and how forcefully you have attacked without urgent necessity the opinions of others and promoted your own instead just to show that you are important, although you could have kept silence with honor and docility.

And it will be not without benefit if you recall the incidents of contempt that your Lord experienced while living in this world, and ponder what is your progress in humility or what are its flaws.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Hugo de S. Victore, *Opera omnia — Tomus III: Miscellanea (Liber I)*, in: *PL*, vol. 177, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1854, p. 548 (*De duplici superbia* (Tit. CXXVII)). Cf. *IC crit. ed.*, p. 382 (footnote 40).

Besides, how often you have rejected lowly occupations, tasks and functions [f.167v] out of the arrogance of your spirit, while you would have gained no insignificant merit should you have taken them on. Oh! What was going on with you when a chance for humiliating yourself presented itself to you? Due to your smugness and the arrogant judgment of your mind, you neglected or refused to submit yourself to it and at your great opportunity did not want to be spurned. Now you regret the loss of merit, and the awareness of your conceit torments your conscience.

To action, therefore! If you hitherto incautiously ran into these very high rocks and the most dangerous Scyllas,²⁵¹ from now on proceed more cautiously and resolve to crawl humbly, so that together with Jesus, the Teacher of humility, you may attain at some point the height of Heaven, and become wiser, singing with David: "Before I was afflicted I went astray" (Ps 119:67).

MEDITATION XII ON THE SAME VIRTUE (OF HUMILITY)

1. Consider the examples of all of the humble saints, and especially of the most humble Virgin Mary and of the Incarnate Word born from her, who also summon you forth to this virtue or shame you if you have been contemptuous of it hitherto.

Therefore, first comprehend by profound contemplation that to teach you humility either by word or by example, the Son of God came down from the bosom of the eternal Father and the most spacious royal castle into the womb of a young mortal virgin (which, however, seemed like Heaven to the Son of God), and began to teach in this same virginal womb this more sublime Wisdom, consisting in a humble spirit and in the contempt of the vainglorious doctrine of the wise of this world.

²⁵¹ The rocks at the entrance to the straits between Sicily and Italy, opposite to Charybdis. There is an expression: "between Scylla and Charybdis," which means "between two dangers," where one cannot be avoided without incurring equally great danger from the other. See footnote 130 (p. 298).

The brief compendium of His entire teaching is: "Learn from [M]e, because I am meek, and humble of heart" (cf. Mt 11:29). Indeed, His birth in a stable, the flight to Egypt, the temptation in the desert, the persecutions by the Jews, the washing of feet in the Cenacle, the sadness in the garden, the fetters, the slaps in the face, the imprisonment, the scourging, the derision by Herod, the crowning with thorns in the hall of Pilate, the most shameful carrying of the Cross, the most disreputable and ignominious death on the Cross, and the countless other events in His life, was all of this not a very manifest and clear, inasmuch as practical, teaching of the utmost humility?

His most modest and humble Mother acknowledges herself unworthy of the heavenly maternity and declares it. She serves Elizabeth, whom she visits. As if impure, she submits herself to purification; indeed, she asks for it. She follows her most beloved Son until His death. As the patient one, she bears such great sorrows; as the humble one, she bears abusive language and unheard of insults. She is glad to be committed into the disciple's care and, always a virgin, to be called a woman (although this detracts nothing from her unblemished virginity).

These things reveal her very great, and even quite divine, humility; without which not even her virginity, as the mellifluous Bernard dares to affirm, would please God.²⁵²

Moreover, who could express in words and embrace with one's mind the humility of the countless number of saints? Very many of them, having thrown away royal dignities, the noble crests of their ancestors, their friends and relatives, famous for their wealth and reputation and having despised the whole world at last, entered the difficult way of the cross and the ignominious (as

²⁵² Cf. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *First Sermon on the Glories of the Virgin Mother*, in: *St. Bernard's Sermons for the Seasons and Principal Festivals of the Year*, vol. I, The Carroll Press, Westminster 1950, p. 62: "I dare to affirm it — the virginity even of Mary would have no value in His [God's] eyes apart from her humility ... And hence it may be said that her humility was the true reason why the Lord took complacency in her virginity." Cf. Bernardus, *Sermones de Tempore: De Laudibus Virginis Matris — Homilia I*, in: *PL*, vol. 183, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1862, p. 59 (n. 735).

the sons of this age think) way of humility, pursuing the Teacher of humility. They trained themselves in the school of humility continuously, to the last moment of their present life.

As for you, considering these things, will you dare to elevate yourself? Will you dare to be puffed up by the presumptuous wind of elevated thoughts? Will you fail to imitate [f.168r] such champions and lovers of humility, while you feel indeed the burning desire to reach and to possess their everlasting glory?

2. Consider that a certain Doctor has passed on somewhere in his great writing, that the loss of virginity may be salvaged only by humility, and that the loss of chastity is compensated by lowliness, although its injured flower will never flourish again.²⁵³ Let this be taught to you first by Mary of Jerusalem,²⁵⁴ and then by Mary of Egypt,²⁵⁵ who, having lost the treasure of their virginal integrity, gained the love and grace of their immortal Spouse only through humility. The above-mentioned Doctor also teaches that he regained through humility among men what he had lost through pride.²⁵⁶

Study attentively and carefully think over also that God resists the proud, but He gives His grace to the humble (cf. 1 Pet 5:5; Jas 4:6). Wherefore if you eagerly desire to regain the graces lost,

²⁵³ In the margin "a certain Doctor" is indicated to be St. Augustine, yet without the title of where the writing was coming from. Cf. Augustinus, *De sancta Virginitate — Liber Unus*, in: *PL*, vol. 40, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1865, p. 426 (cap. 50).

²⁵⁴ Evidently it is Mary, the sister of Lazarus from Bethany, which was a village near Jerusalem. This Mary in the Latin liturgy was identified with Mary Magdalene, a woman who was a sinner out of whom Jesus had cast seven devils (cf. Mk 16:9), and with the anonymous woman, a sinner, who came to the Pharisee's house where Jesus was at a meal, knelt behind Him, washed His feet with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed them in humility (cf. Lk 7:37-38). Cf. *BLS* (s.v. *July 22 — St. Mary Magdalen*).

²⁵⁵ Cf. Joseph-Marie Sauget, *BS*, vol. VIII, Istituto Giovanni XXIII nella Pontificia Università lateranense, Roma 1966, pp. 981ff. (s.v. *Maria Egiziaca, santa*): St. Mary of Egypt, ca. 430, "at the age of twelve she fled from her father's house to lead a comfortable life of sin in Alexandria ... For seventeen years she lived in this state." In Jerusalem, "having seen an image of the Theotokos, she got down on her knees and begged [Mary], touched by a grace of conversion, to free her ... to show her the way of penance that she should have already been following."

²⁵⁶ Cf. *AC*, Bk. IV, Ch. 16; Bk. VII, Ch. 18.

to keep those already granted and possessed, and to acquire new graces from God, you should apply yourself with all zeal to humility.

Finally, consider carefully that humility is the only virtue that lifts us up to the dwelling-place of the heavenly beings; and, as St. Philip Neri, the Flower of Florence says and teaches, delivers and releases us from the unsuitable and hurtful effect of sadness, from dangerous scruples, and from very oppressive temptations.²⁵⁷

For this reason, St. Anthony the Great, who had before his eyes the evil spirits' cunning tricks and snares laid out for the entrapment of the souls of good men as well as other countless dangers, inquired with trembling by whom these are to be overcome; the answer was given from God: that all these nets and dangers to salvation can be overcome by someone humble.²⁵⁸

Finally, you shall be easily convinced that a religious without humility is like a house without a foundation. But endowed with it, he is like a building provided with the best fortification and founded on the strongest rock.

Since this is so, you should lament very much and in the highest degree that you have not yet acquired this most excellent of virtues, and that you never, or certainly most seldom, practiced it, doing so with the uneasiness of a swaggering spirit. Henceforth, having considered how great are its power, excellence, and dignity, and also its usefulness, will you continue to be negligent or will you strive to acquire it as soon as possible and to exercise it constantly?

3. Make some resolutions to exercise humility. As it was said, humility consists in keeping silence, avoiding showing off one's learning, wearing the cheapest garb, doing lowly duties, and showing most prompt submission to whom it is due. And it also consists in declaring yourself, not only in speech, but also with reasons, most deserving of hell because of your evil deeds; and

²⁵⁷ Cf. Carlo Gasbarri, *Filippo Neri nella testimonianza dei contemporanei*, Città Nuova Editrice, Roma 1974, pp. 24-71 (Ch. II-III).

²⁵⁸ Cf. Athanasius, *Vita S. Antonii* (#50), in: *PG*, vol. 26, Ateliers catholiques du Petit-Montrouge, Paris 1857, p. 890 (n. 654).

in believing that you deserve to be crushed by the greatest pains, annoyances, and anguishes.

Beware of doing those things that disturb others, but do things that please them, provided that they are not sinful. Believe yourself deserving to undergo punishment for other sinners. Flee from sublime titles, and pleasure of praise and reverence, as far as it is fitting, unless God thus arranges that these things, without your aspiring for them, are imposed upon and shown to you against your will, which is to be endured also out of humility,

In a word, it will also testify to the greatest humility, if doing such things zealously, you would not be aware of being humble and would decidedly deny it. You should behave as if you did not know what humility is, or rather you should recognize and praise it. Should you even fulfill all of the things asked, nonetheless you will never arrive at the perfection and summit of humility, at which arrived their Master, Christ, [f.168v] and which He attained, or to which all of the other saints ascended. However, so that as a disciple you do not separate yourself from Him, at least be good enough to exercise the duties and acts of humility, which the Savior Himself exercised; or at least admire them, praise them, and understand that even if you had the humility of all the saints, you could never imitate or match even the least portion of the humility of Christ. And finally, ask that He who alone can do it, make you humble. He, who “has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the humble” (cf. Lk 1:52).

MEDITATION XIII ON MODESTY²⁵⁹

1. Consider what the Wise Man says: “There are six things which the Lord hates, seven which are an abomination to

²⁵⁹ St. Stanislaus uses the Latin word *modestia*, but it is important to note that this Latin word has a broader meaning than how we typically use the word “modesty” in English, and signifies an overall temperateness of spirit rather than simply temperance in regard to dress.

[H]im: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and a man who sows discord among brothers” (Prov 6:16-19). All these things are contrary to modesty and result from licentiousness of spirit and heart.

Modesty certainly restrains the eyes, immodesty gives free rein to them, and this is what the fall of David teaches us (cf. 2 Sam 11:1-5).

Modesty restrains the tongue, immoderation loosens it: he who affirms that tongues are the very worst evil among all things,²⁶⁰ shows you how great and what kind of evils arise from it.

Modesty folds the hands together, immodesty agitates them: daily experience teaches you what kind of and what great evil deeds the unrestrained hands can cause.

Modesty is the master of the heart and guides it according to the rules of prudence; immodesty pours the heart out, and anyone can see without looking that it is clearly the origin of so many imperfections. Modesty commands to curb your pace, immodesty permits the feet to run free: but who could count the number of men whom their feet led to hell?

Modesty is very friendly to truth, immodesty is the feeder of lies, and everybody knows with what great repugnance God and men speak of it, since for the sake of salvation of the whole world, lying is forbidden by divine ordinance.

Modesty tells to mind one’s own matters, immodesty always meddles in other people’s affairs; it calls evil good and asserts that good is evil; well, how contrary this is to the Divine Law! Modesty guards fraternal charity; immodesty, like some restless plague, often disturbs and confuses all things; and who among the celestial beings or men would recognize it as good?

Pay great attention to all these things in regard to yourself and analyze them most diligently in your mind, accepting and recognizing only such things that find themselves agreeable with what

²⁶⁰ Cf. Jas 3:5-10, where we are told about the evils of the tongue.

the Wisest of all the wise asserts. Finally, resolve to uphold and exercise modesty, and to avoid and cast out the most hurtful and destructive vice of immodesty.

2. Consider that modesty is the custodian or feeder of virtues, or their guide, if you will. Besides the already identified, there are many other vices contrary to it, as shown below:

1) An improper attitude or rather discomposure of the body, like agitated arms or some other part of the body; then a loud, unpleasant, and also flippant way of speaking. This vice includes: all unbecoming jokes, wits, curses, murmurs, lies, insults, [f.169r] quarrels, brawls, blasphemies, buffoonery, sarcastic remarks, words seasoned with disorderly jokes, calumnies, slanders, humiliations, and defamations. In regard to the eyes however, the eyes are not only repugnant to modesty when they are restless and wild, but also when they are exceedingly downcast and lowered and coerced by a kind of continuous struggle.

2) Adverse to modesty also is the irreverence towards persons to whom due honor must be shown, such as the elderly, as well peers and those lower in rank.

3) As to hearing, these things destroy modesty: showing interest in gossiping or spreading gossip, whether they are secular and external, or domestic and internal; although unrelated to you, they create the greatest distraction of your spirit and result in great damage; lending your ear to conversations redolent of the world and intended to stir unhealthy curiosity or to injure somebody's good name. Many other countless vices of immodesty in regard to hearing could be added here.

4) It is a grave imperfection and a greatly reprehensible thing to frequent, enter, search, or plunder somebody else's rooms without any just cause; indeed, without authorization, but out of sheer curiosity; [as is] inquiring into, judging, and condemning somebody else's works without an edifying benefit; opening books without necessity, flipping them back and forth, scratching, damaging and staining them; and finally, not avoiding even the slightest actions that either introduce or suggest laxity and prepare the end of our perfection and the ruin of salvation.

If you detect these things in yourself, you should feel ashamed and, considering that fickleness may be condoned only in youngsters or children (indeed, not even in them), you should make the firmest resolution to observe in the future with a greater zeal religious gravity and modesty, the most appropriate virtue for you.

3. Consider that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary conducted herself with remarkable modesty, and that Jesus Himself, the Teacher of every possible perfection, was so excelled in this virtue that He showed no sign of immodesty in His whole life, even in the midst of the cruelest torments.

In fact, He taught you what kind of a man you should be in gatherings and assemblies with others when, invited to the wedding at Cana, He showed a remarkable example of modesty to the guests watching Him, as He was not at all moved by an immoderate wedding joy.

Therefore, imitate, as you should, Mary and Jesus; these two prototypes of modesty. Moreover, consider that while many vices are hidden, everybody can see immodesty; and so, since this vice escapes no one's eye, it causes very grave scandal to many people.

Finally, notice where you should observe modesty above all, that is, in which of your activities, namely: in looking, in moving, in your gait, in conversation especially among large groups of lay people who, unable to properly interpret the intention of human actions, notice and feel scandalized by the smallest things.

Anyway, avoid whatever you are able to discern as contrary to this virtue, and arrange your conduct and life according to the lifestyle of the most modest saints and the rule of your Institute. This can be easily done if you consider more attentively that God is present near you everywhere. Just like immodesty is the clearest indication that the Divine Presence has been erased from your consciousness, so modesty would clearly show that this Divine Presence has been preserved and secured. For if no courtier says or does anything immodest in the presence of the king; then why would a religious commit immodesty in the presence [f.169v] of his Lord, the immortal God?

MEDITATION XIV ON PRUDENCE

1. Consider that the Eternal Wisdom, Christ the Lord Himself, enjoined prudence to His disciples most assiduously in these words: “Be prudent²⁶¹ as serpents” (cf. Mt 10:16). But He Himself also exercised it when both the demon Tempter and the Jews with their Pharisaic adroitness drew Him into a trap. Also, Solomon, that marvel of wisdom, urges it, saying: “Incline your heart to prudence” (cf. Prov 2:2).

But for whom do you think that prudence is more necessary than for you who, having withdrawn beyond the streets of the world, hid yourself inside the walls of the religious institute; as if inside Paradise, where the ancient serpent, always envying your happiness, uprightness, and future glory waits with gaping mouth for a chance to surprise, grasp, devour, and swallow you?²⁶²

If only our first parents were guided by this virtue of prudence, perhaps they would not have fallen. If only the inconsiderate Eve would not have yielded to the most cunning serpent, or the incautious Adam would not have lent an ear to her deceptive words. Therefore, since you admit being a descendant of Adam and live in a religious house, as if in the Elysian meadows,²⁶³ know that you must be more cautious and more circumspect as well as most watchful in spirit for all things. Lest you be cheated and deceived by the common enemy of all men, who transforms himself into all kinds of figures: being the Angel Lucifer, he pretends to be the Angel of Light; he offers evil under the guise of good; under the cover of sweetest honey he gives to drink the bitterest mead, and is not choosy in picking tricks and cunning devices to catch us in his net.

²⁶¹ In the CV the word *prudentes* is used, and thus it is also the word that St. Stanislaus used, saying that Jesus enjoined “prudence” to His disciples. Most English translations, however, render *prudentes* as “wise.”

²⁶² Cf. 1 Pet 5:8.

²⁶³ According to Greek mythology, Elysium is the abode of the blessed. Cf. *BHM*, p. 133. Cf. Parandowski, pp. 156-157.

Wherefore the Apostle rightly exhorts: “Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith” (1 Pet 5:8-9) and in prudence.

2. Consider that prudence is most necessary for you in two things, namely: in doing good and avoiding evil.

The good is done prudently when preceded by a right intention; when no boastfulness or personal interests are involved; when just means are employed to accomplish it; when it begins and ends with unconquerable firmness and fortitude; when the better good is chosen out of two; when actions are performed with the greatest possible perfection, and, no annoyance or trouble results from them by reason of carelessness either for us or someone else.

By prudence harms are evaded, too, when they are foreseen a long time in advance.

Finally, by prudence we either do not fall to temptations, or by a magnanimous spirit and by wise judgment we exclude, reject, and expel those which inadvertently have entered and occupied the soul and we do not at all let them to get the upper hand on us, unless it happens by God’s arrangement and permission for our greater good or humiliation.

3. Recount these actions of prudence:

1) To consider that the goal of your whole life is, naturally, serving God and doing things that are pleasing to God, as well as attaining the heavenly happiness and also considering the end of virtue in every action and every [f.170r] occupation.

2) To ponder the means of attaining that aim by observing the divine laws; to ask for God’s light for discerning His will in any action, to undertake extraordinary prayers for this intention, and also to anticipate every work, especially of great importance, by attentive reflection, consultation, and the advice of the others, not relying only on oneself.

3) To weigh out and properly differentiate things brought for consultation; separating the useless from the useful, the evil from the good, the more important from the less important. At the

same time, it is necessary to consider one's own status and vocation, as well as the scope of one's virtues and graces.

4) To elect better and more appropriate things for the attaining of the goal for which we strive.

5) With authority, to impel the will and other powers of one's soul to comply efficaciously in order to accomplish the things that have been chosen and accepted. As the Wise Man testifies: "A wise man is mightier than a strong man, and a man of knowledge than he who has strength" (Prov 24:5). Wherefore, he not only assesses and chooses rightly, but also firmly brings into effect the good that he has assessed and chosen.

6) And perhaps the last action of prudence is to deem the prudence of the world as carelessness and its wisdom as foolishness,²⁶⁴ and to hold on to the love of God with arms and legs [as in "to hold on with arms and legs to one's dear life"], as the Polish saying goes, because, according to the above-mentioned Wise Man: "Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity" (Eccl 1:2), and all is foolishness except loving God and serving Him alone.

Make the examination of conscience in regard to these things, and correct prudently whatever sins and errors you committed against prudence. And if these errors are incorrigible, bewail your carelessness and proceed henceforth more prudently on the way of perfection. For that reason, indeed, God permits falls so that one's steps are taken more cautiously in the future.

MEDITATION XV ON THE OTHER VIRTUES CONDUCTIVE TO RELIGIOUS PERFECTION

1. Focus your thoughts on all the virtues, after which you should strive with the greatest zeal, seek with every effort, and practice eagerly. Run them all through your mind and ponder

²⁶⁴ Cf. 1 Cor 3:9: "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

them attentively, especially those appropriate to your vocation and perfection. Note also the failings and vices that are contrary to these virtues.

How diligent have you been in avoiding the chattiness that destroys virtues and distracts the spirit? How carefully have you been keeping silence, which is the guardian of these virtues and the recollected spirit; and have you trained yourself in observing it?

In what way did you foster kindness, gentleness, and meekness; the greatest ornaments of a religious man?

How much effort did you put in attaining patience, this hereditary virtue of Christians and especially of the religious; in gaining fortitude and magnanimity; fighting things that are contrary to perfection? With what force of the spirit have you been overcoming pusillanimity, groundless fear, uncontrolled sadness, impatience, and furious anger? Have you exercised resignation, the most certain source of internal peace and perseverance, or have you omitted to do so?

Have you made until now any progress in religious perfection, [f.170v] not according to honor, knowledge, dignified positions and more distinguished offices, but according to poverty, humility, obedience, love of God, self-contempt and other virtues, in which the perfection of a religious consists?

Consider whether you have progressed or regressed in the spiritual exercises, for example, in prayer and contemplation, according to the multitude of God's graces?

Because, according to the frequently repeated maxim of the Doctors of spirituality: "Not progressing means regressing; not going forward, means going backward."²⁶⁵ Who would not understand this, taught by daily experience?

²⁶⁵ Cf. Antonio Royo and Jordan Aumann, *The Theology of Christian Perfection*, Wipf & Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 1962, p. 138: "The famous axiom, so often cited by the Fathers of the Church, 'He who does not go forward on the road of God falls back,' [*In via Domini, non progredi est regredi*,'] clearly expresses the necessity of constantly progressing in the way of Christian perfection at the risk of falling back and of compromising one's salvation."

2. Consider what you have been more involved in and dedicated to as a religious: mortifications or the amenities of life? To what was your spirit inclined more: subduing your will or fulfilling it? Satisfying the desires of the others, especially your Superiors, or your own desires?

If you stuck to your own desires, be convinced that a false spirit has led you. If, however, it was otherwise, doubt not that you were guided very well and understand that your vocation was found worthy. So that you may respond to it, you should increase and multiply the fresh, small sparks of divine love and practice of virtue, supporting them by a lively effort and a desire for advancement, and by actual progress. If you work hard at self-contempt, you will feel how sweet the Lord is. If you estrange yourself wholly from the world, you will experience how bitter the world is.

For what flavor, what aroma of material things is perceived by those who do not merely taste, but imbibe carnal desires, worldly pleasures, and Babylonian drinks? For a short time, they shall draw from them and taste the sweetness because of which –alas –they shall be thrown in an immense abyss of eternal feelings of bitterness. They will, however, bewail forever that they indulged their nature, and they shall not wipe away the stain!

On the contrary, how much everlasting sweetness can still be found in the cross, in endurance, in mortifications, in hardships, in misfortunes, and wrongs, born in imitation of the God-Man! The lovers of the cross and of torments find in these things an abundance of never-ending joys, perennial delights, holy and everlasting pleasures, although only after a hard fight and struggle with the world, with hell, and their evil lusts.

To you the free option is given to choose either one of these two approaches to life, because you possess free judgment and free will. But check with what prudence and what profit you have already chosen and will choose again. You should consider the end of all, which is twofold for the twofold kinds of men.

For the luxurious, those avid of honor, those leading at present a lawless life; the punishment is eternal death, according to that well-known maxim: “Their end is destruction” (cf. Phil 3:19). For

the righteous, those given to all kinds of mortifications, the obedient, and those living in perseverance under the discipline of the sacred law and of the rules; it is everlasting glory, the happiness of having the untiring vision of God, the Supreme Good, and the endless life that is free from death, according to those well-known words: "But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them" (Wis 3:1).

3. Attentively consider what fruits of mortification you have gathered during your religious life. What benefit has your soul obtained from frequently receiving the Most Holy Sacraments and the continuous exercise of the virtues? How much and to what extent has it brought back the benefit of salvation from so many frequent spiritual readings, conferences, conversations and exhortations? How much has it progressed in striving for virtues, as stimulated and, [f.171r] as if by spurs, roused to the good by so many pious speeches, by so many holy inspirations and admonitions? What advantage have prayers, corporal mortifications, dwelling in the house of God and customary fasts brought to you?

Also, examine your conscience as to wasted time, which flies by irrevocably, as you draw daily nearer to eternity and know that you will soon reach its port. But what cargo of holy goods are you going to bring in? If you are not going to have those gems of virtue, which are greatly valued in the heavenly regions, realize that you are not going to be admitted to the shore of the heavenly regions.

Now, if this should happen (God forbid!), where are you going to turn? In the ocean of the world your ship may not always remain in winter quarters; it constantly seeks the shore and makes for it: be it the happy shore of the Promised Land or the unhappy one of eternal condemnation.

This colloquy shall consist of sorrow for and renouncement of failings, all sins, and imperfections, followed by holy, generous, and absolute resolutions of exercising the heroic virtues; to which you must add a serious emendation of your whole life.

MEDITATION XVI

ON THE PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

1. Make now a recapitulation of all efforts put into the consideration of the previous meditations and repent, in particular and in general, of any: sins, faults, cases of negligence, and imperfections committed by you throughout your whole life and during your time in the religious state and especially since your last general confession.

Make efforts to arouse in your heart the true contrition that comes from the love of God, namely: that you repent of the offences and the failures in doing something not for fear of infernal punishments, not because of the loss of heavenly glory, not out of any other human and natural motive, but rather out of the pure love for Almighty God, the best and greatest Father.

Atone, for you have offended the One Who is extremely good, Whom you were to follow with the greatest love; by countless wrongs and evil deeds you have hurt the feelings of the One Who is inexhaustible and infinite Goodness Itself. You have passed over from Him to His enemy, from the One Who created you almost from nothing, from the slime of the earth, so eminent, so noble, and excellent among other created things; He redeemed you with the ransom of His Most Precious Blood, delivered you from the perpetual prison of the infernal enemy to eternal freedom, drew you out from the greatest darkness of ignorance to the light of faith, through which salvation and everlasting life are acquired by good and suitable works of faith. By the powerful force of His grace He drew you out from the harlot Babylon, that is, from the world, to His holy city of Jerusalem, i.e., to the religious life, and here He not merely granted, but overwhelmed you with countless, inexplicable, and immense benefits.

2. Consider that God shall forgive you, someone truly contrite, all evil deeds, faults, and imperfections, and erase them through the Holy Sacrament of Penance. And if you are rightly and well prepared, He shall also remit all punishments that should be inflicted because of sins. In addition, you will also be able to

undertake some extraordinary penitential actions, such as prayers, or mortification of the body, works of mercy, and others. These may be adequate to some extent for the remission of punishment and sufficient for transgressions, according to that saying: “break off your sins by practicing righteousness” (Dan 4:27), and with voluntary penances.

After King David asked the Lord for forgiveness of his sin, [f.171v] he also promised to do a certain remarkable atonement, namely: teaching justice to the unjust: “Then I will teach transgressors [Y]our ways, and sinners will return to [Y]ou” (Ps 51:13), and elsewhere: “every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping” (Ps 6:6).

Without a doubt, no evil deed can be forgiven either in this or in the other life without the penalties being paid and endured. And if the matter stands thus, it would be better for you to voluntarily undertake atonements for your faults and failings, which will be very pleasing to the most merciful God, rather than waiting for different ones that are sure to come after death; for not even the most severe acts of penance can be compared with them.

3. Consider that you are now about to approach the fountain of the Supreme Good from which you will be able to draw all you want and as much as you like; into which you will immerse all your faults and cleanse every stain of your soul. And you will come out and return pure from there, untouched by evil deeds, spotless, such as you had come out from the holy bath of Baptism in the past. For the Apostle calls this Sacrament of Penance a Baptism. But you will indeed approach this fountain, about which the very pious king prophet, inflamed with holy thirst, says: “As a deer longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for [Y]ou, O God” (Ps 42:1). And in another place: “my soul thirsts for [Y]ou” (Ps 63:1), “When shall I come and behold the face of God?” (Ps 42:2).

You will go, therefore, to this most desired fount; but first impress upon your soul that you should seek in it not delight, but salvation; desire eagerly not sweetness, but advantage; and then, having extinguished in yourself the flames of depraved

desires; and having removed all of the pestilential infirmities of the spirit, that He may grant you health and refreshment; better than which nothing can be neither desired, nor possessed; and that He may transform you from the blackest demon²⁶⁶ into a dazzling white angel.

Moreover, have hope that you shall obtain from this fount and spring of eternal delight such an abundance of pearls, that is, of graces, as great as you may need for gaining the everlasting Kingdom of Heaven.

MEDITATION XVII UPON RETURNING FROM THE HOLY ALTAR

1. “See, you are well! Sin no more” (Jn 5:14). With these very gracious words the heavenly Doctor of souls addresses you, a religious. Behold, the most merciful Lord, who is truly more merciful than can be said or thought, forgave you whatever great imperfections you have committed until now. He forgave you every offense, no matter how enormous. Even if your soul was covered and afflicted by the sores of so many grave and shameful sins, they were completely removed by the most efficacious medicine: the most holy food of His Body, and the most excellent ablution of His own Blood.²⁶⁷

Thanks to this, you can piously and certainly hope, nay rather believe, that the forgiveness of all your sins committed both in the world, and outside of the world,²⁶⁸ was granted to you. But it is necessary that you apply yourself henceforth to good deeds, so that the roses of the best virtues may be found in the garden of your soul among the thorns of sins. Resolve, therefore, to care-

²⁶⁶ The phrase used in the original Latin is: *Aethiope nigerrimo*, which is an allegorical expression used in olden times to describe the evil spirit.

²⁶⁷ However, “the Eucharist is not ordered to the forgiveness of mortal sins, that is proper to the sacrament of Reconciliation” (CCC, 1395).

²⁶⁸ When St. Stanislaus says “outside of the world,” he is referring to the religious life.

fully cultivate this garden, and may the many burrs and useless weeds, that is, vices, not deter or distract you from zealously tending it; and may no arduous labor make you stop.

The right hand of the good and almighty God shall help your good will [f.172r]: He will send you plentiful rainfall, that is, an abundance of tears to water this garden. He will give forth the friendly west winds of graces, so that prompted by them your garden may bring forth the most abundant fruit of solid virtues, while the fragrance of your holy actions will refresh and enliven heavenly and human spirits.

2. Note that, after recovering the health of your soul with the Lord's help, you must follow a different road, lest you fall among the most dangerous bandits: the world, the flesh, and their companion, hell.

For if people avoid the places where they sustained at some point the loss of their temporal goods with great labor, enormous effort, and great zeal, you should flee much more prudently even the least occasions, even the very small imperfections that make you lose the treasure of the heavenly glory and despoil you of it. May the sons of darkness be not found more prudent in this aspect than you, a son of light (cf. Lk 16:1-8).

Therefore, you should avoid conceit so that you would not be despoiled of humility; you should avoid the winds of vain praise, lest you be driven into the most dangerous rocks of many evil deeds; you should avoid gluttony, lest you fall into lust; you should avoid quarrels, lest you harm charity; you should avoid idleness, lest you become the devil's couch; you should avoid all extravagance, lest you fall into condemnation.

Formerly you have sinned by disobedience; now recover by obedience the crowns lost. You have averted and distracted your thoughts by talkativeness; focus them again by silence. You fell out of God's grace through pride; take care to have it restored through humility. You lost Heaven by idleness; gain it back by work, devotion, and the practice of virtues. Put on a different man that you may experience a different Savior of men: however angry He was with you on account of your sins, He will become

so much more gentle, friendly, and favorable on account of your penitential acts.

3. Being aware of your reconciliation with the God of the highest goodness, throw yourself at last into His embrace. Wonder at the patience with which He awaited your conversion and improvement; be amazed at the kindliness with which He drew you to Himself; praise the goodness and kindness with which He received you when you were returning, the son who was worse than the lost prodigal son from the Gospel.

Oh, how great is the kindness of the Savior, Who received you into His grace and presented you with salvation although the fairest Judge could most rightly condemn and thrust you into the infernal fires. How often men commit some greater offense and then, when justice is brought upon them, no treasures, no power of prayers, no intercessions of friends could deliver them from death.

You, on the other hand, with evil deeds of infinite malice, assailed, offended and angered the Lord of infinite goodness, your Creator and Redeemer. Although you merited eternal death for this reason, He did not punish you by it, but rather promised and will surely give you the immortality gained by His most cruel death, if now you cease at last to offend Him and begin to love Him.

What a lasting memorial of such great divine goodness and love towards you it is! Oh, why do you not cling wholeheartedly to such a merciful, generous, and most gracious Lord? Why do you not die of love in His bosom? Why are you not wholly His so that He might be wholly yours? Why do you not repay love with love? May Christ, Who is the Love of all men and the Savior of all mankind, teach and instill this love in you!

MEDITATION XVIII BEFORE ANY HOLY COMMUNION

1. Consider that our Lord and Savior [f.172v] Jesus Christ, the only Son of the true and only God, personally instituted the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. It happened in Jerusalem, at

the Last Supper, which the Lord had arranged before His cruel Passion, to celebrate with His disciples the Pasch or Passover at the house of a certain citizen of Jerusalem, undoubtedly a very good and righteous man.

This was recorded by St. Matthew, a former tax collector who became a faithful steward of the Divine Word, with these words: "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, '**Take, eat; this is [M]y [B]ody.**' And [H]e took a chalice, and when [H]e had given thanks [H]e gave it to them, saying, '**Drink of it, all of you; for this is [M]y [B]lood of the new covenant,** which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'" (cf. Mt 26:26-28).

Learn from these words that under the veil of bread, which is bread no longer, the true and real Body of Christ is present in the Most Holy Eucharist. The Body of Christ, who died for us nailed to the Cross; the Body that was afflicted with so many wounds and put to death on the Cross; a living Body, not a dead one; and the substance of bread no longer exists in the bread, but it is transformed into the true and living Body of Christ by divine power, upon the priest's command and the utterance of the divine words. And this admirable Sacrament, to be given to the souls of the faithful as spiritual food, was left by the Lord Jesus Christ as a pledge of His perpetual love for the Church, His bride.

2. Ponder this: although our Savior, having taken the chalice, also gave His Blood to His disciples to drink, Mother Church acts rightly in allowing and distributing to the faithful Holy Communion under one species. For we, Catholics, consume the living Christ. Yet can a living body be lacking blood at any point?

Realize also that every time people approach the sacred table, and especially those who prepare themselves most attentively for receiving this Holy Sacrament, they are filled by God with countless gifts, they receive unheard of and inconceivable graces; they are sanctified, strengthened, and obtain the forgiveness of evil deeds and the promise of eternal life.

3. Consider attentively that many receive this Most Holy Sacrament to the ruin of their souls, according to the words of

the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, approved by the Lord Himself: “Bad and good the feast are sharing, of what divers dooms preparing, endless death, or endless life.”²⁶⁹

Just as this food wonderfully benefited the other disciples at the Last Supper, it did no good at all to the most miserable Judas; thus, it should be believed that now too it is salutary to many people, and on the other hand, it does harm to many others. The reason is that they approach God’s sacred banquet without the wedding garment (cf. Mt 22:11-13), that is, without a right intention and a pure conscience.

As for you, therefore, approach it with the greatest docility of soul, with purity, devotion, love, and longing. Then it will bring to you refreshment and everlasting salvation. Amen.

MEDITATION XIX AFTER ANY HOLY COMMUNION

1. Consider what great thanks you are going to give to the omnipotent Divine Majesty for [f.173r] this spiritual nourishment. For if the holy angels and all the purest spirits of Heaven honor the immortal God by continuous praises and venerate Him by unceasing service, because they enjoy His constant presence, then with what heavenly praises are you going to burst forth to-day? What kind of gratitude are you going to show to the best and most gracious Father? He not only refreshed you by His presence, personally visiting your soul, but also enlivened it with the sweetest and most beneficial food of His Body and roused it up to new strength.

If you immerse yourself in the Holy Scriptures, you will find that each time the Jews received some remarkable benefit from God, they praised Him with songs, with melodious cymbals,

²⁶⁹ This quote is from the Sequence *Lauda Sion*, which St. Thomas Aquinas composed for the Solemnity of Corpus Christi: *LM*, p. 979 (Stanza 17). Cf. *MIR*, p. 398. Cf. A. Piolanti, *ECat*, vol. VII, Ente per l’Enciclopedia Cattolica e per il Libro Cattolico, Città del Vaticano 1951, p. 956 (s.v. *Lauda Sion*).

with timbrel and choir, with strings and organs, with sound of trumpet and with psaltery and harp (cf. Ps 150:3-5).

They did so when they had been led out of Egypt. They did so when the immense waves of the sea, returning to their place, covered and engulfed Pharaoh, the Egyptian tyrant, along with his whole army (cf. Ex 13:18; 15:1-21). They did so when they overcame Sisera (cf. Jgs 5:1-31). And finally, they did so whenever they won a renowned victory, when they overcame all of their enemies, and when God benefited them in some extraordinary and singular way.

Will you not bring forth today, right now, indeed in the course of your whole life, joyful songs out of your mouth? Will you not pour out praises from your heart? Will you not strike the tambourines of prayers? Will you not dance and say from the bottom of your heart what an enormous benefit of Holy Communion you have been granted, enriched, and filled with by the best, kindest, and most generous God?

2. Consider that friends, treated to a banquet by other friends, always think and give care to repay this courtesy of human kindness. Likewise, you should apply yourself today to finding out how you can repay the present generosity of Jesus Christ, your Lord and best friend, with which He gave Himself completely to you in His Body and Blood to be consumed as food. Therefore, out of love for Him, you should offer yourself, for example, for the works to be accomplished and the hardships to be endured, whichever would present themselves to you, as the Prince of the Apostles offered himself at the Last Supper (although with God permitting and arranging it wisely, it happened otherwise) and was ready to undergo death itself for the Lord, saying: "Even if I must die with [Y]ou, I will not deny [Y]ou" (Mt 26:35).

Perhaps, you should take upon yourself some mortification to practice in honor of this most excellent Sacrament; or you should resolve to cultivate some heroic virtue; or you should promise to avoid with an extraordinary zeal and to root out every abominable vice, every perverse and reprehensible habit, into which you fall rather frequently, which is especially displeasing to the

eyes of the Divine Majesty and indeed does you no insignificant harm. Do this, so that in the future you may burn on the altar of your heart the purest incense of your holy actions in sacrifice to the most powerful, most generous, and most merciful Lord of hosts and of heavenly powers.

3. Ponder that there was no other reason for refreshing the disciples with the Lord's Body during that last banquet of the ancient Passover than to strengthen them with new and divine strength after they consumed in the Passover of the New Testament the immaculate Lamb, God Himself, so that they might endure with strong and invincible spirit the imminent Passion of their Master, and that their faith would be unbroken and unscathed by it.

At that time the immortal Commander armed them with the weapons of faith and perseverance against the attacks of Jewish treachery and persecution. He armed them with the power of love against the power of hatred; He armed them with divine strength against human strength and power. Similarly, [f.173v] it is for this reason that this spiritual food, I say the divine food, was granted and given to you today: that you may become stronger against the forces of temptations; that you may become more fervent in loving, more steady in suffering, and more stable and heartened in perseverance

Indeed, today you may rightly say with the Apostle: "Who shall separate me from the love of God?" (cf. Rom 8:35), who shall separate me from the love of the true God and Man, the Redeemer of all men, whom I have received under the veil of bread? Would that be poverty, nakedness, and indigence? Would that be affliction, persecution, toils, sorrows, and fatigues? Would that be temptation, insults, the world, hell, some pleasure or mortification? Would that be the alluring persuasions of the evil spirit or the anger of men, bitter words, or something similar? Finally, would that be death itself, even the cruelest one? I am certain that none of these things shall separate me, nothing shall drag me away, nothing shall divert me from loving Jesus Christ forever, because I will brave, withstand, suffer, and embrace all these things out of the same love.

O my Jesus, if only (I shall shout this at every moment!) I can love You as You so passionately loved me! If only I die out of love for You Who did not hesitate to die out of love for me, even though You were immortal!

ACT OF CONTRITION

I repent, my Lord God, of all my sins, faults, and incidents of negligence committed by me in any way during my whole lifetime, but especially since my last general confession.

I repent, my Lord God, not because I lost Heaven, not because I deserve hell, not out of natural fear, but out of supernatural love: namely, because I offended You with countless sins, my Creator, Savior, and Leader, Whom I was supposed to love infinitely.

I now detest all my evil deeds, faults, and negligences, all the evils I have committed and all the good I have omitted.

I love and revere you, my Supreme Good, above all things, and wholeheartedly desire that all would love You, and that You would never be hurt.

I plunge all of my faults, O my Jesus, into Your Most Holy Wounds, hoping that for the sake of Your wounds and the sorrows and intercession of the most Holy Virgin and Mother, and for the sake of the merits and prayers of all heavenly beings, especially of my holy Patrons and Patronesses, You would forgive me my faults and grant me the grace of true and perfect improvement and life everlasting.

God, be merciful to me, the greatest of all sinners!

VOCAL PRAYER

before Holy Communion (from the Roman Missal)²⁷⁰

I draw near, loving Lord Jesus Christ,
 to the table of [Y]our most delightful banquet
 in fear and trembling,
 a sinner, presuming not upon my own merits,
 but trusting rather in [Y]our goodness and mercy,
 I have a heart and body defiled by my many offenses,
 a mind and tongue
 over which I have kept no good watch.
 Therefore, O loving God, O awesome Majesty,
 I turn in my misery, caught in snares,
 to [Y]ou the fountain of mercy,
 hastening to [Y]ou for healing,
 flying to [Y]ou for protection;
 and while I do not look forward to having [Y]ou as Judge,
 I long to have [Y]ou as Savior.
 To [Y]ou, O Lord, I display my wounds,
 to [Y]ou I uncover my shame.
 I am aware of my many and great sins,
 for which I fear,
 but I hope in [Y]our mercies,
 which are without number.
 Look upon me, then, with eyes of mercy,
 Lord Jesus Christ, eternal King,
 God and Man, crucified for mankind.
 Listen to me, as I place my hope in [Y]ou,
 have pity on me, full of miseries and sins,
 [Y]ou, who will never cease

²⁷⁰ This prayer, composed by St. Ambrose as a “Preparation for Mass,” is found in the Appendices of the English translation of the Roman Missal along with other prayers in preparation for Mass. *Appendix VI: Preparation for Mass — Prayer of Saint Ambrose*, in: *The Roman Missal*, English trans. according to 3rd typical ed., Catholic Book Publishing Co., New Jersey 2011, pp. 1323-1324. Cf. *MIR*, pp. xlvii-xlviii (“*Præparatio ad Missam — Oratio S. Ambrosii Ante Missam*”).

to let the fountain of compassion flow.
Hail, O Saving Victim,
offered to me and for the whole human race
on the wood of the Cross.
Hail, O noble and precious Blood,
flowing from the wounds
of Jesus Christ, my crucified Lord,
and washing away the sins of all the world.
Remember, Lord, [Y]our creature,
whom [Y]ou redeemed by [Y]our Blood.
I am repentant of my sins,
I desire to put right what I have done.
Take from me, therefore, most merciful Father,
all my iniquities and sins,
so that, purified in mind and body,
I may worthily taste the Holy of Holies.
And grant that this sacred foretaste
of [Y]our Body and Blood
which I, though unworthy, intend to receive,
may be the remission of my sins,
the perfect cleansing of my faults,
the banishment of shameful thoughts,
and the rebirth of right sentiments;
and may it encourage
a wholesome and effective performance
of deeds pleasing to [Y]ou
and be a most firm defense of body and soul
against the snares of my enemies.
Amen.

[ff.174r-v and 175r-v are blank]

PART V

Daily Meditations

Morning: On the Passion of the Lord Evening: On the Last Things

1. MONDAY MORNING

Christ's prayer in the Garden (of Gethsemane).

1. Consider that after that Supper of the new Passover full of the most profound mysteries, Christ the Lord left His most Holy Mother with all of the disciples and went out to the Garden of Gethsemane, taking along only three of them. There, on the hill, kneeling humbly and with His whole body bent toward the ground, He fervently poured out His prayers to the Father.

And first He perceived all the torments awaiting Him. Having pictured them in mind, He underwent such a change that He began to be afraid, to grow weary, to become pale and to be saddened. For although His divinity, identical with the will of the Father, sought the Passion as soon as possible, His humanity, left to itself, feared to endure these things, which, from the outside in the consideration of the mind, would be most horrible. And thus, with fear and desire fighting each other, Jesus burst out at last into these words: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from [M]e" (Mt 26:39). But when an angel appeared to Him, fortified Him, and declared the will of the eternal Father (although being God He already knew it), He exclaimed with the greatest resignation: "not as I will, but as [Y]ou will" (Mt 26:39).

2. Consider that the mind of your Savior was occupied for the next hour with a reflection on the evils and misfortunes of all men. For He pictured in His most perceptive intellect all the afflictions of all mankind: their anguishes, pains, sicknesses, torments, persecutions, oppressions, and every kind of misfortune by which they would ever be harassed. When He grasped them with His keen mind, He was stung by a far sharper paroxysm of pain than the one that pierces a person at the sight of a friend's unfortunate circumstances, or parents at the sight of their children's bad fortune or hardships. This is what Isaiah says clearly in the prophecy: "Surely [H]e hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (Is 53:4) [*DRB*].

Finally, He saw in His mind the evil deeds of all men who had lived in the world before, during, and after His time there. As He offered up to the Heavenly Father to suffer and atone for them, He was so violently shaken at their depravity that the bloody sweat poured out of all His pores, flowing all the way down to the ground (cf. Lk 22:44). [**f.176v**]

3. Consider most attentively the time, place, manner, and other circumstances of Jesus' prayer. He remained praying with great resignation on a very quiet night, on a remote hill away from all witnesses, kneeling or perhaps deeply bowing, if not prostrating, for nearly three hours.

Now, awaken your feelings of gratitude, bearing in mind He who was praying and for whom He prayed. Then, learn to fly to the anchor of prayer, as the storms of temptations or other troubles, or difficult undertakings assail you. Finally, you shall always have your will in conformity with the divine will by saying: "Not mine, but [Y]our will be done" (cf. Lk 22:42).

2. MONDAY EVENING

On the certainty of death, yet the uncertainty as to its time, place, and manner.

1. Consider that every man was created from perishable matter; and therefore, he shall decompose. Therefore we are called

mortals, because we are subject to death, according to this saying: “We must all die, we are like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again” (2 Sam 14:14). Hence, it is impossible to find someone so powerful, or rich, or expert in law and all sciences, who could break that law, remove himself from under it, or evade it by means of some arguments. It is the law that the Creator of all things personally laid down in times past for our first parent, and at the same time for every man without exception: “you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3:19).

Besides being unable to avoid death, a human cannot even manage to prolong his life in a natural manner for a single moment. Therefore, be it a king, an emperor, a pope; an ordinary person, or lord; be it a rich or poor person; learned or ignorant; young or old; healthy or sickly, he should bear in mind that the end of his life may come at any moment. And as for you, ponder, expect, and fear the same.

2. Consider that no mortal can know in a natural way the day or hour of his death, as Ecclesiastes teaches: “Man does not know his own end” (Eccl 9:12). So that we would be mindful of the end of our life, the Eternal Wisdom exhorts us in these words: “Watch” (Mt 24:42) and “be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Lk 12:40), namely: the same one who will judge every man immediately after their death.

Wherefore, since you surely are not able to promise yourself an additional tomorrow; indeed, not even to the end of this hour in which you ponder these things, pay close attention to your every thought and deed; seriously improve your life; adopt a more holy conduct, and apply yourself more assiduously to perfection. Since it is written...²⁷¹

3. Consider that unknown to man is not only the time, but also the place where he will breathe his last: whether in his own house or in another's; on the road or in bed; on land or on water? For there are many who travel to foreign countries; many that die

²⁷¹ In the *Inspecio Cordis* manuscript it does not say *what* “is written.” Perhaps St. Stanislaus forgot to conclude the sentence with the following words: “Watch therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour” (Mt 25:13).

with doctors; many who end the last moment of their life on the battlefield.

But who can know the manner of his death? Whether this thief is going to come unexpected or foreseen; whether by day or by night; would your life be snatched away from you slowly or violently; in a natural way, through torments or in an accident?

Wherefore you do not want to put off your improvement till tomorrow; you do not want to ever omit any occasion to gain merit; you do not want to promise yourself a long life, remembering the heavenly Teacher's parable: [f.177r] "But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him, and put him with the hypocrites; there men will weep and gnash their teeth" (Mt 24:48-51).

3. TUESDAY MORNING

On the capture of Christ the Lord, His indictment, being struck, imprisonment, and mockery.

1. Recall with profound attention this: as Christ the Lord became aware of Judas the traitor's coming, together with the servants, his helpers in the impious action, He woke up His disciples from sleep and came out to meet him. When they stood face to face, He received a kiss from this most treacherous traitor; a kiss, always a very gentle token of peace, that was then, in fact, the deceitful sign of wicked betrayal (cf. Mt 26:45-50; Mk 14:42-45; Lk 22:47-48). And finally, after the thrice-repeated mob's retreat and their triple fall to the ground,²⁷² He let them seize Him with these words: "[T]his is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Lk 22:53).

²⁷² St. John the Evangelist only speaks of one fall to the ground. Cf. Jn 18:4-8.

Once this was said, those cruel lions assailed the meekest Lamb: some pulled His hair; others violently seized His arms; some bound His hands; others cast Him down to the ground; others lifted Him up, the Lord of incomprehensible majesty, and led Him cruelly bound to Annas.

With a devout spirit, join the Savior of the World as He walks inside the walls of the hostile city. Look at the cruelty with which He is pushed; how insolently He is drawn here and there; with what cruelty He is hustled to the Cedron River; with what ferocity He is dashed against the stones there; finally, with what wickedness He is placed before Annas, harassed with groundless accusations, and struck by the cruel hand of a most impudent soldier (cf. Jn 18:13-14, 22).

O night, obscured by so many evil deeds of the Jews and lit up by so many virtues of the Savior of the world! On one side rise betrayal, ill will, brutality, and ingratitude; on the other shine innocence, love, gentleness, and beneficence. May you, detesting the vices of the Jews, imitate the virtues of the Savior!

2. Together with the most innocent Son of God, enter the house of the high priest Caiaphas and there, by the grace of the Savior, patiently listen to the many false witnesses, abominable lies, and blasphemies (cf. Mt 26:57, 59-61; Mk 14:53, 56-59).

Then go into the filthiest prison, full of muck, plunged in deep darkness, foul and horrible, and see the Emperor of the whole universe sitting here, abandoned by friends, disciples, and relatives, surrounded by a pitiless pack of wicked soldiers, from whom He would receive no consolations, but insults; no compassion, but torments. Indeed, some of them spit in His face, brighter than the sun; the others harass Him with sneers; some strike Him with their fists and slap with their hands; moreover, they all beat Him with various instruments, and constantly throwing dirt on Him for the whole night, they do not let Him rest even for a little while (cf. Lk 22:63-65).

Yet, a more painful injury than all these befell the Savior, a more cruel sadness descended upon His soul, when that Prince [f.177v] of the Apostolic Senate, that Ruler of the lands, that

firmest rock and Friend until the end, denied, rejected, and disdained Him (cf. Mt 26:69-75; Mk 14:66-72; etc.). Naturally, a wound inflicted by a friend's hand is worse than the one inflicted by an enemy's hand.

3. Contemplate the uncreated Sun coming out of His prison's dark dungeon at the rising of the dawn. And watch Him attentively, admiring the brightness of many virtues, as He first appears at the meeting of the chief priests, then at the governor's palace, and finally at the king of Galilee's quarters (cf. Lk 23:7).

Observe, as the senate of Jerusalem most vehemently accuses Him, as the imperial governor angrily questions Him (cf. Mt 27:11-18), as the cruel Tetrarch, driven by curiosity, harasses Him, despises Him with arrogance, and rashly mocks Him!²⁷³

Yet, above all else, admire His silence, full of a most profound mystery. When the inquisitive Herod asks Him about many things, He does not respond at all (cf. Lk 23:8-9). Thus, He teaches you by this example that you should keep silence even to some detriment to your reputation, rather than speak to the detriment of your soul. For it is better to pass for a fool by keeping silence than for someone not to be holy because of babbling many things.

4. TUESDAY EVENING

On human agony, on the state of a human body after the soul's departure before the tribunal of God, and the burial.

1. Consider or picture in your imagination a person; perhaps, even yourself, already at the moment of his ultimate struggle at the end of life. This is when the evil spirits attack the soul, willing to induce it to conceit by exalting its merits, or to desperation by exaggerating its sins. Next, picture yourself lying and moaning painfully, surrounded by friends, family members and relatives, with a candle lit at your bedhead and some little picture or a crucifix inserted into your hands.

²⁷³ Cf. Lk 23:11. Herod Antipas was the tetrarch of Galilee at that time.

Oh, how horrible is the thought of that agony! When the colossal power of illness shall try to force the soul out from the body, but the soul indeed shall refuse a great deal, linger, and resist, unwilling to leave its Achates,²⁷⁴ the body, being particularly aware of the evils committed together. What would you say then? What sort of prayers will you utter? Which of the Patrons will you invoke? Which of the friends of God, or of your friends, will you summon to your aid? Nothing will be able to help you, except the knowledge of your good deeds based on the merits of Christ.

2. Consider now the departure of the soul, which painfully struggles as it leaves its habitation, namely, from the heart, while the vital warmth fades away from the feet, hands, and head and passes out through the door of the mouth.²⁷⁵ Then, accompanied on one side by its guardian angel, and on the other by the evil spirit, the tempter, the soul hastens to the tribunal of the Judge. There, after the examination of its deeds according to their kind, the soul will either receive the heavenly glory or be sentenced to Purgatory or eternal condemnation.

Therefore, see how much you should honor numerous saints, and especially, the Virgin Mother of the dying among them, and your guardian angel, a faithful companion during your lifetime, so that you may experience their help at that time when you will be in no way able to help yourself. [f.178r]

3. Consider now that your body shall turn cold, pale, and foul smelling as soon as the soul has departed from it. All its parts will become rigid, constricted, and arousing no slight dread in those standing alongside to such an extent that those who cheerfully

²⁷⁴ Achates was the faithful companion and friend of Aeneas, according to the Aeneid of Virgil, where Achates is praised for being “brave” and “faithful.” Hence the word “Achates” is proverbially used to denote a faithful friend or companion. Here, “Achates” is meant to be the body of the dying person, the faithful companion of his soul during his life on earth.

²⁷⁵ Cf. Alberto Pincherle, *EI*, vol. III, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1929, p. 362 (s.v. *Anima*): According to the ideas of the primitive peoples, “the idea of the soul as breath, which leaves the body of the dying person through the mouth, has had a great influence: this is very frequently pictured in Greek vase paintings, where the soul is presented in the form of a butterfly, a fly, or of another winged insect coming out of the mouth of the dying person.”

associated with you when you were alive will turn away terrified and disgusted from the dead body and will fear coming near it alone.

Later the same body, washed with warm water, will be deposited on a bier and put into a tomb as soon as possible, so that it would no longer irritate human nostrils by its stink. For the same persons who wished you once the Nestorian years²⁷⁶ will remove you very quickly from their sight and will commit you to the earth, so that, being dead, you do not stink for long.

Oh, what shall become of the beauty of your body then? It will be swollen, disfigured, exuding foul-smelling bloody fluid, from which shall arise an enormous multitude of worms that will gnaw away whatever flesh remains. All the rest, except the bones, will return to the dust from which you were taken (cf. Gen 3:19). Since you shall be in the future nothing more than a swelling, putrefaction, bloody matter, stink, worms' food and dust, why do you swagger now and dream that you are someone important? Why do you follow sensuality? Why do you indulge your body more than its due? And why do you not subject to the mastery of the immortal soul this insolent slave that is soon to return to dust?

5. WEDNESDAY MORNING

About our Savior's cruelest scourging.

1. Consider with greatest reverence and tender affection the reason for which the Governor; who found himself between the hammer and the anvil, wishing both to acquit Christ the Lord and calm down the angry Jewish mob, gave the sentence, which he thought discrete but that was in fact most iniquitous, condemning the Savior of the world to be tied to a pole and publicly punished by scourging (cf. Mt 27:26; Mk 15:15; Jn 19:1).

²⁷⁶ I.e., a great age or many years of life, because Nestor was the oldest and wisest of the Greek heroes before Troy; hence "Nestor" is proverbially any wise old man. Cf. *SLL*, vol. 2, Typis Seminarii apud Joannem Manfrè, Patavii 1758, p. 55 (s.v. *Nestor*, and *Nestoreus*).

O my Jesus! What do I hear about You? Are You going to be stripped of Your clothes, You, who adorn all things with fitting garments? Are You going to be tied to a pole, You, the unattainable One, nonetheless present everywhere and in every place? Are You going to be lashed with scourges, You, Who are not only just, but Justice itself; not only innocent, but Innocence itself; not only pure and free of any evil deed, but the Redeemer, the Purifier of all evil deeds?

And yet, You receive the many scourges of a sinner (cf. Ps 31:10) [DRB]. You, the living rock (cf. Ps 78:20), are scourged because of the wickedness of Your people (cf. Is 53:8), I say, because of my wickedness.

Therefore, on the one hand, the pain tears my heart asunder out of sympathy for You, dearly beloved Jesus. But on the other hand, I overflow with joy, because thanks to Your scourging I shall avoid mine, which I deserve on account of my sins. My soul heavily grieves, and it should grieve, for unless it grieves it would be impious. I say, my soul grieves as it realizes that You, O Jesus my hope, are condemned to scourging as if the greatest of criminals; but the same soul exults to the highest degree and should exult, [f.178v] for unless it exults it would be ungrateful. My soul, I say, exults to the highest degree, when it sees You, touched by love for it, ineffably desiring to receive a thousand scourges for its salvation, and when it hears You saying with the king-psalmist: "Behold I am ready for scourges" (cf. Ps 37:18) [DRB].

May it be so, my Lord, that I, for the sake of Your honor and to avoid offending You, no longer indulge my body and insolent flesh, just as for the sake of my salvation and redemption You did not spare Your body.

Command, O Lord, what You will, and bring it about that I do Your command.²⁷⁷

2. Picture to yourself the murderous haste with which they performed their duty as well as the kind of tools used for scourging.

²⁷⁷ Cf. AC, Bk. X, Ch. 29: "My entire hope is exclusively in [Y]our very great mercy, [O God]. Grant what [Y]ou command, and command what [Y]ou will."

For as soon as the Governor passed the sentence of Christ's flagellation, [and] it was proclaimed that Christ was to be lashed with rods, the torturers hastily went to prepare their tools, undoubtedly being additionally spurred by some monetary gift from the Jews.

And so they tie the rods together and put iron hooks on their ends. They place on the outside the iron whips hanging like chains, completed with sharpened stars. To these they add various other kinds of whips, which their cruelty was able to devise at this time, and which your pious mind can piously imagine.²⁷⁸

3. Turn your thoughts fully to Christ the Lord and ponder Him with admiration as He, inflamed with the greatest desire to suffer for you, removes from Himself His garments; as He offers to the furious lictors²⁷⁹ His hands to be tied to the pole and, by His meekness, rouses their fury for flogging.

Now, close your eyes, curb your pious imagination, lest perhaps you may be frightened and struck by incredulity and abhorrence at the first apprehension of the unheard of, unseen and unspeakable cruelty of the tormentors in carrying out the flogging. Succeeding one after another, the executioners approached the less injured parts of the body and flogged this purest body with their utmost strength till there was no room for new scourges, lashes, and wounds.

And this is what a certain seer declared in a prophetic inspiration: "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein" (Is 1:6) [DRB]. The legs, knees, chest, sides, loins, arms, shoulders, hands have been most cruelly torn

²⁷⁸ Cf. Stanislaus Papczyński, *The Suffering Christ: In Seven Meditations, adapted to the penance of Lent, [and] given to the faithful for fervent reflection by Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, a Polish priest*, in: *Selected Works of St. Stanislaus Papczyński*, Marian Heritage — PROMIC, Stockbridge — Warsaw 2021, p. 777 (Disc. III: "The Scourging of the Sinner," n. 2), where we find the description of the tools used for the scourging of Jesus Christ. [Hereafter *The Suffering Christ* will be abbreviated as SC.]

²⁷⁹ The word "lictor" refers to a public attendant of the principal Roman magistrates, who executed the sentences which they pronounced. In this instance, St. Stanislaus is referring to the Roman magistrate Pontius Pilate's attendants who executed his sentence that Jesus Christ was to be scourged. Cf. *CLD*, p. 318 (s.v. *lictor*).

to pieces; and the space between shoulder blades was so exposed that it awakened dread in the onlookers and moved to tears those reflecting on it.

If you hold your tears back, if you keep indulging your flesh, then you are like as hard and rough as a rock and the most wretched of men. Mourn, therefore, mourn and lament not so much the scourging itself of the Savior as the cause of the scourging; and make a serious effort in the future not to scourge Him more severely with your sins.²⁸⁰ [f.179r]

6. WEDNESDAY EVENING

On the ultimate judgment day and preceding signs.

1. Consider that each of us has to appear twice before the Supreme Judge: at first in the individual judgment, which happens after each person's death; and the second time in the general judgment, which Christ the Lord shall arrange in the valley of Josaphat (cf. Jl 3:2, 12), as common opinion proclaims, when the world would be coming to an end and totally destroyed, according to what the king-psalmist says in his prophecy: "He shall judge the world with justice, and the people with [H]is truth" (Ps 95:13) [DRB]. Then all men shall be there, from the first man Adam up to and including the last person that shall be born or die in the world; and the blessed from Heaven, and the purified from Purgatory and the condemned from hell, will appear flocking together to render a strict account of all their thoughts, words and deeds.

²⁸⁰ Maria Faustina Kowalska, *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul*, 3rd ed. with revisions, Marian Press, Stockbridge 2009, p. 196 (#445): St. Faustina saw who scourged Jesus and with what sins: "I saw the Lord Jesus tied to a pillar, stripped of His clothes, and the scourging began immediately. I saw four men who took turns at striking the Lord with scourges. ... Jesus gave me to know for what sins He subjected Himself to the scourging: these are sins of impurity. ... [T]he executioners left Jesus, and other people started scourging Him; they seized the scourges and struck the Lord mercilessly. These were priests, religious men and women, and high dignitaries of the Church, which surprised me greatly. There were lay people of all ages and walks of life. All vented their malice on the innocent Jesus."

2. Recall to mind the signs which shall precede that general judgment, according to the teaching of the Master of truth: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;" He says, "and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves" (Lk 21:25) [DRB]. Nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom, empire against empire will wage cruel wars; severe domestic revolts, tumults, and rebellions will arise (cf. Lk 21:9-10).

Besides these things, the true sisters of war, pestilence and hunger, will torment mankind from all sides and everywhere so much that those whom the cruel power of war and sword shall not destroy, will be annihilated, as if poisoned, by the venom of infectious plagues and hunger. Moreover, the torment of the people shall be increased by the overflowing of the sea and by the unusual flood of waters, by which many islands and places near the sea, will be swallowed up with their cities, villages and inhabitants, enveloped in the immense flowing of waves.

3. Consider the changes of the heavenly bodies, their collisions, and destructions. For unusual thunders will be heard then, horrible flashes of lightning will be seen there, countless thunderbolts will fall from heavens, and they will kill men here and there and burn their dwellings. Shaken violently by a severe earthquake, the earth will rise up. Also the powers of Heaven shall be moved and the stars shall fall, the sun will darken, the moon shall not give its light (cf. Mt 24:29), and all will be thrown up and down into confusion by a sorrowful and lamentable transformation.²⁸¹ This mournful and detestable state of all things will so violently

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 42 (#83): Jesus Christ revealed to St. Faustina something more about the signs preceding the end of the world and the Last Judgment: "[B]efore I come as the just Judge, I am coming first as the King of Mercy. Before the day of Justice arrives, there will be given to people a sign in the heavens of this sort: All light in the heavens will be extinguished, and there will be great darkness over the whole earth. Then the sign of the cross will be seen in the sky, and from the openings where the hands and the feet of the Savior were nailed will come forth great lights which will light up the earth for a period of time. This will take place shortly before the last day." Ibid., pp. 332-333 (#848): "[L]et all mankind recognize My unfathomable mercy. It is a sign for the end times; after it will come the day of justice."

shake the spirits of the men then living under the sun, that, deprived of their senses, acting like madmen, they will search for hiding places. As fugitives from their own dwellings, they will go to the deserted wilderness and the dens of wild beasts. On the contrary, wild beasts, put to flight from forests by the terrible movements of heavens and earthquakes, will come from all sides to the people's dwellings, as if looking for some help or remedy from the imminent danger, or for a place of refuge. [f.179v]

As for you, shall you continue to love the world, destined along with its devotees to such a horrible end and destruction?

7. THURSDAY MORNING

On crowning Christ with thorns and showing Him to the people.

1. Picture in your mind the Savior of the world and the King of the universe Whom the savage soldiers covered with the torn and worn-out pieces of purple cloth for mockery, and crowned with the wreath woven with uncommon and very sharp thorns as a token of the highest disgrace (cf. Mt 27:27-30; Mk 15:16-19; Jn 19:2-3).

Should you see a king known to you, or even a more simple and ordinary person being treated this way, you would certainly feel sorry for him out of pity. But when you think that these things are done or have been done to God, and indeed, to that God Who put on human flesh for the love of you, what should be then your spiritual disposition?

O my soul, why do you grow hard? Why do you not feel sorrow? Why do you not groan, nor shed tears; having recognized through reflection the contempt for your most beneficent God, Lord and Father? Desire, desire that you may omit no opportunity for despising yourself, that you may avoid no contempt, but indeed seek after it voluntarily. Amen.

2. Recall with your most compassionate heart, how the same impious and cruel soldiers made Jesus to sit on a stone and then

mockingly greeted Him as a King, showing royal reverence by genuflecting and, at the same time, laughing loudly, they were striking His temples and face with a thick and heavy reed. You shall be able also to piously imagine how the others, having taken some staffs, whether of reed or another material and placing them crisscrossed on His head, so powerfully pressed down that crown of thorns with such great strength that its sharpest points not only pierced through His temples, but penetrated as far as the area of the brain, which being squeezed out, flowed down together with a great deal of blood.²⁸²

O unheard of cruelty! O unbearable pain! O unhappy delights of yours and of all men, for which the head of Jesus Christ the Lord was so horribly pierced through!

May it be, O my most merciful Savior, that at least from now on, when I ponder Your most painful coronation, I not only deny myself any internal and external sensual pleasure, but also not even allow my mind to be occupied with it. Indeed, may I wholeheartedly embrace each cross, calamity, affliction and mortification! Amen. [**f.180r**]

3. Consider that Pilate, seeing what was done to Christ the Lord, who was clearly most innocent, and how the soldiers treated Him, ordered Him to be brought to a higher level of the governor's palace. With a nod of understanding, the soldiers immediately seized the Savior and, having dragged Him up the steps most harshly, placed Him before the governor. He took Jesus' hand and showed Him through a window to the agitated crowd; while placing himself in another window, and said the words worthy of tears: "Behold the Man" (Jn 19:5) [*DRB*].

By these words, as well as by displaying the Savior, he wanted to bring it about that, moved by pity, the crowd and the Jewish Council of Elders would no longer demand for Jesus the verdict of death; since they saw Him so harshly treated that He retained nothing of a human appearance.

O most lovable Jesus, through Your crown of thorns, I beg You, adorn my head with countless crowns of countless merits, and

²⁸² Cf. *SC*, pp. 785-791 (Disc. IV).

bring about that the barren field of my heart does not produce any more thorns, but instead the most pleasant and most fragrant flowers of virtues. Amen.

8. THURSDAY EVENING

On the burning of the world, the revival of the dead, the second coming of Christ, and the ultimate verdict passed on the good and the bad.

1. With more focused thoughts, behold the fiery balls falling down from the heavens and engulfing in flames all that is there, thus destroying the whole universe. For this is what the kingsalmist sings about in prophecy: “A fire shall go before [H]im, and shall burn [H]is enemies round about” (Ps 96:3) [*DRB*].

After the burning of the whole world, the Prince of angelic hosts will come down from the abodes of the empyrean heavens, and with the voice like a sound of a trumpet, no less frightful than powerful and efficacious, will chant to each of the four corners of the world: “Rise, the dead, and come to the judgment.” [**f.180v**] So great will be the power of this voice that on hearing it all the souls of men will rush forth from Heaven, Purgatory, and the infernal torments. They will take up their former bodies and be at the age of Christ the Lord, and they will gather in the valley of Josaphat (cf. Jl 3:2, 12).

Learn from this that nothing in the world is worthy of the love of your heart; nothing can be offered to you that is so distinguished, so excellent and delightful, to which your soul could cling. For your soul is immortal, while all the pleasure, splendor and goods of the world are transitory and will ultimately perish.

2. Place before your mind the consideration of the second coming of Christ the Lord to the earth, which will be very different from that previous, peacemaking one. After gathering every man at the place of the tribunal, all the heavenly hosts will pour down from Heaven, preceding their immortal King. Then the instrument of our Redemption, the Most Sacred Wood of the Cross,

will be brought down from above, on the clouds. Then the Son of Man will appear, arriving with great power and majesty (cf. Lk 21:27). The most Holy Queen of Heaven will be at His right side; the Archangel Michael with his host will be at His left. Now, the appearance of Christ will be so frightful that at first, even the righteous ones will seem somewhat frightened, because He is going to judge even the righteous deeds. Now, having come down to the earth, He will occupy His throne, and with Him the twelve apostles will take theirs, in order to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (cf. Lk 22:30).

Oh, what great dread will seize sinners, what great despair, when their own conscience will accuse them, and they will acknowledge themselves most deserving of eternal condemnation! For the just however, a better hope will increase due to the practice of virtues, their good deeds, and the Passion and merits of Christ the Lord. Their bodies will be filled with wonderful joy for this reason, that already they are going to obtain the most precious immortality, of which your body shall not be deprived, if only you will mortify it in this life. [f.181r]

3. Consider the verdict of the implacable Judge, who, with His countenance assuming the greatest and almost unbearable gravity, will turn towards those standing at His left side, the sinners to be condemned eternally; and, giving that verdict in a fiery and terrifying voice, He will say: "Go, you cursed, into everlasting fire," etc. (cf. Mt 25:41). At once the earth, opening its mouth, will engulf them, together with all of the evil spirits, to be exceedingly tormented forever in the abyss of infernal punishments, and whatever abominations will then be on its surface, all this it will drag with them.

But the same Judge, gazing most gently at the righteous at His right side, will invite them with the sweetest voice to take possession of eternal joys: "Come, you blessed of [M]y Father, and possess the Kingdom, which was prepared for you by [M]y Father forever" (cf. Mt 25:34).

Learn from this to devote yourself to purity of conscience, which will be the only fearless thing before the tribunal of

that Judge, who is not appeased with gifts and does not accept excuses, but will openly declare what is just.

9. FRIDAY MORNING

On the carrying of the Cross, the crucifixion and death of Christ the Lord.

1. Consider that it is not uncommon to see the secular tribunal condemning innocence and acquitting the crime. The fact that the most innocent Christ was condemned, and the very wicked Barabbas was set free teaches you just this. Since there was the custom of releasing one prisoner on the solemn day of Passover as a favor to the people, they chose and demanded (undoubtedly incited by the chief priests and the Pharisees) that Barabbas be released to them, but that Christ be crucified (cf. Mt 27:15-23).

Oh, what an unheard of magnitude of hatred! O crime to be abhorred by every creature! O impiety added to the greatest injustice! So, the bandit [f.181v] apprehended for committing a murder is to be set free? He is set free.

And Jesus, delivered to the governor out of envy, is to be condemned? He is condemned. For Pilate, pressed by the council of the Senators, washed his hands and ordered that the verdict of death be proclaimed, approved by the majority of votes.²⁸³ Which verdict? “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” (Jn 19:19) is to be crucified. But He did no evil? He is to be crucified. But He is the Just, the one flourishing like a palm, the Holy of the Holies? Certainly, He is to be crucified.

O my soul, it is you who passed this irrevocable verdict of crucifying the Lord! For it is expedient for one man to die for all people (cf. Jn 18:14): and Christ for you. Ah, at least do not crucify Him again with your sins!

²⁸³ There is nothing in the Gospels about this vote made by the council of the Senators, and there is no indication of the source from which this information was taken. Cf. *IC crit. ed.*, p. 422 (footnote 86).

Already carrying the Cross for Himself, the most loving Athlete ascends to the place, which we call Calvary (cf. Jn 19:17). Accompany Him, my soul! – for the Most Holy Mother also accompanies Him – and desire to help Him carry the Cross as the most chaste Mother also desires, but is not able. You are able, by bearing joyfully the spiritual cross.

2. Since you, my soul, already arrived with Christ the Lord at the place of execution, look at the great cruelty with which the soldiers rip off the garment, glued to His Most Holy Body with dried blood! (cf. Jn 19:23). After Christ was flogged so atrociously at the pillar, He put on His tunic, woven in one piece from top to bottom (cf. Jn 19:23), which so adhered to the wounds with His congealed blood that it had to be ripped off with great effort. Hence, when it was torn off, His whole body appeared as one wound: the entire Jesus bled, so that it was impossible to see on all of His body even a spot as large as a needle prick that would be intact, unhurt or untouched.

Learn from this to rid yourself of your self-love, of your own will, and your own judgment. At the same time, make all possible effort to rid yourself of evil habits and abstain from them.

3. Consider the kind of cruelty with which the executioners fasten Christ the Lord to the Cross, thrown forth on the earth, [f.182r] and place the King of the universe for the greatest derision between two thieves! Hear also how the impious people harass Him, laugh at Him, and blaspheme Him (cf. Mt 27:38-44; Mk 15:27-32; Lk 23:33).

On the other hand, look at Him praying for His enemies (cf. Lk 23:34); gifting a thief with paradise (cf. Lk 23:43); entrusting the disciple to the Mother as a son, and the most chaste Mother to the most chaste disciple as a Mother (cf. Jn 19:26-27); invoking the help of His eternal Father (cf. Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34); thirsting for your salvation (cf. Jn 9:28); commending His soul to the Father, equal to Himself; bringing to an end the work of our salvation and exhaling His divine soul.

Ponder here the sorrows of the most Holy Mother, of the beloved disciple, of the loving Magdalene, and the tears of other

friends (cf. Jn 19:25-26), and, O my soul, also pour forth your own most abundant ones, because Christ suffered for your sins, and the Mother along with His disciples and His intimate friends suffered unbearable pains for your sake.

10. FRIDAY EVENING

On the location and internal and external punishments of hell.

1. If you want to know what hell is and what it is like; picture in your mind a very deep underground abyss, located at the very center of the earthly globe and filled up with different kinds of punishments. But among others, imagine two regions established there: one of inextinguishable fire, and the other of unbearable cold. And imagine in spirit, that you see souls like very dense sparks flying at a great speed from the flames over into the cold, whereas from there, they fly like dense snow or frozen hail back into the flames. How painful must be this punishment, whose peculiarity changes so completely and so quickly, so that at one moment the souls glow in the flames just like the fiery iron, and then suddenly congeal like ice in the cold.

Ah! I implore you, try to overcome your spiritual coldness already here, lest you suffer the infernal one forever! Try to subdue by serious mortifications the flames of furious anger and the urge of passionate lust, lest you be punished with those untamed flames. [f.182v]

2. Examine with your mind the remaining external punishments of hell. The relentlessly burning fire that generates very little light and yet is so strong that it penetrates even souls, which are incorporeal. The various attributes of this fire are, in fact, so adjusted that it does not reduce human body parts; and we see after the general judgment is carried into effect that, although the fire continues to burn, yet the same bodies are being burned here.

Note the palpable darkness, bringing about everlasting night; the unbearable stench of the most offensive foul smells, which

are gathered there from the whole world; terrors, ghosts, insults, reproaches, and torments with which demons harass men; tight places, in which souls are squeezed like sardines in a barrel; complaints, groans, abuses, blasphemies, wailing, and gnashing of teeth (cf. Mt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; Lk 13:28), which will never leave the damned.

Oh you, the fortunate one, if only you would willingly resolve to treat yourself severely in a prudent way here, rather than be compelled to suffer countless torments there.

3. Now turn your attention to considering the internal punishments of the condemned, and imagine especially the torments of the three powers of the soul: intellect, memory, and will.

The intellect will be tormented first by reflecting on the heavenly glory of the blessed and by recognizing with the greatest insight its punishment and condemnation.

The memory will be tormented by the recollection of former worldly pleasures and delights, while it will comprehend the torments into which it fell because of them.

The will shall gnaw and tear itself apart with inexplicable rage, while it continuously chews over and over that God is an unjust, pitiless, harsh, and most cruel tyrant (although the condemned suffer everything justly), who punishes and torments it forever in such a horrible way.

But not last will be the pain that the no-longer-beneficial worm of conscience will provoke out of the unceasing examination of sins. This worm will gnaw at the insides of the condemned so bitterly that each of them would prefer to suffer all the torments together than to be tortured by this worm (cf. Mk 9:45, 47) [*DRB*].²⁸⁴

²⁸⁴ The *RSV* omits these two verses, which it numbers as 44 and 46. In the *DRB* both verses say: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished."

11. SATURDAY MORNING

On the opening of the side, descent (from the Cross) and burial of Christ the Lord; and the sorrows of the Virgin Mary.

[f.183r]

1. Ponder that unheard of evil deed of the centurion Longinus. When he approached the Cross with other soldiers and saw that Christ the Lord had already died, he thrust his lance with cruelty unheard and unthought of from all ages and plunged it with great force and anger into the side of the deceased Savior.

O God! O heavens! O created things, be all astounded by it! Did anyone ever ill-treat a dead man? Even wild animals, even dogs no longer rage against a lacerated dog, but move away from the dead. Oh immense humility of Christ the Lord, which was so much more profound than anybody else's, even after His death He still wanted to experience human rage against His body.

But consider, my soul: as Christ suffered the ignominy of this wound, all of the pain pierced the Blessed Virgin Mary, who felt it no differently than as if her own side and heart had been stabbed. Wherefore consider that you owe much to the Son, but also not a little to the Mother.

2. Consider that Joseph of Arimathea, this faithful friend and disciple of Christ the Lord, approached Pilate and asked him for permission to take the body of the Lord down from the Cross. Having received it, he immediately went to the Mount of Calvary, and with help of Nicodemus, a very devout man, he took down his already dead Master from that ignominious wooden beam, and, not without tears, deposited Him on His Mother's maiden lap.

Now, think a bit about the feelings of the Virgin Mother, what she thought, what pain she suffered, as she looked at the Son of the eternal Father, and also hers, so awfully wounded in His whole body! She was groaning and pouring out tears with which, instead of water, she washed the bloody limbs of the Lord. The

same was done by the holy Magdalene who loved Him; by Mary of James and Salome; as well as by other devout matrons together with Christ's closest friends.

Finally, all of them went to the most mournful burial. With truly pious kindness, Nicodemus provided nearly a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes for that Divine Body; someone else, having bought a linen cloth, wrapped the Savior of the World in it. The remaining holy persons followed the sacred funeral all the way to the garden situated near the place of capital punishment, where they placed the King of angels in a new tomb (cf. Mt 27:59-60; Mk 15:45-46; Lk 23:53-54; Jn 19:39-42). [f.183v]

3. Consider the inexpressible sadness, grief, and sorrow that tormented the Most Blessed Virgin as she deposited in the tomb all of her love, her delights, and her treasure. And going back home, as she noticed the marks and drops of the Most Precious Blood shed along the way, she undoubtedly collected them too.

Stay with her, my soul, and see how she continuously considered the torments of her Son, and poured out many tears caused by the intensity of sorrow. Then, ask that she may obtain for you not only the true knowledge of your sins, but also abhorrence, sorrow, and swift penance for them, because they are the very sins for which the Son of God and her most beloved Son, and indeed she herself, suffered so much.

12. SATURDAY EVENING

On the individual punishments of each of the damned, on the punishment of damnation and on their eternity.

1. You should consider this: just as the greatness of one's rewards in Heaven corresponds to the greatness of one's merits, so in the perennial prison of the damned, the greatness and multitude of one's punishments match the multitude and greatness of one's evil deeds. Therefore, in addition to torments common to all of the damned, individual torments are to be endured by each according to the nature and quantity of their faults, as the

Apocalyptic prophet asserts in these words: “As much as somebody has glorified himself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give to him” (cf. Rev 18:7).

A certain devout Doctor is not far from the above when he says: “In what things a man has sinned: in the same shall he be the more grievously punished. There shall the slothful be spurred with burning goads, and the gluttons will be tormented with vast thirst and hunger. There shall the luxurious and lovers of pleasures be bathed by burning pitch and stinking brimstone; and the envious, like wild dogs, shall howl their grief. There the proud shall be filled with all feeling of shame; the greedy shall be pinched with miserable penury. There is no vice that will not have its proper torment.”²⁸⁵

O most miserable one, who are found too sluggish to submit to penance and mortification here, but very quick to commit evil deeds [f.184r]. Oh, have pity on yourself: recognize the misfortune about to come! What else will that fire consume if not your sins? By how much more you spare yourself now and follow the flesh, so much the longer afterwards will you suffer and so much greater is the material you reserve for the burning.²⁸⁶ Come to your right mind, improve and make amends.

2. Consider more carefully that the punishment of damnation, which is nothing other than the deprivation of that most blessed vision of God, exceeds all the punishments of hell put together. For as all the joy, happiness, pleasure, and blessedness of the heavenly beings consist of delighting in this beatific vision, so on the contrary, in its deprivation is contained all of the mourning, unhappiness, torments, and the damnation itself of the damned.

Alas! What a grievous misfortune this is! What a severe pain! What an unbearable punishment it is to be stripped of the good for which man was created and to be deprived forever of the heavenly Fatherland.

²⁸⁵ Cf. *IC*, Bk. I, Ch. 24, §§ 3-4.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

3. You should consider the length of time of the punishments of hell. They will have no end. As long as God shall live, so long will the damned be dying but never die! As long as the saints shall enjoy the fullness of the delights in Heaven, so long will the damned be afflicted by torments in hell. But when will this “as long as” come to an end? Never.

Let us imagine a mountain as high, wide, and great as a thousand worlds. However, by the order of God after a million years or more, some bird would take one grain of earth from this mountain and transfer it to another place of equal space. Let this favor be granted to the damned: that they would be set free from their punishments, when the above-said mountain would be thus transferred by the said one bird to the other place; indeed, those miserable souls would be overflowing with incredible joy, because at last, at some point, there would be an end to their suffering. But alas! Their suffering will have no end! There will never, ever, ever be an end to the punishments of hell.

Oh, who would not then exclaim with Augustine, would not ask: “Lord burn here, cut here, if only spare in eternity!”²⁸⁷

13. SUNDAY MORNING

On Christ’s descent into limbo, on His resurrection, and His apparition to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

1. Consider how the Most Divine Soul of Christ the Lord, having left the Most Holy Body, went surrounded by so many angelic hosts to the prisons of limbo.²⁸⁸ It is difficult to grasp with one’s mind the great joy of those holy Fathers, the great emotion and exultation with which they greeted Christ’s soul there. In fact,

²⁸⁷ A reference for this quote could not be found in the works of St. Augustine themselves, however, this saying has been attributed to Augustine by a number of authors. For example: cf. Hieremias Drexelius, *Liber Primus: Considerationes de Aeternitate*, in: *Opera omnia*, vol. I, Ioannis Cnobbari, Antverpiae 1643, p. 16 (Consideratio V, § III).

²⁸⁸ CCC, 631-633.

as He allowed Himself to be seen by them, they all cried out, impelled by the force of immense joy: “You have come, the one so longed for, [f.184v] you have come, our Savior, our promise, the Messiah awaited for so many ages.” By its presence alone, Christ’s soul wonderfully revived them and led them out of this unfortunate darkness and took them along into the tomb.

2. With an attentive mind recall how that same soul of God penetrated the stone of the tomb and, uniting itself most perfectly to the dead body as it was united before, aroused it as if from a short sleep and made it glorious and immortal. There and then was fulfilled His prediction, which He had uttered shortly before as He compared His body to a temple: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (Jn 2:19).

3. Consider how, after His most glorious Resurrection, the Redeemer appeared first to His most Holy Mother and filled and refreshed her with joys and heavenly delights that were as great as were heavy the sorrows that had afflicted and tormented her at the time of His Passion.

Hence, learn that the consolations of God are given according to the measure of tribulations, and the more kinds of adversities, persecutions, and calamities someone endured in this world out of love for Christ, the more ample abundance of joy and perennial consolation will he be endowed with in the everlasting Kingdom.

Hence, also conclude that we should mortify our flesh, so that it may rise from the dead more glorious, because, as the Savior said in a parable: Unless the grain falling into the ground die, it will bring forth no fruit (cf. Jn 12:24-25).

14. SUNDAY EVENING

On the heavenly Fatherland and everlasting happiness.

1. Place before your eyes the city, which the most beloved disciple of Christ described most exactly in the Book of Revelation. It is the holy Jerusalem, the eternal abode of all heavenly spirits and blessed men, which has the brightness of God. Its wall is one

hundred forty-four cubits and it is built of jasper. Its foundations are adorned with all kinds of precious stones. Its twelve gates are twelve pearls, and its streets are pure gold. [f.185r] Also, the city itself is made of pure gold, similar to clear glass. The Lord Almighty and the Lamb will be its temple (cf. Rev 21:1-2, 10-23).

The city inhabitants and citizens are the angels of the Lord and the saints of both sexes; and between them reigns now and always such a great concord and great charity, that the goods of each one seem to be regarded as common to all. One feels such a great joy about the other's merits, glory, and happiness, as if he himself were experiencing the same. There reigns neither envy nor ill will, but everything is common to all.

O you, the unfortunate one! If you do not desire to be in their company as soon as possible.

2. Propose to consider which goods the body as well as the soul will obtain in that holy city at the same time. The body will acquire immortality, impassibility, agility, and clarity. The soul will have perfect beatitude together with the highest glory.

Should you want to learn the privileged gifts of individual senses, consider how there (i.e., in the heavenly Fatherland):

- **the sight** shall receive the highest clarity and sharpness, by which it will penetrate everything above and below;
- **the touch** shall be endowed with incorruptible vibrancy;
- **the taste** shall abound in all sweetness and various tastes, not for nourishment, but for satiety and pleasure;
- **the hearing** shall be refreshed constantly by the various melodies of the angels singing together;
- **the smell**, finally, shall detect unusual fragrance from everything, and even from one's own body.

Strive, therefore, for continuous mortification of your senses if you want to take delight in their beatitude. But chiefly, mortify exceptionally your will and intellect since extraordinary gifts are prepared for them in Heaven.

3. Consider that the vision of God alone excels all the goods that the blessed possess in Heaven. This vision is the source out

of which all the glory flows; all the abundance of beatitude comes forth; all the happiness descends upon all the heavenly beings, so that the heavenly inheritance itself, which the Savior of the world promised to His followers, depends upon this very beatific vision.²⁸⁹

The Apocalyptic prophet expressed it very well, saying: “[T]hey shall see [H]is face, and [H]is name shall be on their foreheads. [f.185v] And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev 22:4-5).

So you see, of what great goods miserable sinners despoil themselves; indeed, of what great goods you despoil yourself whenever you do not want to strive lawfully!²⁹⁰

TO THE IMMORTAL AND INVISIBLE KING OF ALL AGES,
TO GOD ALONE BE THE HONOR AND GLORY
FOR EVER AND EVER.
AMEN.

[f.186r — is blank]

²⁸⁹ Cf. CCC, 1045.

²⁹⁰ Cf. 2 Tim 2:5.



Traditum ad traditorem
TEMPLVM

DEI

MYSTICVM

Quod

**In homine Christiano
demonstravit.**

R. P. STANISLAUS à IESV MARIA
Presbyter Polonus

**Opusculum cuius hominũ
statui maximè proficuum,
& ad Sermones Dedicati-
onis Ecclesiæ summo-
pere accommo-
dum.**



Ex Libris Congregationis Infrascriptæ
TEMPLUM *Domus*
DEI MYSTICUM, *fratrum.*

Quod in homine Christiano,
Venerabilis Pater STANISLAUS à
JESU MARIA Papczyński, Ordinis Imma-
culatæ Conceptionis B.M.V. Congrega-
tionis Polono-Marianæ, Animarum Suf-
fragatricis primus PRÆPOSITUS
Gener: ac FUNDATOR.
DEMONSTRAVIT.

*Opusculum cuiusvis hominum statui maximè pro-
ficuum & ad sermones Dedicationis Eccle-
siæ summopere accommodum.*

Avitæ Portæ
Illustrissimi & Reverendissimi Domini,
D. ANTONIJ
OSTROWSKI,

Cathedralis Cracoviensis, Posnaniensis CA-
NONICI, & Insignis Collegiatæ Varſ: Custodi,
Grojecensis, Garwolinensis, &c.

PRÆPOSITI, Judiciorum S.R.M. Affessori,
Ac ad Tribunal Supremum Regni Judici
Deputato.

In recognitionem obsequij
à Congregatione Polono Mariana
DEDICATUM.

VARSAVIÆ Typis S.R.M. Scholarũ Piarũ. A. 1747.

THE MYSTICAL TEMPLE OF GOD

which was made visible in the Christian man
by the Venerable Father Stanislaus
of Jesus and Mary,
a Polish priest

This work is very useful
for people of every state of life,
particularly suitable for sermons
on the consecration of a church.

Translated by
J.R. Thomas Holland
Edited by
Patrick Lynch, MIC

INTRODUCTION

The Work, its Author, and Circumstances of its Creation

Templum Dei Mysticum (TDM) is a work on asceticism. Its full Latin title reads: *Templum Dei Mysticum quod in Homine Christiano demonstravit R. P. Stanislaus a Iesu Maria Presbyter Polonus*. This work, which took Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński some years to complete, was printed in Krakow in 1675 at the Shedel's print shop. Reprints appeared in 1741 and 1747 through the efforts of the Servant of God Casimir Wyszyński. The critical edition was prepared by Fr. Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC, in 1998.

There is no doubt as to the authenticity of the title and authorship, since the book's first release was finalized through the personal efforts of its author and the front page reads: *Templum Dei Mysticum, quod in Homine Christiano demonstravit R.P. Stanislaus a Iesu Maria Presbyter Polonus, opusculum cuius hominum statui maxime proficuum, et ad Sermones Dedicacionis Ecclesiae summopere accomodatum. Prodit Cracoviae Typis Schedelianis, A.D. 1675*. As we can see, the author adhered to the custom of giving only his religious name of "Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary," which he continued to use in the Marian Order that he had founded. However, instead of *Scholarum Piarum*, he added *Presbyter Polonus*, "a Polish priest." The year TDM's first edition was released marked two years since ecclesiastical approval of the Institute of the Marian Fathers in the Korabiew Forest granted by Bishop Jacek Świącicki, to whom Father Papczyński dedicated TDM as a token of thanksgiving. Father Stanislaus's authorship of this book was also confirmed by an official act: on May 29, 1769, the archivist Fr. D. Kisieliński submitted TDM — together with Fr. Papczyński's other writings — to the Roman Congregation of Rites to be examined by theologians for the process of his beati-

fication. Subsequently, on July 15, 1775, the Congregation issued a decree confirming the examined works' faithfulness to Church teaching. *TDM* is mentioned twice, under numbers 3 and 12.¹

It is noteworthy that Fr. Papczyński prepared *TDM* for publication the same year that he was composing the *Rule of Life* (*Norma Vitae* [NV]) for the new Marian community; that is, during his stay in the town of Lubocza, in the Mazovia region of Poland, where he served as a chaplain at the Karskis' family court (1671-1673).²

Composition, Contents, and Purpose of this Work

In order to understand the theological foundations upon which Fr. Papczyński erected the edifice of *Templum Dei Mysticum*, it is necessary to particularly consider the first chapters of his book in which he presented his concept, the book's base, and its conclusions. He paid special attention to God's presence and His love. By His very nature, God is a presence because, in revealing His name to Moses, He said: "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14). He is present not only in Himself, but also in His creation, which in His goodness, He called into existence and sustains in continuation and action. He is therefore present as the Creator and as Providence.³ In the case of man's creation, He deigned to be present in a deeper way. As the Holy Trinity — and, therefore, a personal being — He created man in His likeness, making him a social, rational, and free being, endowed with memory. In this way, man also became a person, a free and intelligent entity and a partner for dialogue. Thus, God made this new personal manner of His coming and presence dependent upon man: everyone is responsible for

¹ Cf. *Copia Publica Transumpti Processus Ordinaria auctoritate in Curia Posnanien. constructi super fama sanctitatis vitae, virtutum et miracularum Servi Dei Stanislai Papczyński Clericorum Marianorum Institutoris*, f. 365; cf. also Decree in: *Summariū Additionale*, Num. 3, §§ 3, 12.

² Father Papczyński remarked in *TDM* that he was composing this book in 1671.

³ "God is always and everywhere in His totality, enlivening, moving, and directing all things, and the Apostle confirms, that in Him 'we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28)." *Mystical Temple of God*, Stockbridge 2013, p. 26.

becoming the image of God. It is a gift that requires cooperation.⁴ Father Papczyński particularly emphasizes the different manners of God's coming and His presence. Let us name at least a few without referring to his written works: God is present in Christ as the Man-God, in the Holy Spirit, in the Church, in the Most Blessed Mother, in the saints, in one's neighbor, in the community of the faithful, in prayers, in the Word of God, in the Sacraments, and particularly in the Eucharist. It is not enough, however, [for someone] to simply acknowledge God's presence and declare to be His image. It is also necessary to prove through actions the truth that a living and immaculate image of God dwells within us.⁵ Therefore, everyone should take up the fight against what separates him from God, what blemishes and blurs God's image in him, and make efforts to acquire virtues (and especially love), thus conforming himself to God and opening for Him the road into the human heart. The allegory of a temple assists in this task.

Man is the *Mystical Temple of God*, more precious than the most famous and most wonderful shrines known to history. For man is an image of God, His dwelling place and His chosen child. Father Papczyński also remarks that material shrines are subject to ruin, while the human soul is immortal. From this comes man's immense dignity: he is incomparably greater than any other creature. The entire symbolic composition of this work is built around this vision, from which ascetic principles are derived.

Father Papczyński left no doubt as to what purpose and to whom this work, which he had written and published, was to serve. The information provided on the title page makes it clear: "This work is beneficial for people of all walks of life, and it is useful especially for sermons at the consecration of a church." This statement is complemented by an encouragement to the readers at the end of the first chapter: "If anyone reads it with

⁴ "Let God always remain in the mind of the one who is understanding and loving, so that, just as there can be no moment which man does not use or enjoy God's goodness and mercy, so there should be no moment in which he does not keep Him present in his memory." Ibid., p. 27.

⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

real attention and frequently considers it carefully, he will reap great benefit, namely, an increased knowledge of himself and of God, a sure way of salvation and a rule of Christian perfection. If someone reads it more carefully and meditates more often, he can benefit from our work a great deal, [gathering] namely an increase in the knowledge of himself and God, a sure path to salvation and model of Christian perfection.”⁶ It should be obvious that the author offers his work to everyone as a textbook of spirituality.

Sources of Teachings and Subsequent Editions

Father Papczyński based his ascetic theology on Sacred Scripture, the writings of the Fathers of the Church, works by Christian writers and mystics, and treatises on theology, quoting frequently from such books. While preparing the critical edition of *TDM*, Fr. C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, endeavored to link these quotations and references with their original sources and achieved a great deal in this respect. Despite this effort, however, he acknowledged the incompleteness of the result, caused by various reasons such as: a lack of references, the author’s inaccuracy in providing references, missing publishers’ addresses, or unknown translations of the quoted text. Actually, Fr. Papczyński, when necessary for his project, sometimes dealt quite freely with statements by other authors, whether by changing their wording, leaving a word out of the quote, or simply paraphrasing the text.

In addition to the printings in 1675, 1741, and 1747, *TDM* was also reprinted in modern times; in 1958, through the efforts of the General Postulator, its Latin version with no critical apparatus was mimeographed. In 1965, *TDM*’s first translation into Polish appeared (prepared by Prof. E. Jarra). *TDM*’s critical edition in Latin with footnotes and an introduction was published by C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, in 1998. The English-language translation was released in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A., in 2013.

⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

As we begin reading this work by Fr. Papczyński, let us keep his admonition in mind: “Therefore treat yourself like a Temple of God, because of that within you which is similar to God. The supreme honor we can show to God is to worship and imitate Him. You imitate Him, if you are devout; you worship Him, if you are merciful. Do everything like the Son of God, that you may be worthy of Him who deigned to call you son.”⁷

Wacław Makoś, MIC

* * *

The quotations from the Bible found in this work were taken by the author from the Latin Vulgate. In this English edition, we used an official English translation of the Bible from the Latin Vulgate (The *New American Bible* [NAB]) where other modern translations of the Bible differ considerably from the Latin Vulgate, and using them here would insufficiently correspond to the original Latin text, thus obscuring the context of the quotations used in *TDM*. Certain quotations are directly translated from the *Vulgate* [LV] as indicated, when the *NAB* does not sufficiently render the meaning intended by the author.

The page numbering shown within the text in brackets comes from the first edition released in 1675.

⁷ Ibid., p. 134.

THE MYSTICAL TEMPLE

Made Visible in the Christian

CHAPTER 1

The Christian is the Temple of God

It is so certain that Man, created by God, and consecrated to Him through the Sacrament of Baptism, is His Mystical Temple, that it ought not to stand in need of proof.¹

For the Apostle of Tarsus² makes this assertion in the clearest terms in his Epistle to the Corinthians, when he says: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God?”³ (1 Cor 3:16). Asia Minor was once boastful of the shrine of Diana of Ephesus, and spoke of it as not the least among the seven wonders of the world. And deservedly so. It was huge, skillfully wrought, magnificent and majestic; a number of kings poured forth their wealth into its construction and splendor.

Yet it was the shrine of just one renowned woman, called Diana.⁴ You Christians, as the Teacher of the Nations teaches, “are the Temple of the living God” (2 Cor 6:15). What a glory is yours! What a dignity!

Solomon, the richest and wisest of the Kings, the son of the just David, and the heir to the throne, impelled so much by his father’s commission, as by the will of God, had such a celebrated

¹ The author does not attempt to prove this truth with the help of a strict theological argument, but demonstrates it by pointing out the supreme appropriateness of such an analogy.

² The Apostle Paul: he was born in Tarsus.

³ The author adds the word “Mystical” to this expression of St. Paul, not to change the meaning, but rather to clarify it. With this addition, it is better understood that here the “Temple of God” is taken in an analogical sense rather than in its basic literal and material sense. Compare Pius XII, in the encyclical *Of the Mystical Body*: AAS 35 (1943), 221.

⁴ The Temple of Diana, which was built in the city of Ephesus (in Asia Minor) in the sixth century B.C. by Chersiphron, was universally recognized as one of the seven wonders of the world.

Temple built in his royal city of Jerusalem, [that] the like of it had never been seen in the whole world; if [one like it] shall [ever] be seen, I do not know. It was built over a space of seven years at the greatest expense by a large number of workmen. The walls were constructed of squared stones in such a manner that neither a hammer nor an axe could be heard. On the inside they were clad with panels of cedar: these were not only inlaid with sheets of gold which were themselves most attractively engraved, but were wholly enclosed by them: "there was nothing in the whole temple that was not covered with gold" (3 Kings 6:22). But it was human ingenuity that raised up all these, and in like manner a human hand destroyed them, and leveled them to the ground.⁵

You, Man, are the invention of the Divine deliberation. The most August Trinity raised you up as a Temple for itself, and the Creator of all things called you into being: "God formed you out of the slime of the earth" (Gen 2:7). Nor on that score is man inferior to the Temple of Solomon because he was shaped of mud. For the hand of the Creator set an immense value on such a worthless material. "For whatever was made besides man," (says Hugo of St. Victor⁶) "God made for change and death; He made only man for immortality" (cf. Gen 2).⁷ Therefore rightly each of us boasts before the Lord with the harpist King⁸ and Job: "Your hands," O Lord, "have made me" (Ps 119:73; Job 10:9).

Nevertheless, I warn here that nobody should think that God has hands when he reads that he is the work of God's hands. "It is a very childish idea," says the African Doctor,⁹ "that God molded man from mud with corporeal hands, for God is not

⁵ The Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans.

⁶ Hugo of St. Victor (d. 1141), a theologian and philosopher. He wrote many works of biblical exegesis (commentaries on the Holy Bible). Compare Piolanti Antonio, *Ugo di San Vittore: ECat XII*, 711-712.

⁷ Hugo of St. Victor, *Explanatory Notes on the Pentateuch*, on *Genesis 1* (Ch. VII): *PL* 175, 37. Also the same: *LCG*, f.34v.

⁸ By "the harpist King," the author means King David, whom he calls a harpist because in the Psalms he played to God.

⁹ St. Augustine (d. 430): he was born in Africa and was made the bishop of Hippo Regius, a city in Africa.

determined by the pattern of any limbs, but just as it has been said, "Your hand has destroyed the nations" and "You brought out your people with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm," so it had also been said, "Your hands, O Lord, have made me and fashioned me." For limbs of this kind are used to signify the power and might of God" (*LCG*).¹⁰ Therefore it was the power of God that created man.

But if we consider the manner of our creation, we shall observe that our race possesses an even greater excellence than can be imagined. Assuredly, when the eternal Trinity was about to create man, It did not wish to undertake this task without a deliberation, but as It was about to make something of the utmost and greatest importance, weighing carefully It said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen 1:26).

For this reason Gregory of Nyssa¹¹ appropriately exclaims: "O what a wonder! The sun is made, but no deliberation precedes; the heavens and every creature are produced by just a word: it was to the creation of man alone that the Creator of the universe approached His task in a certain way with deliberation, saying: "Let us make man."¹² Behold, man, your dignity!

But listen to Ambrose when he is advising how much you are obliged to your Creator for His grace: "Man was created," (he says), "with the deliberation of the Holy Trinity and by the work of the Divine Majesty, so that he might understand from the honor of his initial condition how much he owes his Creator: and might love his Creator all the more ardently, and might understand how wondrously he was created by Him."¹³ What [else can be said]?

¹⁰ Augustinus, in: *LCG*, f.54v (in *Gen.*, Chap. II), where, however, there is no indication of the work of St. Augustine's from which this quotation comes. It should be noted that it is not quoted word for word from *LCG*, but adapted somewhat to the text.

¹¹ St. Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394) wrote mainly works of exegesis. Cf. Danielou Giovanni, *Gregorio Nisseno: ECat VI*, 1099.

¹² St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, 3: *PG* 44, 135. A similar idea is expressed by St. Gregory in his work *Prayer I* on the words "Let us make man etc." *PG* 44, 259.

¹³ Ambrose, *On the Dignity of the Human Condition*, 1: *PL* 17, 611.

That when our creation had already been corrupted by sin, He added sanctification and enlightened us with the light of His grace, as though clothing His Temple with sheets of gold, and He almost consecrated us to Himself, when He gave us back, bathed in the sacred font, original justice! “And for that reason, dearest brothers” (so St. Augustine exhorts us), “since we have not deserved to become the Temple of God by any previous merits but by the grace of God, let us labor as hard as we can with His assistance to ensure that our Lord may not find anything in His Temple, that is, in us, that offends the eyes of His Majesty.”¹⁴

Moreover, since “whatever is done in temples made by human hands” (as the same holy Father teaches), “all this is completed in us by spiritual edification,”¹⁵ it pleases me to advance further in the work begun, and set out the remaining features of the Mystical Temple. If anyone reads it with real attention and frequently considers it carefully, he will reap great benefit, namely, an increased knowledge of himself and of God, a sure way of salvation and a rule of Christian perfection.

CHAPTER 2

The Image of the Mystical Temple

I reveal God in man: begone, begone, you profane ones! “For in the image of God has man been made” (Gen 9:6). Let the sun, the moon, the fixed and mobile stars, the sky with its beauty, the earth with its greatness and the sea with its depth all yield to human nature. “For in the image of God has man been made.” Precious metals, very valuable gems, scarlet corals, snow-white crystals, gold colored ambers, the luster of silver, the brilliance of gold, the splendor of pearls, the gleam of diamonds, let them all yield to human nature: “For in the image of God has man been made.” Yet also let the fishes of the sea, the fowl in the air, the animals that

¹⁴ The source of this quotation from St. Augustine has not been found.

¹⁵ There is no reference to the source.

move and run over the earth, and whatever is beneath God and not endowed with reason, be inferior to human nature. "For in the image of God has man been made."

But you, earthen deity, learn with me, and recognize; what are you? The image of God. In what way? Let the Fathers inspired by the Holy Spirit explain it. And listen first of all to Gennadius:¹⁶ "It is to be understood" (he affirms), "that man is in the image of God for the following reason. God is provident for all things; man too provides for some of these. God is boundless and is present to all things; and man is present, wherever he wishes, in an instant by thought. God is the king of all things, man too has been graced by God with the power to judge. God is invisible, immortal, and a creator; nor is human nature altogether devoid of these divine distinctions."¹⁷

But that most eloquent and wise Bishop Ambrose depicts this image of God in the Mystical Temple of God more properly and in a manner most suitable to the present subject: "This Image," (he says), "must be considered in conformity with the inner nobility of man. The first thing indeed is that just as the one God is always and everywhere in His totality, enlivening, moving, and directing all things, as the Apostle confirms, that in Him "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28), just so the soul in its body is active everywhere in its totality, enlivening, moving and directing it, being present in its totality in both the smallest and largest members. This is the image of the unity of God.

The soul is also the image of the Trinity both because as God exists, lives and has intelligence, so also the soul in its own fashion exists, lives and has intelligence; and equally because, just as God is one nature but three Persons, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, in like manner the soul also is one nature, but possesses within itself three dignified features, that is: the intellect, the will and the memory. This same fact is indicated in the

¹⁶ Gennadius of Marsilia (d. 496); cf. Draczowski, Franciszek, *Gennadiusz, kaplan z Marsylii: EK V*, 963.

¹⁷ Gennadius, from an unknown work, in: *LCG*, f.41v (*on Genesis, chapt. I*).

Gospel, even though in other words, when it is said “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Mt 22:37), that is, with your whole intellect, with your whole will, and with your whole memory. For just as the Son is begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, in like manner the will is begotten of the intellect, and in like manner the memory proceeds from both. And just as the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, yet they are not three Gods, but one God having three Persons, thus the intellect is soul, the will is soul, the memory is soul, yet there are not three souls in one body, but one soul having three dignified features. And we are bidden to love the Creator by these three, as if [they were] the preeminent dignities of the soul.”¹⁸ That mellifluous Father, Bernard, expresses and suggests the same ideas more concisely, but clearly in the following words: “Our mind is the image of God, in which there are these three [capabilities]: memory, understanding, and will. To the memory we attribute everything that we know; to the understanding — everything that we discover to be true; to the will — everything that we love. By memory we are similar to the Father, by intelligence to the Son, and by will to the Holy Spirit” (*Book of Meditations*, chapter I).¹⁹

And so already from both the quoted text of Holy Scripture, and from the authentic meaning of the holy Fathers, any Christian will, I think, easily conclude that the image of the Most Holy Trinity is imprinted on his soul and its powers, that is the intellect, the will and the memory.

It remains for us to exert ourselves most diligently to fulfill what these same most holy Teachers of ours advise us. And indeed St. Bernard says: “Now, what is in the image of something must be in conformity with its image, and not share in vain the name of its image. Let us, therefore, show in our image our quest for

¹⁸ Ambrose, *On the Dignity of the Human Condition*, 2; PL 17, 611-612.

¹⁹ Bernard, *Most Devout Meditations about Understanding the Human Condition*, ch. 1: PL 184, 487. Also in: *St. Bernard's Complete Works*, II, Paris 1719, 333.

peace, our search for truth, and our love of charity.”²⁰ Secondly, St. Ambrose exhorts us to contemplate continually this image of God depicted in us with a singular love for our Creator and Restorer in the following way: “Let God always remain in the mind of the one who is understanding and loving, so that, just as there can be no moment which man does not use or enjoy God’s goodness and mercy, so there should be no moment in which he does not keep Him present in his memory.”²¹ Nor is it sufficient to apprehend the mere presence of God; we must also show in our actions and exterior deeds that we truly bear within us the living and unsullied image of God.

I want to give voice to Ambrose in what he still has to say on this subject: “Just as God the Creator,” (he says), “who created man in His image and likeness, is love, is good, is just, patient and mild, pure and merciful, and embraces the other characteristics of the holy virtues, which are read about Him, so also man was created to have love, to be good and just, to be patient and mild, pure and merciful. What greater honor for a man” (he continues farther), “than to be clothed with the same garments as the Lord himself; according to what is said: ‘The Lord is king, He is clothed with beauty’” (Ps 93:1) [LV]?

Therefore, let everyone pay more careful attention to the excellence of his first condition and acknowledge the venerable likeness to the Holy Trinity in himself, and strive, by the nobility of his conduct, the exercise of virtues, and the dignity of merits, to possess the honor of divine likeness; so that when it becomes manifest what he is like, then it appears that he is similar to Him who wondrously formed him in His likeness in the first Adam, and yet more wondrously reformed [him] in the second.”²²

²⁰ Bernard, *“Meditations ...”,* Ch. 1: PL 184, 486 (n. 319) or *The Most Devout Meditations of St. Bernard to Obtain an Understanding of the Human Condition, Also Known as A book about the Soul*, 1, n. 34 in: *The Meditations, Soliloquies and Handbook of Saint Aurelius Augustine, and in Addition The Meditations ... of Saint Bernard ...*, Turin 1929, p. 313. [Hereafter *The Meditations, Soliloquies and Handbook* will be abbreviated as AMS.]

²¹ Ambrose, op. cit. *ibid.*

²² Cf. *ibid.*, Ch. 3. In the final section of this quotation the author omitted the reference to 1 Jn 3:2, where we read: “We know that when it comes to light, we

For this reason, finally, the Sun of Venice, St. Lawrence Justinian²³ rightly insists: “What have you to do with flesh and blood, you who bear in yourself the Divine image? What have you to do with the world and vices, who, it is proven, was created for this, that you may ascend to heaven and enjoy the beatific vision of God with the Angelic spirits?”²⁴

CHAPTER 3

The Altar of the Mystical Temple

I embrace the oracle of Clairvaux²⁵ and publicize it to all: “The holy temple is a God-fearing soul, and the altar is its excellent heart” (Med., Ch. 6).²⁶ Bernard spoke this. And who would not admit that the Heart of man, especially of a devout one, is the Altar of God the Most High? For, just as God veiled in the most Holy Eucharist is never absent on the altar of a material temple, so He is never absent in a heart that is devoted to Him. Hence, He addresses us in the writings of that most enlightened Father of Calahorra, John of Jesus and Mary, who was once Superior General of the Carmel, which is beginning again to blossom,²⁷ in the following words: “Prepare your hearts from their very depths

shall be like Him...”

²³ St. Lawrence Justinian (d. 1456) is called “the Sun of Venice” by the author, because he was the patriarch of Venice.

²⁴ This quotation is probably taken from *The Complete Works of St. Justinian Lawrence ...*, Venice 1606, but from which specific work is not known.

²⁵ By these words the author refers to the “oracle” (i.e., an opinion that enjoys great authority) that St. Bernard of Clairvaux made known in the monastery of Clairvaux (meaning, “Bright Valley”). This Cistercian monastery was founded by St. Bernard himself.

²⁶ Bernard, *Meditations ...*, 6: PL 184, 497 (n. 328), or *The Meditations of Saint Bernard*, Ch. 6, 4 in: AMS, p. 338.

²⁷ Father John of Jesus and Mary (the Calahorran), born in Calahorra in 1564, died in 1615; Superior General of the Order of Discalced Carmelites from 1611 to 1614; cf. Gabriele di S. Maria Maddalena, *Giovanni di Gesù Maria (Calaguritanus)*: ECat VI, 562.

for Me, so that attracted by your love I may rest in them, like the groom in his bridal chamber, as God on His own altar.”²⁸

Once, the God of infinite goodness desired that a temple be set up for Him by the king of the Israelites. And so He intimated His desire to His prophet, and dispatched him to David with these instructions: “Go, tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?’” (2 Sam²⁹ 7:5). How much more ardently does He desire to have an altar — I say, the whole heart — dedicated to Him in His Mystical Temple? From this arises this entreaty, so to speak, addressed to each one of us, as it is found in the writings of the Sage: “My son, give me your heart” (Prov 23:26). For what purpose? That He may inhabit it, reside therein, and stay, reign and rest therein forever. For the Roman Philosopher³⁰ himself believes: “God dwells in each good man” (Seneca. Ep. 41).³¹

For that reason the golden Aurelius³² accedes to this, when he proposes the goal of created man to us in the following discourse: “God made man that by loving he may possess the highest Good: God is therefore the most noble possession of man.”³³ But if God is the possession of man, then certainly He is most deserving of the most noble place in men; for the more excellent things are to be held in a more excellent way, and the more sublime are to be honored in a more sublime way. Yet what is more excellent or more sublime than God? Since then there is nothing in man either more deserving, or more noble, than his heart, God is to be placed here as on His altar, so that He may rejoice most fully in His whole possession.

²⁸ John of Jesus and Mary, *The Book on the Prudence of the Just*, Part V, Ch. 1: *Complete Works*, vol. II, Cologne 1622, p. 391

²⁹ The original text refers to 2 Kings.

³⁰ Lucius Annaeus Seneca, a Roman philosopher who belonged to the Stoic school.

³¹ Seneca, *Books of Moral Epistles to Lucilius*, I, 312: Book IV, ep. 12 (41) (*The Italian Corpus of Roman Writers*, edited Hectore Romagnoli, Milan 1933).

³² This is how the author denotes St. Aurelius Augustine.

³³ This text could not be located in the works of St. Augustine.

Saint Bernard, a man most loving of God, holding the same opinion, says: "In every creature that is busied under the sun with the vanities of the world, nothing is found more sublime than the human heart, nothing more noble, nothing more like God. Therefore He seeks from you nothing other than your heart" (Med. 7).³⁴ Add that if our heart [were] a little more noble, it [could] be filled with no other thing except God alone! And so it should seek nothing except God, nor to rest anywhere but in Him, to whom it is morally bound. Augustine acknowledged speaking to God in this way: "You made us, Lord, for [Y]ourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You."³⁵ The most learned and devout Father Nieremberg³⁶ illustrated this in a very elegant and appropriate metaphor [parable] saying: "The nautical needle does not come to rest until it turns toward the North, and looks straight at the Arctic Pole; and in what other direction it finally turns, it never stops there: so exactly our Heart, which God has made for Himself alone and not for anything else, tends and inclines towards its own center or natural perfection: and it cannot rest until it looks to its Creator" (in the *Divine Life*, Ch. 4).³⁷

And so, since they are mutually sought by each other, both God by the heart, and the heart by God, neither should the heart envy God, nor God the heart; let Him remain alone on His altar. Nothing earthly, let alone impure, should come to rest on it. Let us keep this altar with utmost zeal very pure for God alone. Let us altogether imitate the magnanimity of Mattathias: when in his sight a certain Hebrew was sacrificing to idols, "he leapt on the man and slaughtered him on the Altar" (cf. 1 Macc 2:23-24). Nor should we permit anything except God on the altar of our heart. His command is, "You shall love the Lord, your God,

³⁴ Bernardus, *Meditations...*, 6/1: PL 184, 498 (n. 328).

³⁵ Augustine, *XIII Books of Confessions*, Bk. I, 1.

³⁶ Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, SJ (d. 1658), was famous for his learning and devotion. Cf. Testore Celestino, *Nieremberg, Juan Eusebio: ECat VIII*, 1872; Niedzielski Jan, *Nieremberg Jan Euzebiusz T.J.: PEK XXIXXXX*, 14.

³⁷ Nierembergius, Ioannes Eusebius, *The Divine Life or Royal Road to Perfection*, Latin edition by Fr. Martin Siberius, SJ, of the Monastery of Westphalia, 1642, p. 47.

with your whole heart" (Mt 22:37). In explaining this, Lipomanus³⁸ says "The Lord wishes to be held, believed, worshiped and loved alone: and as He alone is our Lord, so He demands that we should be entirely His."³⁹ Otherwise, the slightest disordered feeling toward a small trifle, [or] toward ourselves, very much impedes this perfect love.

"For those who love God," as Theodoretus⁴⁰ says, "with all their heart, do not divide their feeling by placing it both among earthly matters and among heavenly things, but bear it entirely upwards."⁴¹

I do not proceed further, but contain myself within the sphere of the heart, and so conclude. If "the heart is the altar of God," as St. Bernard would have it, let it be consecrated to God alone. "He wishes to have your heart for Himself alone" (he admonishes you, Christian, Imitator of Christ⁴²) "and to sit as a King on His own throne" (1. 2, c. 7),⁴³ as God on His altar. O God! Make it that this be so forever.

³⁸ Luigi Lippomano, or Aloisius Lipomanus (1500-1599) is the author of the works: *A Chain on Genesis*, Paris 1546; *A Chain on Exodus*, Paris 1550. Cf. Benigni, U., *Lippomano, Luigi or Aloisius Lipomanus: EC IX*, 279-280; De Gaiffier B., *Lippomani (Lippomano, Lipomanus) Luigi: LThK VI*, 1071.

³⁹ This text of Lipomanus could not be located.

⁴⁰ Cf. Peterson, Erik, *Theodoretus of Cyrrhus: ECat XI*, 1926-27, where it may be read that he wrote "exegetical works on many texts of the Octateuch."

⁴¹ It was not possible to find this text. In *The Complete Works of Theodoretus*, Ed. Sirmand, Paris 1642, in the section: "Index of Names and Subjects," on the words: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, etc.," only one passage is indicated where Theodoretus provided a commentary on these words, that is, in "Questions on Deuteronomy," Inter. III: *ibid.*, I, 170s, d, where however it was not possible to find a different text although it was very similar as far as the sense is concerned: "The Lord has clearly taught us that nobody can serve two masters. And in this passage therefore we are taught that love cannot be shared between God and gold, or between God and friends: but we are instructed to consecrate the whole force of love to God the creator."

⁴² "The Imitator of Christ," that is, the author of an anonymous book called *On the Imitation of Christ*. He is believed by many to be Thomas Hemerk à Kempis, of the Order of Regular Augustinian Canons (d. 1471).

⁴³ Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, Bk. II, Ch. 7. [The English translations of *The Imitation of Christ* are all translated directly from the Latin quotations of *The Imitation* from *Templum Dei Mysticum*, in order to fully convey the meaning that St. Stanislaus intended. Hereafter *The Imitation of Christ* will be abbreviated as *IC*.]

CHAPTER 4

The Sacrifice of the Mystical Temple

Be far from this temple of ours [any] victim that is displeasing to God, which He Himself spurns saying somewhere: “Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” (Ps 50:13). Be far from this temple those buying and selling, which He holds in greatest abomination according to the well-known words of Jerome: “Let there be no business dealing in the house of our heart, no commerce between buyers and sellers, no desire for gifts: let Jesus not enter when He is angry and stern, otherwise He will not cleanse His temple except with the use of a whip” (cf. Mt 21:12-13).⁴⁴

What then should be offered in sacrifice to the eternal Majesty? David sings: “My sacrifice, God, is an afflicted spirit; God, do not spurn a contrite, humbled heart” (Ps 51:19) [LV].

Let the afflicted offer his affliction to God in sacrifice; the sinner his contrition, the righteous his humility, the Priest his praise, the Religious his vows; just as the same King⁴⁵ urges us elsewhere: “Offer praise as you sacrifice to God; fulfill your vows to the Most High” (Ps 50:14).

Pleasing is the offering of the afflicted, when he particularly blesses God in it, whether his affliction is imposed upon him for his sins or for the merit of his eternal glory; in consequence one of the Fathers says, “There is nothing more blessed than the tongue that thanks God in adversity.” Pleasing is the contrition of the repentant sinner, for as the Lord Himself declares, “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance” (Lk 15:7). Pleasing is the prayer of a humble creature, because

⁴⁴ Eusebius Hieronymus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, III, 21: PL 26, 157 (n. 165) and the same author: Bk. III, *Commentaries on Matthew ...: CChrL* 77, 188.

⁴⁵ By “King” is meant David, who was the second king of the kingdom of Israel (1011-971 B.C.).

“it penetrates the clouds”;⁴⁶ because God “gives grace to the humble.”⁴⁷ And just as the righteous man at the beginning of his speaking is his own accuser, just so God is always present near him as a friend who takes delight in humility.

Pleasing is the praise on the lips of priests, whom the Holy Spirit Himself exhorts: “Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord; [. . .] Servants of the just, bless the Lord” (Dan 3:84-85).

Pleasing finally, yes, indeed most pleasing, are the poverty, chastity and obedience of Religious men and women, because it rests on the counsel of Christ; our Lord demanded earnestly and exacted these very offerings from St. Francis in the form of golden plates.⁴⁸

Now since these enumerated sacrifices are most acceptable to God, then the most outstanding and lovable of all will be that in which they all are contained. This is performed when all that is ours, internally and externally, is offered daily to God with a pure intention in such a way that no part of them falls to the lot of the devil. Here is a twofold manner of making this offering, that you can use in the morning and in the evening.

⁴⁶ Cf. Eccl 35:21: “The prayer of him that humbles himself shall pierce the clouds.”

⁴⁷ Cf. Jas 4:6 “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

⁴⁸ Cf. De Legisma, Juan R., Gomez Canedo, Lino, *St. Francis of Assisi*, Madrid 1956, pp. 207-208 (Floreccillas de San Francisco, P. II: *Consideraciones sobre las Llagas*, 3), where one reads: “And among other things which He [Jesus Christ] said to me, He asked of me three gifts; Then He said to me: ‘Search in thy bosom, and offer me what thou shalt find there.’ And searching, I found there a golden ball, and I offered it to God; and the like I did three times, even as God has given me something to offer Him. And immediately it was given to me to understand that these three offerings signified holy obedience, most entire poverty, and most pure chastity, which God by His grace has enabled me so perfectly to observe And whereas thou didst see me put my hand into my bosom and offer to God those three virtues, signified by these three golden balls which God has placed in my bosom, so God has infused such virtue into my soul.” It appears therefore that the “offerings” were not “in the form of golden plates,” but of golden globes (small balls).

PRACTICE I of a daily Offering

My Lord God, I offer to your Majesty my morning (or evening) tribute of all the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the most Blessed Virgin and of all those in Heaven, and of the righteous who dwell on earth, and the good and indifferent works of all men; and this in recompense for all and every one of the benefits conferred on myself and the whole human race, at all times and in all ways, especially this night (or day) for the satisfaction and the washing away of my sins, and all my faults and imperfections, and those of the whole human race, especially those committed this night (or day); for the aversion of those punishments and calamities which we have deserved for the same, and the dangers to our soul and body; for Your Will to be known and fulfilled in all things, loving You above all things and our neighbors with peaceful charity and avoiding impediments to all these [things]; for the spiritual and corporal needs of your Holy Church, of the Pope, of the Christian Emperor, of our King and Kingdom, and of all Kings and Christian Kingdoms, neighbors of my own and of my parents, relatives, benefactors, friends, enemies etc., especially N.N. and all those for whom I have ever either resolved, promised or ought to pray, and whom your Majesty wishes to be prayed for, whether alive or dead, but not yet enjoying Your glory; for the conversion of sinners and heretics and the enlightening of unbelievers and schismatics; and lastly for that intention, for which Your Majesty wishes these to be offered to Himself and for which I am bound to offer.

And with all these aforesaid merits and works I offer to Your Majesty my heart, that it may love only You, and nothing beside you, unless for Your sake; [I offer You] my soul, that it may serve You; my intellect, memory and will, that they may be subject to You; my mouth, that it may speak of You; my tongue, that it may bless You; my sight, touch, taste, hearing, smell, imagination, that they may admit no evil, and may desire or retain nothing disordered; [I offer You] all my interior and exterior senses; all parts of my body and soul, and all their motions; all the works of my whole life, and especially of this day, my thoughts, steps, vision,

conversations, desires, proposals, suffering, consolation, fear, security, anxiety, joy, falling, rising up again, temptation and victory over it, persecutions, wrongs, honor, contempt, dishonor, and good repute, abundance, misery, toil, rest, health, and sickness, etc., life and death; myself, namely my entire being, and all I have.

Grant, Lord, that I may be wholly Yours and not my own, for all time, at every moment, for the whole of eternity.

May all these things be for Your glory, for the honor of the most Holy Virgin Mary, and all who dwell in Heaven, for my salvation and that of my neighbors, and the increase of virtue, and the growth of grace and merit. Amen.

PRACTICE II

From the writings of the Rev. Fr. John of Jesus and Mary of the [Order of] Discalced Carmelites⁴⁹

“Most merciful God, to whom I owe myself entirely for many reasons, I direct my entire self, my thoughts, words and works of my whole life, but especially of today, to the glory of your Majesty, together with Jesus Christ our Lord, the most Blessed Virgin, all the blessed and holy Souls, who dwell in Heaven, and the righteous, wherever they live, whom I most closely bind to myself by affection, and I desire most earnestly to please you through all of these without other consideration.

In addition to the things I have mentioned, I desire to possess countless thousands of the most perfect hearts, which along with them have pleased you from eternity and will please you forever. With this desire conceived within me I offer you with every breath all these things as a sacrifice to atone for sins, as a sacrifice of thanksgiving, to show gratitude for your benefits, universal and particular; as a peacemaking sacrifice to obtain all the goods of which I need all the way to attainment of the state of blessedness; as a holocaust to enter into a union of heart with you and to bear witness to your Divine Majesty. Most Blessed

⁴⁹ See Ch. III, footnote 27 (p. 581).

Virgin, I give myself completely, with all the thoughts, words and works of my whole life, particularly those of today, and all the hearts I have mentioned (as far as it is allowed) as much as I can, to your praise, and I desire very much to please you through all of them.”⁵⁰

Protestation

I protest, my God, Lord of infinite goodness and Majesty, that this day, and during my whole life, I do not want to contemplate, speak or do anything against your will.

And so it will be done without my resolve and intention, if anything to the contrary happens; and that it may not happen, I most humbly beg Your Majesty having regard only for the love of You and Your glory.

By such offerings and protestations we avoid many evils and achieve much good; most importantly, we are made most pleasing to God.

I end this chapter with that golden saying of the Imitator of Christ:⁵¹ “The progress and perfection of man consists in offering yourself with all your heart to the divine will, not seeking your own interest in either small matters, or great, either in time, or in eternity; so that you may continue to be equally disposed in giving thanks, both in prosperity and adversity, weighing carefully all things in an equal balance.” (1. 3, c. 25).⁵²

⁵⁰ John of Jesus and Mary, *The Instruction of Novices*, P. IV, Ch. II: *The Complete Works*, vol. II, Cologne 1622, p. 307, D.

⁵¹ See above: Ch. III, footnote 42 (p. 584).

⁵² IC, Bk. III, Ch. 25.

CHAPTER 5

The Priest of the Mystical Temple

In this Mystical Temple, Love performs all sacred [duties]: Love, the Priest, offers all the victims. This Love is pure, holy, fiery, heavenly; it flows from the fountain of eternal Love.

In Leviticus chapter 2, it is commanded to the ancient Clergy: “Whatever sacrifice you offer, you shall season it with salt” (Lev 2:13). Of course the ancient sacrifices consisted chiefly of flesh; this has no taste without salt, and no preservation is possible. In the law of Christ, whose foreshadowing the ancient law was, it should be said more correctly: whatever sacrifice you offer, you shall season it with love. For, as Peter of Cluny⁵³ observes: “Those in the law do not accept any sacrifice without salt, thus showing that no gift is pleasing to him without the covenant of love” (1. 5, ep. 16).⁵⁴ This is confirmed by the saying of the most holy Father Ambrose: “Love alone distinguishes between the sons of God and the sons of the devil. Let them all sign themselves with the sign of the Cross; let them all respond Amen: let them enter the churches, let them fill the walls of the basilicas: the sons of God are distinguished from the sons of the devil by love alone.”⁵⁵ Therefore, unless the sacrifices of the Mystical Temple are offered by the Love, the Priest, they are displeasing to God, and He completely rejects them.

For if the intention of our works, whether [these works are] good or what they call indifferent, is not the best [intention], they will scarcely have any merit. That common axiom is not entirely unfounded: Whatever men do, the intention judges them all. Do you jump out of bed and apply yourself at once to various

⁵³ Peter the Venerable (d. 1156) was elected Abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Cluny in 1122. Cf. Piolanti A., *Pietro il Venerabile: ECat IX*, 1450; Roczkowski, Julian, *Piotr Maurycy ... Venerabilis: PEK XXXI-XXXII*, 204-205.

⁵⁴ There are six books by Peter of Cluny and in Book V there are only nine letters, in which this quotation was not found.

⁵⁵ This is not the saying of St. Ambrose, but of St. Augustine. This quotation comes from St. Augustine's *In Epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos*, treatise V, sect. VII, in: S Aurelii Augutini Hipp. Ep. *Opera omnia*, vol. XVI, Paris 1842, p. 511.

things without an act of good intention and without a heartfelt reflection on God? Believe me, you are not unlike a brute beast. You will have wasted the day, unless perchance God, who created you from nothing and redeemed you for His glory, accepts what He has ordained to be done well and properly by you. Yet, what merit would indifferent works have, which are neither good nor bad, unless you make them good by your good intention?

It seems to me that the sacrifices of Cain were faulty by a defect of this good intention. "For the Lord looked with favor on Abel and his gifts; but He did not look with favor on Cain and his gifts" (Gen 4:4-5). Theodosion⁵⁶ translates this passage thus: "And the Lord was highly pleased by Abel and his sacrifice, but was not pleased by Cain and his sacrifice." Why so? "For," as Ambrose says,⁵⁷ "when Cain was offering God his gifts, he kept his own being for himself. God did not accept such a portion, but said "Son, offer me your heart." But he kept his heart for himself and offered God the fruits of the earth."⁵⁸ The most magnificent God rejected those gifts that were offered not out of love, but in some other spirit, either from brotherly rivalry or a meaningless and futile ceremony. Love, the Priest, was absent when the sacrifice was made; the sacrifice was not accepted.

Therefore, whether you are praying, or reading, or writing, or saying good things, meditating, working, eating, drinking, worthily refreshing your spirit, or whatever you do that is virtuous, devout, holy, useful or praiseworthy, do it all out of the love of God, to the glory of God in such a way, that a particular intention always precedes what you do, or at least follows close after it.

⁵⁶ This probably refers to a translator named Theodotion, who in trying to correct the Septuagint translation, made a Greek translation of the Old Testament in the second century. Cf. Hozakowski, Wl., *Biblijne tłumaczenia* (Biblical Translations): PEK 34, p. 331.

⁵⁷ The author of the text quoted here is not Ambrose but Rupert; see below, footnote 58 (p. 591).

⁵⁸ Rupertus of Deutz, *On the Holy Trinity and its works — Commentaries on Genesis*, IV books, on Genesis IV, 2: *CChrM*, 21, 282. So too in *LCG*, p. 105 (in Ch. IV). Therefore the words are not taken from the work of Ambrose *On Cain and Abel*: PL 1415, 184, as Jarra erroneously states.

For it is both more fruitful and noble to consecrate oneself and all one has to God (as we have taught), not only in the morning and evening, but also more frequently in the course of the day, especially at the beginning of each action, adding every day at least some general protestation (as it was shown) with the resolve not to think, speak or act, I do not say [only] evil things, but those that are vain, prompted by mere curiosity, or are useless, and also to avoid imperfections. For so it will be that our loving and merciful God, considering our sincere will, will sanctify all our works, thoughts and actions, will preserve us from sins, and if by chance we should fall because of weakness, He will at once lift us up and mercifully pardon the effects of our ignorance, and finally will grant that we love Him most perfectly with all our heart, spirit, mind, will and strength, everywhere, always, for all eternity, and that we are united with His Divinity in the closest bond of intimate Love.

CHAPTER 6

The Victim of the Mystical Temple

By victim, we wish here to be understood mortification, both interior and exterior, but in such a way that it is sacrificed by the Love, the Priest, and we wish everything else in the Mystical Temple to look entirely to him. For whatever is done without him in the Temple is entirely illegitimate and deceptive.

Interior mortification then (if I may use the common and familiar term) consists in the restraint of our will, judgment, and imagination. The will is directed best and in the most holy manner when it is led to embrace those things that are conformed to the divine will, whether they are written down or inspired, and not at variance with the laws of God, nature and the Church, such as are proper to each one's state of life.

We say that the rule of the divine will is inspired, when it originates from a heavenly spirit, or an upright and learned man, such as are confessors, the Spiritual Fathers, and devout men, or from

some holy discourse that has been heard or read. For countless people are saved and become very holy when they obey this rule. Thus the Angel, by his mission, gently and very graciously led the most Holy Virgin to give her consent to the Divine Incarnation.

Thus Teresa⁵⁹ made remarkable spiritual progress and accomplished admirable things thanks to the advice of devout and learned men. So also, the most wise and holy Father Augustine was converted to the orthodox faith and holiness of morals by Ambrose's sermons and just one sentence from a letter of St. Paul.⁶⁰ Thus, when Anthony the Great heard the words of the Lord: "If you wish to be perfect, go, and sell all that you have and give it to the poor" (Mt 19:21),⁶¹ these words turned him into a poor hermit and a true follower of Christ. So, when John Colombini was relieving his impatient hunger with spiritual food, that is, by reading *The Life of Saint Mary*, named from Egypt, he was himself converted.⁶²

Therefore, a Christian should continually be watching closely for such inspirations and putting them firmly into practice. I would however advise that he does it with the approval of prudent men, even though the saints I have mentioned made no use of such. For neither that famous sinner Mary consulted anyone

⁵⁹ This refers to St. Teresa of Avila (d. 1582), canonized in the year 1622. The author was able to gain knowledge of her life and works from reading her writings in a partial Polish edition prepared by Seb. Nucerin and the Carmelite priests, Krakow, 2 vols., 1664.

⁶⁰ Cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. V, Chs. 12-14; VIII, Ch. 12.

⁶¹ This quotation, with two words added to the text of the Latin Vulgate, (see textual annotations), is taken from *The Life of St. Anthony Written by St. Athanasius*, in: *LH, A Second Reading in Memory of St. Antony, Abbot* (January 17). Also, the reading in Mark 10:21 and in Luke 18:22 is somewhat different.

⁶² We are concerned here with Giovanni Colombini (d. 1367). One day, driven by hunger, he went to refresh himself earlier than usual and received from his wife a book to read (the said *Life of Saint Mary of Egypt*) until his food was ready to eat. "Giovanni Colombini, a rich merchant and an authoritative citizen of Sienna was married to Bigia Cerretani (1342). He was invited by her to read the *Life of St. Mary the Egyptian* (1355) and was so inspired by God to charity until (in about 1364) he gave all his belongings to the hospital of St. Mary della Scala and the nuns of St. Bonda in Sienna ... And so he gave himself to an intense life of penitence and apostolate, gathering the disciples called Jesuates." Chiari Alberto, *Colombini, Giovanni, the Blessed: ECat III*, 2006.

as to what she should do when she was stirred internally to make her way immediately, directly to the wilderness to cleanse and emend the stains of her youth: nor others too, seized by the same spirit, asked anyone whether they should reform themselves. The spirit which draws us back from vice to virtue, from evil to good, from sin to penitence, does not need to be examined. For hellish powers never are wont to advise such things. The man whom eternal wisdom teaches, and at the same time moves to action, does not wait for an adviser.

Indeed it is at times dangerous to reveal oneself, especially to many, who do not fear [God], or are afflicted by envy or some hidden mental distress. And yet I would not oppose revealing oneself, which is not only useful, but also necessary, yet it should be done to the kind of persons to whom is granted discernment of spirits; who not only know what comes forth from God but are also willing to help those who are being led along such a way. Let the Virgin Teresa (never praised enough) be an example, and yet what different opinions even learned and devout men entertained about her heroic daring deeds and seraphic spirit! Some believed her to be deluded, others obsessed, others mad; very few approved her undertaking, and only after it obtained [good] results. Of course, from results all easily discern good things from evil things, but before results only a very few are either able or dare to affirm something in a matter, unless they have received this gift in a singular manner from God. A simple soul, trusting in God, humble, attending to nothing except to what pleases God, will not stray on this path.

We call the written rule of the divine will that which has been laid down for us in its Evangelical precepts, counsels, and teachings, in the laws and instructions, and in statutes and rites, and in the universally accepted customs of the Church, and then in civil laws that are in accord with justice, and not in opposition to religion, to spiritual integrity and dignity. I add the rules of religious Orders and various societies and others of the same kind, especially those approved by the authority of the most Holy Apostolic See. Whoever submits his will to these out of his love of God, not

only admitting them, but also fulfilling them, he should truly be considered dead to himself but alive for God.

But let us come to that type of mortification of the will by which one voluntarily submits oneself to the will, command, desire, and direction of another, deeming that this is the most acceptable sacrifice to God. And in truth this can in no way be denied, what the Divine Spirit Himself expressly asserted in Holy Scripture, when He intimated to Saul through Samuel: "Obedience is better than a sacrifice."⁶³ Certainly, as Gregory the Great observes, "By means of a sacrifice somebody else's flesh is slain, but by obedience one's own will is slain."⁶⁴ The heavenly Teacher Himself recommended such mortification to us, not only in words but especially by his example. For He said that His food is the fulfillment of the Father's will,⁶⁵ and in the garden of Olives beginning His very fervent and long prayer, three times [it was] repeated, [that] He desired wholly to follow and accomplish the will of His eternal Father by drinking the most bitter cup of the Passion.⁶⁶

Therefore, I do not think that souls stirred up by such an excellent example need the stimulus of words. If one is not persuaded by the life and teaching of Christ to pursue virtue and holiness, who would persuade him? And so I advise here this one thing alone: it is a most splendid thing, most pleasing to God, and advantageous to man, to follow another's will rather than one's own in all things where no evil is apparent, and one who conforms oneself to another's will can never be tricked by an evil spirit as long as he recognizes that this will is not occupied by the very same spirit, which would happen if sin or error were enjoined, or imposed or advised.

⁶³ Cf. 1 Sam 15:22

⁶⁴ Gregory the Great, *Moral Lessons in Job*, (Ch. 42), Bk. 35: PL 76, 765 (nn. 1155-1156) and *CChrL* 143 B, 1792 (Bk. 35, n. 28). It should be noted that this same argument is discussed in his "explanations on Book I of Kings," VI, 30-32 (Ch. 15, 22: "Does God want holocausts and sacrifices and not prefer that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices, and to listen is better than to offer the fat of rams"): *CChrL* 144, 566-568.

⁶⁵ Cf. Jn 4:34 "My food is to do the will of him that sent me."

⁶⁶ Cf. Mt 26:39-44.

What then shall I say about Judgment? That most holy Founder of the Oratory of Jesus and most enlightened Teacher of spiritual matters, Philip Neri,⁶⁷ scrutinized the spirit of his followers by their mortification. For when he would see that some readily gave way in an argumentation even when asserted by good reasons, it is said that he greatly praised them; and he would then apply two fingers to their forehead, saying that in them rested holiness, intimating by this, I believe, the mortification of the will and of judgment. And I do not dare add anything to this.

It is a conspicuous and rare virtue: to allow oneself to be conquered by another when you have victory at hand. Yet I do not want anyone to be silent, when it is necessary to speak, or give way, when he should prevail, especially if the dangerous opinion, or the less probable teaching, or indeed one that is already rejected, is advanced or defended. I personally desire to flee far from such conversations, and I desire always to be absent from them; but if I should be present, my intent is not to withdraw from fighting for the truth and defending it.

Finally, you must then mortify and restrain the imagination when less virtuous images flow into it. Indeed, one must attend to this most unbridled horse everywhere, since it is with us everywhere. But if you do not want to restrain it in such a way as to do damage to the brain or head, which I personally do not advise, at least do what is to be done persistently, not giving attention [to] the insolence of the imagination until it becomes accustomed to make itself subject to reason. The imagination is that Bucephalus, which Alexander alone knew how and was able to handle.⁶⁸ Here we need to be Alexanders.

Do not despise exterior mortification either: it is salutary and very advantageous. For what is more profitable to man with regard to either eternal glory or the edification of his neighbors than to strive skillfully and wisely to ensure that each of our

⁶⁷ St. Philip Neri (d. 1595), Founder of the Congregation of the Oratory.

⁶⁸ Bucephalus: "famous horse of Alexander the Great, given to him by Philip because he alone succeeded in riding and subduing him;" anon., *Bucephalus: El VIII*, 10.

senses performs its dutiful action. You will therefore contain your eyes within the Vincentian sphere,⁶⁹ within, as I say, the stature of your body; you will not stretch out your hands to what is not permitted. In food and drink you will not seek out excess or what is tasty.

You will avoid improper conversations, which corrupt good morals, and will not listen to flattery, murmuring, whispers, defamatory talk, unfair accusations, vain complaints, mocking, blame, and suchlike monstrosities. For is there anyone among Christians who would allow shameful and obscene things, not only hear of them? I shall say nothing about smell. I hope that you will not seek out balsams, roses, and the Cyprian powders, pigments and other perfumes; rather see to it that you are an aroma of Christ. We shall expose other matters of this kind more precisely and with greater detail below.

Afflicting the body to extremes is by no means to be neglected; truly it should be so much more harshly treated, the more insolently it kicks back, so that this Ass may altogether be subject to reason. If therefore it seems that common fasts are not sufficient to subdue necessarily the flesh, apply personal ones; add also to these flagellations, sleeping on the bare ground, night vigils, manual labor; and weary this unruly beast so long, until it becomes quiet and is most ready to obey at once the bidding of the spirit. Many advise, quite suitably at times, that here a consideration must be had of one's health; although I do not disagree with them, yet I shall always proclaim that you should not thus indulge the body as to lose your soul; but each should at once yield to God as a sacrifice.

In addition you must not think that I am taking no account of that which is best, and which alone forms a man wise and holy, namely, the moderation as we say, of our emotions: I allow you to grow angry, but without sin; to rejoice, but in the Lord; to grieve,

⁶⁹ It appears that here "Vincentian" is derived from the verb "to conquer" (*vincere*), and that as a result the expression "Vincentian sphere" denotes a circumference within which temptation can be overcome.

but because sometimes you have offended God, who is the highest good, or your neighbor; to hope, but for the Kingdom of Heaven; to be consumed with sorrow, but in penitence for evils you have committed or good deeds you have omitted; to fear, but only God, as a son fears his father; to love, but this same God alone, or, for His sake, your neighbor, and much more so your enemy. I shall summarize everything in this brief saying of St. Anthony of Padua: "Just as a ship easily sinks when a storm arises at sea, unless the helmsman steers it with diligence; thus emotions make man worse, unless they are ruled by right reason."⁷⁰ Be then on your watch, excellent captain, lest the ship of your soul deviates from the course leading to the heavenly harbor; try to reach it with all your might, and have domination over the waves and storms like Neptune; "the lust should be under you, and you shall have dominion over it" (Gen 4:7) [LV].

Do you have a sacrifice? Call the Priest. Love alone has the function of offering it. I already wanted to end [this chapter], when, for ending it, that famous saying of the Imitator of Christ⁷¹ burst into my mind. "You ought to undergo all things willingly for the love of God, namely labors and pains, temptations, vexations, anxieties, privations, infirmities, injuries, slanders, rebukes, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempt: these forge a heavenly crown," (Bk. 3, Ch. 35):⁷² these are a sacrifice pleasing to God.

⁷⁰ This quotation could not be verified, as the work of St. Anthony of Padua from which it comes was not specified.

⁷¹ See Ch. III, footnote 42 (p. 584).

⁷² IC, Bk. III, Ch. 35.

CHAPTER 7

The Incense of the Mystical Temple

At Jerusalem in that most splendid work of Solomon there was an altar which served specifically for burning incense. We have demonstrated a little earlier that the Heart of man is the altar; should not then the most fragrant incense continually come forth from it into the sight of the Lord? I mean prayer. The apostle spurs us to it when he says: "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess 5:17). Assuredly this Mystical Temple of God may be considered most desolate when the incense of constant prayer is not burnt in it.

One must then pray with the mind, voice, sighs and tears; and through the fragrance of such prayer we must put to flight whatever we have within us that stinks. Bernard very well advises: "Wherever you are, pray within yourself. If you were to be far from an oratory, do not seek a place, since you [yourself] are the place. If you were to be in bed or in another place, pray, and there is a temple."⁷³ One who persists in prayer in this way and continually exercises himself in it, will not only wash away all his sins, although most serious, but will make his way into such an intimacy with God, that he will no longer be a servant but a friend, yes indeed a son, so in fact united with God that he can do all things in God, with Him and through Him.

And so, the Venerable Bede⁷⁴ having in mind the mentioned Altar of Incense said: This "altar was next to the 'Mercy Seat,' that is, the Holy of Holies;" this is "in the outer building, but near the door of the interior." This altar "is the type of perfect men, who still kept in the world by the flesh, but suspended close to the things of heaven by their every desire, send forth smoke that mounts to the Holy of Holies as if with burning incense; for burning with a

⁷³ Bernard, in: *Meditations...* 6, n. 2, in: *Meditations of Saint Aurelius Augustine*, Lyon-Paris, 1861, 279-280. [Latin *Divi Aurelii Augustini Meditationes*].

⁷⁴ Venerable Bede, Doctor of the Church (d. 735), cf. Ferrua, Antonio, *Bede, the Venerable, Saint, ECat* II, 1132-1137, where we read that his exegetical works, containing commentaries on almost all of the books of the Bible, form the greater part of his life's work.

heavenly love they buffet the ears of their Creator with frequent prayers, and the purer and closer to heaven they are, the more quickly they receive from the Lord what they request. On this altar they burn only incense, and not the flesh of victims; because such men no longer in offering have the need to kill the sins of the flesh and the enticements of the evil intents, but offer only the incense of prayers and spiritual desires in the sight of their Creator through the fire of interior love.”⁷⁵

Such souls as these, steadfast in their zeal for prayer, can help the whole Church more in one moment than all preachers with their sermons, Teachers with their lectures, [and] confessors with the administration of penance. They can rouse the dead to life, recall the wicked to righteousness; they can destroy whole armies, avert famine, chase away disease, and do all things being supported in their prayer by two arms, faith and charity. It seems that the writer of Deuteronomy spoke of such men: “They will set incense on your rage, and a holocaust on your altar” (cf. 33:10). The normal interpreter explaining this for me said: “The prayer of the saints is a most sweet incense to the Lord, by which the anger of the Lord is calmed” (when the people sin), “because cleansed of all earthly filth and purified by heavenly desire, it blazes before the face of God and the flame of devotion flies up like a holocaust from the altar of a loving heart.”⁷⁶

And so, O Christian! Arrange for yourself fixed prayers, which you should never discontinue, the prayers to be approved, what I would advise for your benefit, by the counsel of a prudent and devout man. Make it your habit also to recall with devotion the Lord’s Passion, the four last things, the life of Jesus Christ, the most holy Virgin and the saints admitted to Heaven, so that by practicing this devotion you may be purified, enlightened, and centered on the imitation of those whose company you wish to join when you die.

⁷⁵ Venerable Bede, *On the Temple*, Bk. I, vv. 1109-1018, 1172.

⁷⁶ We do not know who “the normal interpreter” is, nor from which work this quotation comes.

The love of God will burn this incense, although not without the help of humility. For if you are humble, as one of the saints used to say, the Holy Spirit will teach you to pray.

He will supply you with incense, He will kindle it, He will increase the flames and He Himself will accept the most sweet aroma.

CHAPTER 8

The Lamp of the Mystical Temple

“The bidding” (says the Wise Man) “is a lamp, and the teaching is a light” (Prov 6:23). It will never cease burning in the Mystical Temple before the very altar of the heart. Why so? For “the command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye” (Ps 19:9), yes indeed the feet, as the same said elsewhere, “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path” (Ps 119:105). For just as we know by which way to go when a torch is borne before us, and do not slip off the beaten tracks, in like manner when the precepts of God are fixed in the heart and shine in the soul, we best see how to order our present life, and by conforming it to these, we shall by no means turn aside from the path to the eternity of happiness.

In the beginning indeed the human race followed the guidance of nature and light of reason in its life by his actions; but when nature was corrupted by vices, and reason was darkened by the habits of sin, God established the law for us, as the way of acting according to His justice, so that we may search for it always. When finally this law collapsed again, partly by the absurd interpretations of the Jews, and partly by strange superstitions, the legislator himself assisted us, that is Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, who “came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it” (Mt 5:17), and strengthened it with his deeds and words in such a way that he is deservedly considered the Light, “which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world” (Jn 1:9).

Finally, the Catholic Church, outside of which there is no light, and no truth, added also its own precepts to the divine com-

mandments, indeed not by introducing anything new contrary to the mind of the Legislator, but by surrounding his laws with a bulwark of its own, so that they look like reserve troops, keeping watch before the camp of the Lord's hosts.

Finally political associations by their laws, and whole nations by various customs wished to protect themselves. All of these, when they are just, as we have intimated above, and pertain only to a holy and happy life, to the excellent governance of the Church, and to the preservation and glory of kingdoms, must certainly be kept before the eyes, in the heart, mind and will.

Somebody deservedly reprehended the ridiculous devotion of the Jews, who either hang the commandments of God about their necks, or put them on the double doors of their houses, but do not observe them. But for a Christian it is proper to keep them in his memory, to consider them with his intellect, and fulfill them in his actions. And this is exactly what the just king sang: "The mouth of the just shall mediate wisdom; and his tongue speak what is right. The law of his God is in his heart; it shall not be supplanted" (Ps 36:30-31) [LV].⁷⁷

Here the old man Eleazar, a true Israelite, provides an example; he chose rather to die than to eat forbidden meat, even in pretense, as it would cause a scandal.⁷⁸ An example is also provided by that well known Maccabean Heroine with her seven sons, whom she sent on ahead to Heaven through terrible tortures, lest they violate native laws and customs.⁷⁹ The lukewarm Christian should be ashamed that almost every day he infringes some of his laws, at least in thought or speech, if not in action.

In addition, the following should be carefully noted. In observing any laws, the correct order should be kept, thus: the first honor should be given to divine laws, then to ecclesiastical, and finally to civil laws. On this score those Pseudopoliticians ought to consider whether the system of state [ratio status] is good, which opposes the law of God or the Church? [I need] not say it

⁷⁷ In the *RSV* and *NAB* this is Psalm 37.

⁷⁸ Cf. 2 Macc 6:18-31.

⁷⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 7:1-41.

is cursed, [for] already it is. But you, who desire eagerly for better things and long to be perfect as your Heavenly Father, simply “keep the commandments”: “If you wish to enter into life,” (it is the voice of Truth) “keep the commandments” (Mt 19:17); if you do not wish to deprive yourself of the light of reason and the Divine vision, “keep the commandments”; if you do not wish to glide down to hell by straying through trackless wastes, “keep the commandments.” “The bidding [commandment] is a lamp, and the teaching [law] is a light” (Prov 6:23); as long as it shines forth hanging in our Mystical Temple, we see the brightness and go straight to Heaven.

The Commandment is that column, fiery by night and cloudy by day, by which we are led to the land of eternal promise,⁸⁰ certain that guided by this light we shall arrive there. “This commandment, which I enjoin on you today” (said God) “is not above you nor far off from you. But the word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it” (Dt 30:11, 14) [LV]. To what end? That Christ may dwell in you. Listen to him: “Whoever” (John explains) “loves me will keep my word,” meaning commands, “and my Father will love him, and we will come to Him and make our dwelling with him” (Jn 14:23). Oh most blessed guardians of the commandments of God; whom God not only raises to Heaven but also comes down to, and, as if on a lofty throne, as if in a celestial [empyrean] abode, the One who dwells in inaccessible light remains and reigns in them! Oh happy Temple, in which this lamp of the commandments of God is never extinguished!

Fr. John Dominic of the Cross, a conspicuous glory, and nearly the Founder, then indeed the Provincial of the Polish Province of the Pious Schools, who died quite a few years ago, was commended and loved for his many virtues and the holiness of his conduct.⁸¹ The lamp suspended before the Most Blessed Sacra-

⁸⁰ Cf. Ex 13:22.

⁸¹ In the year 1642, under the leadership of Fr. John Dominic of the Cross Franchi (Franco), the Institute of the Pious Schools was established by Prince Lubomirski at Podoliniec, where Fr. John Dominic lived until his death. He served first as Rector and Novice Master (1642-1659), later as Provincial of

ment fell without any human force or physical cause, and so announced beforehand his death. For with great love and diligence, he always attended that this light be never lacking to that eternal and boundless Light that is Jesus Christ, hidden among us under the appearance of bread.

Oh lover of Christ! In what a holy and wise way you will have acted, if that lamp or torch of God's commandments never falls in you! Falls? You too will be suffocated in a rather serious death if you are next to spiritual collapse. For "the one who sins shall die" (God said through Ezekiel) (Ez 18:20). To live forever, kindle within you the eternal fire of the lamp of Divine Law as the Vestals did. As this lamp burns and shines forth in your hands it will lead you to the light of the beatific vision. It is not a vain wish that after your death the hymn of triumph be sung for you: May eternal light shine on him, because he was kind. He lived as a light, may he be a light in dying.

CHAPTER 9

The Ornaments of the Mystical Temple

The honey-tongued Bernard quite admirably teaches that virtue is the principle ornament of a Christian when, contemplating the first man, he speaks as follows:

"It seems to me that I see the first man clothed in four virtues, namely Mercy and Truth, Justice and Peace,⁸² from the very beginning of his creation; and, as the prophet mentions, 'he was clothed with the robe of salvation' (Is 61:10). For in these four virtues is the unimpaired condition of salvation, and without all of

the German-Polish Province (1659-1662) and finally as the first Provincial of the newly erected Polish Province (1662). On account of his virtuous life he deserved to earn a place in the list of Venerable Servants of God of the Pious Schools. Father Papczyński had him as his Master for the first year of his novitiate (1654-1655). Father John Dominic of the Cross died in the year 1662. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 21, 27-28.

⁸² This recalls the Scripture verse: "mercy and truth have met each other, justice and peace have kissed" (Ps 85:10).

these, salvation cannot be assured, especially since they cannot be virtues if they are separated from one another.

“For man had received mercy, namely as his guardian and follower, that it may come before him and follow him, to also protect him and safeguard him everywhere. You can see what sort of guardian God gave His little child, and what sort of follower He gave the newly born man. But he is in need of a teacher, since he is a free and rational creature, not to be tended like some beast of burden, but to be educated like a little child. No one more fitting of course, could be found for this ministry than truth itself, to lead him at last to the knowledge of the highest Truth. In the meantime he also received justice for his direction, lest he be found wise to do evil and be overcome by sin, as if knowing what is good and not doing it. But the most kind hand of the Creator moreover added peace, by which he might be encouraged and delighted: certainly a twofold peace, to have neither contention within nor fears from outside, so that the flesh should not covet against the spirit, and that he should not fear any creature. What did he lack, whom mercy guarded, truth taught, justice directed and peace encouraged? Yet alas! This man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who, as we read, first of all stripped him [cf. Lk 10:30]. But was he not also stripped who, as the Lord was coming, complained that he was naked?”⁸³

“I was afraid,” he said, “because I was naked” (Gen 3:10). We too were naked; yet God has clothed His Temples with the most noble and splendid coverings, those natural and supernatural gifts, namely the virtues. Of these indeed the Theological Virtues are preeminent, since without them eternal salvation cannot be obtained, so they can deservedly and in a proper sense be called, the Robes of salvation. For “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb 11:6): “and hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5): *Charity finally takes possession of God*.⁸⁴ Only in our present lives

⁸³ Bernard, *Sermon on the Feast of the Annunciation BVM*, in: *PL* 183, 385-386 (n. 973s).

⁸⁴ The words: “Charity ... God” are here indicated as a quotation, but in probability they originate from the author himself (they are not found in Holy Scripture).

are we adorned by the former virtues [i.e., faith and hope], but we shall retain the splendor of charity also as the blessed in Heaven. For that reason the Apostle of Charity, who wished to be “cut off” [from Christ] for his brothers,⁸⁵ recommends no ornament more than charity to his Corinthians, indeed, to all Christians, and he portrays it in his wholly flourishing style of writing in this way: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and do not have charity, I have become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” (1 Cor 13:1) [LV].⁸⁶ The Corinthians abounded in brass, and he wished them to abound in charity, and he compared the man who lacks charity to sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal (these they had before their eyes).

He continues: “And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and possess all knowledge; if I should have all faith that I could remove mountains, and do not have charity, I am nothing. If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and do not have charity, it profits me nothing. Charity is patient, is kind.” (Look, look at the colors of charity!); “Charity does not envy, does not deal perversely, is not puffed up. Is not ambitious, does not seek her own, is not provoked to anger, thinks no evil. Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor 13:2-7) [LV].

How many ornaments of the Mystical Temple are expressed in the one image of charity! But we must also fasten our belts around our waists with chastity, and by patience save our souls, and become known for our modesty, and be exalted for our humility. Although it may appear despicable and incompatible with magnificence, yet a certain person spoke very well and most truly about it in a Biography of Ferdinand the most devout and

⁸⁵ Cf. Rom 9:3.

⁸⁶ Cf. NV, Ch. 2, § 1: “The Teacher of the Nations compared the servant of GOD lacking the fervor of true charity to sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.”

brave Roman Emperor: "There is," he says, "a humility in Christians, which does not dishonor Majesty, but adorns it."⁸⁷

I do not expound prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude at this point: first because they regard more civil life than mystical doctrine, unless they are understood in a certain non-philosophical manner; second, because they will shine forth in the mystical lampstand in the next chapter; and also because they are almost all found together with solid virtue.

Macharius⁸⁸ teaches thus: "Know this, beloved, that all the virtues are connected among themselves. For just as in a spiritual chain one link depends upon another: prayer upon love, love upon joy, joy upon mildness, mildness upon humility, humility upon obedience, obedience upon hope, hope upon faith, faith upon hearing, hearing upon openness. Just so in the opposite direction vices are dependent one upon another: hatred upon anger, anger upon pride, pride upon vainglory, vainglory upon unfaithfulness, unfaithfulness upon hardness of heart, hardness of heart upon neglect, neglect upon sloth, sloth upon laziness, laziness upon impatience, impatience upon pleasure, and so on with the remaining mutually dependent monstrous vices. Thus also the virtues, for the most part, come and depend reciprocally upon each other" (hom. 40).⁸⁹ But these ornaments also relate to Love, the Priest.

For unless the virtues are practiced from the love of God, they have no merit before God. Love endows them with value and splendor just as they do so for the Mystical Temple.

⁸⁷ Probably the one mentioned here is the Emperor Ferdinand II (d. 1637) who was known for his devotion and fortitude (cf. Ferrari, Angelo, *The Emperor Ferdinand II: ECat V*, 1165s; S.S., *Ferdinand II*, in: *Ekość V*, 310-318), but such an opinion could also be expressed by his son the Emperor Ferdinand III (d. 1657), who remained in the memory of the people as righteous and wise (cf. Furlani Silvio, *The Emperor Ferdinand III*, in: *Ekość V*, 318-319). We do not know the biography from which this quote was taken.

⁸⁸ Macharius (or Macarius) the Egyptian, also called "the Elder" or "Great" (d. 390). He is the author of 50 homilies in Greek, addressed to religious, in which he discusses ascetics, Christian perfection and its degrees, difficulties and temptations. Cf. anon., *Makary egipski*, in: *Ekość XIII*, 93-94.

⁸⁹ Macarius Aegyptius, *Homilies of St. Macarius of Egypt*, 40,1: PG 34, 763.

CHAPTER 10

The Lampstand of the Mystical Temple

It is recorded that Moses, that most zealous propagator of the Divine worship, hung up in the tabernacle of the Lord a lampstand of considerable weight, an extraordinary work of art, remarkable for its seven branches displaying just as many lights: "He also made," (as the holy page relates) "a lampstand of beaten work of the finest gold, and the seven lamps" (Ex 37:17, 23). Woe to us, if a similar lampstand is not present in our Mystical Temple! "For this lampstand" (says Isidore⁹⁰), "with its seven branches, displayed the image of the Holy Spirit, who by His sevenfold grace sheds light on the entire Church standing firmly in the unity of faith."⁹¹

Therefore, it is necessary that every Christian shine with this sevenfold light of the Holy Spirit if he would like to be considered as a true and natural offspring of Christ. The prophet Isaiah speaks most clearly and certainly about this subject, "A shoot will spring from the stock of Jesse, and a new shoot will grow from his roots, and the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and piety, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord will fill him" (Is 11:1-3).

And indeed the following should be realized about wisdom: in the Christian it should be divine, not human. "For" (as Gregory attests) "the wisdom of this world is: concealing one's mind with cunning devices, hiding one's feelings with words, showing what is false as true, and pointing out what is true as false. Those who are versed in this wisdom look down with arrogance on others; those who are ignorant of it, with submission and timidity, admire it in others because duplicity [this clad in the name of unfairness] is loved by them, while this kind of mental perversity is called urban-

⁹⁰ St. Isidore (d. 636), bishop of Seville and Doctor of the Church.

⁹¹ Isidore, *Inquiries into the Old Testament — into Exodus*, 49: PL 83, 312 (nn. 395-396), where among other things St. Isidore treats of "the Lampstand and the Oil."

ity. On the contrary, the wisdom of the just is: to feign nothing by dissimulation, to reveal feelings with words, to esteem highly things that are true, to avoid things that are false, to do good freely, to endure willingly evil things rather than do them, to seek no revenge for injustice, to consider an outrage suffered for the truth as gain. But this guilelessness of the just" (he adds) "is ridiculed, because the virtue of candor is believed to be foolishness by this kind of wise men."⁹² But on the Day of Divine Judgment, after having treated with disregard those who are wise in accordance with God's mind, being very angry at their own stupidity which they will then recognize, and, groaning in anguish of the spirit, they will lament most bitterly: "These are" (they will point out with a finger the foolish because of Christ) "they whom we held sometime in derision and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints!" (cf. Wis 5:3-5) [LV].

Next, I understand knowledge to mean knowing those things that are necessary for salvation. "For to what good," (as he⁹³ says) "is this great deceptive subtle reasoning about hidden and obscure matters since we shall not be accused on Judgment Day that we were ignorant of them!"⁹⁴ "Indeed a humble peasant who serves God is better than a proud philosopher who neglecting himself [that is his own soul] studies the course of the heavenly bodies."⁹⁵ "And yet knowledge or any simple acquaintance with a thing is not to be blamed, which, when considered in itself, is good and ordained by God."⁹⁶

Now to understanding pertains discernment and orderly use of things, as the prophet said about our Savior: "He shall be living on curds and honey by the time he learns to reject the bad and choose the good" (Is 7:15).

⁹² Gregory the Great, *Moralia X*, in: *On Chapter XII of Job*: PL 75, 947 (n. 360).

⁹³ The author of *Imitation of Christ*. See Ch. III, footnote 42 (p. 584).

⁹⁴ IC, Bk. I, Ch. 3, § 1.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Ch. 2, § 1.

⁹⁶ Ibid., Ch. 3, § 4.

Counsel teaches: what is to be done, in what place, at what time, by what means and to what end; how evil things are to be guarded against; by what means the virtues are to be acquired and retained; and by what way one is to climb to Heaven. Fortitude has its place in undertaking difficult tasks out of love for God, and with perseverance completing them, in overcoming temptations, in enduring adversities with a joyful spirit, and enjoying prosperity with moderation and not arrogantly, as indicated by that known saying of the Poet: "Remember to keep an undisturbed mind in adversity, just so refrain from arrogant joy in the possession of goods."⁹⁷

Piety pertains to the worship of God, to religion and the honor and love that should always be shown to one's parents and ancestors.

Finally, fear of the Lord diverts one from evil.

All of these are to be observed together in the Martyrs. Did they embrace the evangelical rather than philosophical teachings? This was due to knowledge. Did they adhere to Christ the despised and crucified? This was due to wisdom. Did they prefer everlasting goods to fleeting ones? This was due to understanding. Did they put their lives in danger and sometimes avoid [danger] for reason of a greater good? This was due to counsel. Did they take upon themselves all kind of tortures for Christ with a willing magnanimity? This was due to fortitude. Did they keep the faith promised to God continuously to the end? This was due to piety. Did they prefer to undergo temporary death rather than suffer the loss of the grace of God? This was due to fear of the Lord.

"In order that the gift of the Spirit" (I am completing my lampstand with Gregory) "may govern the mind against every single trial, it rules it in the seven virtues: that against foolish-

⁹⁷ Horace, *Odes*, Bk. II, Ode 3, 1, in: *The Poetry of Quintus Horatius Flaccus*, Ed. G. Schimmelpfeng, Leipzig Berlin 1919, p. 37 — we may notice a different English translation of the words quoted here: "With a mind undisturbed take life's good and life's evil, temper grief from despair, temper joy from vainglory." (*Collection of British Authors*, Tauchnitz Edition, vol. 1056: *The Odes and Epodes of Horace* by Lord Lytton, I, 154)

ness it may bring about wisdom; against dullness, understanding; against rashness, counsel; against fear, fortitude; against ignorance, knowledge; against harshness, piety; against arrogance, fear" (*Mor.* 2; Ch. 1).⁹⁸

O sevenfold Light, glide into our hearts, and dwell in them forever!

CHAPTER 11

The Preacher of the Mystical Temple

Who is the ordinary Preacher of our Temple, so fiery that he is never dull, so severe that he never flatters, so attentive that he at once indicates and exposes our greatest and smallest defects, shows those which are to be corrected, and thunders against those which are to be avoided? It is the conscience that fulfills this duty of the preacher within us, watchful, not dissembling.

I would not know what caused Cain to change the expression of his face after his sacrifice had been despised by God, so that God Himself had to ask him: "Why is your countenance fallen?" (*Gen* 4:6) [LV]. I would not know, I say, the reason for this, had not the very wise Ambrose, after a wise investigation, revealed it to me in these words: "Cain became gloomy, because he realized in his own conscience that his sacrifice was not found good by God."⁹⁹ God did not look with favor on the offering of Cain, and behold, suddenly the suitable and most excellent Preacher cries out: what did you do? Why were your gifts not accepted? Did you perhaps offer them with a vicious intention? For that reason you did not render God favorable to you, but rather you made Him hostile; what did you do? Cain was made almost breathless by what this Preacher said and his whole face became pale with fear.

⁹⁸ Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, II, 49, in: *On Chapter I of Job*: PL 75, 592-593 (n. 68).

⁹⁹ Ambrose, *On Abel and Cain*, Bk. II, yet in the edition *Of the Works of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan*, tome I, Rome 1580, p. 123, E, and in PL 14, 368 (n. 214, 18), the words are presented in a different order.

Something similar happened to Abimelech, the king of the Palestinians, when he saw Isaac abounding with riches and power. A renowned foreigner in his realm, he was stirred up by some Palestinians¹⁰⁰ who were envious of Isaac; and moved him outside the country and ordered him to stay outside of his kingdom. “Depart from us,” (he said), “for you have become more powerful than we are” (Gen 26:16) [LV]. Yet a little later, when Isaac was living in Beersheba, and was not less powerful than in Palestine, Abimelech went up to him with two other friends and said: “We propose that there be a sworn agreement between our two sides—between you and us. Let us make a pact with you: you shall not act unkindly toward us” (Gen 26:28-29). Who inspired you, Abimelech, with fear of the power of Isaac? Who persuaded you to make an agreement with him to be reconciled forever? It was that courageous preacher Conscience; for thus thought the Bishop of the golden mouth:¹⁰¹ “Unjustly,” he says, “they had expelled Isaac from their land, and now, see, how driven by conscience they hurry to reproach themselves, since nobody else is forcing them and reproaching them with what they have done.”¹⁰² Isaac had scarcely set foot outside Palestine, and at once his household herald, having approached Abimelech, cried out: have you really wickedly driven a good man from your kingdom? Have you really unfairly expelled a just man from your borders? Do you believe that you will get away with this without punishment? Do you think that he is not shielded by God’s protection? But indeed, it may well be that this son of Abraham himself will not conceal the infamy received. By your audacity a new war will

¹⁰⁰ This is according to the Vulgate, but according to the translation from the original language, instead of “Palestinians” we have “Philistines”; cf. Gen 26:14.

¹⁰¹ St. John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople and Doctor of the Church (d. 407). He is called “Chrysostom,” that is, “goldenmouthed,” because of his acclaimed skills as an orator. There are around 700 homilies, exegetical for the most part, with commentaries on the books of the Old and New Testaments; Included in thises are his sermons on the book of Genesis. See: *PB* 47-64. Cf. Cataudella, Quintino, *Giovanni Crisostomo*, II, *Works: ECat* VI, 538-541.

¹⁰² John Chrysostom, *Homilies*, 52, in: *On Chapter XXXVI of Genesis*, *PG* 54, 462.

be stirred up against you.” Abimelech, moved by these pricks of conscience, went to Isaac, begged for pardon, and made him his friend by a solemn treaty.

The grandsons of this same Isaac, when they were about to dine in the house of Joseph, the Viceroy of Egypt, their brother whom they did not recognize, experienced such violent interior disturbance that, filled with fear and doubt for their safety at their host’s, should I say their brother’s table, they discussed among themselves: “It must be, on account of the money put back in our bags the first time, that we are taken inside; they want to use it as a pretext to attack us” (Gen 42:25-28). No doubt, for them this is what Joseph, a most gentle man, was intending. But, as Lipomanus¹⁰³ well noted: “Such are the consciences of the impious, so that they are afraid even in favorable circumstances. For when they are conscious within themselves of the wrongs done, they suspect even good things as being evil, while in others these things would give rise to peace of mind and joy.”¹⁰⁴ Once, sons of Jacob, you put aside your meal as you were to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites!¹⁰⁵ You are now most rightly disturbed as you are urged on to his banquet, as if you were on your way to death. Deservedly you experience these things, because you sinned against your brother. Does not Conscience, your Advocate, impress this upon you?

Happy is the man, who attends to this Advocate and obeys him. We would not need many books, nor most zealous preachers, if only we apply our mind to the whispers and voices of our conscience alone, and we would then commit nothing evil, nothing disgraceful and nothing abominable: but if committed, we would at once wash them out and return from our fall to grace with the God offended.

On this point one should listen to Bernard, who says: “I cannot hide my sins, since wherever I go my conscience is with me, carrying with it whatever I have placed in it, whether good or bad.

¹⁰³ See Ch. III, footnote 38 (p. 584).

¹⁰⁴ *LCG*, f.389v; *On Genesis*, Ch. 43:18 (they are in truth the words of “the Author of the Chain”).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Gen 37:25-28.

It preserves the deposit which it had received for keeping, to the living, and restored it to the dead. If I do evil, it is present; but if I appear to do good, and then am praised, it is present. It is present to the living, it follows the dead. Everywhere it is my inseparable glory, or confusion, in accordance with the quality of the deposit. Thus, thus in my own home and from my own household I have accusers, witnesses, judges and tormentors. Conscience accuses me, memory is the witness, reason is the judge, pleasure is the prison, fear the torturer, delight my torture" (*Med.* Ch. 13).¹⁰⁶

No Cicero accuses his Verres¹⁰⁷ as effectively as does conscience, and at the same time it convicts, condemns, and tortures the sinner with his bad deed itself. Now this accuser is bound to us; even the Roman Sage¹⁰⁸ acknowledged it when he said: "There is never any security in being hidden; even for those who are hidden, conscience proves them to be guilty and shows them who they are" (Ep. 97).¹⁰⁹ Let us therefore follow conscience and we shall be saved. We have none closer to admonish us, and none more faithful, provided only that we do not corrupt it by choosing for ourselves teachers who tickle our ears.¹¹⁰

There is a fable that a lion with his damaged stomach began to breathe out an offensive breath. He asked a bear if he could smell it, and when he gave a frank answer, the lion, unable to endure the truth, ripped him apart. He then asked a wolf; who, having seen the violent death of the previous animal, denied smelling it;

¹⁰⁶ Bernard, *Meditations*, Ch. XIII: "On the presence of the conscience everywhere," n. 1, in: *AMS.*, p. 351, and also in: *PL* 184, 503 (n. 332).

¹⁰⁷ Verres (in Italian, Verre) discharged the office of proprietor in Sicily in the years 73-71 B.C. In the year 70, when he had already laid down this office, Verres was denounced by the Sicilians and accused of extortion, depredations, violence, and the immoderate exercise of his authority. He was taken to trial, which became very famous on account of the role that Cicero played in it. He demonstrated "such clear evidence, that Verres went voluntarily into exile without waiting for the second stage of the trial." Cf. Arnaldi, Francesco, *Cicerone: EL* X, 200; Levi Narui Attilio, *Verre, Gaio*, in: *ibid.*, XXXV, 189-190.

¹⁰⁸ Seneca. See Ch. III, footnote 30 (p. 582).

¹⁰⁹ Seneca, *Books of Moral Epistles to Lucilius*, IV, 194: Book XVI, epistle 2 (97) (*Of Roman Writers...*).

¹¹⁰ Cf. 2 Tim 4:3

and this animal was torn to pieces for a pure and clear lie. Finally a fox was called, who, realizing that death was in store for him, pretended that he had catarrh and affirmed under a most solemn oath that because of his dull sense of smell he could not recognize the lion's breath as different. At times we forge such a conscience for ourselves by pretense and dishonesty. "It is distinctly," (says Bernard), "a foxlike conscience: lukewarm dealing with others, animal-like thinking, feigned confession, brief and rare compunction, obedience without zeal, prayer without attention, reading without edification, conversation without forethought" (Med. 10).¹¹¹ Free us, Lord, from a conscience of this kind. For you do not judge by man's standards, but just as you know all things as they are done, so you judge. Therefore, implant upright judgment within me; give me an upright conscience and a ready and unchangeable will to obey my conscience.

CHAPTER 12

The Singers of the Mystical Temple

In man the emotions take the place of music, since not clamor, but love sounds in the ear of God. He who well tempers the emotions, praises God best with a harmonious symphony. Here we give a sort of practice of this matter to be used again and again, selected from the Royal Harpist himself. See, how beautifully all the emotions tend towards the one God, albeit by different paths, I should have said tones!

[The following texts are from the Vulgate translation]:

Love: "I shall love you, Lord, my strength: the LORD is my firmament, my refuge, and my deliverer" (Ps 18:2-3).

Sorrow: "To you only have I sinned, and have done evil before you: that you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged" (Ps 51:6).

¹¹¹ Bernard, *Meditations*, 10, 2 at the end: PL 184, 502 (n. 331).

Joy: "We will rejoice in your salvation, and in the name of our God we shall be exalted" (Ps 20:6).

Sadness: "My soul is troubled exceedingly: but you, O LORD, how long...? Turn to me, O LORD, and deliver my soul; o save me for your mercy's sake" (Ps 6:4-5).

Hope: "In you, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded; deliver me in your justice. Bow down your ear to me; make haste to deliver me!" (Ps 31:2-3).

Fear: "Pierce my flesh with your fear; for I am afraid of your judgements" (Ps 119:120).

Desire: "Lord, all my desire is before you; and my groaning is not hidden from you" (Ps 38:10).

Resignation: "Make the way known to me, where I should walk: for I have lifted up my soul to you. Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD. To you have I fled. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Your good spirit shall lead me into the right land. For your name's sake, O LORD, you will quicken in me your justice" (Ps 143:8-11).

Gratitude: "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall be always in my mouth" (Ps 33:2).

To this are inclined the sighs:

Of the Afflicted: "The troubles of my heart are multiplied: deliver me from my necessities" (Ps 25:17).

Of the Penitent: "I said, I will confess against myself my injustice to the LORD; and you have forgiven the wickedness of my sin" (Ps 32:5).

Of the Tempted: "O God come to my assistance: O Lord, make haste to help me" (Ps 70:2).

Of the Slandered: "Let them be confounded and come to nothing that detract my soul: let them be covered with confusion and shame that seek my hurt" (Ps 71:13).

Of the Assailed: "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps 27:1).

Of the Confused: “Enlighten my eyes that I never sleep in death; lest at any time my enemy say: I have prevailed against him” (Ps 13:4-5).

More examples of this kind can be drawn, both from the Psalms of David and diverse prayers of various saints. Indeed necessity and God teach us such things. Therefore the devout soul should just be watchful lest it expel the God of infinite goodness from itself by some grave sin, and should not be too anxious about [experiencing emotions] similar [to the examples above]: its Musicians follow the King everywhere.¹¹²

But if anything is to be attributed to the ancient masters of yet good Philosophy, and their admonitions are not entirely to be rejected, then I shall be allowed to declare with Tully:¹¹³ “Nothing is more sweet than the harmony of the virtues.”¹¹⁴ This harmony pleases Almighty God who wants us to be perfect as He Himself is. O God!

“Make us to understand the way of your justifications, and we shall be exercised in your wondrous works” (cf. Ps 118:27).

CHAPTER 13

The Ministers of the Mystical Temple

Our five senses may not inappropriately be called the ministers of the Mystical Temple. But as two of them, Hearing and Sight, have been reserved for another allegorical interpretation, we have placed here only three: Touch, Taste, and Smell.

¹¹² Here, “King” refers to “God” and “Musicians” to the emotions. Just as one reads at the beginning of this chapter: “In man the emotions take the place of music,” because musicians are those who make music. And so the interpretation proposed by E. Jarra that “King” refers to King David seems to be incorrect; cf. Jarra, p. 25, n. 3

¹¹³ Tullius Cicero.

¹¹⁴ Jarra refers this quotation to the work of Cicero’s called *On the Orator*, 3.6.21, where the discussion is about *The Harmony of all doctrines* (cf. Jarra, p. 25, n. 4). Yet such a text is not found in this work, as is proven by the index of words where occurrences of *suavior* and “*suavissima* etc. are given, but not *suavius* (more sweet); it seems therefore that this quotation comes from a different work.

And so, first of all, Touch, if it performs its function properly, is of great service in advancing the beauty and strength of our Temple: the hands with honest works provide all that is necessary for the body: by nourishing it, supporting it, and keeping it safe; they also benefit the mind: by exercises, by praiseworthy and devout occupations, or when we read approved books, or when we write what is useful and salutary, or when we distribute alms, or serve our neighbor out of love. For we include under touch whatever our hands perform. Yet we wish to be far from what can defile the body or soul, so that each of us can boast with the royal psalmist,¹¹⁵ singing: "I will wash my hands in innocence and walk round your altar, LORD" (Ps 26:6). For when our hands refrain from any deed that is not good, let alone from the shedding of innocent blood, (of which I would not wish even to hear among Christians, least of all to be done), then they conserve the cleanliness of the heart, which is the altar of the Mystical Temple, indeed thus defend it, as the defenders do with city walls. For the body is disciplined with these hands, lest, as Paul warns us, "it fights against the soul";¹¹⁶ with these is formed the sign of the Cross that puts unholy thoughts to flight and shuts up entirely the access of the devil to us. Touch then is very beneficial and a most necessary minister for the Mystical Temple, provided it is on guard against what ought not to be touched.

Taste is settled in the mouth: therefore we can attribute to it whatever is done by the mouth. You could call this the holiest minister if its only taste is for the praise of God alone. David aspired to this singing: "Let my mouth be filled with praise, that I may sing your glory, your greatness all the day long" (Ps 71:8). But if you also avoid food that is superfluously seasoned, and not only superfluous, and avoid luxurious drink, and not only too much of it, your taste will better serve reason. I do not insist that

¹¹⁵ King David.

¹¹⁶ In none of St. Paul's writings can such a phrase be found. It would appear therefore that the author is erroneously ascribing such a warning to St. Paul, which is actually expressed by St. Peter in the following words: "[I urge you] to keep yourselves free from the desires of the flesh, which attack the soul" (1 Pet 2:11).

you get accustomed to hard, coarse bread, or that you sprinkle it with ashes (what, however, some of the saints did in a most holy manner), that it may have no taste. Nor do I want your honey to be mixed with gall; your heart, I say, should not be free from bitterness,¹¹⁷ unless God urges you to do this and helps you; but I do boldly advise you this: do not take delight in these gifts, but rather bless and love Him who gives you food and drink at the right time, not that you live to eat, but that you eat to live; not that you enjoy, but that you use the gifts of God, remembering however the abstinence and fasting of Christ, remembering the gall and vinegar that was given to His Majesty to drink, when He was thirsting on the Cross for your sake. And yet, indeed do not do this alone, but also remove from others, when you can, the opportunity of sinning with their taste. This servant performs his duty badly, when he eats and drinks continually, when he drinks heavily and guzzles day and night.

Finally, smell might seem to some to be the least necessary minister for our Temple, if we did not know that its proper task is to prevent worthless smells. In these deplorable times¹¹⁸ I doubt whether this minister keeps watch at his post before the gates of our Temple; indeed I believe that [absorbed in sound sleep] he is badly snoring.¹¹⁹ For we are so given to perfumes that we steep even our clothes with them, and not just the entire head, kerchiefs and sleeves. Alas! What sort of men are we, who expose our noses to nothing except what has a pleasant smell? Christians, I beg you,

¹¹⁷ In order to understand this text properly it is necessary to note that the words: "your heart, I say, should not be free from bitterness" (The heart, I say, shall not deny itself bitterness) are an interpolation which interrupts the flow of the narrative. Both Jarra and Sawa failed to notice this, and accordingly gave an erroneous translation of these words.

¹¹⁸ Here the word "times" signifies "a time when things are getting worse" (in the moral sense: "Oh times! Oh morals!"). As a result, "in these times" could be rendered as "in these sad times." Vincent Ferrer used the word in this sense in the title of his book: *A Summary of the Theological Course Including All the Controversies Which Used to be Considered in the Schools at This Time*, Valenza 1720.

¹¹⁹ This proposition has not always been properly understood. Here we express it according to the Polish translation given in the critical edition of *TDM*.

awaken your Smell, that is in so ugly a manner buried;¹²⁰ awaken it; so that it may prevent worthless fragrance from the Temple of God, unless you wish to fall down or to be thrust down to where there is a hideous and everlasting stench, where more than one Cincinnatus,¹²¹ with his badly smelling Cyprian powder, laments: Ah! Curses on my curls, curses on my hair, my disgrace, which I have often combed with an effeminate hand!¹²²

Apply yourself to this holy pursuit with all your strength, so that these three ministers of your soul and body, Touch, Taste and Smell, may make you the sort of men about whom that famous saying of the holy King can be appropriately understood and declared: “They have noses and yet do not smell. They have hands but do not feel; and no sound rises from their throats” (Ps 115:6-7).

CHAPTER 14

The Doors of the Mystical Temple

What are they? Eyes. Ah! How carelessly they are guarded! How often one has to shout to these sentries with the devout bard: “O eyes! O rocks—is not this a better label with which they would be called? Alas! So many ships were lost, dashed against them!”¹²³

Why so? Because, as our Teacher Jesus explains in Matthew: “Everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (5:28). This agrees with that proverb of the Wise Man: “Your eyes shall behold strange women, and your heart shall utter perverse things” (Prov 23:33) [LV]. For whatever is in the eyes is at once in the heart. This is why it is said that Job made a pact with his eyes not to entertain any thoughts

¹²⁰ The comparison is being made here with “snoring badly” (see above, footnote 119 (p. 619)): Smell is sleeping so soundly, that it appears to be dead and buried.

¹²¹ That is, “one who has curls.”

¹²² Although this verse is not italicized in the *TDM*, it is almost certainly a quotation from an unknown work.

¹²³ This is a quotation from an unknown work by an unknown author (“*pious vates*”).

about a maiden;¹²⁴ those who make no such pact do have such thoughts. If the mother of the human race had not seen the fruit pleasing to the eyes,¹²⁵ she would not have lost original justice.

By a careless guarding of his eyes even that most just king David brought forth two monsters within the sanctuary of his mind: adultery and murder. He stared at Bathsheba and killed Uriah; that she might be possessed, the other had to perish.¹²⁶ Alipius, certainly the most religiously scrupulous companion of St. Augustine, lamented for a long time that he had gazed with attention at the Roman amphitheater shows.¹²⁷ The Prince of the Apostolic College did not hesitate to call “irrational beasts” (2 Pet 2:12) [LV] those men who have “eyes full of adultery and of sin that does not cease” (2 Pet 2:14) [LV].

For in truth, one sins unceasingly when these doors of the Mystical Temple are wide open everywhere and to everything.

There is more than one Christian, to whom God can say, when driven away from his heart: “Your eyes have made me fly away.”¹²⁸ As soon as anything base and evil flies into the soul through the eyes, at once Beauty and the Supreme Good fly away. Will you then not keep these doors closed, you who desire God to dwell with you, and you yourself with God? He certainly remained with the most modest youth Blessed Aloysius Gonzaga, who visited the Empress daily for three years, and never looked at her.¹²⁹ He remained with the recently canonized St. Peter of Alcantara, the

¹²⁴ Cf. Job 31:1.

¹²⁵ Cf. Gen 3:6.

¹²⁶ Cf. 2 Kings 11:3.

¹²⁷ Cf. Augustinus, *Confessions...*, Bk. VI, 8.

¹²⁸ Cf. Cant 6:4 “turn away your eyes from me, for they have made me flee away.”

¹²⁹ St. Aloysius Gonzaga SJ, (d. 1591). Father Papczyński may have known his life from a book written in Italian by Fr. Virgilio Cepari, printed in Rome in 1606 (followed by translations into many other languages) where one may read of the modesty of eyes of this saint. “Having traveled from Italy to Spain in the company of the Empress, and having gone almost every day, ... nonetheless so great was the modesty of his eyes that he declared to him that he had never seen her, and had never once gazed at her face, so that if he had seen her again, he would not have recognized her.” (Cepari Virgilio, *Life of St. Luigi Gonzaga of the Company of Jesus*, Alba 1928, p. 69).

Father of the Recollects,¹³⁰ who for forty years gazed at neither man nor woman.¹³¹ Truly, those who are not ignorant of the fact that death enters the soul through the eyes, fasten a thousand bolts to them.

You, certainly be watchful, lest some Isaiah¹³² laments of your Temple: "All its gates were destroyed" [Lamentations 1, 4].

CHAPTER 15

The Windows of the Mystical Temple

They are ears. Why? As all things enter through doors, and only noise enters through windows from without, so words enter through the ears, not bodies. And yet with words a thing itself may penetrate, first seizing the imagination, then the other faculties with greatest ease, and may defile the altar itself. The most holy King of Jerusalem boasted that these windows of his temple were absolutely perfect when he sang: "Sacrifice and obligation you did not desire; but you made perfect ears for me" (Ps 40:7) [LV]. Of course those ears are perfect which are open only to devout, salutary, virtuous and beneficial discourses; they are barred against those that are vain, prying, slanderous, licentious,

¹³⁰ St. Peter of Alcantara OFM Obs., (d. 1562). Clemens IX canonized him on April 28, 1669. Clemens X extended his cult to the whole church in the year 1670 (cf. Ghinato, Alberto, *Peter of Alcantara, Saint*, P.II: *ECat* IX, 1396). In truth, St. Peter of Alcantara can scarcely be called a "Father of the Recollects," because he did not belong to the Recollects Minor, but originated the reform of the Franciscan order, which became known as the "Alcantaristi" (the Brothers of the Strictest Observance).

¹³¹ The author probably read of St. Peter of Alcantara's remarkable penance in the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila; but the assertion: "for forty years he gazed at neither man nor woman" is not so clearly stated in this book, where one reads: "He told me that for forty years ... he had not slept longer than an hour and a half. From youth he practiced strict mortification, and told me that he never raised his eyes from the ground, to the point that, although he lived in the same house belonging to his Order for three years, he recognized his fellow religious only by their voices; For more years he never looked any woman in the face." See: *Life of St. Teresa of Jesus Written by Herself*, Ch. 27, nn. 17-18, in: Teresa di Gesù, *Works* I, Milan, 1932, 298 pages.

¹³² This is generally attributed to Jeremiah, not Isaiah.

hardly religious, not to say blasphemous. There is a great cleanliness in that temple, and through its windows not even flies, let alone any birds, can enter.

You will have a similar purity of heart and soul if you live with closed ears. You may be whiter than snow, purer than crystal, but you will be easily blackened if you lend an easy ear to all things. Once it was solemnly said: "Evil conversations corrupt good morals" (1 Cor 15:33) [LV]. How many men would be chaste, and holy, and not heretical, if they perceived these evil conversations as the harpies which force themselves upon their mind through their ears, and they would either chase them away, or flee from them. The Apostle foresaw this when he wrote prophetically to his dearest Timothy about lax Christians in the following way: "For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths" (2 Tim 4:3-4).

In the annals of the ancient Fathers it is related that a certain saint began a discourse among his followers about the words of God. But they began to fall asleep. However, when he began a witty story, they awoke and suddenly listened to his words with intense attention. Ah, wretched we are, while pious discourses and even sermons themselves weary us, we have taste of the things that are prying, fabled, harmful, detrimental.

Yet we are not ignorant of the fact that the most sure sign of predestination to heavenly glory is the eager and attentive hearing and fulfillment of the Word of God. "Blessed," (said Christ himself), "are those who hear the word of God and observe it" (Lk 11:28). Therefore, so that we may not be deprived of this blessing, Paul suggests not only to Timothy but to all of the faithful: "You will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching you have followed. Avoid profane and silly myths" (1 Tim 4:6-7). But I add that we must avoid chatting, especially in the House of God, and especially at the time of a sermon. I would further add that we should not indeed present our ears to arguments and controversies that do not

bring holiness and are not useful. Much more to be avoided are discourses and readings that not only lack any usefulness but also cause greatest harm. "Whoever teaches something different," (I am not afraid to declare with the Teacher of the Gentiles) "is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid disposition for arguments, and verbal disputes. From these come envy, rivalry, insults, evil suspicions, and mutual friction among people with corrupted minds, who are deprived of the truth" (1 Tim 6:3-5).

Finally, may I be allowed to set forth these words from the most holy Father Augustine concerning all the senses in order to avoid sensuality, in which God is not found: "I have wandered like a sheep that was lost" (the one is speaking who once was weak) "seeking you outside" (namely God) "who are within. And I toiled greatly seeking you outside of myself, yet you dwell in me, if, however, I would desire you. I have walked all around the streets and squares of the city of this world, in search of you, but did not find you: because I unsuccessfully sought outside what was within. I sent my messengers, all my exterior senses, to seek you, but I did not find you, because I was seeking you wrongly" (*Sol.* Ch. 31).¹³³

And so let us rather learn to seek God through the death of the senses, and we shall find him. They die, when they are directed wisely, when such things are removed from them by which brute animals themselves are attracted. Then, when the animal man dies, the spiritual one will arise, who, having found in himself God as his possession, will sweetly repeat with Paul: "I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

¹³³ Augustine, *A Book of Soliloquies of the Soul to God*, Ch. XXXI, 1, in: *St. Aurelius Augustine of Hippo, Bishop, Meditations, Soliloquies and a Handbook*, Paris 1861, p. 155. The text contained in this quotation is not found in the same work as edited in: *The Complete Works of St. Augustine Bishop of Hippo*, XXV, Paris 1842.

CHAPTER 16

The Cleanliness of the Mystical Temple

Cleanliness is greatest if the temple is swept out at least once a day. In this regard David should be imitated, who said of himself: "I swept my spirit" (Ps 77:6) [LV]. This is done by the examination of one's conscience: the more frequently and diligently it is used, the cleaner it makes the dwelling place of God in man. Truly there is a deplorable negligence of not a few people, and a most serious error: they cannot bear their bedrooms, clothes, and dishes unless they are wholly spotless, yet they do not remove the dirt of the conscience; they wash their body, oil [perfume] it, cleanse it in every way, yet neglect the cleanliness of the soul. O Christian! Every day you wash your face, every day you clean your clothes, every day you sweep out your house, so why do you not do this every day with the Temple of God, which you are.

Take notice then of your thoughts of the whole day; consider what you have said, and much more carefully what you have done. Have you omitted some good or committed some evil? But indeed examine the very intention of your deeds, and moreover attend to this: whether some good could not have been made better.

You have a method for this most holy exercise of sweeping out the Mystical House of God at least every evening, in this well known poem:

Thank God, ask for light, examine your mind, ask pardon for sin, and resolve, make satisfaction.

You can do the first in this way:

O most holy and glorious Trinity, one God, I adore You countless thousands of times, I give thanks due to Your Majesty for each and all the benefits, favors and graces granted me and the whole human race from the beginning of the world right up to this time, and especially on this day. I thank You, my Lord God, because You have created me, redeemed me, called me to the Catholic religion, have directed, enlightened, roused, encouraged, safeguarded, nurtured, protected, tolerated, etc., (add particular favors, espe-

cially of the present day). Be blessed therefore in Your gifts, and Holy in all Your works, who live and reign forever and ever.

The second:

Enlighten, Lord, the eyes of my mind, that I may acknowledge Your good deeds and my evil deeds: may I bless You for the former, and weep over the latter and amend them with Your grace for your glory. Amen.

The third:

Call to mind what you have thought, said and done, so that you may perceive whether any sin or imperfection has not been committed in your thoughts, words and deeds against the law of God, of nature, or human law, so that you begin to feel just sorrow for it and write down what is to be submitted in confession. This is what St. Leo¹³⁴ stresses: "Let each one scrutinize his conscience, and set himself before himself by censorship of proper judgement" (Sermons 3, for Lent).¹³⁵ Augustine does not advise anything different, when he says: "Let man ascend the tribunal of his own mind against himself, and in the court established in his heart let there be present reflection as the accuser, conscience as the witness, fear as the executioner, and let the blood of the soul making a confession flow through his tears" (*Book 50, Homily 1*).¹³⁶

The fourth is derived from there. When you discover some defect or offense in the conscience, or more of them, you should make the following act of contrition concerning them, both individually if they are grave, and in general:

I am sorry, my Lord and God, the supreme and infinite Good, out of pure love for You, that some time, but especially today,

¹³⁴ St. Leo the Great, Doctor of the Church (d. 461).

¹³⁵ St. Leo the Great, *On Lent III*, in: *Sermons of St. Leo the Great, Sermon XLI*, Ch. 1: *PL* 54, 272 (n. 153).

¹³⁶ This quotation was not able to be verified according to the author's reference. Jarra too noted a different division of the sermons of St. Augustine in *PL*.

I have offended You by these sins (cause them to appear in the court of your mind) and thus I should like to grieve over each and every one of the sins of my whole life, indeed over the sins of all men, most perfectly, just as I ought. I detest them above all evils. Forgive me, and all, because of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Most Blessed Virgin and all Your Elect. Amen.

The fifth:

O God! O goodness! O my Love! I love You above all things, and desire that You be loved by all, as Your Majesty should and can be loved. Would that I be able to love You as You love yourself, as You love Your most sacred humanity, as the Most Blessed Virgin and all the elect love You. O God, out of my love for You I firmly resolve to atone for each and all my sins by sacramental confession as soon as possible for Your glory, to correct them by your grace, and make satisfaction for my sins.

The sixth:

Finally assign yourself some mortification, both in thanksgiving for the benefits received and in satisfaction for your sins. Or at least undertake at once some prayer, or decide to give some alms as soon as possible, or to fast as to the quality and magnitude of the sin demands, and as the Spirit of God teaches you. Thus you will clean the Temple of God, and so you will advance in His grace, love, and perfection.

The admonition which Annaeus¹³⁷ gives in particular on this point should not be despised: "As much as you can," he says, "accuse yourself. Examine yourself accurately: first play the part of the prosecutor, then of the judge, and lastly of the advocate; at times provoke yourself."¹³⁸ But if by chance you grumble at the Philosopher's admonition, then consider what the most holy

¹³⁷ Lucius Annaeus Seneca. Sawa correctly recognized him, but Jarra erroneously identifies him with Ioannes Annius of Viterbo (d. 1502).

¹³⁸ Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *A Book of Letters to Lucilius on the Reason for Living*, Krakow 1524, Fo. 18v.

Doctor advises: “Attentively examine your integrity,” (says St. Bernard) “and examine your life in a daily scrutiny. Attend carefully to how much you advance or how much you fail; what is your conduct and what are your emotions; how similar or dissimilar are you to God; how near, or how far, are you from him, not by the distance of places, but by the emotions of your conduct. Therefore, display yourself to yourself, if not always, or often, then at least sometimes. Rule your emotions, direct your actions, set right your steps. Let nothing undisciplined remain in you. Place all your transgressions before your eyes. Set yourself before yourself, as if before another, and so grieve over yourself. Bewail your evil deeds and sins, by which you have offended God. Make known to Him your wretchedness, show Him the wickedness of your enemies. And when you have softened yourself before Him with your tears, I beg you to be mindful of me” (*Med.*, Ch. 5,[1]).¹³⁹ Thus far are Bernard’s words: having become better by his admonition, cleanse your soul everyday by a strict examination; in this way it will be a dwelling pleasing to God forever.

CHAPTER 17

The Roof of the Mystical Temple

Temples are known by their roofs; in like manner a Christian is known by his works of righteousness, without which he is nothing but an empty name. The Apostle pronounced a harsh judgment on such Christians, that: “They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny him” (Tit 1:16) [LV].

Zealously Augustine addressed this: “How,” he says, “can a man be called a Christian, when no Christian acts are apparent in him?” (Tr. 10 on John).¹⁴⁰ Wherefore in order that the Lord may turn us away from this infamy, He obliged us to good actions by a serious injunction in the following saying: “Let your loins be

¹³⁹ Bernard, *Meditations*, Ch. V, n. 1: PL 184, 494 (nn. 326, 14).

¹⁴⁰ The the quoted text could not be found in the indicated passage: St. Augustine, *Treatise X on the Gospel of John*.

girded and lamps burning in your hands” (Lk 12:35) [LV]. “For we are girding our loins” (as Gregory very well explains the mind of the heavenly Teacher) “when we restrain the lust of the flesh by continence. But because it is less to do no evil, at once he adds: ‘and lamps burning in your hands.’ Indeed we hold lamps burning in our hands when by our good works we show our neighbors examples of the light. The Lord indeed says of such works: ‘Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven’ (Mt 5:16).”¹⁴¹ This interpretation of the Roman Pontiff is obvious, and none is more suitable to the matter under consideration.

Also John the Evangelist had this in mind when he wrote: “If we say, ‘We have fellowship with him,’” (he means God, the eternal Light) “while we continue to walk in darkness, we lie and do not act in truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of His Son Jesus cleanses us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:6-7).

Darkness denotes sin, light denotes holy works. Paul includes both when writing to the Ephesian converts: “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.” (Eph 5:8). Then truly we are known as true Christians when we are seen to be not in the darkness but in the light, following in the footsteps of Christ, in accordance with His testimony: “Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness” (Jn 8:12).

And so the mentioned preacher and writer of the Holy Gospel, John, is repeating for us again what was said before: “Who says that he abides in Him,” that is, in Christ, “ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (cf. 1 Jn 2:6). For “no one who remains in Him sins, and no one who sins has seen Him or known Him” (1 Jn 3:6). For “whoever sins belongs to the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. In this way, the children of God and the children of the devil are made plain” (1 Jn 3:8, 10). In what way? The latter by their sins, and the former by their works

¹⁴¹ Gregory, *Homilies on the Gospels*, Bk. 1, *Hom. XIII: PL*, nn. 1481-1482.

of justice. He therefore that does good is recognized to be the Temple of God; he that does evil is a chapel of the devil.

Do you say, or at least believe, that you have the Holy Spirit? The roof shows me what guest lives inside. Are you greedy? You are a temple to Plutus;¹⁴² proud? [a temple] of Juno;¹⁴³ lustful? Of Venus;¹⁴⁴ irascible? Of the infernal Furies;¹⁴⁵ gluttonous? Of Bacchus;¹⁴⁶ envious? Of Cerberus;¹⁴⁷ sluggish? Of Night.¹⁴⁸ "By their fruits you shall know them" (Mt 7:20) [LV]; Truth said this about false prophets, [that is] feigned Christians. Let us therefore prove our faith by works of faith, since by means of these roofs we both are and are acknowledged to be the Temples of the living God.

¹⁴² Plutus: "For the Greeks this was the name of an ancient god of agrarian nature ... The name Pluto, indicating riches, was originally restricted to the idea of the fertility of the fields, but then it was extended to that of every form of well being;" Guarducci Margherita, *Pluto: EI XXVII*, 561.

¹⁴³ Juno: "Ancient Latin divinity who developed as time passed into one of the principal goddesses of state and private Roman religion," "identified with the star of night and in this way brought to be related to the calendar and life, and female nature..." She became "extremely important." "In some cities of Latium and central Italy we find Juno first among the other deities as protectress and sovereign lady of the state." Gianelli, Giulio, *Juno: EI XVII*, 329-330. For these reasons Juno suggests the notion of pride.

¹⁴⁴ Venus: a Roman goddess of love, identified with the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite. In sexual matters, Venus represents lust, the appetite for intercourse, and intercourse itself. Here, Venus refers to sensuality: lust or a life of pleasure.

¹⁴⁵ The Furies: this is a poetic word for "madness," denoting enraged fury, anger, frenzy. It is also a proper noun: the Furies are the goddesses of madness. There are three names for these goddesses of madness, those found in Heaven are called "Dirae," on earth, "Furies", and in the Underworld, "Eumenides." The three Furies are the three passions that drive men headlong into all crimes: anger, avarice and lust. Thus according to Forcellini, *Lexicon of All Latinity*, II, 566-567.

¹⁴⁶ Bacchus (Dionysus): "One of the most important ... earthly divinities in ancient Greece. As the god of wine and drunkenness, Dionysus bears the names of Branius and Bacchus." Gianelli G., *Dionysus: EI XII*, 944-945.

¹⁴⁷ Cerberus: "the dog who guards the entrance to Hades, kind to him who enters, fierce and aggressive towards anyone who tries to get out of it"; idem, *Cerberus: EI IX*, 779

¹⁴⁸ Night. The origin of this mythological divinity is explained as follows: "The tendency inherent in the religious spirit of the ancients to confer a personality, a human form, on all natural phenomena ensures that even the idea of Night is personified in mythology." According to Hesiod, Night is the mother of Sleep and Death. And so it has a twofold nature, and as the mother of Sleep it is the "the giver of peace and repose to mortals." Cf. Bendinelli, Goffredo, *Night: EI XXIV*, 982.

CHAPTER 18

The Bell of the Mystical Temple

What other thing is this, except a Good Name? When a statesman (Saavedra¹⁴⁹) wished to portray it, he drew a bell with the epigram: "It is recognized by its stroke" (in *Symb.*).¹⁵⁰ The striking indicates whether the bell is whole or cracked.

Although the sound of reputation should be attended to rather seldom, since it increases or decreases in accordance with men's feelings, and nobody should be immediately considered worthless on the basis of popular bias, yet every servant and follower of Jesus Christ should strive to procure for himself a good name among all, as far as he is able. The Apostle advises this, writing to the Romans, that we should provide good things not only before God, but also before all men (cf. Rom 12:17). This he also urged upon the Philippians: "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil 4:8). That chosen Instrument¹⁵¹ wanted us all to be instruments of glory, so with God, as with men; he wanted us all to be the good fragrance of Christ, not degenerate shoots of the Vine, not members of the Head in disagreement; finally he wished that everywhere we should be renowned for the way we live, and holy in our conduct, and that none should be found among us whose disrepute would not maliciously be spread.

¹⁴⁹ Saavedra Fajardo, Diego De (d. 1648): "Spanish writer and diplomat [who] passed much time at Rome..." Anon., *Saavedra, Fajardo, Diego De*, in: "New Times"(Grand Univers. Enc.), XVI, 8913. "The principal work of S. is *The ideal of a Christian Political Prince Represented in One Hundred Designs (Patterns)*, published at Münster in 1640. The work was translated into many European languages and into Latin. As the premise to the disquisition of each chapter there is a 'device,' a symbolical allegorical design, accompanied by a Latin motto, of moral or political significance, each indicating the subject matter and argument offering a comment on the moral and political qualities that should adorn an imaginary perfect Christian." Giannini Alfredo, *Saavedra Fajardo, Diego*, in: *EI* XXX, 370.

¹⁵⁰ Saavedra Faxardo A. Didaco, *Ideal of the Christian Statesman Expressed in 101 Symbols*, Amsterdam 1651, p. 83: Symbol XI.

¹⁵¹ St. Paul the Apostle; cf. Acts 9:15.

This idea agrees with that saying, which is indeed common, but not to be rejected: If you lose everything, remember to preserve your good name. This, however, is not to be interpreted as meaning that even if we sin disgustingly and often, we should nevertheless boast that we are close to the apostles in holiness, but rather that it is more fitting that we suffer the loss of our property and life than leave to posterity the examples of a bad name. Neither can I be pleased by that well-known saying: If not chastely, then cautiously; I am pleased more by the saying: Both chastely and cautiously. Who would not approve that saying of the Sage? “A good name is better,” (he says), “than great riches, and good favor is above silver and gold” (Prov 22:1). “A good name” — says the same — “is better than good ointment” (Eccl 7:1).

Therefore, Christian, follow the same man’s advice, and “take care of a good name; for this shall continue with you, more than a thousand treasures precious and great” (Sir 41:12) [LV]. But I am afraid that in this matter you may fall into error, that you would not think that a good name is obtained without the true splendor of virtue, especially by unjust wars, by great spilling of blood, by wealth heaped up through lawful and unlawful means, by honors, sought with cunning skill, by invasion of kingdoms, by taking powers by force, by worldly prudence, by vain and puffed up knowledge, by oppression of the weak, by defamation of others, by bringing neighbors to ruin, by cunning, fraud, by feigned appearance of honesty. A truly good name is one that is advanced, nurtured and maintained by a good life, virtue, integrity, genuine devotion, constant zeal for God’s glory, a true contempt for human affairs, concern for eternal things, love of God, love of neighbor, a conduct adapted to Divine perfections, the same disposition in adversities and in prosperity, and particularly conserved by those greatest sources of all the virtues, faith, hope, and charity. This fruit of a good name will never perish, and is truly pleasing both to mankind and to Heaven.

You will be able, indeed you shall be obliged, to boldly rise against anyone who would like to defile or abolish your good

name by either the pen or his tongue. Basil the Great¹⁵² rightly impels us to do this when he says: "One must not be silent in the face of calumnies, not that we take vengeance by contradiction, but that we do not permit the unhindered spreading of a lie or allow those who have been led astray to remain in their damage" (ep. 65).¹⁵³ Yet I do not advise you to avenge with severe punishment a trivial defamation, but rather disregard it, since such barking dogs cannot bite you. A frequent vice found in many is to slander another's good name, since they have none themselves; which owl loves the light or praises it? But there are not a few who want to become famous by another's disgrace. Hence even Christ himself, the supreme perfection, was not wholly free from impudent and biting tongues, as the imitator [of Christ]¹⁵⁴ rightly speaks in his person: "I have often heard many complaints against Me; I willingly sustained disgrace and insults: in return for benefits I received ingratitude; for miracles—blasphemies; for my teaching—censures" (l. 3, c. 18).¹⁵⁵

And what is to be said about the fact that for the most part those who desire to be lovable to God alone become odious to many people? Wherefore Paul, the Teacher of this world remarkably declared: "If I were still trying to please people," (he says), "I would not be serving Christ" (Gal 1:10). And you, "when you are living an upright life, pay no attention to the words of evil men."¹⁵⁶ Yet more tasty than Cato's morsel is this one which someone offered me as seasoned most pleasantly with the example of Paul: "Many are given to much talking, and therefore

¹⁵² St. Basil the Great, Doctor of the Church, (d. 379).

¹⁵³ St. Basil the Great, *Letter 207* (sic!): PG 32, 759 (n. 309). A very different translation from the original Greek text into Latin should be noted in PG: "But because slanders should not be ignored in silence; our intention is not to gain revenge by contradiction, but lest we allow the lie to advance and those who have been misled from suffering harm. . ." (PG).

¹⁵⁴ See Ch. III, footnote 42 (p. 584).

¹⁵⁵ IC, Bk. III, Ch. 18, § 1.

¹⁵⁶ Cato Marcus Porcius, Censorinus (d. 149 B.C.), Roman writer and politician, in: *The sayings of Cato that Are Commonly Entitled the Moral Distichs of Cato*, edited by Geyza Nemethy, Budapest 1895, p. 28: Distichs, Book III, 2.

little trust is to be given to what they say. Yet it is not possible to satisfy everybody either. Although Paul was eager to please all in the Lord, and became all things to all men, yet it mattered little to him that he was subject to human judgment [cf. 1 Cor 4:3]. He did a lot, as much as he was able, for the edification and salvation of others: but at times, he could not hold back that he would not be judged or even despised by others. Therefore he committed all to God, who knows all things; and he defended himself by patience and humility against the talking of those who spoke unfair things of him, or even thought groundless and inaccurate things and discussed all that they wished about him. Yet at times he did respond, lest he give scandal to the weak by his silence. Who are you, Christian, that you should fear mortal man? What can anyone achieve by attacking you with words and injuries? He hurts himself rather than you; yet he will not be able to escape God's judgment, whoever he is." Therefore, "cast your heart in the Lord, and do not fear human judgment" (*On the Imitation of Christ*, l. 3, Ch. 36).¹⁵⁷ It is not the fault of the bell if it is improperly struck, when it is good.

Finally the best means to win and keep a good name is as follows: slander nobody, do not listen to those who do so, do not be grudging in your praises of others. When Caesar set about restoring the statues of Pompey,¹⁵⁸ someone said to him that he was setting up his own. Thus feeling no envy for another's glory, he was spreading his own. Some honoring the deeds and virtues of the saints are moved to do equal things and become saints.

¹⁵⁷ *IC*, Bk. III, Ch. 36. It should be noted that the words "cast ... judgment" are placed at the beginning of chapter 36, from which this quotation comes.

¹⁵⁸ Caesar, Julius (d. 44 B.C.), defeated Pompey in the year 48 B.C. at the battle of Pharsalus, and Pompey was killed soon afterwards, thus gaining Caesar absolute power in the Roman state. "Caesar, with the measure intended to show his desire for pacification, issued an amnesty and wished even to have the statues of Silas and Pompey the Great restored..." Levi, Mario Attilio, *Caesar, Gaius Iulius: EI IX*, 872. According to Plutarch, Cicero's judgment on this action of Caesar's was as follows: "He did not allow the statues of Pompey which had been pulled down to lie on the ground, but restored them, and it was then said by Cicero that "Caesar by restoring Pompey's images made firm his own;" see: Plutarch, *Caius Julius Caesar, LVII, 3: Lives*, vol. II, Paris 1878, p. 876.

They too have a great name, who make great [things] out of little [ones], rather than little [things] out of great [ones]. In this way you will make the bell of the Temple of God ring clearly.

CHAPTER 19

The Consecration of the Mystical Temple

The Consecration of the Mystical Temple may be twofold, just as is the case with material temples. The first is the one that the Holy Spirit performed in us by the ministry of a priest through the saving Sacrament of Baptism, when He consecrated us to Himself. In a sermon on this consecration, Pope Leo, that most eloquent and devout man, speaks to each of us in this way: “through the Sacrament of Baptism you have been made a Temple of the Holy Spirit. Be unwilling to drive so great an occupant out of yourself by means of vicious actions, and to submit yourself again to the slavery of the devil: for the price paid for you is the blood of Christ; because He will judge you in truth, who has mercifully redeemed you.”¹⁵⁹

The other is the one by which, observing the annual memory of that first Consecration, we give God true thanks for our sanctification and celebrate our most joyous feast of consecration in a spirit of gratitude by renewing our fervor to serve God. Ah! Who are those who observe this most holy custom that is truly proper to each Christian, of devoutly recalling that day on which they were born both for the world and for Heaven? Namely, so that they may purify their soul by confession, may receive Holy Communion, and by whatever possible means and diligence they may show themselves most grateful to God for their holy regeneration.

Among the many stories, even written by those who have recounted the deeds of devout men, I confess that I have found only one example, and that a recent one, of this annual con-

¹⁵⁹ Leo the Great, *On the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, Ch. III: *Sermons*, Sermon XXI [or XX]: PL 54(I), 193, n. 66.

secration of the Mystical Temple, in the Life of the Venerable and outstanding Servant of God, Fr. Gaspar Drużbicki, a Polish priest of the Society of Jesus,¹⁶⁰ which was recently published by the famous theologian of the same Society, the Very Reverend Fr. Daniel Pawłowski,¹⁶¹ which I have admired — and here I set it forth for practical use, and advise any Christian to use it in a salutary manner.

THE METHOD

of celebrating one's birthday

or rather the mystical consecration of the Mystical Temple,

used most piously by the Venerable Servant of God

Fr. Gaspar Drużbicki of the Society of Jesus.

“I was born, Lord, into this world, and indeed born blind, indigent, naked, a sinner. At the light looked a son of darkness, a slave of the devil, an object of God’s anger. O my Triune God, all my good! Why, before I was made Your son through the grace of adoption, before I attained the inheritance of the merits of Christ, before I, useless shoot of the vine, was grafted onto the true Vine, why, I say, did I not die in some mishap? But that piece of my mass found grace before You, so that You allowed me to live and entrusted me to be guarded by Your Angel. Through Your Providence I was brought to the font of Baptism, and from this reborn to be a son of grace, made a member of Christ and established as an heir of glory. O how poor I was when I arrived! O how rich I was when I was carried back and restored to my mother’s arms, adorned by the precious merits of Your Son as if by necklaces? And was there anyone, whether parents or those

¹⁶⁰ Kasper Drużbicki, SJ (d. 1662), theologian, spiritual father, master in colleges of the Society of Jesus, master of Novices, twice Provincial Superior, famous preacher and the author of many works, including about 60 on the ascetical life. He died with a reputation for sanctity. Cf. Majkowski, Józef, and Misiurek, Jerzy, *Drużbicki, Kasper*, SJ, in: *EK* IV, Chs. 238-240; Niedzielski, Jan, *Drużbicki, Kasper*, in: *PEK* IXX, 133.

¹⁶¹ Daniel Pawłowski, SJ (d. 1673). Theologian and writer; cf. Natorńsk I Bronisław, *Pawłowski Daniel*, in: *PSB* XXV, 493-494. Father Papczyński is speaking here of the *Life* written by him entitled *The Life of Fr. Gaspar Drużbicki, SJ, a Pole*, Krakow 1670.

present, or the priest himself, who acknowledged, my God, Your benefit done for me, and gave You sincere thanks for me? I do not know whether this was then done for me. If it was done, I thank Your Providence, and I now consider as valid all that was done for me; if it was not done, that this benefit may not lack a certain sign of due gratitude on my part: behold now, my God, my Trinity, with all my heart and all the power and effort of my soul and body I render immense thanks to You my God, through Jesus Christ, and through His Mother, and from that time forth my most precious Mother.

To whom shall I attribute the progress of my education, my God, my Trinity? You know the dangers to which my ignorant and fragile youthful age was subject, which could perceive nothing except with an animal-like sense. You fostered my limbs and strengthened them; You held my tottering steps and paces and directed them; You weakened my brute nature that I might finally emerge into a rational life. Who then glorified You for me, O my God? But who else O Lord except You, brought forth that next time of my life, in which the use of reason finally dawned on me and the first fruits of my discretion and human freedom then shone bright? And did I consecrate to You the first use of my reason? It may have happened; that it happened, I do not know, but I wish that I did it. For it was fitting that from that time forth I should love, adore and praise You, my God and Creator with the whole of my being, and profess myself your subject, and bring you and publicly declare the tribute of my subjection with fear and love. What was not done then, Lord, I do at the present. I abandon, expend, immolate, sacrifice and offer myself as a holocaust to You now, for that time, with all the first fruits of my actions and feelings that are worthy of You and which are due to You from me, in every possible kind of purity, effort and circumstance.”¹⁶²

¹⁶² Pawłowski, Daniel, *Vita P. Casparis Družbicki Poloni SI*, Cracoviae 1670, pp. 3-5. Textual annotations or corrections have been made in accordance with the text of this Consecration, which is found in a copy of this book in the General Archive of the Society of Jesus (AGSI).

This is how every Christian should spend his birthday [that is the anniversary of his baptism]; and pass his spiritual feast of consecration not in drinking and luxurious revels, but in this thanksgiving.

CHAPTER 20

The Guardians of the Mystical Temple

Our singular Guardians, who are to be revered by us with singular honor are: the most August and Supereminent Virgin, the Mother of God, our guardian angel, and the saint whose name, as given us, we have.

Who could adequately explain the care the most Holy Mother has for us? I would like to do so, if I could. Yet I know that she is concerned for us in no other way than she was concerned for Christ the Lord, her only and most beloved Son, since she recognizes that we are His members. I can mentally grasp almost all the good that she does for us, but I lack the words with which to set them forth for others to consider. And so I say briefly: we have all things through Mary, and, after God, it is in her that we live, move and have our being.¹⁶³ “After God,” (as Albert the Great¹⁶⁴ thinks) “she is the source of all grace in us” (in the book *Mar. 1.*, Gen., n. 12).¹⁶⁵ Hence Bernard, most devoted to her, says: “We venerate Mary with all the depth of our hearts, with all the ardor

¹⁶³ Cf. Acts 17:28, “In him we live, and move, and have our being.”

¹⁶⁴ St. Albert the Great, Doctor of the Church, “the universal doctor” (d. 1280). Cf. Walz Angelo, “Albert the Great:” *BS I*, 710-712.

¹⁶⁵ Albert The Great, *Marian Bible*, Bk. Genesis, n. 12, in: *The Complete Works of Bl. Albert the Great*, Paris 1848, vol. 37, p. 367. Also in a separate edition of this work, published at Cologne in 1625, p. 82, before the words quoted here we read: “lest they perish in the flood,” and after them can be read: “Genesis 7: ‘When Noah entered,’ that is, Christ, ‘into the ark,’ that is, into the womb of the Virgin Mary, which happened at the Incarnation, ‘all the springs burst,’ that is, of graces, ‘great abysses,’ when a flood of graces inundated Mary, and the devil was drowned, and sins were wiped away” (ibid., pp. 82-83).

of our hearts, and with our desires: because such is the will of Him who wished us to have all through Mary.”¹⁶⁶

Our second guardian is the Angel, to whose guardianship we were entrusted soon after we began to exist. O how much service, how much care we receive from him! David, greatly refined by Divine Wisdom, addresses man as follows: “No evil shall befall you, no affliction come near your tent. For God commands the angels to guard you in all your ways” (Ps 91:11) [LV]. As if He had said in brief: hedged about by the guardianship of your tutelary Spirit no one should fear danger, no one should tremble before evil. Saint Augustine recognized how much the Angel’s protection confers on man, as he himself declares before God in the following words: Our guardian angels “support us with great care and watchful eagerness at all times and in all places, coming to aid us and providing for our necessities, and passing with great solicitude between us and You, O Lord, bringing our groans and sighs to You, that they may obtain for us an easy mercy from Your benevolence, and may bring down from You the desired blessing of Your grace.” (*Soliloquies*, Ch. 27[3]). Yet what impels them to such great care for us? Their love for us; “they love,” (says the same author,) “their fellow citizens, by whose society they expect that the ruin of the schism [caused by the rebellious Angels] may be repaired” (*ibid.*).¹⁶⁷ Hence they are near us with such great perseverance that they do not neglect even the greatest sinner, yet to his last breath continually watching for his conversion. O how great are the good deeds each man could do, how great are the merits he could win for himself, how great are the evils he could avoid, if he paid attention to and obeyed this Holy Spirit, given him by God the father of the heavenly luminaries [cf. Jas 1:17], as his guide and leader?

Finally the third guardian is that saint whose name we took for ourselves either in Holy Baptism or in Holy Confirmation.

¹⁶⁶ Bernard, *In the Nativity of the B.V. Mary — On an Aqueduct*, § 7, in: “St. Bernard Abbot of Clairvaux — Sermons on the Saints, Sermon 68: PL 183, 441

¹⁶⁷ Augustine, *A Book of Soliloquies of the Soul to God* by St. Aurelius Augustine Bishop of Hippo, Ch. 27, n. 3, in: AMS, p. 181.

For we call such saints our patrons because they do more for us than temporal patrons would wish to do for their clients. Is the good God angry with us? They appease His anger; does He not grant our requests? They intercede on our behalf; does He want to punish us? They restrain Him; does He spare us? They thank Him. They favor our good deeds, favor our merits, favor our happiness, and await us with far greater longing than companions in port await the shipwrecked.

And therefore, as is the custom of the Church, I would devoutly suggest that we celebrate the recurring festivities of these our guardians with an octave. In what way? On each of the eight days let us do something pious and good in their honor. On one day one should attend the sacrifice of the Mass, on another give alms, on another apply some mortification to the body, on another pardon wrongs if there are any to be pardoned, and on another, if there are none, acquire virtues, on another we should practice some work of mercy, on another say our prayers with greater fervor, and on another live in great recollection and devotion. Finally we should perform whatever is acceptable to God, whatever brings honor to our patrons and whatever is salutary to us and our neighbor, because of our love and reverence due to them. In this way we shall have honored our Guardians in the best way.

CHAPTER 21

The Restoration of the Mystical Temple

The Mystical Temple is brought to ruin by impious deeds and repaired by pious deeds. Thus redeeming sins with alms is advised by Daniel¹⁶⁸ to the king of Assyria. Thus prayers, along with merciful generosity, and the burial of the dead, made Tobias a friend of

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Vulgate, Dan 4:24. "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you, and redeem your sins with alms, and your iniquities with works of mercy to the poor; perhaps he will forgive your offenses."

God.¹⁶⁹ For mercy embracing everything is able both to appease the angry God and to retain the grace of the favorable God.

There are fourteen works of mercy by which you will achieve everything with God.

Those relating to the body are recorded in the following line of verse:

I visit, give drink, give food, ransom, clothe, take in, bury.

Those relating to the spirit are contained in the following line of verse:

I advise, forgive, console, admonish, teach, pray, remit.

The remarkable work of *visiting the sick* is praised by our Lord and Savior Himself, who said, “[I was sick], and you visited me” (Mt 25:36) [LV]. Those who practice this work in a truly praiseworthy manner do not approach the beds of the poor and the sick with empty hands. John of God, as he is called, a most blessed man, founded an Order that has the duty and the vocation to seek out the sick who have become poor and to take care of them. In all the regions of Europe, among the Christians of true faith, this most pious Order has become so famous for its distinctive charity, that we commonly call them the Good Brothers¹⁷⁰ because of their truly good work, with which they are very occupied.

In many places, especially in Rome, there are houses for the sick, for whom the generosity of merciful people provides everything; [and] along with [providing] medicines, [this generosity] paves for itself a sure path to Heaven. In that City one can also see the Supreme Rector of Seminaries, also the purple-clad august assembly of the Church, in turn at the feet of the destitute and the sick, with how great a consolation for them! With how great a profit for themselves! With how great an edification of the people!

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Tob 1:6, 19-21; 2:3, 7-9, 16.

¹⁷⁰ St. John of God (d. 1550) was born in Portugal and founded the Hospitaller Order in 1537, subsequently approved in 1571. Their aim is: “bodily and spiritual assistance of the sick and the needy, especially the poor.” They are commonly called the “FateBeneFratelli,” and in Poland the “Bonifratrzy.” Cf. Botifoll, Riccardo, OH, *The Hospitalers of St. John of God: DIP VI*, 982s.

For who would not dare to undertake what the purple-clad are not ashamed of?

Next, *to give food and drink to the needy* is proper to great mercy. Clement IX, who died in a very saintly way two years ago (I write this in 1671), following the custom of Gregory the Great, frequently invited the poor to his table.¹⁷¹ Those who have experienced it, speak about this charity far and wide.

But also illustrious women, like Elizabeth,¹⁷² Hedwig,¹⁷³ and Kunegunda¹⁷⁴ became famous through this virtue. Fortunate women, if they now have imitators! But if high rank or public business hinders someone from this work, he will not lack a reward if he does it through others.

The ransoming of captives, especially from infidels, O how glorious! How meritorious! Paolinus, bishop of Nola, who got rid of all that belonged to him and to the Church for this work [of mercy], finally gave himself up as a ransom for the son of a poor widow.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ The author could have learned of Pope Clement IX (d. 1669) "inviting the needy to his table" by word of mouth at the time of his stay in Rome at the end of 1667 (the year when Clement was made Pope) and the beginning of 1668. Clement IX was known for his mercy and generosity towards the poor; cf. Soranzo Giovanni, *Clement IX, Pope: ECat* III, col. 1830. He evidently imitated St. Gregory I, the Great, who excelled "chiefly in mercy towards the poor," and as Roman Pontiff "everyday invited twelve poor men to serve them food and drink." Indeed, in the church of St. Gregory on the Caelian (the oratory of St. Barbara) there still exists "a marble tablet from the Roman era which according to tradition was used by St. Gregory I, Pope, for the repast of the poor." Cf. Monachino, Vincenzo, *Gregory I: BS* VII, 271-275 (P. XI: *The Fame of Holiness and Worship*); Pesci Benedetto, *Gregory I, Pope, Called the Great: ECat* VI, 1123-1124.

¹⁷² St. Elizabeth of Hungary (d. 1231); cf. *LH, Second Reading for the Office of Reading* for November 17, when her memory is celebrated.

¹⁷³ St. Hedwig, the wife of prince Henry of Silesia, who enclosed herself in the Cistercian monastery in Trzebnica when her husband died. When she was still in the world, St. Hedwig always had 13 poor people in her palace, to whom she served food and drink. Cf. Nowodworski, Michał, *Jadwiga: EKość* VIII, 363.

¹⁷⁴ Saint Kunegunda (d. 1292), a Sister of St. Clare, founded a monastery in Stary Sącz in the year 1280, where she died in 1292. Her body was highly venerated there. Also, the parents of the author, who lived in neighboring Podegrodzie, had great devotion towards her. The author himself had a devotion to St. Kunegunda from his youth. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 7, 15, 207, 566, 635, 661.

¹⁷⁵ St. Paolinus, bishop of Nola (d. 431). The author mentions "the episode narrated by Gregory the Great in his Dialogues (I, 3), where we read that Paolinus offered himself as a voluntary prisoner of the Vandals in place of a young man, the

What can those say to this, whose gold groans confined, when it would be most right to use it for captives groaning among the Moors and Scythians? Saint Peter Nolasco, as well as St. Raymond, founded holy congregations of Religious who devoted themselves to the ransoming of captives with such perfection that they gave themselves in pledge for their freedom.¹⁷⁶ I grieve that such men as these, so pious and holy, are absent from Poland,¹⁷⁷ when legions of the Sarmatic race are detained, with danger to their eternal salvation, both among the Tartars and among the Turks, whom they could help.¹⁷⁸ Cornelius the mimic actor is equal to that most holy ascetic Theodulos in God's reckoning: in order to find a remedy for the shame of a certain noble lady and secure the freedom of her bankrupt husband, confined by his creditors,

son of a widow, who had been captured and carried off to Africa by the invaders. It is said that he lived as a slave, gardening in the court of the barbarian king until, recognized as a bishop, he was freed with the other prisoners from his city. The fact to be considered legendary, insofar as it concerns Paolinus, could not be altogether such if it refers to another Paolinus, one of the two homonymic successors of our Paolinus to the See of Nola... to them adapts itself better the chronology relative to the invasion of the vandals"; Celletti, Maria Chiara, *Paulinus, Pontius Meropius Anicius, Bishop of Nola, Saint*: BS X, 156-160 (P. I: *Life*).

¹⁷⁶ St. Peter Nolasco (d. 1249), founder of the Order of the B.V.M. of Mercede (the Mercedari). This order was dedicated to the ransoming of prisoners. However, it is not possible to verify the assertion that these religious applied themselves to their task with such perfection that "they gave themselves in pledge for their freedom," because actually "the ransoming was secured with money collected by religious in various places, [and] also through the sale of certain goods that the faithful gave for this purpose," whilst only as stated by the law — in the case of an insufficiency of material means — "the religious had to offer themselves in place of the slave (this will be the fourth vow of the Mercedari)"; cf. Rubino Antonio, *Peter Nolasco, Saint*: DIP VI, 1704-1710; idem, *Mercedari*: ibid. V, 1219-1223. However, no examples of this pledging of oneself are known to us. Saint Raymond of Penafort (d. 1275), contrary to the assertion of the author (which is based on false historical tradition), was not founder of either the above-named Order nor of another Order with the same specific aim, but simply assisted the Mercedari religious with his advice at the beginning of their foundation in 1218. Cf. Rubino, A., ibid.

¹⁷⁷ While the Order of the B.V.M. de Mercede extended its activities from Spain into Italy, France, Ireland, Africa and America, there were no members of this Order in Poland; cf. Bartyński, Maryan, *Mercedaryusze*: PEK XXVIII-XXXIII, 7-8.

¹⁷⁸ This statement is confirmed in: Bystroń, Jan Stanisław, *Dzieje obyczajów w dawnej Polsce (The History of Customs in Ancient Poland)*, Warsaw 1934, I, 131-133.

he had sold his clothes and furniture, and having received in this way four hundred golden coins, he offered it to relieve another's misery.¹⁷⁹ Just consider how highly God values you, who value your own wealth as nothing, if you offer it to the poor.

The very law of nature bids us cover the naked. For how can we bear uncovered flesh of our flesh? That woman Thaumaturge of Sienna could not bear it: she stripped herself of her under-garment to cover a pauper and for that reason, as a gift from Christ, she never felt cold again.¹⁸⁰ Martin could not bear it; being still a catechumen, he covered a naked man, I should have said Christ, with half his soldier's cloak.¹⁸¹ John Gamrat, bishop of Cracow, could not bear it: he — otherwise not holy — used to be followed by carts loaded with clothes, which he used to place on any needy people he met, and for that reason he deserved to be warned at the right time by the grace of God concerning his death, so that he could add penitence to his mercy and be saved.¹⁸² And as for you, who are immersed in the filth of sins, will you not release yourselves by the clothes given to the poor?

¹⁷⁹ This event falls under the category of legend. Theodulos is recorded as "the name of a legendary hero, ... According to this [legend], Theodulos abandoned his office as town-prefect at the age of 42. He lived for 48 years in the neighborhood of Odessa on a pillar. He wanted to know who could equal him in supernatural merits; he was informed in a vision that it is the mimic actor Cornelius in Damascus. He went there and found him in rather high society, but learned that he had once helped a poor woman with his wealth. The Legend offers no historical point of support"; cf. Kötting B., *Theodulos: LThK* (1965), X, 53. Cf. Jarra, p. 40, footnote 9.

¹⁸⁰ This probably refers to St. Catherine of Siena (d. 1380).

¹⁸¹ St. Martin of Tours (d. 397), who in the depth of winter met a half-naked beggar. Having no money left, he took his sword, cut his own soldier's cloak in half and gave one half to the poor man. The following night in a dream he saw Christ, clad in the half of his soldier's cloak, who said to the angels: "Martin, although still a catechumen, covered me with this coat": Lahach, Jacques, *Martin, Bishop of Tours, Saint: BS* VIII, 251.

¹⁸² Here the author probably confused Peter Gamrat, the bishop of Krakow, (d. 1545) with his brother John. The words "otherwise not a holy man" probably refer to the bishop's "long-time friendship with Dorota Dzierzgowska, née Sobocka, confidant of Bona, ... as well as his excessive lavishness, his inclination for a cavalier lifestyle ..." Hartleb, Kazimierz, *Gamrat Piotr, of the Arms Sulima: PSB* VII, 266. The bishop's mercy is confirmed by the following words: "Gamrat was a squanderer but he was generous and merciful." Gall Stanislaw, *Gamrat Piotr: PEK* XIII-XIV, 39.

To give lodging to strangers is an act of great merit. The Son of God approved of this virtue in his apostles Luke and Cleopas, who compelled Him to dine [with them], and, as He broke the bread, He manifested Himself as both God and man.¹⁸³ Blest indeed was that City, which, as an old history of the Holy Fathers mentions, had such merciful citizens that they would snatch strangers to themselves so as to treat them generously. Woe to you, who perhaps feed many dogs and yet allow men to die of hunger! You, who close your doors to strangers, and keep even religious men away from your doors; will Christ not cast you out from the gate of Heaven? Do you not know that a prostitute was received into the dwellings of Heaven because she offered a hospitable welcome to Joshua and Caleb?¹⁸⁴ A guest comes, Christ comes.¹⁸⁵ He who receives a guest, receives Christ; and would not Christ receive the man who received Him, into His eternal abode?

To bury the dead free of charge, simply out of charity, is not considered by God as a service of little value. It happens rarely, especially in rather small gatherings of persons, but there are [a] few people who do it. In this matter Tobias the elder is the most renowned, as I have already indicated.¹⁸⁶ Raphael the Archangel said to him: "Since you prayed with tears and buried the dead, and abandoned your supper, and concealed the dead by day in your house, and at night buried them, I have offered your prayer to the Lord" (Tob 12:12-13). Certainly the most effective prayer is made by the one who, when he wishes to obtain God's mercy, shows mercy to a man. Yet what more eminent form of mercy can there be, than that shown to the dead, from whom no reward, no gratitude and no praise can be expected? Those who do this by all means gain immortal life for themselves.

¹⁸³ Cf. Lk 24:13-32.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Josh 2:1-22; 6:22-23, 25

¹⁸⁵ There is a well-known Polish proverb: "A guest in the home; God in the home."

¹⁸⁶ See footnote 169 (p. 641) (p. 165 of the original text).

But now we turn to other works of mercy, which are called spiritual because they have effect on the soul, not on the body. *Giving advice*, sincere and salutary, to one who needs it, is the mark of a most virtuous mind. God creates wise men, so that those who lack wisdom may be assisted and directed by them. He who does this without a desire for a reward is truly merciful. For at some time or other, right advice is more useful than whatever great financial support. Many would fall into hell, unless they met excellent advisors; not a few would perish if they were not saved by another's advice. Experts should therefore give the advice they consider most salutary in the forum of conscience, in the forum of law, in the Chancery, and in military service, motivated by love, and so, by this admirable virtue, they will provide much for their own salvation. How great are things that one young virgin Teresa accomplished in the Church of God when, in addition to the Holy Spirit, she made use of the best counselors!¹⁸⁷ How many mortals, not just her, did St. Peter of Alcantara advance to Heaven with his advice!¹⁸⁸ The gifts of the Holy Spirit should be spread out. It is either envy or malice to refuse to show what is virtue to one who desires it, and it is greed to want a reward for one's advice.

To forgive those who wrong us, and to be reconciled with our enemies, this — I say — is not just peculiarly Christian but distinctly divine. For in what manner do we more express the goodness of God than in forgiving offenses and loving our enemies? Indeed the Goodness of God shone out most brightly for us in this, that He reconciled us to Himself through His Son while we were His enemies, not only granting us forgiveness of our sins, but willing to sacrifice Him for us, in order to satisfy justice.

¹⁸⁷ St. Teresa of Avila (d. 1582). Among her "best counselors" one should name the Jesuit Fathers: D. de Celtina, J. de Pradanos and B. Alvarez. In the latter part of her life, she received counsel from St. Francis Borgia (d. 1572) and St. Peter of Alcantara (d. 1562). Cf. Valentino di St. Maria, *Theresa of Jesus: BS XII*, 396.

¹⁸⁸ St. Peter gave counsel to many, including St. Teresa (as mentioned by the author), John III of Portugal and others in a collective manner as a famous preacher (popular missions in Spain and Portugal). Cf. Blasucci, Antonio, *Peter of Alcantara: BS X*, 653-654, 660.

Emphasizing this, the Apostle said: “When we were still weak, at the appointed time Christ died for the wicked. For hardly anybody dies for a just person, although someone might perhaps dare to die for a good man. Furthermore God commends His Charity to us: since while we were still sinners Christ died at the appointed time for us; while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son” (Rom 5:10). Weigh out each of the points, as you read it, and imitate what is said there as far as this is allowed for man. Who would give his debtor the money, with which he may repay the debt contracted? Who, that his enemy may not die, is willing to die for his sake? The Son of God did this for us, our Creator and Savior. Shall we then, out of love for Him, not give pardon to those who ask for it? Shall we not show favor to our enemies? It was St. Ubald, Bishop of Gubbio, who showed this favor after being humiliated by a despicable man to the bottom of his heels; thus, intending to avenge this contempt, he inflicted a great wound on his enemy — a kiss.¹⁸⁹ Our Savior prompted us to this kind of mercy when He advised, saying: “Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt 5:23-24). Listen to this, you, who nurture never-ending hatreds and foster continual rancor in your hearts, you are waiting for a chance for vengeance, and meanwhile, in the most Holy Eucharist, with Judas, you give kisses to Christ the Lord. If your trespasses are to be forgiven you, as you are used to forgive your enemies, then your salvation is lost, you have perished. Therefore “love your enemies” as Jesus urges, “that you may be children of your heavenly Father” (in Mt 5:44-45).

¹⁸⁹ St. Ubald, the Bishop of Gubbio, (d. 1160). He was consecrated bishop by Pope Honorius II in 1128/29, and “governed the diocese of Gubbio for 31 years.” cf. Del Re, Niccolo, *Ubald, Bishop of Gubbio*: BS XII, 733. The event indicated here by the author is confirmed in the following text: “He distinguished himself by an admirable gentleness and patience. When a certain mason was found guilty of violating the Bishop’s property, Ubald not only forgave him but also gave him publically a kiss of peace.” Cf. Blachut, Augustyn, *Ubald, Saint, Bishop*: *EKość* XXIX, 381.

To console the afflicted, not only by words but also by deeds, is a mercy not easily attained. Dido boasted of such a mercy in a poem of Virgil: "My own acquaintance with misfortune has been teaching me to help others who are in distress" (Aen. 1).¹⁹⁰ Once an exile herself from Tyre, she gave a most kind welcome to the exile Aeneas on behalf of the whole of Carthage.¹⁹¹ This was indeed helping the afflicted by deeds (and she was a Gentile). In addition to words full of consolation, the faithful friends gave some gifts to Job: "each one gave him a piece of money and a gold ring" (Job 42:11). John comforted the Most Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, shattered by the most cruel death of her most beloved Son; from that hour when he closed our most loving Savior in the tomb, he "took her into his home" (Jn 19:27). Encouraging his disciples our heavenly Teacher said: "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid" (Jn 14:27). By contrast the prophet weeping over Jerusalem sang: "Bitterly she weeps at night, tears upon her cheeks, With no one to console her of all her dear ones; her friends have all betrayed her and become her enemies" (Lam 1:2). What is more painful than not to have someone who shows sympathy in one's grief? What is more wicked than to add affliction to the afflicted? Beware of this, Christians, and when you can, cheer even your enemy when he is distressed. Victorious Alexander had mercy upon the defeated Darius:¹⁹² such things are not convenient for us. And yet we are commanded to weep

¹⁹⁰ Virgilius Publius Maro, *Aeneid I*, vv. 627-630: *The Works of Publius Virgilius Maro*, Ed. C.H. Weise, Leipzig 1844, p. 119. The words quoted by the author here are found in the last verse of this stanza: "Therefore, come, gallant friends, and proceed to my home. A fortune not unlike yours has harassed me, and led me, too, through many tribulations, to rest at long last in this country. My own acquaintance with misfortune has been teaching me to help others who are in distress."

¹⁹¹ See the explanation of this passage in Jarra, p. 43, footnote 1.

¹⁹² Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia (d. 323 B.C.). The author does not explain how Alexander "nobly had mercy" on Darius III, the Persian king, when he had conquered him. But perhaps the author is referring to the detail that after Darius was killed by his fellow countrymen, "Alexander had his corpse taken to Preside, where it was buried with all honors in the tomb of the kings." Giannelli Giulio, *Alexander III of Macedonia, the Great: EI II*, 333.

with the weeping of the Apostle.¹⁹³ And Christ our King and Lawgiver did not teach us anything else by his example, when “on seeing the city” in which he was soon to be killed, shortly to be ruined, “he wept over it” (Lk 19:41).

One who knows his own weakness readily shows sympathy towards the spiritual fall of others. Philip Neri, that most renowned Father,¹⁹⁴ used to say when he heard that somebody had committed a rather grave sin: “May God keep me from doing worse things.”¹⁹⁵ Certainly if a disaster suffered by our neighbor can at times elicit our tears, a spiritual downfall ought to elicit them more. For what is more unfortunate than a man be made an enemy of God through sin? Such men are to be helped and comforted in every way. From this is derived another work.

Admonishing the sinner. Many would correct their vices if they had prudent admonitors. I said ‘prudent.’ For admonition is seldom useful when employed with ardent zeal; not at all, when it is employed with furious anger. Just as men gradually grow accustomed to their vices, equally they are to be withdrawn from them. Violence is everywhere hurtful. Therefore David had, I believe, a very pleasant and cautious admonition of Nathan before his eyes when he sang: “The just man shall correct me in mercy, and shall reprove me: but let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head” (Ps 141:5) [LV]. The Apostle did not prescribe anything different: “Brothers,” he said, “even if a person is caught in some transgression, you who are spiritual should correct that one in a gentle spirit.” (Gal 6:1).

But another’s failings should not be made known, before those who fail have been fraternally admonished in private. When a fault of an individual, and to a much greater extent the sin of

¹⁹³ Cf. Rom 12:15.

¹⁹⁴ St. Philip Neri (d. 1595). Cf. Gasbarri, Carlo, *Filippo Neri*: BSV, 760-789.

¹⁹⁵ The author is paraphrasing the words of St. Philip. Cf. Cerri, Oreste, *St. Philip Neri Anecdotes*, Rome 1939, p. 253, where one reads: “When the Saint heard the story told about some grave offenses committed by someone, instead of being surprised or scandalized, joining his hands in an act of prayer he used to say: “Lord, put thy hands on my head, otherwise I also could do this and even worse!”

several or of a community, becomes known to more persons, it is usually fiercely defended; some prefer to suffer the loss of their salvation, even though very imprudently, than of their good name. They can be turned away from this evil by wise admonitors.

On this point therefore heavenly Wisdom leaves us an excellent rule, saying: "If your brother sins [against you], go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell the Church. If he refuses to listen even to the Church, then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector." (Mt 18:15-17). Just see how gently and cautiously we must proceed in fraternal correction! Some correct themselves, when they hear their own shortcomings being rebuked in others; some unless they see their faults, do not acknowledge them, and believe that others are to be corrected in them; some are made worse by frequent admonition; some eagerly desire to be admonished even in the smallest things. And so to these this saying applies: "He who rebukes a man gets more thanks in the end than one with a flattering tongue" (Prov 28:23). And deservedly so! For why should we avoid rebuke, let alone admonition, when it is "better to be rebuked by a wise man than to be deceived by the flattery of fools" (Eccl 7:5) [LV]? Why should we avoid rebuke, since "open rebuke is better than hidden love" (Prov 27:5-6) [LV]? Why should we avoid rebuke, since "better are the wounds of a friend than the deceitful kisses of an enemy" (Prov 27:6) [LV]?

I return again to the prudence of a rebuke, and I do not speak ineptly. One must have a regard for the nature of those to be rebuked, and their character; the occasion and method must be wisely applied; indeed one must most fervently pray to God for the obstinate and destitute of grace, that He may accomplish with His light what exceeds our prudence or authority, since sometimes with this light He converts the most wicked into the most holy. Here prayer helps more than harsh rebuke or severe blame. Thus it was very well said: "One should patiently suffer

what one cannot amend in oneself or in others, until God ordains otherwise. If anyone admonished once or twice does not submit, do not quarrel with him, but entrust all to God, so that His will be done and honor may come to be in all His servants; for He knows well how to change evil into good.”¹⁹⁶

I do not, however, advise against admonition. For *everybody has a commandment concerning his neighbor*.¹⁹⁷ Yet I do not permit connivance, since it destroys entire communities. In this regard I want charity to be joined to prudence and patience. For the Apostle also gave this injunction to Timothy: “Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching” (2 Tim 4:2).

For the rest, to fulfill the law of fraternal correction, it is sufficient to not approve an action, if corrections cannot be done otherwise. For who would begin to contest with the mighty about the good? Unless perhaps you have been armed with the grace of God, in which case I shall advise you to proceed to the battle and you will either die or conquer. You have great examples of great men.

Among the Hebrews there is John the Baptist,¹⁹⁸ among the Latins — Boethius¹⁹⁹ with Symmachus,²⁰⁰ and Martin²⁰¹ with

¹⁹⁶ *IC*, Bk. I, Ch. 16, §§ 1-2.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Sir 17:14

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Mt 14:10.

¹⁹⁹ Boethius, Anicius (d. 524). “In 523, because he defended the senator Albinus who was accused of a secret communication with the emperor Justinus to the detriment of Theodoric, Boethius was involved in the same accusation, exiled, imprisoned and finally tried and condemned to death on October 23, 524. It seems likely that national and religious motives lay behind this tragedy, since Theodoric was a barbarian and an Arian, whilst Boethius was a champion of Catholicism and of what was Roman. Traditionally Boethius has always been venerated as a martyr;” Degl’Innocenti Umberto, *Boethius, Anicius Manlius Torquatus Severinus: ECat II*, 1753-54.

²⁰⁰ St. Simmac, Pope (d. 514). He suffered much from the faction of the anti-pope Laurentius (“harassed for a long time by a faction of Schismatics” (*MR*, July 19)). “The enemies of Symmachus, not being able to further contest his election, had recourse to accusations and calumnies.” Cf. Amore, Agostino, *Symmachus, Pope, Saint: ECat XI*, 630.

²⁰¹ St. Martin I, Pope and Martyr (d. 656). He “held a Synod at Rome and condemned the heretics Sergius, Paulus and Pirrus. For that reason, on the orders

Gregory,²⁰² among the Greeks — Chrysostom²⁰³ with Basil;²⁰⁴ among the English — Thomas of Canterbury²⁰⁵ with More, the other Thomas;²⁰⁶ among the Poles (passing over other nations in silence) — the glorious Bishop Stanislaus,²⁰⁷ and others of great renown. While they bravely accused others of transgressions, or

of the heretical emperor Constans, he was captured by trickery and taken to Constantinople and exiled to the Chersonese. There he died, exhausted by hardships on behalf of the Catholic faith"; (*MR*, September 16). "Captured by the emperor Constans in 653 and taken to Constantinople, he suffered much; finally he was taken to the Chersonese and died there in 656" (*LH*, April 13). Cf. Daniele Ireneo, *Martin I, Pope, Saint, Martyr*: BS VIII, 1293-1297.

²⁰² This probably refers to St. Gregory VII, Pope and Confessor (d. 1085), who suffered much "in conflict with the empire." "The champion and fiercest defender of Ecclesiastical freedom" (*MR*, May 25) he died on May 25, 1085, saying: "I have loved justice and hated injustice, therefore I am dying in exile;" cf. Miccoli, Giovanni, *Gregory VII, Pope, Saint*: BS VII, 337-354. Elsewhere one can read: "Attacked chiefly by King Henry IV, he died as an exile in Salerno in 1085" (*LH*, May 25).

²⁰³ St. John Chrysostom (d. 407), Bishop of Constantinople and Doctor of the Church, "who, cast into exile by a faction of enemies, was recalled thence by a decree of St. Innocent I, Pope. On the journey he suffered many evils from the soldiers who were guarding him, and died" (*MR*, September 14). Elsewhere one can read: "Overwhelmed by the hatred of the imperial court and by men who hated him, and of the envious people, he was twice compelled to go into exile; worn out by his afflictions, he died on September 14, 407" (*LH*, September 13).

²⁰⁴ St. Basil the Great

²⁰⁵ St. Thomas Becket, "clergyman of Canterbury," Bishop and Martyr (d. 1170). "He strenuously defended the rights of the Church against King Henry II, as a result of which he was compelled to go into exile for six years in France. He returned to his native-land and still suffered much more, until he was killed by some of the king's attendants in 1170" (*LH*, December 29).

²⁰⁶ St. Thomas More, Martyr (d. 1535), who "was beheaded on the orders of King Henry VIII for his defense of the Catholic faith and the primacy of blessed Peter" (*MR*, July 6). His memory is celebrated by the Church along with St. John Fisher, Bishop and Martyr, for "both were beheaded on the orders of King Henry VIII, whom they had opposed on the question of the dissolution of his marriage, in 1535" (*LH*, June 22).

²⁰⁷ St. Stanislaus, Bishop of Krakow and Martyr (d. 1097), who "was killed by King Boleslaus, whom he had reproached" (*LH*, April 11). Cf. Peter Naruszewicz, *Stanislaw, Bishop of Krakow, Saint, Martyr*: BS XI, 1362-1366, where the explanation of the conflict between the bishop and king proposed by the historian Vincent Kadlubek (d. 1223) is supported. Kadlubek, "who, basing himself both on religious tradition and on the information gathered from the descendants of the first-hand witnesses ascribes the conflict between Stanislaus and King Boleslaus II to the injustices and acts of cruelty committed by the latter towards his subjects; the action of defending them against the insolence of the sovereign was sustained by

made admonitions, or did not support impiety, they experienced most intense hatred, or exile, or death. Do you have so much grace? Then dare to not spare the wicked, and you will obtain the crown.

Those who are accustomed to *teach the ignorant* should consider that the following saying of the prophet refers to them: "Those that instruct so many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity" (Dan 12:3) [LV].

I said little. Those who will instill a knowledge, love, and fear of God in others' hearts, will come near to the titles of God's Mother. O how admirable are Christ's coworkers, who only in consideration of His love, sincerely and carefully put forth to children, especially to those who are ignorant and uncouth, or in error, all that is necessary for salvation, for leading life in a Christian way, for avoiding vices and embracing virtues.

No work of mercy is more distinguished than this; none is more blessed. Such a task is fulfilled in schools by teachers, in our [church] schools by churchmen, in their homes by parents who inform their offspring of those things without which eternal salvation cannot be had. But most of all, those who exercise the profession of teaching Christian doctrine: when this is neglected, alas! How many souls fall into hell!

Here I give undying thanks to all those who brought me a knowledge of God and virtue, all those who taught me in my ignorance. I ask Jesus not to take away the heavenly reward from them, whether they did this by words or by good examples. May His Majesty deign to impart also to me His grace, so that I do not neglect anything in this regard. Moreover, I beg Him to grant as much light and ardor to all those who have the care of souls, as they need, in order to imbue those who are committed to their faith and virtue, with all moral perfection. And may He most of all bestow the Apostolic Spirit on preachers and parish priests, since by their hard work countless numbers of people should be lifted up to the heavens.

Stanislaus until his martyrdom." A proof of this thesis is found in the work: Bełch Stanisław, *Saint Stanislaus, Bishop, Martyr, Patron of the Poles*, London 1977.

Finally, as an example, we make clear and assert the great mercy of the saintly Prince Ladislaus Jagiello. Indeed, as Duke of Lithuania, chosen to be King of Poland on the proviso that he would embrace the Catholic Religion, later he burned with such a great zeal to bring his people to the worship of the true God, that he personally explained the principal points of the faith to them; he spared no efforts in bringing them into the sheepfold of Christ and so from Grand-Duke of Lithuania he became a grand apostle,²⁰⁸ He could deservedly pray with the king-psalmist: "I will teach transgressors your ways, that sinners shall return to you" (Ps 51:15).

Next, it is the greatest charity *to pray earnestly* to God for the freedom of the souls remaining in Purgatory, or to assist them by merciful alms as by various other means. Quite impious and foolish is he who is not moved by their torments, and does not help those who suffer when he can. The Leader, Judas Maccabees, just as vigorous as noble-minded, "took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view" (2 Macc 12:43). This was done by a man who was occupied with continual wars, which usually extinguish pity, and who may well have known that the Synagogue did not have as much power as our Holy Mother the Church to apply the merits of Christ the Lord to the faithful departed. What is appropriate for us to do; for us who can obtain much from Jesus, and have such frequent incentives to bring assistance to the souls of the faithful who are destined for temporary torture? Therefore, I am greatly amazed how it is possible that a Christian does not begin to feel deeply the entreaty

²⁰⁸ Ladislaus Jagiello, Grand Duke of Lithuania, and subsequently king of Poland (d. 1434). The author calls him "the great Apostle of Lithuania," because Jagiello married Hedwig, the Polish Queen, "accepting proposals and conditions, of which the most important are: christianization of Lithuania and its union with Poland. Towards the end of the year [1386] both the king and the queen baptize Lithuania in Vilnius and endow eight parish churches"; cf. Chamiec, *Xawery, Jagiello (Władysław)*: PEK XVII-XVIII, 266.

of these souls who cry aloud in these words: "Pity me, pity me, O you my friends!" (Job 19:21). What about the fact that we shall have in Heaven as many Patrons and helpers as many souls we have brought there, thanks to our help, from the furnace of Purgatory! I do not relate many things on this subject; let it suffice to consider and follow what the Holy Spirit declared: "it is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosened from sins" (2 Macc 12:45-46) [LV].

The last work of Mercy, equal nonetheless to the others, is: *to remit offenses*. If Christians were willing to do this zealously, as they should, quarrels would cease, tribunals would be abolished; frauds, deceits and many cunning devices, which vengeance at times contrives, and are for the most part unjust, would perish; many would be presented by God with the true laurel of patience. Saint Paul in times past already enjoined this on the Corinthians when he said: "But rather brother goes to court against brother, and that before unbelievers? Now indeed [then] it is, in any case, a failure on your part that you have lawsuits against one another. Why not rather put up with injustice? Why not rather let yourselves be cheated? Instead you inflict injustice and cheat, and this to brothers! Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God?" (1 Cor 6:6-9). From this conclusion of the Apostle, a serious one indeed, I understand that he who suffers injuries is blessed; while the one who inflicts injury is unhappy. As much as the former will be exalted for disregarding vengeance, so much so the latter will be humbled by God for perpetrating injustice. It is good to forgive, but evil to irritate, offend and oppress. In forgiving I imitate Christ; in oppressing me you emulate the torturers of Christ. Therefore I encourage that injuries be remitted, and discourage that they be inflicted. For it is beneficial for me to suffer innocently, but for you it is greatly detrimental to harass me. Ah! So you must go headlong to hell, because by your persecution you raise me to the heavens? And finally I conclude this with a most devout Father: "The patient man who grieves more over the other's malice than over his own injury, has a great and salutary purification" [IC, Bk. I, Ch. 24, § 2].

As I bring this chapter to an end I wish an increase in good works to be effected within myself and every mortal. For through these the Mystical House of God is repaired and through these the mercy of God is obtained. Our works follow us. "Assuredly on the day of Judgment," (someone said devoutly) "we shall not be asked what we have read, but what we have done; nor how well we have spoken, but in what saintly manner we have lived."²⁰⁹

When will this be? "When the Son of Man comes in His glory," (He replies) "and all the angels with Him, He will sit upon His glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before Him. And He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (Mt 25:31-34). O most delightful "come!" But by which virtue was it brought forth? By the works of Christian mercy. "For I was hungry," (proceeds God our Judge) "and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me" (Mt 25:35-36).

And so let us apply ourselves to the works of mercy, let us exert ourselves; through them we restore the Temples of God, our souls; we repair, I say, the inner man; we shall hear "blessed," and we shall possess the heavenly kingdom.

CHAPTER 22

The Reconciliation of the Mystical Temple

This takes place in Penance and in Holy Communion. For when the Temple of God that we are is polluted by sins, especially mortal ones, one may conclude [what will happen] from the following admonition of St. Maximus: "whoever," he says, "either is a Temple of God or desires to be one, should be very careful that pursuing

²⁰⁹ *IC*, Bk. I, Ch. 3.

vain things he does not cease to be a Temple of God and becomes a habitation of darkness, a repository of the devil.”²¹⁰ therefore for the Reconciliation [of this temple] these two Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, were established by Jesus Christ.

First of all, the Voice crying in the wilderness quite rightly proclaimed that Penance is a kind of second Baptism.²¹¹ For what stains of the soul would Penance not cleanse completely? What sins would Penance not wash away? If the devil himself applied himself to Penance, he would be restored to his original grace, because true penance contains true humility, to which God can deny nothing. Yet one should take into consideration that the word “Penance” is fitting both to a virtue of this kind and the Sacrament.

Here we treat only of the latter. For although the power of the virtue of penance is great, the power of the Sacrament is greater, by which sanctifying grace is properly conferred unless some obstacle is placed before it on the part of the penitent.

To prevent this from happening, one who intends to go to the Sacrament of Penance, must first of all make a preparation; by giving alms, or by fasting, or by some similar mortification of the body directed to this end, that God may impart to the penitent the grace of a perfect knowledge of his sins, both in general and in particular, of a true contrition and a sincere and salutary confession. You should begin the examination of conscience with a brief prayer; then the examination should be done in a rather retired place and free from witnesses, not in a perfunctory manner but through a careful scrutiny of each of your particular thoughts, words and deeds, taking into regard the commandments of God,

²¹⁰ This is probably a quotation from an unknown work of St. Maximus “the Confessor” (d. 662). Maximus was “a man conspicuous for his learning and zeal for Catholic truth” (MR, August 13). “His moral and ascetic writings had great importance, which are recorded his ‘Ascetic Book’ and the ‘Chapters on Charity.’” cf. Vona Costantino, *Maximus the Confessor, Saint: BS IX*, 44–45. The author’s quotation could be located in neither the writings of St. Maximus the Confessor (PG 90) nor in those of St. Maximus of Turin (Corpus XXIII). N.B. Jarra was also unable to find the origin of this quotation (cf. Jarra, p. 48, footnote 2).

²¹¹ St. John the Baptist. He described himself in this way (Jn 1:23) [LV]: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness” and asserted of his activity: “I indeed baptize you in water unto penance” (Mt 3:11) [LV].

and of the Church, and the duties proper to one's own situation, just as we have taught above in the method of daily examination. In my desire for brevity, I do not intend to set up here a list of sins that can be or are usually committed, since conscience itself is the list; if it is deeply examined, it will show what one should grieve over, confess and censure.

Afterwards, sorrow for all one's sins and for one's particular mortal sins should be elicited, with serious abhorrence for them and a firm purpose of amendment: this does not consist so much in feelings and tears, even though these are good and most pleasing to God, as in the acts of judgment and understanding, by which the gravity of a sin is understood, which results from having offended the Supreme Good, and from the prompting of the will, which abhors the sin especially for the same reason, that is, the offense of the Supreme Good. But if one would not have such a sorrow and abhorrence, but rather would have some inclination to a certain sin, especially one that has often been committed, then having made a humble petition to the Lord God for the gift of true contrition, one should accuse oneself of the imperfection of this contrition. For what will happen is that God will accept what is in him, and will grant him what is in Himself.

Finally, he should proceed humbly to the confession of his sins, as though intending to plead a cause against himself before God the Judge, so that he may gain pardon sooner by accusing himself. In this sacred tribunal, having first asked a blessing of the confessor, one should not leave anything unsaid out of fear or shame. For he is confessing not to man but to God, to whom all that is inside of every man is very well known, and to whom sins are known before anyone commits them, and from whom nothing can be concealed. He should recount all sins with sorrow, without obscurities, adding, where necessary, aggravating circumstances, or ones which change the kind of sin, not betraying an accomplice, not minimizing the sins, not arguing.

Finally he should listen to and carry out the confessor's admonitions, counsels, remedies and humbly accept the penance imposed upon him, and perform it without delay, adding more on his own

initiative, since discreet confessors, although for various reasons give a small penance, they wish nevertheless that penitents should voluntarily do more when they can. For in this way, they will gain both a more assured remission of punishment and a more abundant grace of amendment. In addition, he should not neglect the acts which help to gain indulgences. For in this way, through God's kindness, by performing a few works, he will be freed from many punishments and will become a perfect friend of God.

Concerning Holy Communion, I hardly dare to say anything, because of the Majesty of so great a Lord who is contained therein. Consider that you are approaching God, before whom all power becomes powerless, all strength trembles, all majesty becomes insignificant and all wisdom vanishes. Yet because He is of unbounded goodness, He not only kindly waits for you, but — what is more — calls you to Himself, so that He may cleanse and sanctify your inner being by the sharing of Himself.

What are you now feeling, you impious one, as you draw near to such great mercy? Be confounded by your wickedness, be encouraged by His clemency and pray that He may have as much mercy on you as you need.

I do not prescribe how often you should use this reconciliation of your Mystical Temple. I point out this: those first faithful Christians were always most ready to die for Christ because they refreshed themselves by Holy Communion almost every day.

You should allow yourself to be guided by the advice of your Spiritual Father, mindful of what was written most rightly by Cyril.²¹² “Do you suffer from pride? Receive the Eucharist, that is, Christ humiliating Himself down to flesh, indeed down to bread, and this humble bread will make you humble. Are you afflicted with temptation of lust? Receive the wine that generates virgins.”²¹³ Are you afflicted with anger and impatience? Receive

²¹² St. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria and Doctor of the Church (d. 444). The works of St. Cyril are found in: *PG*, LXVIII-LXXVII. Of his exegetical works the *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* is “one of the more important writings;” cf. Vona C., “*Cyril of Alexandria, Doctor, Saint: BS III*, 1309-1315.

²¹³ Cf. Zach 9:17.

Christ the crucified, the most patient, He will give you a share in His patience" (in John c. 6).²¹⁴

What more shall I discuss with you? "Whoever eats this bread" (it is the oracle of eternal Truth), [this] holy, heavenly, Angelic, supernatural bread, having all sweetness and all the delight of grace, "will live forever" (Jn 6:58).

From what has been said rather concisely, both the matter and manner of reconciling the Mystical Temple is clear, which St. Augustine also expressed in these rather brief words: "Let the dwelling place of our heart" (he said), "be emptied of vices and filled with virtues: let it be closed to the devil, and opened to Christ; and let us strive in such a way as to be able to open the door of the heavenly kingdom with the keys of our good works. And therefore, dearest brethren, let each of you examine his conscience, and when he realizes that he has been wounded by some crime, let him take pains to cleanse his conscience first with prayers, fasts or almsgiving, and in this way let him presume to receive the Eucharist" (sermon 232).²¹⁵

The invocation of Almighty God for the reform of our morals and life.

"O Lord my God! Bestow desire upon my heart, that I may desire you; that by desiring You, I may seek You; that by seeking You, I may find You; that by finding You I may love You, that by loving You, I may be freed from all my sins; and that once being freed, I may return to them no more. O Lord my God! Grant repentance to my heart, contrition to my spirit, a fountain of tears to my eyes, and liberality in giving alms, to my hands. O my King! Extinguish all desires of the flesh and kindle the fire of Your love in me. O You my Redeemer, drive away the spirit of pride; and grant me, through Your mercy, the treasure of Your humility.

²¹⁴ This citation from the sixth chapter from the Gospel according to John seems to not match the quotation in question.

²¹⁵ This quotation was not found in sermon 232 of St. Augustine, in which there is a discussion of quite a different matter. Cf. *The Entire Works of St. Augustine Bishop of Hippo*, New Edition, Acc. D.A.B. Caillaud and others, Paris 1841-1850.

O You, my Savior! Remove from me the fury of anger and vouchsafe me (of Your grace) the shield of patience. O You my Creator! Take all rancor from me; and through Your meekness, enrich me with a sweet and gentle mind. Bestow on me, O most merciful Father, a solid faith, a suitable hope, and continual charity!

O You my Director! Remove from me vanity and inconstancy of mind, unsettledness of heart, scurrility of speech, pride of eyes, gluttony of diet, the offense of my neighbors, the wickedness of detractions, the itch of curiosity, the desire for riches, the seizure of powers, the ambition for vainglory, the mischief of hypocrisy, the poison of flattery, the contempt for the poor, the oppression of the weak, the eagerness of covetousness, the rottenness of envy, and a death-causing blasphemy. Cut away from me, O You who are my Maker, heedlessness, wickedness, pertinacity, unquietness, idleness, somnolence, sloth, dullness of mind, blindness of heart, obstinacy of judgment, crudeness of conduct, refractoriness of the good, resistance to advice, imprudence of speech, plunder of the poor, violence inflicted upon the impotent, false accusation of the innocent, negligence of the subjects, severity towards the members of the household, irresponsibility towards the members of the family, hardness towards neighbors.

O my God and my mercy, I beseech You through Your beloved Son, grant that I may perform the works of mercy, grant me the inclinations of devotion; suffering with the afflicted, advising those that err, comforting the miserable, aiding those in want, consoling those in sorrow, relieving the oppressed, refreshing the poor, refreshing the tearful; forgiving those who trespass against me, pardoning those who do me wrong, loving those who hate me, rendering good for evil, despising nobody, but honoring all, imitating the good, guarding against the bad, embracing virtues, rejecting vices, having patience in adversity, and moderation in prosperity; setting a guard at my mouth, and shutting the door of my lips: despising earthly things, and thirsting for heavenly ones" (from the *Meditations* of St. Augustine).²¹⁶ Amen.

²¹⁶ Augustine, *Meditations*, Ch. I, n. I, in: AMS, pp. 1-3.

CHAPTER 23

The Immortality of the Mystical Temple

We who are Temples of God are called mortals; how then are we going to become immortal? As far as the body is concerned, our eyes can observe every day that, after the soul has been set free, it becomes a cold, pallid, and finally a stinking corpse; finally it teems with barely tolerable rot, it teems with dreadful worms, and finally changes into ashes. Bernard said excellently: "After man," (he states) "the worm, after the worm, stink and horror. Thus every man is turned into a non-man."²¹⁷ There is of course a divine decree against mortal man: "For you are dust, and unto dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19) [LV]. O how wretched is our condition! Unless, of course, a better one is to be hoped for, to which the merits of our Redeemer will attract us. "For we know," (Paul encourages us) "that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven" (2 Cor 5:1).

The necessity of dying is imposed on all, and it is even to be desired because of our future immortality. "For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, for that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality" (1 Cor 15:21-22, 53). "Therefore, when once the brief light will set for us, we do not have to sleep everlastingly for one night,"²¹⁸ as Catullus dreamed.

"We shall all indeed rise from the dead" (1 Cor 15:51) [LV]. Job, sitting on a dung-heap and scraping the pus flowing from his almost decomposed body with a potsherd, soothed most pleas-

²¹⁷ Bernard, *Meditations*, Ch. III, n. 2, in: AMS, p. 321.

²¹⁸ Catullus, Poem V: *The Book of Catullus of Verona*, edited R. Ellis, Oxford, 1878, p. 13. The two verses quoted here (5-6) come from a very faulty edition of the poems of Catullus; these verses in the corrected editions have the contrary sense and therefore can in no way be used as a text to confirm the "immortality of the Mystical Temple." Cf. Jarra, p. 51-52, footnote 1.

antly by this hope of future resurrection, said: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin; and in my flesh I shall see my God. Whom I myself shall see and my eyes shall behold [...] this my hope is laid up in my bosom" (Job 19:25-27) [LV].

There is no place for doubt here, not at all. "We shall all indeed rise from the dead" (1 Cor 15:51) [LV]. All of us who are true Christians believe in the resurrection of the body. And quite rightly. "The whole management of this world," (says Augustine) "is evidence of future resurrection. In winter we see the trees lose their fruits and leaves; but in spring they express the appearance of the resurrection in buds, flowers, leaves and fruits. I ask you," (he continues) "who have doubts about the resurrection, where are the things that are produced at that time? Where do they hide? They are not seen anywhere; but God brings them forth with a secret power. So too the grass that lived before and dies, revives once more from seed! In like manner our body revives from dust."²¹⁹ Nothing is more consistent with reason than this perpetuity of our Mystical Temple. There is an example in caterpillars and butterflies. We see how they are born, die and revive. Lakes in winter hold fast the swallows immersed, but spring restores them once more to the air.²²⁰ Nature does these things; will God not do more noble things with my body, with His Temple?

Whatever tomb our mortal limbs were allotted, they will emerge immortal from it by the Divine power, when "The trumpet, spreading a wondrous blast, from the tombs of the earth, will drive all before the throne."²²¹

²¹⁹ The source of this quotation could not be located in the sermons of St. Augustine that discuss the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor could this text be found with the help of the Index of Words for the Works of St. Augustine under "resurrection of the body."

²²⁰ In the *Universal Encyclopedia* of St. Orgelbrand (Warsaw 1883, vol. 6, p. 12) in the article on "Jaskelka (the Swallow)," the following popular opinion is recorded: "There is a strange opinion among our people that the swallows spend the winter in water."

²²¹ Stanza III of the hymn "*Dies Irae*" is quoted, with a sort of inversion of word order. Cf. *Sequence of Masses for the Dead*, p. 1503. *The New Roman Missal*, Fr. Laçance, Christian Book Club of America, Palmdale, CA.

"Then those whom the earth received in her bosom," (the words are those of St. Peter Damian) "those whom the waters swallowed and those whom destructive fire consumed, all give back just as a deposit entrusted to them, and restore life without any diminution of it."²²² Let Tertullian, that most ancient writer,²²³ end this section for me: "The body rises from the dead," (he says) "and indeed intact. It is everywhere in deposit with God, through Jesus Christ, that most faithful depository of God, and you should know that what you think of as the destruction of the body is its withdrawal. It is not only the soul that is set apart; also the body has for the time being its own places of withdrawal, in waters, in flames, in birds, in beasts. When it seems to be dissolved into these, it is transferred, as it were, into receptacles, so that it may once more be reproduced from them."²²⁴ "Death and Hell gave up their dead who were in them" (said the Prophet of the Apocalypse). "And the sea gave up the dead who were in it" (Rev 20:13).

But the immortality of the body having been asserted, what shall we say about the soul? Shall we believe with atheists that having left the body it disappears into the air? Far from it. For by its nature it is immortal. For when "God formed man of the slime of the earth, He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen 2:7) [LV], not a dying soul. For although what is taken from the earth will one day return to the earth, this [breath], however, which the Divine mouth (if I may use a human way of speaking) has breathed onto the face of man, is immortal as God Himself from whom it began. This fact is so conformed and fitting to our capacity of comprehension, and not only to Holy Scripture or dogmas of the faith, that even infidels, who think correctly about the souls of men, have taught that they are not only immortal but moreover that after death are punished for their crimes or made blessed for their virtues. We indeed, who are recipients of the light from above, have established that the

²²² St. Peter Damian, *Some Little Works*, I (Bk. VIII, ep. 8): PL 144, 477 (n. 284).

²²³ Tertullian (d. 220), eminent ecclesiastical writer.

²²⁴ Tertullian, *Book on the Resurrection of the Body*, Ch. 63, at the beginning: PKL 2, 933 (nn. 885-886). This quotation is neither complete nor entirely accurate.

immortality of souls is so certain that we hold most firmly that as soon as they have departed from the body they fly out either to glory or punishment, which is either temporary or everlasting. For the Holy Spirit has taught us this in many places of Holy Scripture, especially in the Book of Wisdom, where for the first time you may hear reprobates groaning due to the anguish of spirit, and saying among themselves: "We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and we walked through hard ways: but the way of the Lord we have not known. What has pride profited us? Or what advantage has the boasting of riches brought us? All those things passed away like a shadow, and like a post that runs on. And as a ship that passes through the waves: whereof when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found, nor the path of its keel in the waters. Or as when a bird flies through the air. Or as when an arrow is shot at a mark. So we also being born, forthwith ceased to be, and have been able to show no mark of virtue: but are consumed in our wickedness. But the just shall live for evermore; and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory and a crown of beauty, at the hand of the Lord for with His right hand He will cover them, and with His holy arm He will defend them" (Wis 5:7-17) [LV]. "But the souls of the just are in the hand of God: and the torment of death shall not touch them" (Wis 3:1) [LV]. "But the wicked shall be punished according to their own devices" (Wis 3:10) [LV].

And so, from these most firm testimonies of the heavenly oracles and the teachings of our Faith, the Immortality of the Mystical Temple is revealed very clearly to us, whether we consider the Body or the Soul. It remains for us to consider closely and almost to fix in our minds that which St. Paul once wrote to the Corinthians as he urged them on to the hope of immortality and at the same time to a pattern of holiness: "We shall all indeed rise from the dead, but we shall not all be changed" (1 Cor 15:51) [LV]. Why so? For those who imitated Christ in life, will attain the glory of Christ; but those who confessed Him with their lips, yet denied Him in their heart, who preached Him

by words and blasphemed Him by their deeds, will descend alive into hell. Therefore, “since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves,” (may I conclude with the Apostle) “from every defilement of flesh and spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God” (2 Cor 7:1).

Let the body be subject to the spirit, and the spirit to reason and the law; let us become conformed to the image of the Son of God, and we shall become coheirs of His heavenly kingdom: if we suffer with Him, we shall be glorified with Him.

CHAPTER 24

The Glory of the Mystical Temple

That apostle snatched up to the third heaven, who heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter, adding that it was not possible not only to describe the glory of the Mystical Temple, but to even think about it: “What eye,” he said, “has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love Him; this God has revealed to us through the Spirit” (1 Cor 2:9-10). Augustine, the Prince of Doctors, not thinking differently said: “That glory and future majesty of the Mystical Temple escapes all manner of speaking, and exceeds all understanding of the human mind. What God has prepared for those who love Him is not grasped by Faith, is not attained by Hope, nor perceived by Charity, it surpasses our desires and wishes.”²²⁵

Therefore I should rather long every moment to possess this glory, and not take pains to portray in words with an unrefined pen what is impossible to describe.²²⁶ And so I shall derive what

²²⁵ This quotation could be located in neither Augustine’s *Meditations* (Ch. XXII: ‘On the Happiness of the Life that God has Prepared for Those Who Love Him’) nor his *Soliloquies* (c. XXXVI: On the Glory of the Heavenly Homeland), nor in his *Handbook* (Ch. VII: On the Joy of Paradise, Ch. VII: On the Kingdom of Heaven)

²²⁶ In the original Latin text researched by Jarra, p. 54, footnote 3: “adynaton” means “what is impossible.”

follows not from my own understanding about the bliss of our Bodies and Souls, but I shall derive it from the sources of those most happy wayfarers, who rather often tasted these delights, to which they were carried over in mind and intellect, but most sparingly, lest, by too great a desire, I overwhelm the thirst rather than excite it.

Bodies indeed shall be adorned with those four admirable and excellent qualities: Impassibility, as theologians say; Subtlety; Agility; and Clarity.

Paul, that most ardent champion of our most fortunate resurrection, expressed them most happily, when counteracting with great eloquence and wisdom the tacit objection of certain men about this subject: "Someone may say, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come back?'" The Apostle replies: "You fool! What you sow is not brought to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be but a bare kernel of wheat, perhaps, or of some other kind; but God gives it a body as He chooses, and to each of the seeds its own body." "So also the resurrection of the dead. It is sown corruptible; it is raised incorruptible. It is sown dishonorable, it is raised glorious. It is sown weak; it is raised powerful. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual one" (1 Cor 15:35-38, 42-44).

Moreover, that river of Paradise divided into four branches signifies the same qualities. Moses, that most holy man, said about this: "A river rises in Eden to water the garden; beyond there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is the Pishon. The name of the second river is Gihon. The name of the third river is Tigris. The fourth river is the Euphrates" (Gen 2:10-14). In Jeremiah Drexel's²²⁷ opinion one may compare the four qualities of the bodies of the blessed with these four rivers.²²⁸

²²⁷ Jeremy Drexel, SJ (d. 1638), writer of ascetic books; cf. Lanz, Arnaldo, "Drexel (Drexelius), Jeremy:" *ECat* IV, 1927-1928.

²²⁸ Cf. Drexel, Jeremy, SJ, *Heaven, the City of the Blessed*, in: *The Complete Works*, Mainz 1651, vol. 1, p. 348 (Fifth Minor Work, Bk. II, Ch. VI: The Sixth Joy in Heaven from the Four Gifts of the Glorious Body, where it is said: "Accordingly, as holy writ attests, 'A river flowed from the place of pleasure to water paradise,

The first quality of Impassibility will not only protect the glorious body from all corruption for all eternity, but completely from all petty annoyance. John prophesied this when he said: "And there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away" (Rev 21:4).

The second quality, [Subtlety,] will confer on the glorious body the power of penetrating any other body, just as a ray of the sun penetrates glass but neither shatters nor damages it.

The third quality, Agility, will give the glorious body the ability of moving most swiftly in every direction. Isaiah predicted this saying: "They that hope in the LORD will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles' wings" (Is 40:31).

The fourth quality, Clarity, will render the glorious body brighter than any light: "the blessed in heaven shall shine," (what Daniel foresaw) "brightly like the splendor of the firmament, like the stars forever" (Dan 12:3). Paul shows us an example of this glory of the blessed body in the glorified Body of Christ the Lord Himself when he writes to the Philippians: "We also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with His glorified body" (Phil 3:20-21). Therefore, just as "Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over Him:" (Rom 6:9) so this gift of His is rightly to be expected also by us. Christ, rising from the dead, came out from an untouched tomb, while the doors were closed, appeared in the midst of the disciples: and so this gift of His is rightly to be expected also by us. Christ rising from the dead gloriously appeared in distant places, at short intervals, both to His most beloved Mother, and to some very holy women, as well as to His most dear apostles, and to the disciples on their way to a village: and so this gift of His is rightly to be expected also by us. Christ, rising from the dead, was seen, I believe, with no different face than that which on the mountain of Tabor "shone like the sun" (Mt 17:2); and so this gift of His is rightly to be expected also by us.

which thence divides into four heads.' One may compare the four gifts of the bodies of the blessed with these four rivers."

“He will change our lowly body to conform with His glorified body” (Phil 3:21). O glory, to be sought after even by infinite labors! O glory, to be desired not without the heaviest weariness! Ah! When shall I come and appear before the face of the Lord?²²⁹

Who would dare to speak of the bodily senses to be ineffably beatified? By what fragrance will the sense of smell be refreshed there, by how great a delight the sense of sight will be filled with the most noble, most beautiful and the most perfect objects of God and all creatures! By how great a pleasure of all savors will the sense of taste be pampered! By what concert of the most exquisite musical ensembles (so to speak) will the sense of hearing be pleased! And finally by how great a pleasure will the sense of touch be filled from its own continually flowing glorification! To this sense relates what we mentioned above as said by the Apostle: “it is raised [an] incorruptible, glorious, powerful, [and] spiritual [body]” (cf. 1 Cor 15:42-44). What David sang applies to hearing: “Let the faithful exult in glory [...]; let the high praise of God be in their throats” (Ps 149:5-6). What the same harpist-king proposed elsewhere refers to the sense of taste: “They have their fill of the prime gifts of your house; from your delightful stream you give them to drink. For with you is the fountain of life” (Ps 36:9-10) [LV]. What Isaiah promised refers to the sense of sight: “Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow” (Is 60:5). Explaining the gift of the sense of smell, he says: “The wilderness shall rejoice and shall flourish like the lily” (Is 35:1) [LV]. And the Church is not discordant, when she sings thus: “Your Saints, Lord, will flourish like the lily; and they will be before you like the fragrance of balsam, Alleluia.”

Who could recount the other things in words? Because I do not even want to touch the happiness of the soul. Let us be silent, let us be silent about matters which we cannot explain in fitting words. For who can penetrate the vision of God, and in Him of all things, His knowledge, love, and the very glory of His intellect, memory, and will? May God make us understand these things

²²⁹ Cf. Ps 41:3.

rather than describe them. May the most blessed Trinity have us reach the end for which we were created, redeemed and called to by faith. May it safeguard us from being thrust down from this most wretched exile into another everlasting one on account of our sins. May it safeguard us in this most perilous and stormy ocean of our present lives so that we do not suffer the shipwreck of our eternal lives, but reach the port of the most longed for blessedness with Christ as captain, Mary as guiding star, the Angels as oarsmen, and the saints' intercession as the winds. In the meantime among the unceasing waves may we, with St. Bernard, be permitted to console our dejected spirit with the following devout outcry, and encourage it to successfully continue our voyage as we sigh again and again:

"O heavenly city, secure dwelling, fruitful and spacious fatherland, containing all that delights, a people without grumble, peaceful inhabitants, men suffering no want! What glorious things are said of you, city of God! All who rejoice dwell in you. Also all rejoice in joy and exultation, all take delight in God, whose appearance is beautiful, countenance graceful, and speech pleasant. He is delightful to see, pleasant to hold, and sweet to enjoy: He is pleasing by Himself, and of Himself sufficient to gain merit and reward; nothing outside Him is required, because whatever is desired, all this is found in Him. In Him the intellect is clarified, and our feelings purified for knowing and loving the truth. And this is the entire good of man, namely to know and love his Creator!

"What madness is it then that drives us to thirst for the wormwood of vices, to pursue the shipwreck of this world, to suffer misfortune of life that is going astray and bear the rule of a godless tyranny and not to rather fly to the happy association of the saints, to the company of the Angels, to the celebration of heavenly joy, and the delightfulness of a contemplative life, so that we would be able to enter into the powers of God, and to see those superabundant riches of His goodness?" (*Med.* Ch. 4).²³⁰

²³⁰ Bernard, *Meditations*, Ch. IV, nn. 1-2, in: AMS, pp. 327-328.

So that we may be absolutely certain of obtaining them, and do not lose them through any negligence on our part, or dissipate them through madness, this admonition, taken from the writings of the same most holy Father, will continually move us, the admonition with which I now bolt this Mystical Temple of God, and wholly seal it.

ADMONITION

“Therefore, use yourself as a Temple of God, because of that within you which is like to God. Since the supreme honor shown to God is to worship and imitate Him. You imitate Him if you are devout, you worship Him if you are merciful. Do everything like the Son of God, that you may be worthy of Him who deigned to call you son.”²³¹

²³¹ Bernard, *Meditations*, Ch. IV, n. 4, in: *AMS*, p. 338.

INSCRIPTION of the Mystical Temple.

TO YOU, ETERNAL FATHER,
My Creator,
TO YOU ETERNAL SON
My Redeemer,
TO YOU ETERNAL SPIRIT
My Sanctifier,

This Temple described and living, which I am,
I most humbly dedicate forever.

Do not despise what You have created;
do not cast away what You have restored;
do not abandon
what You have promised to inhabit.

For what benefit is there in my blood,
in that Blood, I say, which was poured out for me,
if I descend in eternal corruption?

The dead shall not praise Thee, O Lord:
Nor any of them that go down to hell.
But we that live bless the Lord:
from this time now and forever.
(Psalm 113:25-16) [LV]

END



ORATOR
CRUCIFIXVS

SIVE VLTIMA

SEPTEM VERBA

Domini Nostri Iesv Christi,
Totidem pijs discursibus exposita

Per R. P. IOANNEM PAPCZYN-
SKI, Presbyterum Polonum.

C R A C O V I Æ,

Ex Officina SCHEDELIANA, S. R. M. Nec
non Illustrissimi ac Reverendissimi EPISCOPI
Cracouiensis Ducis Senecæ Typograph.
à Anno Domini. 1670.



THE CRUCIFIED ORATOR

or the seven last words
of Our Lord Jesus Christ
explained in as many pious reflections
by the Venerable Father John Papczyński,
a Polish priest

Translated by
Thaddaeus Lancton, MIC
Edited by
Patrick Lynch, MIC

INTRODUCTION

1. The Work, Its Author, and the Circumstances of Its Creation

Orator Crucifixus (OC) is a collection of sermons on the Passion of our Lord. Neither the title nor the authorship of this work gives reason for any doubt, because its first edition was printed through the efforts of its author, Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński, in 1670, by the royal print shop in Krakow, called *Officina Schedeliana S.R.M.*

The front page states: *Orator Crucifixus sive ultima septem verba Domini nostri Iesu Christi, totidem piis discursibus exposita per R.P. Ioannem Papczyński, Presbyterum Polonum*, or, “*The Crucified Orator or Seven Last Words of Our Lord Jesus Christ, explained in the same number of pious meditations by Rev. Fr. John Papczyński, a Polish priest.*” It’s significant that Fr. Stanislaus did not provide his religious name, “Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary,” as he used to do elsewhere, but reverted instead to his baptismal name and wrote “John Papczyński, a Polish priest.” The reason was his personal situation at the time: He had left the Piarist Order in 1670, but the new Order of Marian Fathers, the founding of which he had already declared, was still in the sphere of his projects. At that time, Fr. Stanislaus was in Krakow, subject to the authority of Andrzej Trzebicki, Bishop of Krakow, to whom Fr. Stanislaus devoted a brief dedication in gratitude for this bishop’s help.

OC was probably ready for print much earlier, even before 1670 or during the time of the author’s membership in the Piarists; but his Superiors did not grant permission to print it.

Also noteworthy is the fact that OC appears on the list of Fr. Papczyński’s written works submitted for examination to the Roman Congregation for Rites during his beatification process. The decree issued by this Congregation on July 15, 1775, affirmed that this work is in accordance with the teachings of the Church.

2. Composition, Contents, and Purpose of This Work

The immediate reason for composing sermons on the Passion of our Lord might have been the need to trigger the sensitivity of some community to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, its importance, and its essential meaning for man and for all creation.

These sermons were certainly intended to help prepare for the liturgical season of Lent. The author not only very eloquently explained the last "words of Eternal Wisdom, ending His life in the human body with a sermon," but also wished that one soul at least might benefit from his effort. This is reminiscent of the Good Shepherd from the Gospel who rejoices in the recovery of one lost sheep. In the same way, Fr. Papczyński (dubbed during his lifetime "the Apostle of Mazovia") addressed with the utmost fervor just one human being in need of spiritual help as if he would address great crowds, and yet, he spoke individually to each of his readers. We see that — urged on by his pastoral commitment — he put all of his ardent soul, mind, and heart into the preparation of these meditations. This is testified to by the fact that in *OC*, he cites the statements of many expert preachers known throughout the history of the Church. In the meditation on Christ saying, "they do not know what they are doing," to the Father about His tormentors, Fr. Stanislaus concluded with "O immeasurable depth of clemency and mercy! Sinner, look what an excellent example of loving your enemies He gives you! He did all that for your own good! Cast out from your heart at once the resentment that you hold against your adversary or your enemy, and the most merciful God, who gazes upon you with the greatest kindness, will grant you the forgiveness of all your sins and will fill you with an abundance of His grace."

The author of *OC* addressed the readers rather than the listeners (e.g., "I invite you, kind reader of this discourse," in "The Fifth Word"). Although the book title states that it is a collection of sermons based on the seven last words of our Lord Jesus Christ, the work has undoubtedly the character of written meditations. In seven meditations, Fr. Papczyński thoroughly pondered the

seven last statements of Eternal Wisdom — Jesus on the Cross. He considered the following topics:

- Love of enemies and the forgiveness of all wrongs “so that we might in this most certain way receive the forgiveness and remission of our sins” (The First Word: *Forgiveness Is Obtained by Forgiveness*);

- Penance following the example of the good thief (The Second Word: *Heaven Is Attained by Penance*);

- Recourse to the sanctuary, shelter, safety, or protection accorded by Mary (The Third Word: *The Most Clement Virgin Mary Is the Mother of Sinners. The Savior Entrusted Them to Her as Sons in the Person of John*);

- Prayer that restores the sinner’s unity with God (The Fourth Word: *The Power of Prayer Restores the Sinner to Communion with God*);

- The total transformation of the sinners’ mind and conduct (The Fifth Word: *The Thirst for [the Salvation of] Souls, Which Torments Christ, Mightily Contributes to Their Conversion*);

- Perseverance in continuous conversion (The Sixth Word: *Penance Is Most Perfect When It Is Consummated with Life Itself*);

- Constant union with Christ as the means to avoid falling back into sinfulness (The Seventh Word: *We Must Frequently Entrust Our Souls to Christ the Lord, Lest We Desire to Fall Often Again and Again*).

On the whole, it is possible to say that the author of OC intended this ascetic teaching “in such a way that it might both bring forth repentance and produce an amendment of life” (The First Word). He emphasized that sinners should not despair, because the Merciful God always provides repentant sinners with the means to attain salvation.

3. Sources of Preaching and Previous Editions

The author wrote in a stately and ornate style proper to the 17th-century Baroque Period. Each meditation was accompanied by numerous quotes from the Scriptures and their commentators

so as to validate and illustrate the author's conclusions. The text includes a large range of names of saintly Fathers of the Church, ecclesial writers, experts in the spiritual life, and hagiographers. Father Papczyński also resorted to secular authors, but "sparingly": [These include] historians, chroniclers, and students of natural history. He evoked personages and events from Greek and Roman mythology and recalled acts of penance performed by contemporary champions of asceticism. The Baroque style, as well as numerous scriptural, patristic, and theological quotations, is brightened by the lively narration that flows as if from the author's personal reflections, while various tropes and figures of speech make the account ever more illustrative.

No reprints of this work by St. Stanislaus were produced from the time of its first publication in 1670 until the present day. For the first time, *OC* was retyped from an old print and reproduced by mimeograph in Rome, in 1959, for the purpose of examining Fr. Stanislaus writings during his beatification process. Next, in 1998, a critical edition of this short work was published in its original Latin in Warsaw through the efforts of Fr. Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC.

Ryszard Roman Piętka, MIC

**In honor of the family coat of arms
Of the Splendid, Most Illustrious, and Venerable Father
ANDRZEJ TRZEBICKI**

The Bishop of Cracow, the Duke of Siewierz,

This snowy color signifies the innocence of the Swan;

The sweet song denotes a gentle disposition.

In the unblemished white we recognize a pure life

And it is a pleasure to sing many times:

Long live the Swan!

O splendid, most illustrious and venerable Prince!

The snow-white heavenly Swan stretched upon the tree of fate and with great sweetness singing before his death, which changed his own natural color to scarlet by pouring out his blood, had to be dedicated only to the Prince-Cardinal. Out of many, your Highness attracted my attention; what is more, you were the first to stand before the eyes of your very humble client.¹ My eyes were enticed also by your Highness's ancestral Swan, and attracted by the senatorial and Episcopal purple. The favors shown to our printing lead to the conviction that this work coming from it is mainly due to your favors. Besides, the author of these devout sermons, himself honored by the gracious patronage of your Highness, induced me to this work, so that this one book might testify to the gratitude of two clients. Please accept with graciousness — by which you are known, Most Illustrious and Venerable Prince — this swan song of the Author of life and salvation for us all, dying upon the Cross, and kindly keep me always in the shadow of the wings of your ancestral Swan.

Most humble client of
your Most Illustrious and Venerable Highness,
Mikołaj Aleksander Schedel.

¹ The Latin "*cliens*" in this context is a liege, vassal, or servant.

Greetings, most noble reader!

Moved by devout, but not audacious courage, guided by an inner movement, I explained the last words of Eternal Wisdom, who ended His life in the human body with a sermon. I do not judge my effort. I leave that to your honesty. I used the Sacred Scriptures along with commentaries. I took sparingly quotations from secular literature and left them nearly in their original wording, so that the glory of eloquence may remain with their authors. If only one soul benefits from my effort, that will be much fruit for me. Since I could have mentioned the works of a man, as of yet unapproved by the holy Mother Church, therefore, I am doing now as Pope Urban VIII instructed, namely: I submit the statements entirely according to his thought and will.

Live always happily and farewell.

THE FIRST WORD OF THE CRUCIFIED ORATOR

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”
(Lk 23:34)¹

Forgiveness Is Obtained by Forgiveness.

Vespasian, the well-known [Roman] emperor, who through his own talent obtained the distinguished office of the Roman magistrate, was so diligent and assiduous in carrying out the imperial duties that he often stated: “The emperor should die standing.”² Indeed, he breathed his last breath in no other way — but while standing. What he maintained about the duty of the emperor, I can say about the duty of the preacher: He must indeed conclude his words with his last breath and end his preaching with his life. Thus, Jesus, the Eternal Word and Preacher from Heaven, while speaking and preaching from the pulpit of the Cross, handed over His Most Holy Spirit to the Eternal Father. At the exact moment that He finished preaching, He died. St. [Robert] Bellarmine,³ a writer clothed in scarlet [as a Cardinal], having pondered this event with great devotion and deepest respect, explained the statement of the Crucified Word and the teaching that flows from the statement in this

¹ Scripture quotations will be taken from Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition, unless otherwise noted. Cf. *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version*. 2nd Catholic ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006). [Hereafter this version of the Bible will be abbreviated as RSV.]

² Cf. Bersanetti, Gastone M., *Vespasiano, Tito Flavio, Imperatore Romano*, EI XXXV, 220.

³ Cf. Piolanti, Antonio, *Roberto Bellarmino, santo* (1542-1621), *ECat* X, 1043-1049, where we read that this Doctor of the Church was admitted to the Society of Jesus in 1560 and was made a cardinal in 1599.

manner: “The Word of the Eternal Father is Jesus Christ, about Whom this same Father openly said: ‘Listen to [H]im’ [Lk 9:35] and Who clearly stated about Himself: ‘You have one master, the Christ’ [Mt 23:10]. In order to fulfill His office to the end, He not only never ceased teaching while He was alive, but even while dying, He preached few words from the *cathedra* of the Cross, but these were the most fiery, most useful, and most efficacious words. Clearly, they are utterly worthy of being received into the depths of the hearts of all Christians and to be safeguarded, examined, and in fact, put into action by deeds.”⁴

In order that I might be of some help to those hearts devoted to Christ, I resolved to explain more clearly, in a more pious rather than sophisticated manner of speaking, the teaching of our Master which He delivered from the pulpit of the Cross, as well as to adapt [this teaching] to the salvation of souls in such a way, that it might both bring forth repentance and produce amendment of life.

So, I begin with the first word, which Luke the Evangelist received and which he placed in Chapter 23 of the book of the deeds and words of our Lord: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” It must be learned from this [statement] that we should love our enemies and forgive wrongs, so that we might in this most certain way receive the forgiveness and remission of our sins. I will now develop this teaching further.

The prophet Daniel recorded in Chapter Four that Nebuchadnezzar, the King of the Assyrians [*Babylonians*], a man characterized by great pride, innocent neither of other faults nor criminal acts, once saw in a dream quite a branchy and towering tree, whose tip touched the sky and whose width stretched to the ends of the earth. The tree also had the most beautiful leaves and abundant fruit. Furthermore, different creatures and wild animals lived underneath it and the birds of the air nested in its branches, and from it all flesh received their food (cf. Dan

⁴ Bellarminus, Robertus, *De septem verbis a Christo in Cruce prolatis* (BDS), Ratisbonae 1925, Liber I, c. 1, p. 1.

4:7-9). As the sleeping king relished the sight of such a prominent tree, behold, a messenger from Heaven came running, shouting in a shrill voice: "Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave in the earth its stump and roots, fettered with iron and bronze the grass of the field; let him be bathed with the dew of [H]eaven; and let his lot be among wild beasts till seven years pass over him" (Dan 4:20) [NAB]. Nebuchadnezzar, terrified at such a sudden and ominous destruction of this stately and beautiful tree, jumped out of bed. He ordered Daniel to be brought to him, whom he knew well to be the most experienced interpreter of dreams. The prophet arrived and explained what had already been revealed to him by God. He explained that the tree symbolized the king himself and that his transformation into a wild animal signified that he would be removed from the company of people and eat hay like the ox in the open air among all the beasts. He would remain in that state for seven full years, until he would recover his senses and acknowledge that, "the Most High God rules the kingdom of men" (Dan 5:21). Since Daniel loved Nebuchadnezzar dearly, he advised the king to placate the wrath of God through alms, so as to release him from this very harsh and humiliating punishment. If God would not repeal His most just decision, He might at least mitigate the sentence that had been already passed. Daniel told the king: "Break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed" (Dan 4:27).

This tree, representing a very prideful Persian monarch, is also an image of every sinner. Consequently, each one of them should also apply to themselves the advice uttered by Daniel: "Break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed."

However, not everyone has such a spirit of generosity, although he abounds in sin just as in wealth. On the other hand, someone might greatly desire to atone for his offenses with generous alms, but cannot give away what he does not have, since he himself is in need, as the extreme circumstances of his own home nearly force him to beg for his own necessities.

Consequently, St. Augustine, presented with this problem, thus addressed our topic of discussion: "It is possible that someone may be so poor that he has nothing from which to give alms, but it is impossible that he has never been wronged by another. If he wholeheartedly forgives all those who sinned against him and does not hold hatred against anyone, but loves all as he loves himself, there is not even a smallest doubt that these acts will be credited to him as the greatest of alms."⁵

By these alms he will redeem his sins, and by this mercy he will obtain mercy. O sinner, do you lack money with which you would pay in full your debts contracted before God? But perhaps, you are not lacking enemies, nor calumniators, nor detractors; you are not lacking persecutors, nor adversaries, nor rivals. Forgive them all, and God will forgive you. By your clemency, you will incline Him to be merciful. Believe me, He will not allow you to outdo Him in this. If you feel that you are generous to the poor, but merciless to adversaries, you will not abate with your generosity the wrath of God, who is more certainly placated by mercy. In vain would you imitate Tobit,⁶ if you do not emulate David.⁷

David — the mildest of kings — contemplating the multitude of his vices, greatly dreaded the anger of the Lord. Therefore, with a deeply perturbed spirit, he cried out: "There is no soundness in my flesh because of [Y]our indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; they weigh like a burden too heavy for me" (Ps 38:3-4). But when he remembered the wrongs, which Saul, his mortal enemy, had heaped upon him in great measure, and how, in the most opportune moment, he nevertheless had not taken vengeance on Saul for those wrongs, he eagerly renewed his hope to obtain God's forgiveness. Now, fearing nothing from the evil executors of divine justice, who also are the most obstinate enemies of

⁵ The source of this quote was not able to be found.

⁶ The reference here is to generosity in the distribution of alms. Cf. Tob 2:16-22.

⁷ St. Stanislaus has in mind David's abandonment of seeking vengeance upon Saul. Cf. 1 Sam 24:1-20.

our souls, David finally says to God: “If I have [...] plundered my enemy without cause, let the enemy pursue me and overtake me [...] and lay my soul in the dust.” (Ps 7:5-6) [NAB].

Oh, how many people we can find in this completely corrupt world, whose sins surpass the number of [their] hairs, whose misdeeds have exceeded all measure! So what would each of them do to free themselves from the weight of their crimes? I do not doubt that they would turn to St. Peter, because this Pontiff was given the [power of] binding and loosing the sinners. Christ said to Peter: “Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Mt 16:19).

All is well, good sinner. I will go to Peter with you. But did you hear what Peter insists that we must do in this matter? He says, “Above all hold unfailing your love for one another” (1 Pet 4:8). Peter advises the best and not the most difficult of things. We can love one another without undue annoyance or strenuous effort. However, lest we might err in this love (because it can easily happen), St. Gregory the Great stipulates for us the proper way to proceed. He stated: “Let no one, when he loves someone, think too quickly that he possesses charity, unless he examines beforehand the very motive of his love. For if he loves someone — but does not love for God’s sake — he does not possess charity... For charity is true, if the friend is loved in God and the enemy is loved for God’s sake... Undoubtedly, therefore, he who for God’s sake loves someone by whom he knows that he is not loved, possesses charity” (Hom. 38).⁸ Thus, according to Peter, “love covers a multitude of sins,” but — according to St. Gregory’s explanation — only the love with which one “loves enemies for God’s sake.” Sinners, love your enemies! Do good unto those who hate you: Forgive, and you shall be forgiven!

Once a king called his servants to settle accounts, as our Savior told us in Matthew. Among them, a debtor was brought before him who owed [the king] 10,000 talents. For a servant, that is

⁸ Gregorius, *Homiliae XL in Evangelia*, hom. XXXVIII: *S. Gregorii Papae I, Cognomento Magni Opera Omnia*: PL 76, 1289, n. 1640.

a huge and difficult debt to repay! Since the axiom accepted by the experts in law was that whoever cannot pay back must suffer in the body, the king ordered this great debtor to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, and to place the money thus obtained in his treasury. That servant would have been miserable, had he not by his truly humble supplication softened the heart of the king, who was by nature very much inclined to clemency. Falling on his knees at the feet of the master, the servant implored him with this excellent formula of humble pleading: “Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.” And thus he escaped: “The master had mercy on that servant, released him, and forgave his debt.” This was a great grace, but did it find a grateful heart? This was an extraordinary clemency, if only it had not been granted to a cruel and most wicked man! For this nefarious rascal had hardly left the sight of the king, when he came across “one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii [denarius — a small silver coin],” seized him right away, “and started to choke him,” repeating time and again: “Give back what you owe.” Pay back one hundred denarii, pay it back! This great cruelty reverberated throughout the entire king’s court. Therefore, after the king had called back the good-for-nothing exactor of debts, he was thrown into prison to suffer “until” he himself “repaid his debt,” and fully redeemed [his obligation]. To whom does this parable apply? [It applies] to Christian sinners who contracted heavy debts before the Heavenly King, but who do not want to forgive the slightest debt of their neighbors. Hence, flows Christ’s horrifying admonition: “So will my heavenly Father do to you,” just as that king did to the wicked servant, “unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart” (cf. Mt 18:23-35).

Isidoro Chiari,⁹ an exceptionally eloquent interpreter of the Sacred Scriptures, thus elucidates the parable of our Lord Jesus, saying: “Such is the law of the Heavenly Father: Wanting to have opportunities for forgiveness, He allows offenses to occur among men that all might have debtors, whom they must forgive, and

⁹ Cf. Penna, Angelo, *Clario, Isidoro*, in: *Ecat III*, 1771.

thus, He might be able to forgive us our greatest debts, which we forgive others.”¹⁰ One could wonder, why among Christians who ought to be connected by the bond of mutual love so that all might have one heart and soul, as it is written about the early Church in the Acts of the Apostles: “Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32); why, I say, in our turbulent times, are there such disagreements, not to say such enmity, among Christians that it is scarcely possible to find anyone who does not have an enemy or a persecutor? Chiari asserts that this circumstance occurs according to Divine Permission, so that — by forgiving others — we also might obtain pardon from God. “For He, desiring to have an occasion for forgiveness, allows offenses among men to happen, so that all of us might have some debtors, whom we must forgive, so that He might forgive us our greatest debts, which we have forgiven others” (*Orat.* 53 on Mt.).¹¹ We, however, are so shamelessly mad that we prefer to be thrown into hell rather than to bear patiently, to forgive, and to immerse in the wounds of the Savior a sarcastic remark, a little contempt, a light injury brought upon us. Yet, at the same time, we cry out daily to the Heavenly Father, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us” (cf. Mt 6:12). Therefore, either we must forgive, or, if we do not forgive, we are lying in the presence of God. But for what benefit? To multiply the number of our debts? That is absurd and the greatest madness. Rather, grant pardon even to those who do not seek it, so that — by forgiving — we might receive forgiveness from God. We must forgive so that we may be forgiven.

My Christian, listen to your Master and Leader speaking from the pulpit of the Cross. What does He say? “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Consider each individual word, how full of mystery they are! He urges the Father; He entreats the Father; He who so perfectly proved to be His Son that He

¹⁰ Isidorius Clarius, *Oratio 53: In Orationem Dominicam: In sermonem Domini in monte habitum Secundum Matthaeum Orationes sexagintanovem ad Populum*, Venetiis 1556, f.210v.

¹¹ Ibid.

deserves to be fully heard. He asks to forgive His enemies' crimes not to hush them up. He asks for forgiveness of both the punishment and the guilt; [forgiveness] of such an enormous guilt that the whole world never heard of anything more grievous. [For] that was a horrid, unparalleled, hateful, and immense crime, which surpassed all measure. For whom, however, does He beg pardon? [He begs pardon] for those who betrayed Him, took Him captive, chained, dragged, mocked, scourged: For those who laid sacrilegious hands on Him; who amassed the falsest testimony against Him; who judged Him worthy of all sorts of torture; who made His head bleed from thorns; who defiled with spittle His face, brighter than the sun; who crushed Him with punches and blows; who burdened His neck with chains; who scourged His entire body from the soles of His feet to the crown of His head with wounds and blows; for those, who accused Him — the innocent One — and who demanded a degrading punishment for Him who is unmarred by any crime. Barabbas — a murderer and a thief, they preferred over Him; they passed His death sentence. He pleaded for those who burdened Him with the heavy wood of the Cross and dragged Him to the infamous courtyard of the guilty. They cruelly stripped him of clothing, nailed Him to the Cross, placed Him between thieves, gave Him gall and vinegar to drink when thirsty; they blasphemed Him when praying; they mocked Him in suffering. And finally, they scorned Him as He pleaded with the eternal Father for them! And yet, not only did He Himself forgive such brutal, such nefarious, such vicious enemies, but He even reconciled them with His eternal Father; and He does it with such kindness, such unheard of meekness so as to more easily obtain pardon for them. Since He could not excuse the crime itself, He excuses their intention, He alleges their ignorance, He presents them as madmen who thus did not act in deliberate malice: "For they," He says, "know not what they do."

O abyss of clemency and mercy! Sinner, look what an excellent example of loving enemies He gives you! He did all that for your own good! Cast out at once from your heart the resentment that you hold against your adversary or your enemy, and the most

merciful God, who gazes upon you with greatest kindness, will grant you the forgiveness of all your sins and will fill you with an abundance of His grace. Saint Augustine, Doctor of the Doctors [of the Church], having this in mind, speaks to all of us: "I encourage you to love your enemies, because I know that nothing is more useful for healing the wounds of your sins. However great may be the labor of loving your enemies, your reward will be great in the future. He who loves enemies will be a friend of God: and not only a friend, but also a son."¹²

O the happiest man, through love of enemies you obtain forgiveness of sins and you are adopted as a son of God, also!

I urge you, therefore, together with the golden-mouthed Bishop [St. John Chrysostom],¹³ who with the greatest patience carried the most painful injuries imposed upon him by his worst enemies; I beg you all, however many, who have adopted the name of Christ, "that we might be obedient to the doctrine of Christ, and having eliminated all hate and rancor from our souls, sincerely love not only those who love us, but strive to love even those who persecute us with hostility. Indeed, there is no other way for us to be saved; on the contrary, let us strive to love even more our enemies as the authors of so much good for us. This way we will be able to obtain remission of our sins as well as to lift our prayers to God from a contrite spirit and humble heart."¹⁴

¹² The source of the quote could not be found in the writings of St. Augustine.

¹³ St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, († 407). Cf. Cataudella, Quintino, *Giovanni Crisostomo, santo*, in: *Ecat* VI, 534-535ss.

¹⁴ This quote appears to be taken from an unknown work and could not be found and verified in the available writings of St. John Chrysostom.

THE SECOND WORD OF THE CRUCIFIED ORATOR

“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with [M]e in Paradise.”
(Lk 23:43)

Heaven Is Attained by Penance.

Joseph, the son of Jacob the Patriarch, was particularly beloved by his father. For that reason, as well as on account of divine favors he received, he was hated by his brothers, and sold by them to the Ishmaelites, who carried him into Egypt. There, through the wickedness of the infamous wife of Potiphar, the leader of Pharaoh's army, he was thrown into prison. There were with him two others, namely: the chief cupbearer and the prefect of the royal bakers. To the first of them, after having heard the account of his dream, he predicted the certain release. Thereupon Joseph asked the cupbearer not to forget his prophet when he would be restored to his former honor. “But remember me,” he said, “when it is well with you, and do me the kindness, I beg you, to make mention of me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into a dungeon” (Gen 40:14-15). It would seem that these words should be firmly impressed upon [the cupbearer's] soul, imbued with such consolation and obliged by such entreaties. It might have been so, if not for the even more prosperous fate that resulted from the restoration of his [former] honor that completely erased them. “Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him” (Gen 40:23).

This is not how our Redeemer acted, when He met by chance the two companions of His punishment on the Cross, both of whom were thieves. As soon as He heard one of them pleading: “Jesus, remember me when [Y]ou come into [Y]our kingdom” (Lk 23:42) [NAB], He immediately promised him, using the formula

of a solemn oath, that after a few hours, he would be taken up to paradise with Him: "He replied to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with [M]e in Paradise'" (Lk 23:42). What He said, He did; what He promised, He fulfilled. That same day, He placed the thief in paradise. O most blessed of promises! With what effort was it acquired? Through penance. Then, this is the key, with which sinners unlock for themselves the gate of the heavenly paradise. Indeed, this is the battering ram, with which they break through the gate, as I will explain more precisely.

After the progenitors of our race violated the precept of God given to them, i.e., of not touching the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they were expelled from the wonderfully beautiful, verdant Elysian Kingdom¹⁵ into the valley of the tears of this world. With one sin they sealed forever the gate for themselves and for their posterity. To this the sacred historian testified in these words: "Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken." And to prevent these unfortunate exiles from reentering that blessed Homeland, "[H]e placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life" (Gen 3:23-24). It is impossible to force one's entry into paradise through that type of guard either by strength or by stealth, particularly for such mortals who have added many sinful deeds to the original sin.

However, the exceptionally gifted Isidore¹⁶ asserts that by a certain pious stratagem, any sinner can breach this strongly reinforced gate and reach the Tree of Life: That is, by transforming himself into a Cherub equipped with a sword. He said, "The man returns to God through the double-edged flaming sword, that is, through the fire of temporal sufferings: by admitting his sins and mourning

¹⁵ Elysian Kingdom, Elysian Fields — in Greek and Roman mythology — are the regions of eternal spring and happiness, where the souls of the just stay after death. The Elysian fields were supposed to be in Hades or in the western regions of earth. Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* VI, 638ff.

¹⁶ St. Isidore, Bishop of Seville, Doctor of the Church, († 636). Cf. Madoz, Giuseppe, *Isidoro di Siviglia, santo*, in: *Ecat* VII, 254-258.

over them; as well as through the Cherubim, that is, through the fullness of knowledge, which is charity," without which there is no perfect contrition, which is the key to paradise. Such a man will "arrive at the Tree of Life — Christ — and will live forever."¹⁷

I will explain this idea of the learned Doctor with an example from the military history recounted by Paolo Giovio. Barbarossa,¹⁸ a ruffian who belonged to the Muslim religion and later became the King of Tunis in Africa, planned to capture the port of Magona, which was under the rule of the Spanish. To make this easier, he unfurled "in the sight of the defenders the banners with Christian symbols and thus impersonated the imperial navy."¹⁹ Those [defenders], thinking that their own were approaching, having [already] put away their war machines as a sign of exultation, admitted the enemy inside. By this trick, Barbarossa seized the port and soon the town beyond it.

Also (as the Jesuit Martino Martini²⁰ recounts), the King of the Asiatic Tartars, summoned by Usangeia — the keen and very faithful General of the Chinese Emperor — to offer aid to his lord against the rascal Licungzum, gave him this advice: "So that our victory might be certain, I suggest that you command your soldiers to put on Tartar clothing and caps, and to shave their heads. Thus, perhaps, the rascal would believe us all to be Tartars." He did believe and fled in dread of such power.

Among the Poles, there was a goldsmith Przemysław — the author of a stratagem — who was soon made a Prince as a reward.

¹⁷ S. Isidorus Hispalensis Ep., *Enarrationes...in Genesim*, Rothomagi 1647, p. 26.

¹⁸ Cf. Rossi, Ettore, *Barbarossa (Khair ad-din)*, in: *EI* VI, 134.

¹⁹ Paolo Giovio, *The History of Our Own Time*, Book 38.

²⁰ Cf. Huonder, A., *Martini, Martino* (1614-1661), in: *EC* IX, 730, where M. Martini is said to have been a "distinguished Austrian Jesuit missionary to the Chinese, in the XVIIth century." Concerning his work, we read there: "Of the great chronological work which Martini had planned, and which was to comprise the whole Chinese history from the earliest age, on the first part appeared: *Sinicae Historiae, Decas I* (Münich, 1658). His *De Bello Tartarico Historiae* (Cologne, 1654) is also important as Chinese history, for Martini himself had lived through the frightful occurrences which brought about the overthrow of the ancient Ming dynasty. The works have been repeatedly published and translated into different languages."

When the [Polish] armies had struck down in an ambush many regiments of the Hungarians and Moravians, the Poles, dressed in the equipment and clothing of the slaughtered soldiers, were received as victors into the enemy camp. In this way, due to the trick that assured success, they successfully deprived the enemy of all their property.²¹

But you, sinners! Do you desire to seize the paradise of delight? Imitate the Cherubim armed with the sword: Seize the fire of penance, which will make you resemble the guards of Paradise. Thus, having been recognized as the inhabitants of Heaven, you will be admitted to that heavily fortified gate. Thus you will force your way through to the Tree of Life. "The man who turns back to God..." etc.²²

In a divine vision, the prophet Ezekiel was escorted up to "a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city opposite me" (Ez 40:2). The city gates to the East and to the North were completely identical in terms of measurement and style (cf. Ez 40:6-27). Radulfus²³ observes that this [symbolism] has a mysterious meaning. His opinion confirms my own thoughts. For he says that the gates of the City shown to Ezekiel (which is undoubtedly Paradise) are equal for the reason that the just who enter through the Eastern gate and the repentant sinners who are admitted through the Northern gate, are equal to each other. Indeed, although sinners have lost their original righteousness, they truly attain the state of the innocent through suitable fruits of penance. Hence, it follows from this [fact] that as the Eastern gate is open to the just, the gate in the North is open to sinners: They have the same access to Heaven as the just. Here, I quote the most learned interpreter. He says, "In Ezekiel the gate to the

²¹ Martin Kromer (1512-1589) gives this information in: *De origine et rebus Polonorum libri XXX*, Bazylea 1586, p. 22; cf. also: Jan Długosz (1415-1480) in: *Historiae Polonicae*, Libri XII, t. I, Cracow 1873, pp. 76-77, describes it as a ruse used by the enemy.

²² St. Stanislaus is referring here to the quote of Isidore above.

²³ This is probably a reference to Radulphus Ardens (12th century), a preacher who left behind a collection of homilies: *In Epistolas et Evangelia dominicalia*. Cf. Gründel, J., *Radulfus Ardens*, in: *LThK* VIII, 967.

North possesses all the same attributes as the gate to the East. For all who have persevered in innocence since birth have the gate to the East. For the light, which they received, has enabled them to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. But all, who have fallen later into sin, were rendered numb with cold. If, however, they return through penance, they have the gate to the North, because to them also, after the numbness of sin, the entrance to the Kingdom is opened by means of mercy.”²⁴

For a better understanding it must be known that among the Sacraments of the Church there are two that are the keys with which we open Heaven for ourselves: namely, Baptism and Penance. The sacred Council of Trent indeed teaches that in Baptism, “men are thus made innocent, immaculate, pure, free from sin, and acceptable to God... so that nothing might delay them from entering heaven directly.”²⁵ For it is the promise of Eternal Truth that “He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mk 16:16).²⁶ On the other hand, Penance burns away and purifies the sins committed by those who have fallen after Baptism, so that — being restored to their original splendor — they are found worthy of Heaven. Accordingly, this is called Baptism in both Sacred Scripture as well as in the words of the holy Fathers, because just as Baptism opens Heaven for those reborn by water, so does Penance [open Heaven] for those brought back to life by grace. Consequently, the Eastern gate of Heaven lay open to the just and the pure, and likewise the gate to the North lay open to the contrite and repentant sinners. Therefore, the gates are seen by Ezekiel to be similar in every respect, in order that we might acknowledge that sinners — if they perform serious penance — are equally filled with the gifts of heavenly glory, as those who have not marred with any crime their original innocence.

O sinners! Take hold of this blessed key of Penance, lest only the innocent enjoy Heaven. Baptism opens Heaven to them; for

²⁴ The source of this text was not able to be found in the writings of Radulfus.

²⁵ Cf. *Concilium Tridentinum*, Venetiis 1570 (Sessio Quinta, *Decretum de peccato originali*), p. 19.

²⁶ Council of Trent (1454-1563), Session V, *Decree on Original Sin*.

you, if only you desire [it], Heaven may be opened by Penance. "For all who have persevered in innocence from birth..." etc.²⁷

We said that Penance opens Heaven; but it remains to be proven that we may conquer Heaven by Penance. John, the forerunner of the eternal Sun, attracted a great number of people of different states and genders, after he had begun to spread the rays of his teaching upon the Jordan River. He indeed illumined them in such a way that, having seen the darkness of their sins, they urged him to teach [them] how to avoid them. "What then shall we do?" (Lk 3:10). Then, seeing no other certain or solid way of recovering the light of grace than penance, he exhorted them all to penance with brief but efficacious words. He said, "Bear fruits that befit repentance" (Lk 3:8). Indeed, he persuaded the wealthy, who were not particularly generous to the poor, to holy almsgiving: "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise" (Lk 3:11). He also put reins on the avarice of the tax collectors: "Collect no more than is appointed you" (Lk 3:13). Finally, to the soldiers, a great many of whom indeed plundered and oppressed the poor to have means for a life of revelry and squandered the possessions of the defenseless on luxurious banquets and disgusting drinking bouts, John spoke in this manner: "Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages" (Lk 3:14).

This sermon of the Voice crying out in the desert was so effective, that it incited virtually entire legions of sinful men to storm Heaven by penance. To this the Heavenly Truth Himself has testified with great eloquence in these words recorded by Matthew: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force" (Mt 11:12).

Explaining this testimony, the learned interpreter Cornelius [à Lapide, SJ] says: "Sinners, such as the publicans, prostitutes, and Gentiles by an ardor of spirit and repentance wrest, snatch, and carry off the kingdom of Heaven even from the Pharisees

²⁷ St. Stanislaus is here repeating the quote of Radulfus Ardens.

and Jews themselves who thought that the kingdom belonged to them alone as sons of Abraham.”²⁸

Indeed, as the mellifluous Ambrose teaches, “We force the Lord not by coercion, but by tears; not by provoking insults, but by tearful supplication; not by blasphemy stemming from pride, but by mourning in humility.”²⁹

O powerful and efficacious battering ram of Penance that inflicts violence upon God, seizes Heaven, and conquers Paradise! An eloquent account from history helps elucidate this. Magdeburg, the noblest and wealthiest town situated on the Elbe, slowly grew powerful (due to its favorable location, as Florus the German affirms), a fact which was often disagreeable to the Roman Emperors,³⁰ as it had frustrated their efforts and preserved its independence intact³¹ for many centuries. But the industrious Tyllius the Great, a famous Catholic warrior, wanted to deprive the rebellious city [of its freedom] by order of Emperor Ferdinand II, whose authority it rejected. He surrounded it with a great army, and having stripped it of its bulwarks, pressed by hunger and destroyed by missiles, he endeavored to force it to surrender. At that point, the citizens, already afflicted with many evils, were more desirous of the clemency of the victor than to experience the ruin of the city and intended to hand themselves over to him on whatever conditions. Therefore, they sent a trumpeter to Tyllius. While the matter unexpectedly [and] slowly dragged on, another participant in the siege, Papenheimius, the strongest and most pugnacious soldier, eager for glory and perhaps also for booty, enflamed his own [companions] to the destruction of the enemy city. Baptist Burg³² recounts that he said: “How long, fellow

²⁸ Cornelius à Lapide, S.J., *Commentaria in Quattuor Evangelia* ed. V, Taurini-Romae 1941, t. I: in *S. Matthaeum, Pars Prior*, pp. 391-392.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

³⁰ Roman Emperors here refer to the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire (i.e., modern Germany).

³¹ In Latin, “*illibatam virginitatem*” (“intact virginity”). In the old German language, “magad” signifies “virgin.” This is the etymology of the name for the city of Magdeburg.

³² This probably refers to the German author whose name (in Latin) is *Petrus Baptista Burg(us) Genuensis*.

soldiers, will this rebellious city elude your power? Can it be that we will spend our entire life besieging this city? Will the unpunished citizens of Magdeburg bargain with us? They, who have caused us so much aggravation, will save their homeland, their homes, and their gold. We, who exhaust ourselves with so many labors in this siege, will we leave without a prize? So it will be, soldiers. Behold, even now, they send back our trumpeter. They surrender to Tyllius on fair conditions, but we are defrauded of deserved spoil and plunder. Will we — with our spirits crestfallen — carry home our tattered clothes and wounded bodies? Why should we not rather acquire these two cubits of clay entrenchment, before they reach an agreement? Let us invade the helpless populace, paving our way with the sword! The only effort will be to ascend the rampart: The rest — the murder of the powerless, the laying waste of houses — is the consolation; jewels [and] wealth, with which the people of Magdeburg abound, will be our reward. Well, soldiers, onward! Follow my lead! Let us not suffer [such] treachery to be without punishment, our injuries to be without vengeance, nor our labors to be without reward” (Book 2).³³ He finished speaking, and doing exactly what he had convinced them to do, he took out his sword. He entered the moat first, and having overcome its fortifications, encamped opposite the entrenchment. The soldiers, with equal alacrity, followed the leader and occupied the lower part of the entrenchment. They soon advanced to the higher part from which they toppled off the people of Magdeburg. When Falchenberg, who had resisted with greater success and had already begun to repel the imperial troops, fell dead from the lead armaments, they seized, plundered, and burned the city.

I empathize with the fate of the people of Magdeburg. But I believe that there is no other way that we can conquer that heavenly City which has been shown to the Prophet of Revelation as

³³ Burg(us) Petrus Baptista Genuensis, *Mars Sveco-Germanicus, sive Rerum a Gustavo Adolpho Sueciae Rege gestarum, Libri Tres, quibus Belli Sueco-Germanici initium [...] fidelissime referuntur*. Coloniae Agrippinae 1641, pp. 153-154.

the New Jerusalem. Behold, the brave leader, St. John the Baptist calls us to this by his words and deeds! With his face emaciated by fasting, his eyes sunk deeply into his head, [clothed] in camel hide, barefoot, pale, exhausted, but filled with an abundance of the Holy Spirit, he preached the Baptism of repentance. He provides the battering ram for storming Heaven. He shows that it [Heaven] must be seized by great violence: by beating it with sighs, breaking into it with fasting, and purchasing release from its guards through pious almsgiving. If such a holy stratagem fails, it is necessary to gain access through the overthrow of our bodies, that is through the mortification of those members that fight against our souls.

He who bears worthy fruits of penance, enters the Kingdom of Heaven as a violent captor; nor does God Himself dare to nor can oppose him, because He obliged Himself under such an oath [recorded] in Ezekiel: "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil." Therefore, "turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ez 33:11).

O sinners, for whose sake the Son of God became incarnate, suffered, was crucified, and died! Why do you wish to be damned rather than to be saved? If your sins forbid you access to Heaven, take up the battering ram of penance and you will shatter these bolts. You will open up for yourself by force a way to the empty seats of Angels who were banished from there. Do not hesitate, for you will obtain it, since one from the clan of thieves has already obtained it.

He was hanging on the gibbet to the right of our crucified Savior, and perhaps he heard Him beseeching the Eternal Father for His enemies. Thus he began to think and consider within himself: That One is without blemish, free from sin, entirely just and innocent, and nevertheless, is afflicted with dreadful punishment. Thereafter, with this stronger light having come upon him, he acknowledged his worst crimes, for which he had been condemned to a temporal death, although [would have been]

condemned to an eternal one. Despite assenting to the Hebrews, with whom he briefly had hurled blasphemies against the kindest Jesus, yet meanwhile, being changed by the sudden effulgence of the neighboring Sun, he recanted what he had earlier said. Boldly, he criticized his companion in punishment and blasphemy, reprimanding him: "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong" (Lk 23:40-41).

Thief! Have the courage to say even more! This innocent One whom you defend is God: He is your Redeemer; for you He undertakes willingly these sufferings that you admire. In fact, why do you not rather reconcile with Him by a mighty supplication? Do this by saying: "Jesus, remember me when [Y]ou come into [Y]our kingdom" (Lk 23:42) [NAB]. Was he [the thief] not able to conquer by these words the most humble heart of the Lord? Indeed, he conquered! The good Lord granted the guilty one [pardon] of his sin. "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with [M]e in Paradise."

Hearing these words, St. John Chrysostom, filled with much admiration, explains: "That Thief³⁴ bought the salvation of the world from the Cross; this thief steals the heavenly kingdom and inflicts violence upon the Divine Majesty."³⁵ How does he do this? [He does this] through sincere, though belated, penance. Recognizing his own sins, he feels contrition and, being filled with humility, he confesses to Jesus, the High Priest, crucified with him. Therefore, the aforementioned Doctor encourages us again in other words: "Did you see the thief and the captor of paradise, who did not forget his trade even on the cross, but stole the Kingdom through his own confession?" Thus St. Cyprian of Carthage, Bishop and Martyr, considering him [the thief] to be the most

³⁴ The author is using the word "thief" in reference to Jesus and to the thief crucified with Him. He has in mind a double analogy: Both are on the cross and both acquire salvation — Jesus for the entire world, the thief for himself.

³⁵ Chrysostomus, *De Cruce et Latrone*, hom., in: *CLCE*, t. III: *In SS. Marcum et Lucam*, p. 460.

fortunate, says: “Through his confession, the thief merited on the cross not only forgiveness, but he became a friend of Christ. He was sent to Heaven before others and was made a sharer in the kingdom. Through his confession he has been made companion in the martyrdom.”³⁶

This thief taught us that penance unseals or rather conquers Heaven: He taught us to steal, to rob, and to snatch the immortal riches. And so, I conclude with Augustine: “For we know that it [i.e., this grace of complete pardon] was granted not only to him. For when Christ the Lord graciously released such a guilty offender, He gave a pledge to the human race so that the absolution of one in despair might be the comfort and hope for all people and so that the personal gift might spread for the benefit of all.”³⁷

THE THIRD WORD OF THE CRUCIFIED ORATOR

*“[H]e said to [H]is mother, “Woman, behold, your son!”
Then [H]e said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!”
(Jn 19:26-27)*

**The Most Clement Virgin Mary Is the Mother of Sinners.
The Savior Entrusted Them to Her as Sons
in the Person of John.**

I rejoice that to the most chaste John this happiness [was given], that to him, a virgin, our Lord, dying on the Cross, entrusted His Virgin Mother. At the same time, I greatly rejoice that all kinds of sinners were entrusted as sons to the same most loving Mother of

³⁶ Cyprianus, serm. *De passione Domini*, in: *CLCE*, t. III, p. 459.

³⁷ The source of this quote was not able to be found in the works of St. Augustine.

God through the person of John. Indeed, Cornelius, the learned commentator on the Divine Word, addresses the Most Holy Mother in these words, as if speaking for Christ: "O Mother! Henceforth, be a courageous and magnanimous woman: In my stead, be the foundation, the rock, and the pillar of My Church, so as to avert and disperse the storms of trials arising against Her [i.e., the Church] by your steadiness, counsel, and prayer — not only now, but ever hereafter for all centuries to come, until the end of the world."³⁸

Sinners, take courage! The crucified Jesus entrusts His Church to His sweetest Mother: I say, that Church, "in which," on the testimony of Gregory the Great, "evil men with good men, reprobate with the elect, have been mixed together."³⁹ For it must be realized that in this way our Lord commended you, the evil men, and the good ones to the Virgin in the person of John: He gave her to you as a gracious Mother.

"He said to His Mother, 'Woman, behold,'" (pointing to each one of us, the good as well as the evil), "'your son.' Afterwards, [He said] to the disciple: (no doubt, to each man, the just as well as the sinner) 'Behold your Mother.'"

Hence, the very devout Richard of Saint-Laurent,⁴⁰ a remarkable venerator of the Mother of God, remarking on the place where she stood beneath the Cross of Jesus, very clearly corroborates my own thought in these words: "Christ, as He was dying, had her," namely, His Most Immaculate Mother, "to His north, which signifies sinners. It is as if He was saying that with her as mediator, He would extend His merciful right hand to frozen [i.e., hardened]

³⁸ *CLCE*, t. IV, p. 448.

³⁹ This exact text was not able to be found in the *Opera Omnia* of St. Gregory, but similar texts were found in at least three places. Cf. *PL* 76, *Opera Omnia S. Gregorii Papae I, cognomento Magni*, n. 1009, col. 589; n. 1637, col. 1285; n. 1638, col. 1286.

⁴⁰ Cf. Piolanti, Antonio, Riccardo di San Lorenzo, in: *ECat* X, 861-862, where we read that he was a theologian of the 13th century, and wrote, among other things, *Mariale* or *De laudibus B.M.V. libri XII*.

sinner.”⁴¹ For it is rare among men overwhelmed with many sins that they would not feel that they deserve eternal punishment. Therefore, please understand with what singular zeal of filial love and with what burning devotion one ought to surround the Virgin Mother, because one not only can but must anticipate certain salvation from her clemency.

A matter much worthy of mention — and not alien to my statement — is recorded by the Apostle-Prophet in the 12th chapter of his Revelation. He says there that he was shown “a Woman clothed with the Sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of the twelve stars” [Rev 12:1]; she was about to give birth. However, there was also a dragon, full of vigilance, waiting to devour the beloved Offspring of the Woman, as soon as He was delivered into the world. However, the heavenly Woman gave birth without any danger to the male child — a Son. In order that He might be taken away [from the] dragon’s jaws, “her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness” (Rev 12:5-6).

At that moment, Michael, the Commander of God’s Army, burst forth from the heavenly court. Attacking the dragon with his legion, he overwhelmed, cast out, and thrust him down to the earth.

With utmost reluctance, the ancient serpent accepted the defeat inflicted upon him by the auxiliary forces of the heavenly Woman. Henceforth, he again pursued her with renewed strength. But she expediently received two wings from Heaven and flew again into the desert. The inspired prophet writes: “And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had borne the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent into the desert” (Rev 12:13-14).

In this remarkable Woman — crowned with a starry diadem, girded with the light of the sun, with her sacred feet resting upon

⁴¹ Richardus a S. Laurentio, *De Laudibus B. Mariae Virginis Libri XII*, Duaci 1625, Lib. II, col. 86.

the moon instead of a footstool, possessing great wings — the most pious writer, Bernadino de Busti⁴² wants us to see none other than the Virgin Mother of God, the special Patroness and Advocate of the just but also of the much more numerous sinners. So, he thus explains this vision of John: “The Blessed Virgin protects us under her wings and shields us from ambush. She is the Woman to whom were given the great wings. One is the wing of mercy, under which sinners take refuge, so that they can be reconciled with God. The second is the wing of grace, under which the just stand, so that they might persevere in grace.”⁴³

But why is the first wing intended for protecting sinners, and only the other one for the just? Perhaps for this reason: Because the just can easily obtain the grace of God for themselves, since they are nearly always in the state of grace. On the other hand, through sin, sinners became enemies of God; so how then can their prayers be efficacious, if God does not listen to sinners?⁴⁴ This task was thus entrusted to the Blessed Virgin, so she would more frequently and more fervently intercede before God and her most beloved Son, practically for sinners only. Therefore, St. Germanus,⁴⁵ Patriarch of Constantinople, referencing this matter with great devotion, says: “With your Son, you enjoy the confidence and influence of a Mother, but we are condemned and do not dare to gaze upon the vastness of Heaven. By your intercession and advocacy, therefore, you make us members of the household of God. You grant salvation, and you free us from eternal punishment.”⁴⁶

⁴² Cf. Di Fonzo, Lorenzo, *Bernardino de' Bustis*, in: *ECat* II, 1405-1406, where we read that he was a renowned Franciscan preacher, and that he published a work on Our Lady called *Mariale de singulis festivitibus B.V.M.*, which was composed in 1492.

⁴³ Cf. Bernardinus de Busti, *Mariale*, Pars XI, Sermo II.

⁴⁴ Cf. Jn 9:31; Is 1:15; Prov 15:29.

⁴⁵ Cf. Ortiz De Urbina, Ignazio, *Germano I, patriarca di Constantinopoli, santo* († 733), in: *ECat* VI, 179-180.

⁴⁶ Cf. Germanus, *Homiliae de S. Virginis Deiparae Mysteriis*, IX: In *S. Mariae Zonam*, PG 98, 379-382.

Surely, God Himself wanted to draw our attention to this, speaking to sinners thus: "See now that I, even I, am [H]e, and there is no god beside [M]e; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of [M]y hand" (Dt 32:39). The erudite Richard [of Saint-Laurent] quite cleverly arranged the words of God into the form of a conversation. Some are assigned to Christ the Lord, the Judge of Sinners, and others are attributed to His Mother, the sinners' advocate. For our own immense comfort, he reasons in the following manner: "Often, those condemned by the justice of the Son, are set free by the mercy of the Mother: So it would seem as if the justice of the Son, and the mercy of the Mother are in disagreement. It is as if the Justice would say: 'I will slay and wound.' The Mercy of the Mother would then respond: 'And I will bring back to life and heal.' The mercy of the Mother still adds: 'And there is none that can deliver out of my hand.'" Concluding this dialogue, the inquisitive Father incites and encourages the sinner to flee to Mary for refuge as for a most certain haven from the wrath of God. Richard exclaims, "Therefore, may you flee to the protection of her hand, and there is nothing to be feared,"⁴⁷ absolutely nothing at all: not the violence of the accuser, nor the magnitude of the infernal tortures, nor the eternal prison of the condemned.

O most powerful and most tender City of Refuge! Under whose protection there is nothing for the sinner to fear, nothing, nothing at all! O Mother, you are much more merciful than can be said or thought! The guilty sons of Adam are received into your bosom, immune from all fear and danger of eternal death, and they obtain the assurance of a blessed Eternity.

Indeed, the goodness and kindness of the Lord our God have no limits. Therefore, so that He never has to chastise or destroy us, who shamefully have fallen, according to the rigor of His severe justice, in His solicitude He gave us the Virgin Mary as our intercessor before Him, just as for the Hebrews He had prepared Esther to be an intercessor before the king of the Medes

⁴⁷ Cf. Richard a S. Laurentio, *op. cit.*, col. 89.

and Persians. Haman, the favorite court official, stained with numerous crimes, desired to indulge his hatred for Mordecai, a true Israelite. Thus, he persuaded the king (by the name of Ahasuerus), that all the Jews who were within his provinces be murdered on one and the same day. Before long the ominous decree of that horrendous and godless massacre was announced in the royal city. Soon the decision was published regarding the wealth and the lives of such miserable people who, full of desperation and fear, grieved, wailed, lamented, and in the face of such violence fell from moaning and pain. "The courtiers went in haste by order of the king, and the decree was issued in Susa the capital. And the king and Ha'man sat down to drink; but the city of Susa was perplexed" (Est 3:15).

But behold, for those who lost all hope, hope did unexpectedly shine forth. Queen Esther, Hebrew by race, was made aware by Mordecai of the calamity [awaiting] her race. She turned to the king with such efficacious requests for reversing the edict, that not only was the cruel edict suddenly abolished, but in addition the author of the decree was punished by hanging: "So they hanged Ha'man on the gallows which he had prepared for Mor'decae" (Est 7:10).

Esther, the liberator of the Jews, is a type of the most gracious Queen of Heaven and Earth, the Advocate of sinners. For who of us does not know that an eternal sentence of punishment has been laid upon sinners? God says, "The soul that sins shall die" (Ez 18:20). By what kind of death? Eternal [death], as the terrible Judge proclaims the fatal sentence in Athanasius's symbol of faith:⁴⁸ "Those who have done evil will go into the eternal fire."⁴⁹

O sinners! O the desperate! Where, where will you escape before such a terrible and ill-fated sentence? Is there anyone who will set you free from it? Who will acquit you [of your sins]? Will it not be the "undefiled, totally pure Virgin, the Mother of God,

⁴⁸ St. Athanasius the Great (ca. 295-373), Patriarch of Alexandria, Doctor of the Church.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Breviarum Romanum, Pars Hiemalis*, Taurini-Romae 1952, pp. 61-63. [Hereafter *Breviarum Romanum* will be abbreviated as BR.]

the Queen of all, the Hope of the despairing?" For thus does St. Ephrem the Syrian⁵⁰ regard her.

Her venerator, St. Bernard bids every sinner to flee to her and says: "If you are troubled by the enormity of your sins, confused by the foulness of your conscience, terrified by the horror of the Judgment, so that you begin to be swallowed up by the pit of sadness, the abyss of despair, think of Mary! In dangers, in straits, in perplexity, think of Mary, call upon Mary,"⁵¹ for she is our neighbor and our own kinswoman; she is of our family. She will heed us more easily than the offended God; in fact, she reconciles us with Him.

Hugo of St. Victor⁵² says the same: "If you must pray and are afraid to approach God, direct your gaze upon Mary. There, you will not find anything to be feared: You see one of your own family."⁵³

Saint Ildephonse,⁵⁴ an exceptional venerator of the Virgin, adds, "Now come with me to the Virgin, lest without her, you will go speedily into Hell. Come: Let us hide under her mantle so that you would not be covered with shame as with a robe."⁵⁵

Bernadino de Busti exclaims, "O sinner! Do not allow yourself to plunge into the abyss of despair, but hasten with confidence to this most powerful and most merciful Advocate. She will run to your aid without delay, because she is able to do so."⁵⁶ Furthermore, she must do so, but for what reason? For in [the person of] John, sinners were entrusted to her as sons.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ortiz de Urbina, Ignazio, *Efrem, santo* (ca. 306-372), in: *ECat* V, 126-129.

⁵¹ Berndardus, *De Laudibus Virginis Matris, super, "Missus est,"* hom. II. *PL* 183, 743, col. 70.

⁵² Cf. Piolanti, A., *Ugo di San Vittore* († 1141), in: *ECat* XII, 711-712.

⁵³ The source of this text was not able to be found.

⁵⁴ Cf. Madoz, G., *Ildefonso da Toledo, santo* (617-667), in: *ECat* VI, 1620, where we read that his principal work is "*De virginitate S. Mariae contra tres infideles.*"

⁵⁵ Ildefonsus, *De Virginitate S. Mariae Liber [...]*, Parisiis 1576, f.7v (Ch. III).

⁵⁶ Bernardinus de Busti, *Mariale [...] de singulis festivitibus beatae Virginis per modum sermonum tractans [...]*, Pars XII, Sermo II: *De coronatione Mariae.*

I have no doubt that everyone wants to know why the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, predicted in various forms by the wisest King⁵⁷ guided by the Holy Spirit, was also shown to him in the form of the moon. Upon setting his eyes on her, the king asked, "Who is this that looks forth like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun[?]" (Cant 6:10). We shall understand this mystery if we remember that God, when creating the moon, imposed upon it the duty "to rule the night" [Gen 1:16], as He had fixed it in the heavenly firmament. What do you think the word "night" symbolizes? [It signifies] sinners. Paul, formerly Saul, confessed this frankly, writing to the Ephesians in this manner: "For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" (Eph 5:8).

Augustine, who later became an eminent saint, was not ashamed to confess before God that he was such [darkness] as he wrote: "Before the eyes of my vanity, there were great and dark clouds, such that I was not able to see the Sun of Justice and the light of Truth. I was enveloped in darkness, as a son of darkness: I loved my darkness, because I did not know the light. I was blind, and I loved blindness, and I walked toward darkness through darkness" (*Soliloquia*, Ch. 38).

Finally, who will doubt that in the Sacred Scriptures the night is frequently compared to sinners, if he contemplates at least one ray of the Sun of Clairvaux⁵⁸ who illumines the Sacred Page? Saint Bernard says, "The night is the treachery of the Jews. The night is the ignorance of the Pagans. The night is the heretical perversity; likewise, even now the night is the carnal and animal manner of the life of Catholics. And is it not night then, when what is from the Spirit of God is not received?"⁵⁹

"He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and in it there is no cause for stumbling. But he who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know

⁵⁷ St. Stanislaus is here referring to Solomon.

⁵⁸ This refers to St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

⁵⁹ The source of this text was not able to be found in the *Opera Omnia* of St. Bernard.

where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (1 Jn 2:9-11). Thus perceives Christ's Beloved Apostle. Therefore, if sinners are the night, then the light for them is provided by the Most Holy Virgin, whose very name means an Illuminator.⁶⁰ She "looks forth" from the face of God "like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun" (Cant 6:10).

Note how emphatically and beautifully the Roman Pontiff, Innocent III,⁶¹ develops this [theme] when he says, "Mary is 'the rising dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the Sun.' The moon shines at night, the morning star at daybreak, the sun in the day. However, the night is sin, dawn is penance, and the day is grace. Then whoever is in night, may he gaze at the Moon and entreat Mary, so that she might inspire his heart to repentance. For was there anyone who has called upon her during the night and was not heard by her?"

She transformed Mary the Egyptian⁶² from being a vessel of disgrace into a vessel of glory. She snatched Theophil⁶³ out of the power of the devil and sent him on to Heaven. Through a sudden blindness she brought into the light of beginning penance Wilhelm,⁶⁴ the Duke of Aquitaine, who — after an earnest conversion — had inadvertently sunk into the world of darkness.

I would run out of days trying to count the examples of those who, turning to this Moon from the night of sins, were restored to the light of grace by this Moon. Yet it is also for the benefit of sinners that the Virgin Mary is not only "fair as the moon," but also as "bright as the sun." Richard of Saint-Laurent demonstrates that "the sun is so generous that it never turns its rays away from any creature, however foul and filthy, if only it be exposed to

⁶⁰ Among the various etymologies for the name of "Mary," St. Stanislaus advocates the translation "Illuminator."

⁶¹ Innocent III († 1216), Pope. The text is taken from the sermon on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the B.V.M.

⁶² Mary had to intercede for her for the grace of conversion. Cf. the account in *BS*, I-XIII, Rome 1961-1970, vol. VIII, pp. 982-984.

⁶³ The verification of the story is found in *BS*, vol. XII, p. 340.

⁶⁴ Most likely St. Stanislaus is referring to St. William of Maleval († 1157), although nothing is known about his blindness.

its action... Similarly, Mary will not divert her tender gaze even from the most wretched sinner who faithfully calls upon her.”⁶⁵ And why would she turn away, since each individual sinner was entrusted to her as a son in John: “Woman, behold your son”?

Come here, despairing sinner! You, who already are sinking to the bottom of hell under the weight of your sins, and think that your salvation has been lost; come here, hasten to the feet of Mary: “Behold your Mother.” Why do you hesitate? What do you fear? Why do you fall into fright? Do you hear John Baptist Spagnoli, known for his holiness, the Virgil of Mount Carmel, singing of her tenderness?

“In adversities she is our common Haven,
She grants you the grace even before you ask her.
She extends her maternal arms to the miserable.”

God, the Father of mercies, desires that — after Him — we place all our hope of eternal life in this Mother of ours. For He has already spoken about this to St. Catherine of Siena, that prodigy of sanctity, the illustrious star of the Dominican Family: “Out of my Goodness and respect for the Incarnate Word, it was granted to Mary, the glorious Mother of my only begotten Son, that no one, whether righteous or sinner, who flies to her in devout veneration would be plundered or devoured by the infernal demon in any manner. For she has been chosen, prepared, and ordained by me as the sweetest bait for catching men and especially sinners.”⁶⁶

Therefore, I conclude with the words of Fulbert of Chartres:⁶⁷ “Let sinners come to her, beating their sinful chests with interior weeping; and they also will receive their desired forgiveness if they truly repent.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Richardus a S. Laurento, op. cit., liber VII, col. 448, F.453, F.454.

⁶⁶ Cf. Chaterina da Siena, *Libro della Divina providentia*, Bologna 1475, cap. 139.

⁶⁷ Cf. Del Re, Niccolo, *Fulberto di Chartres* (ca. 960-1028), in: *ECat* V, 1799-1800.

⁶⁸ Cf. Fulbertus, Carnotensis Ep., *De Nativitate Beatissimae Mariae Virginis*, in *Sermones ad populum*, Sermo IV: PL 141, 324, B.

THE FOURTH WORD OF THE CRUCIFIED ORATOR

“My God, [M]y God, why have [Y]ou forsaken [M]e?”
(Mt 27:46)

The Power of Prayer Restores the Sinner to Communion with God.

Just like wicked Calvin smells of blasphemy in the entirety of his teachings, he likewise reveals himself as exceedingly impious and blasphemous, — as Cornelius à Lapide observes — in his explanation of the eternal Word’s sigh to the eternal Father. For he [Calvin] affirms that Christ the Lord uttered a cry of despair; and — as it was allegedly true — being stripped of His omnipotence, He was not able to do anything for His own salvation. For this the Jewish priests mocked Him, saying: “He saved others; [H]e cannot save [H]imself” (Mt 27:42).

What an abominable blasphemy! What a foolish and heinous interpretation of Sacred Scripture! Indeed, St. Leo the Great comments on this word of our Lord more wisely and venerably. He says “That cry is not a complaint but a teaching.”⁶⁹ For when His Incarnate Son uttered in torment a sigh to God the Father, namely to the Father with whom He is always equal, He is not so much complaining of having been abandoned, as He is teaching us: When it seems as if we have been abandoned by God, zealously persevere in prayer so that He will return; insistently beseech Him so that we may be reconciled with Him. I will now prove this [statement] at length.

God loves to take Himself away from man for two reasons. Firstly, when He wants to test what the man is capable of by his own strength, or at least what the man who counts on his own strength wishes [to be capable of], even though he knows that he

⁶⁹ Leo Magnus, Tractatus 67: *De Passione Domini*, CChrL 138A, p. 412.

cannot do anything without help from Heaven. Secondly, when a person, having committed a mortal sin, detaches himself from God, and passes under the jurisdiction of the infernal spirit. This is what the most excellent God complained about in Jeremiah, saying: "For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer 2:13).

We are all the people of God, as long as we obey His commandments, as long as we abide by His will. But whenever we tarnish our souls with sin, by withdrawing from the Creator to creatures, we become at once rebels in relation to Him, and we surrender ourselves to the power of the dreadful tyrant of hell. Theologians say that we drink from the fountain of all good as long as we remain in the state of grace; however, having lost the grace through sin, we draw out the most turbid water from the Cocytus and Styx. Indeed, how loathsome are the waters in which we plunge our mouths, when we do not resist the temptations of the demons. In this very manner the world-renowned teacher Jerome formulates his teaching, as he clarifies the aforementioned words of God. He says: "It is worth noting that the fountain is something permanent and possesses life-giving water. On the other hand, the wells and pools are filled with water from streams and with muddy waters of the fields and rains."⁷⁰ Therefore, God "who is the fount of life" calls demons the "broken cisterns." Such wells [cisterns] are dug out by someone who, stained by disgraceful deeds, shamefully abandons God and comes under the power of demons. Whoever forsakes the Fount of Life follows the maker of death, for whom the magical drink of Circe is more delicious than the nectar of Heaven.

But now, we must consider: By what means can we call back God who was put to flight by the stench of our sins? I say: by the fragrance of prayer.

Demons delight in foul smells; God enjoys fragrance. Fragrance expels the former, and attracts the Latter. Sacred Scripture, the

⁷⁰ Cf. Hieronymus, [*Commentarius*] in *Hieremiam*, I, 22: CChrL 74, 17-18.

teacher of the virtues, confirms this with the most brilliant testimony. The young Tobias was going with Archangel Raphael, hidden under the human form of the most faithful Achates,⁷¹ into the Rages in Media. When they followed the road near the river Tigris, Tobias desired to enter the river, perhaps to refresh his weary feet in the water. When he did so [acting] with more eagerness than caution, “A fish leaped from the river and would have swallowed the young man (Tob 6:2). Scared to death, the noble youth fell into despair. But as assistance was near at hand in this instance, he called out to his companion: “Sir, he cometh upon me” (Tob 6:3) [DRB]. Raphael, giving courage to the thoroughly frightened boy, ordered him to immediately and bravely seize the fish, pull it ashore, kill it, disembowel it, and keep its heart, liver, and gall. The boy, having survived such a great danger, eagerly did as commanded and [then] asked in a more familiar manner his wiser companion: What purpose do the innards of the fish serve? Raphael, explaining their extraordinary powers, said: “As for the heart and liver, if a demon or evil spirit gives trouble to any one, you make a smoke rise from these before the man or woman, and that person will never be troubled again” (Tob 6:8). Finally, it was proved true when Tobias — joined by the bond of marriage to Sarah, the daughter of Raguel (to whom he came with the purpose of collecting a debt) — with the smoke rising from the burnt heart of the fish, chased from her the very powerful demon that had triumphed over the several youths before him.”⁷²

Nicholas of Lyra, an eminent exegete of Sacred Scripture, after considering this matter, quite aptly interprets this smoke in a way that harmonizes with our topic. Here are Nicholas’s words: “That smoke arising from the fire signifies the power of prayer of

⁷¹ St. Stanislaus is here referring to Achates, the companion of Aeneas, appearing in the *Aeneid*, whose faithfulness became proverbial. The name Raphael uses in the book of Tobit is actually Azariah.

⁷² Cf. Tob 6:14.

Tobias and Sarah, through which the Angel Raphael expelled the demon from Sarah.”⁷³

To better comprehend this, it is necessary to agree with the philosophers: Two contradictions cannot exist in one and the same object. They fight each other until the weaker is thrown out by the stronger. And what is more opposed to God’s grace than sin? What is more hateful and hostile to God than the demon?

Therefore, do you wish to regain God’s grace, of which sin has deprived you? Do you wish to call God, whom you have banished through your wicked inclination toward Satan, back into your hearts? Sinners! First, drive out sin by the incense of ardent prayer and, at the same time, make a break with its source — the tyrant of hell. Soon, both the grace of God — and God Himself — will come back to you. The smoke rising from the fire of the burning fish’s intestines expelled the demon from Sarah and indeed rendered God favorably disposed to her. For prayer, since it is odious to the demon, is therefore pleasing to God. It routs the devil and invites God; furthermore, it draws Him as if bound into the heart of the prayerful one.

The piety of Noah can serve as an example for us here. As soon as Noah, the captain of the ark of the entire world, that is, his “Argo” which preserved the entire world within itself, came out onto the earth after the falling of the waters, he recognized that first he must reconcile himself with the God of Heaven. “Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar” (Gen 8:20). Meanwhile, what happened? “And when the LORD smelled the pleasing odor, the LORD said in [H]is heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done’” (Gen 8: 21).

Heavens! Whence this sudden change of God? Before, when He was angry, He had said: “Cursed is the ground because of you;

⁷³ Cf. Lyranus, Nicolaus, *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa Interlineari, et Nicolai Lyranii Postilla*, [...], t. II, Venetiis 1588, f.288r.

in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life" (Gen 3:17-18). Now He says something quite different: "I will never again curse the ground." Beforehand, touched within by pain in the heart, He said: I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them" (Gen 6:6-7). Now, completely appeased and calm, entirely good and gracious, He proclaims something different: "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done"(Gen 8:21). Why such a sudden and miraculous change in someone who is unchangeable? Because "the Lord smelled the pleasing odor," say the Scriptures [Gen 8:21]. It is as if they were saying: Hitherto, God was so angry and furious that He completely destroyed the world while the harsh smell of the crimes of men filled His nostrils. However, when the fragrance of thanksgiving, the odor of supplication, the aroma of prayer reinvigorated His nostrils, immediately, as if transformed into someone else, He holds back His right hand, and promises the most abundant fecundity of the earth and the safety and peace of the human race. "I will never again curse the ground," He said, "neither will I ever again destroy every living creature."

O blessed aroma, which so perfectly reconciled the earth and its inhabitants with God! But here one may ask: Where did this aroma so pleasant to God come from? From the flesh of immolated animals or from somewhere else? The first is ruled out, since smoke and an unpleasantly strong smell typically come forth from the burning of meat. Therefore, there was a different origin of this aroma, and indeed it was so abundant, that its intensity checked the strong smell of the [burning] flesh. Affirming this [fact] strongly, the Bishop⁷⁴ [John Chrysostom], famous for his golden eloquence, declared: "Thanks to its very intense aroma, the disposition of the one offering the sacrifice removed

⁷⁴ St. Stanislaus has in mind St. John Chrysostom.

the smoke, the stench, and the great unpleasantness that arose from the burning animals.”⁷⁵

Quoting Rupert,⁷⁶ I will add: “For God is not flesh or body to delight in such a smell. But since He is a spirit, in corporeal sacrifices He considers the heart of the one making the offering, and if it is pious, the gracious Lord is pleased by his contrition, more than man is delighted by the smell of flesh, no matter how pleasant.”⁷⁷ Look, look how pleasing is prayer flowing from a contrite and loving heart to the excellent God! How efficiently it dissipates the stench of committed sins! How its odor makes God exceedingly gracious toward man!

Now, let us reaffirm this with the oft-repeated example narrated by the Eternal Truth. “Two men,” said the Lord, “went up to the temple to pray” (Lk 18:10-14). Who or what kind [of people]? “One a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.” Both were well-known; both were high-ranking. Let us listen carefully to each one’s prayer. What boastful words did the Pharisee’s lips utter? He said: “God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector” (upon whom he gazed with disdain). You seem to have prayed well, Pharisee. For you gave thanks to God for having preserved you in the state of grace. Nor do you conduct yourself entirely wrongly, because you do not conform yourself with sinners, whom God Himself hates. In fact, I also form the same opinion of you. But does the eternal Judge form a similar opinion? See [the Gospel of] St. Luke, and you will know.

And now you, tax collector: Why do you pray with eyes cast down to earth? Why do you sigh, striking your breast with your fist? He says, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” Is that right? Are you a sinner? Is that the reason why you look down, and do not

⁷⁵ Cf. Chrysostomus, Ioannes, *Homiliae in Genesim*, 27, 2 (In Cap. VIII, Gen.): PG 53, 242.

⁷⁶ St. Rupert of Deutz (Tuitiensis; ca. 1075-1129) was a theologian and Benedictine abbot.

⁷⁷ Cf. Rupertus Tuitiensis, *De Sancta Trinitate et Operibus eius, Commentarium in Genesim IV*, 28: CChrM 21, 314.

dare [to look at] Heaven? Please, listen: Are you attempting, perhaps, by expulsing sins with your fist to call back God whom your sins put to flight from your heart? At once, I ask: Does this manner of praying accomplish or attain something? He accomplished much and attained much, for he received what he hardly dared to expect: He was restored to communion with God, he “went down to his house justified.” Justified? But why? St. Paulinus says, “The sinner with a contrite heart, who is his own accuser, will be accepted and will receive forgiveness of the sins confessed” (Letter 18).⁷⁸ This is perfect justification, the remission of sins, and God’s return to the penitent heart. How great is the power of humble prayer which brings this about!

Saint Mark, another Evangelist, says that our Savior cast out by His power seven demons from a woman who “was a sinner” (Lk 7:37). Who is more miserable than the one abandoned by God and inhabited upon His allowance with so many and so cruel torturers (that is to say, vices)? However, He, who had come to save sinners and not the just, not only freed this miserable, possessed woman, but in addition He exalted her to such a degree of glory and sanctity, that it is difficult to define which was a more excellent work of the Divine omnipotence and goodness: the creation of the world and all things or the conversion of Magdalene?

If, however, you want to know, what obtained that grace for the greatest sinner from the Redeemer of the human race, see the Gospel of St. Luke, and [works of] St. Augustine — the prince of Doctors — and you shall learn. Indeed, St. Luke narrates that this very infamous woman, possessed by seven demons, burst with great boldness into the home of a certain Pharisee where Christ was dining. She lowered herself to the feet of Christ. She not only moistened His feet with a great shower of tears, but even washed them. Having washed them, she doused them with a most precious liquid and, having doused them, she wiped them dry with a particular ornament of her head, namely: her light-colored hair. Being released from the internal torturers at that very instant,

⁷⁸ Cf. Paulinus Nolanus, Pontius Meropius, *Epistulae*, CChrL 29/1, 406.

she then heard from the mouth of God those most gracious words, that testimony of reconciliation with God, the pledge of the remission of her sins and that symbol of eternal friendship with the eternal King: "Your sins are forgiven" (Lk 7:48).

Next, St. Augustine, contemplating diligently, as he knew how, this astounding and admirable affair, attributes it to a silent, but very efficacious prayer. He thus meditates upon Magdalene beseeching Jesus: "She shed tears of the heart and washed the feet of the Lord by an act of the confession of her sins. She dried His feet with her hair, kissed and anointed them. She spoke silently: She did not utter speeches, but showed devotion."⁷⁹ Therefore, she merited well to hear: "Your sins are forgiven." After the expulsion of the demons, My grace is already within you, a love for Me, not a love for the world. God said this; God accomplished this. Thus it will remain forever.

If [you are] deserted by God, possessed by an evil spirit, deprived of grace or burdened with transgressions, whoever you are: Groan, beat your chest, shed tears, cry out, shout out: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" Power will be given you from on high, the demons will be put to flight and your sins will be forgiven. You will be filled with God's grace and glory. I conclude with Isidore of Pelusium: "Whoever strikes his chest and heart with compunction, and joining the choirs of heart-rending and penitential words, dips his pen of penance into grief's chalice of tears at night, will not be deprived [of the benefits flowing from] the death of Christ undertaken for sinners."⁸⁰

⁷⁹ The source of this text was not able to be found in the works of St. Augustine.

⁸⁰ The source of this text was not able to be found.

THE FIFTH WORD OF THE CRUCIFIED ORATOR

“I thirst.” (Jn 19:28)

**The Thirst for [the Salvation of] Souls,
Which Torments Christ,
Mightily Contributes to Their Conversion.**

Surius, a well-known writer from the Carthusian community, recounts that a certain young man by the name of Landelin from the high French nobility was diverted from his decision to enter religious life by the wicked attempt of his relatives, and having unloosed in a turbulent age the reigns of his freedom, he finally joined a band of robbers. He was eventually made their leader. When one night he rallied his own [men] to plunder the house of a certain wealthy Croesus, he realized that he was missing one of his closest [men] who was bereft of his life by a sudden blow of death. He was so overwhelmed by sadness on his account that in place of looting he plunged into sluggish inactivity. Behold, he saw in a dream that the evil spirits abducted into hell the one on account of whose death he was depressed. However, the dream was interrupted by a good spirit (which was his guardian angel): “Hey there! Listen! Are you still going to be his companion?” Terrified at the sight of the infernal abyss, he did not wish to play Theseus to his Pirithous. Having purged his dream and his sins, he changed so much that he visited the threshold of the Holy Apostles three times. He [also] constructed many monasteries and brought about numerous miracles. [Finally,] laying down in ashes and sackcloth, he died a saintly death.

So Landelin was much benefited by his descent into hell while still alive, and it was not in vain that he saw through the eyes of his soul (although in a dream) the bath prepared for sinners.

Truly, I do not intend here to convert anyone from an evil path to a good one by showing the immensity of eternal tortures.

Rather, may the ever-burning desire for the salvation of souls, which the Son of God always so strongly felt, be for each one an incentive [for conversion]. It is precisely this desire that I wish to present at length.

I invite you, kind reader of this discourse, to endeavor to please God ever more if the grace of God has [already] taken you to the highest degree of perfection. But if, through love of created things, you have withdrawn from your Creator, I beg you: “Turn around! This is not a good path; turn around! All who have followed this path have died.” Turn around and give to the thirsting Jesus a drink from the chalice of your conversion so desired [by Him].

As the Holy Scriptures⁸¹ recount that famous David — the most ideal among the fallen kings — when hiding out of fear of the persecutors in the caves of Adullam, felt an intense desire to drink from the purest fountain [located] near the gates of his native Bethlehem. The fountain attracted men to its crystal water. However, it was then occupied by the Philistine enemies. And thus, not hiding that he was thirsty, in the presence of his fellow soldiers he cried out in these words: “O that some one would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!” (2 Sam 23:15).

Someone may be surprised at such a slight mortification, and on the other hand, such a coarse and overt carnality of this very manly — and also very saintly — king, on account of which he exposed three valiant heroes of his army to a very obvious jeopardy. To get to the cistern, they had to break through the circle of enemy lines so that they might indulge the palate of the king. In addition, someone could have censured David — an experienced warrior as he was — that he chose such a place for himself and the army, where they had to suffer the lack of the most necessary thing, namely, water.

However, I perceive a great mystery here. David is the righteous, the type of the world’s Savior. Among the various Fathers, St. Remigius indicated this quite clearly in these words: “The

⁸¹ Cf. 1 Chron 11:15-19.

word ‘David’ means ‘strong hand’ or ‘desirable to see.’ This etymology points to Christ who is a strong hand because He conquered the devil, and distributed his spoils. He is desirable to see, for not only men but even Angels desire to see Him.”⁸²

Thus, the thirsty David alludes to the thirsting Christ. However, so that we might more solidly understand the matter, we ought to reflect upon the meaning of the word “Bethlehem,” near whose gates is found this famous cistern, which inflamed in David — representing Christ — such a mysterious thirst. Gregory the Great says: “Bethlehem means the house of bread.”⁸³ Near this bread, water is found: For the Lord Jesus was never hungry or thirsty for anything but for the salvation of souls. For that reason, when the disciples caringly urged Him once, “Rabbi, eat,” He said to them in response: “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” In order that they might better understand Him, He added: “My food is to do the will of [H]im who sent [M]e, and to accomplish [H]is work” (Jn 4:31-34).

What kind of work? The famous Albert the Great says, “Calling men to conversion and bringing them back to the Father.”⁸⁴

Therefore, when our Savior, in the person of David, desired water from the well of Bethlehem, “He hungered and thirsted not for human food and drink but for [our] salvation,” as the Bishop of Milan [St. Ambrose] noted.

Allow me to examine this most powerful thirst for souls, which still torments the Son of God. Natural history scholars tell us that there is a kind of snake called *dispadēs* which, biting a man, injects into him such a harmful poisonous toxin that he suddenly has an intense desire to drink [water]. And although he would drink constantly, he will not quench his thirst.

But let us return to our topic. That ancient serpent — the devil — when it bit the Progenitors of our race, released into them

⁸² The source of this text was not able to be found.

⁸³ Gregorius Magnus, *In I Reg. Expositiones*, PL 79, n. 375.

⁸⁴ Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Ioannem*, In *Evang. Ioannis*, Ch. IV, p. 34. In: *B. Alberti Magni Ratisbonensis Episcopi, Ordinis Praedicatorum Oper Omnia*, Parisiis, vol. 24, p. 180.

such an awful venom that in Adam, we all die. On the other hand, it is most certainly true that Christ our Lord was in no way infused with this potent toxin of the hellish serpent, since he was born of Mary, the Conqueror of the serpent, who likewise was not only untouched by sin but even by the impulse to sin. He clothed Himself with the robe of human flesh primarily with the goal to provide a medicine for our disease. Out of love for us, He took upon Himself our weakness — and as the prophet testifies — He carried our infirmities and bore our pains (Is 53:4). “But [He] emptied [H]imself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Phil 2:7). He burned with such a constant thirst for the salvation of our souls that it would have seemed that He was somehow stung by the hellish serpent. Therefore, Cardinal Hugo said beautifully: “It is strange [...] that the Fount should thirst [...] all this, however, is for us.”⁸⁵

He once cried out in the midst of the Temple of Jerusalem: “If any one thirst, let him come to [M]e and drink” (Jn 7:37). In the person of David, He also revealed His thirst, crying out: “O that some one would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!” All this is on account of us. Let us proceed.

Jesus was heading — as His beloved disciple recounts — from Judea into Galilee through Samaria; and when He had come to the city of Sychar, “Jesus, wearied as [H]e was with [H]is journey, sat down beside the well” (Jn 4:6). Meanwhile, a woman came with a bucket to draw out some water. He said to her: “Give [M]e a drink” (Jn 4:7). O woman a hundred times blessed, who was asked for a drink by Him who is the Creator of all water! Quick, quick, immerse the bucket into the fount, and refresh with your cold water the Fount of all good things. But, she does not want to. Why [not]? Because she declares that she is a Samaritan. (She dares to dispute with Eternal Wisdom.) “How is it that you,

⁸⁵ Cf. Hugo, *In Evangelium secundum Ioannem*, cap. IV: *Ugonis de S. Charo S. Romane Ecclesiae tit. S. Sabinae Cardinalis Primi Ordinis Praedicatorum, tom. VI, in Evangelia secundum Matthaeum, Marcum, Lucam, Ioannem*, Coloniae Agrippinae 1621, f.304v (ad verba: *Dicit ei Iesus: Da mihi bibere*).

a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” (Jn 4:9).

You may already wish to know, curious mortals, what significance has the reason, for which the Samaritan refused Christ a drink? Listen therefore to the most amiable Abbot of Clairvaux, who ponders this topic in this meditation: “Samaritan means ‘vain spirit,’ [a spirit] which seeks only vanity, pleasure, licentiousness, greed, and all the worldly desires.” Is that not so? Such was the Samaritan woman! Vain, frivolous, licentious, greedy, full of worldly desires! Therefore, who could wonder that she was unwilling to give a sip of cold water to a true Jew, the greatest enemy of such vices?

Consider how greatly Jesus was oppressed by thirst when He asked this woman for a drink; with what great longing He desired the salvation of this vain, arrogant, and wild person. Albert the Great teaches that “He desired more the salvation of that soul than to drink water.”⁸⁶

Indeed, the first cause of His being “tired” was His rather hurried trip to the city; lest the time of her arrival at the well, known to Him from all eternity, might pass by. The Golden Doctor says, “The Lord knew at which hour the others rested and that she was accustomed to walk to get water. Therefore, He came at the sixth hour.”⁸⁷ Paul of Bourges⁸⁸ adds, “Lest it may seem that He — who regulates all things — came by chance, He guided her thoughts by a secret impulse so that she would arrive when the Fount of Life — Christ — was there.”⁸⁹ Since He arrived before her, He awaited the Samaritan woman “as was the custom of those weary,” says Cajetan, “propped against the fount — that is resting His arm on the edge of the well as a support for His head. Thus the weary usually sit.”⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Ioannem*, In Evang. Ioannis, cap. IV, 8 op. cit., p. 159.

⁸⁷ The source of this text was not able to be found.

⁸⁸ Paul of Bourges († 1435) was a Dominican exegete.

⁸⁹ The source of this text was not able to be found.

⁹⁰ Cf. Caietanus, *Evangelia cum Commen[tariis] Caietani Rev.mi. D.D. Thome de Vio Caietani Cardinalis s. Xisti:in quattuor Evangelia et Acta Apostolorum*

Then, someone among the more recent authors⁹¹ states that by the word “thus” (Jn 4:6 in the commentary of Cajetan), St. John surely wanted to denote a solicitude full of longing as well as an ardent love that burned the Divine Shepherd in the tireless search for the lost sheep.

Next, consider if you would the voice of the One speaking to her, as Toletus says: “It is a voice of supplication, and He who can command the Angels, begs the vain harlot and unfaithful woman (for such was the Samaritan). He is so much concerned with the salvation of people that He urgently begs for something [...] which is of highest importance to us all, as well.”⁹²

Finally, becoming aware of her stubbornness and her unawareness of her own good, He says: “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked [H]im and [H]e would have given you living water” (Jn 4:10). Saint Bernardino of Siena, meditating upon these words and recollecting the Canaanite woman, who once endeavored with a nagging and downright importune supplication to coerce the Lord to heal her daughter, said these words: “When the Canaanite woman, burning with love, seeking with solicitude, begging with loud cries, asks for the healing of her daughter, namely, of her soul, Jesus draws back from her, does not speak to her, and scorns her like a dog, and makes an impression as if He is repulsed by her. But here on the contrary, He pursued this Samaritan woman, even when she resisted His inspirations.”⁹³

O blind Samaritan! O creature so vain, frivolous, sensual, dissolute, and burning with concupiscence; filled with the desires of the flesh, of the eyes, of the pride of life, and of the pleasures of this world! Give (for your salvation, I beg you), give drink to your

[...] *Commentarii*..., s.l. 1530, f.152v.

⁹¹ It is not known which author St. Stanislaus has in mind.

⁹² Cf. Toletus, Franciscus, *Francisci Toleti Doctoris Theologi Cordubensis e Societate Iesu, in Sacrosanctum Iohannis Evangelium Commentarii*, Romae 1590, p. 200 (Caput IIII).

⁹³ Cf. Bernardinus Senensis, *S. Bernardini Senensis Ordinis Fratrum Minorum Opera Omnia*, Sermo XXXI (Feria Sexta post III Dominicam in Quadragesima: De conversione Samaritanae), t. IV, Florentiae 1956, p. 97, vv. 10-14.

thirsty Savior: Hand yourself over to Him! Why do you delay your own conversion? See, after seeking you, He is tired, and being tired, He sits down, and while He is sitting down, He seeks the opportune moment for speaking to you through holy inspirations or other means. When He repeats this effort, you disregard Him. He offers Himself to you, you turn away; He shows how much He is willing and eager to forgive you so many and such serious sins, but do you not see this. Finally, He asks for a drink of your tears, and do you grant it? When He asks, "Give me a drink," He does not desire anything else but the pure water from the fount of your eyes.

But I come now to the ultimate thirst of my Lord. He hung on the tree of the Cross in between two thieves. He was covered with many, many wounds; His hands and feet were pierced, and He was bloodstained by the crown of thorns. Moreover, He was flayed with the bitterest sneers of the blasphemers. Meanwhile the Sun, terrified at such a dreadful spectacle and at such a monstrous sin of men against their Creator, hid itself from their eyes. A black night covered the whole world. Furthermore, the earth sighed, the heavens thundered, rocks were split asunder, and the veil of the temple was torn. All of nature was agitated.

Only Jesus, remaining immobile in unspeakable torments, cried out in a slow voice: "I thirst." Here Magdalene, ardently compassionate for her Liberator, lamented in silence: Ah! You cry "I thirst!": These rocks have no water. The streams flow only from [our] eyes. Drink those. The Most Holy Mother and the other women present at this most sorrowful tragedy did nothing contrary: They offered their tears to their Beloved Savior to quench His thirst.

Only a soldier, seldom moved to compassion, awakened the thirst of the heavenly Emperor with a new wickedness. "So they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to [H]is mouth" (Jn 19:29). Thus John, the disciple of Christ, relates about the disciples of Mars. I believe that the Lord did then the very same thing as He did shortly before with the wine mixed with gall: Namely, "but when [H]e tasted it, [H]e would not drink it"

(Mt 27:34). He, who for so long was tormented by another thirst, did not wish to drink at all. For He who did not eat or drink for forty days did not desire water. The devout Blossius rightly concludes: "He had a different thirst, namely, for suffering more and for demonstrating His love for us more clearly."⁹⁴

Here, I will stop briefly and ask the most learned students of nature: What do deer do when struck by a poisoned arrow or when bitten by a serpent? Solinus alone responds for all of them, telling me: "They hurry athirst to the fount of the waters, and they vomit out the venom into those purest waters." In that way, they extinguish the thirst produced by the venom with the waters, and they are freed from the venom [that was] swallowed.

Now back to Jesus, whom, (in my opinion) the Sacred Scriptures call the Deer. For thus boasts the holy Bride, proud of his speed and agility: "My beloved is like a gazelle, or a young stag" (Cant 2:9). The heavenly Deer, struck with two arrows — the arrow of love for humans and the arrow poisoned with our sins — sustained lesser injuries from the sharp tips of the nails. For He assures [us] that the great thirst tortures Him [more], when He cries out while nailed to the Cross: "I thirst." Ah! For what do You thirst, my Lord, for what do You thirst? He answers through the lips of St. Augustine: "My thirst is for your salvation; My thirst is for your redemption; I thirst for your faith,"⁹⁵ O mortals! I thirst for your conversion, O sinners!

Ah! Pious souls as well as the wicked ones: Cool the thirst of your Redeemer with the sweetest tears. This is the most appropriate drink for this thirst. This fount greatly desires to reach this Deer, pierced with the most poisonous arrows of your sins. Repent, therefore; be converted to Him through fasting, weeping, beating of your chests, and pouring out before Him the entire ocean of tears, which are beneficial to you and most desired by Him. Give drink to the thirsty, give the drink of tears

⁹⁴ Cf. Blossius, Ludovicus, *Praeclara Admodum Dominicae Passionis Explicatio*, in *D. Ludovici Blossi Abbatis Laetiensis...Opera...*, Coloniae 1606, p. 519.

⁹⁵ The source of this text was not able to be found.

overflowing from a contrite heart. For, unless you act most promptly and generously, fear the eternal thirst. For the time is coming, in which this thirsty Deer will be transformed into the most severe Judge. Then He will condemn finally those wicked men who had contempt for His most ardent thirst and their own salvation: “I was thirsty and you gave me no drink [...] Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire” (Mt 25:42, 41).

O sinner! So that you will not burn for eternity, refresh Christ who burns with thirst for your conversion.

THE SIXTH WORD OF THE CRUCIFIED ORATOR

“It is finished.” (Jn 19:30)

Penance Is Most Perfect When It Is Consummated with Life Itself.

Commencing any human work, but not completing it successfully, never brings glory; it is always ridiculed. Often, this results in a detriment and not a profit. What glory is there in beginning many things beautifully and then finishing badly or abandoning them undone? It is not commencement but completion that brings glory. Hence, God, the Creator of the Universe, after He commended the works of the other five days, did not give His solemn approval — “God saw that it was good” — to the second day’s work. The good God recognized all other works as good, [and] only the Firmament — as if unfinished — He did not praise. Why is this so? To this question, Rupert responds: “This is because the firmament — although a thing unique and beautiful to see — nevertheless, according to the intention of the One who made it,

is not one that is whole.”⁹⁶ It was not approved like the other works of God’s right hand, because — in the mind of God — it seemed to be only started and not finished.

This is a lesson for those who begin their interior transformation: Once their penance is started, they ought to persevere in it, even until death. For penance is only perfect in every way and irrefutably deserving of eternal glory, when its completion comes with the end of one’s life. I will elaborate more upon this matter.

Well suited to my theme is the well-known advice of the heavenly Teacher, who — through an elegant comparison — taught us to persevere in penance once it is begun. Considering this matter, He says: “For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build, and was not able to finish’” (Lk 14:28-30).

Now, He speaks about those who build, meaning not only those who erect new houses from their very foundations, but also those who repair the old ones. The human soul is the House of God, especially the soul of such a man who — burning with true love of God — has not become cold in the fulfillment of God’s commandments. The Son of God stated this very clearly in these words [in the Gospel] of John: “If a man loves [M]e, he will keep [M]y word, and my Father will love him, and [W]e will come to him and make our home with him” (Jn 14:23).

One may ask: What is this efficacious love you speak of that turns human souls into the House of God? Answering this question, Gregory, the Great Pontiff and Doctor, states: “Only when we restrict ourselves from harmful pleasures do we truly love God and keep His commandments. For someone who constantly errs through his illicit desires surely does not love God, because he opposes God by his will.”⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Cf. Rupertus Tuitiensis, *De Sancta Trinitate et Operibus eius, Commentarium in Genesim*, l. I, 30, CChrL 21, 159.

⁹⁷ Cf. Gregorius Magnus, *S. Gregorii Magni XL Homiliarum in Evangelia Lib. II*, Homil. XXX: PL 76, 1220 (n. 1575).

Thus, it follows that the soul steeped with pleasures and enticements or depraved with sin is a collapsed house of God. O man, you poison the dwelling of Christ and of His Eternal Father. What is more: You smash and destroy it as often as you mar yourself by wicked vices and fall even lower. Therefore, do you want to rebuild the ruins of this Divine Tabernacle, of this Temple of the Holy Spirit? You can easily achieve this through persistent and rigorous penance.

Saint Jerome exposes this entire matter right before our eyes by relating the example of the traitor Judas: “The wicked Judas, when he was an apostle, was also the House of God. The devil came and Judas accepted the morsel, and immediately Satan entered him (Jn 13:27), and his house collapsed, and it was never rebuilt again.”⁹⁸ Why? “Because he did not do penance. If someone truly does penance after having sinned, his house will be rebuilt after its destruction.”

Indeed, for this reconstruction to be perfect and praiseworthy and not just usable, it is necessary to persevere in penance as long as one lives, lest the devil say about him with derision: “He began to build,” he began to restore his ruined house, “and he could not complete it.” He had risen from the malodorous swamp of his vices and immersed himself in them anew. He began to root out the evil habits and now indulges in them again. He put his hand to the plow, and already he looks back. He departed Babylon, but already he returns. He had taken the cowl, but he casts it aside. He dismissed his mistress but now invites her back. The dog returns to its vomit.

O sinner beginning your interior transformation! Lest the devil mock you, lest you inflict sorrow upon Heaven rejoicing at your conversion: Persevere in penance, persevere! For as long as you breathe, walk in the spirit! So, heal the wounds of your soul that they would not open again.

⁹⁸ The source of this text was not able to be found, but a similar text was found in *Contra Rufinum*, *Val Iarsius Dominicus*, *S. E. Hieronymi Opera*, Venetiis 1767, t. II, P. I, l. II, 495.

In this matter, we have a magnificent example in [the book of] Joshua. When this excellent leader was about to enter the Promised Land, he was obliged to circumcise all the Hebrews born in the desert. Thus did God desire, and so did He command. The sacred text recounts: "When the circumcising of all the nation was done, they remained in their places in the camp till they were healed" (Josh 5:8). This was the Jewish circumcision, but what should be the Christian circumcision? A widely recognized commentator⁹⁹ of Sacred Scripture says: "To be circumcised by Jesus means to abandon vices, evil habits, and very wicked morals and to amputate whatever is inconsistent with the rule of propriety." For who would dream of entering the Promised Land, which for us is our heavenly homeland, with all these extremely heavy bundles? Indeed, "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Mt 7:14).

Vices have such a nature that as many times as they are cut down, they grow anew. Every vice and sin is like the Lernaean Hydra's heads that always grew back after being cut off. Likewise, after the removal of one vice or of one sin, another emerges, if all its sap has not been completely removed by unremitting penance. In this matter we must be persistent as Hercules. Never must we release the weapons of penance from our hands. May he never put it down who has once laid hold of it [i.e., the weapon of penance] to fight against vices and sins: Clasp it, clasp it always. "It is not enough to be circumcised; it is necessary after this circumcision to return to health and allow the wounds to scar. Penitents ought to remain in their practice of penance." Reason supports this, the most holy Abbot Stephen¹⁰⁰ advises this, and this is the way to achieve salvation.

Once, a great crowd gathered around Jesus, "And people were bringing children to [H]im, that [H]e might touch them" (Mk 10:13). His disciples were so moved with anger (I know not the

⁹⁹ It is not known to whom St. Stanislaus refers.

¹⁰⁰ Information regarding this author and the source of this quote was not able to be found.

reason why) that they decided to ward off with threats those who brought this crowd of children to the holy Teacher: "The disciples rebuked them," Mark says, while Luke states that "they rebuked them"¹⁰¹ (Lk 18:16). But the merciful Lord, indignant, said to His disciples: "Let the children come to [M]e, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God" (Mk 10:14). What do I hear? My Lord, what do I hear? Will a child enter the Kingdom of Heaven? How so? The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence. [As] You have said elsewhere: "The violent take it by force" (cf. Mt 11:12). What kind of strength, however, do children have, that they may enter Heaven by force? Unless, perhaps, they acquire Heaven by their tears, which are never lacking to children, and which are more powerful than battering rams. Indeed, it is so.

Let us remember what happened to Hagar the Egyptian when Sarah expelled her from Abraham's house into the desert along with her small child, Ishmael. Namely, on account of their lack of food, she left her son under a tree, so that she may not watch him die. "As she sat opposite him, she wept aloud" (cf. Gen 21:16). "And God heard the voice of the lad" (Gen 21:17), the sacred historian then states. Hence, I am greatly astounded that the sacred writer is inconsistent: For why does he say that the boy's cry was heard, although he stated that it was not the boy, but the mother who wept? "As she sat opposite him, she wept aloud." However, he conceals a great mystery here, as was his custom. Hagar was a figure of the penitential soul, for she was grieved by being expelled from the house of her master and husband because of her own impudence and she was dying from hunger in the desert, while at the same time, so many servants lived nicely, even very comfortably, in her master's home. Hence, her sighs and tears were so efficacious and so tender that they seemed to be those of a child. Therefore, it is rightly said that Hagar wept but the boy was heard, because the persevering penitence trans-

¹⁰¹ In St. Stanislaus' Latin Scripture quotations, there is a difference that does not appear in our English translations. In Mark we read "*Comminabantur offerentibus*," whereas in Luke we read "*increpabant illos*."

formed the mother into a child. So, St. Ambrose calls out to the penitent in a very beautiful and apt manner: "Such is the power of a completed amendment that it restores one, as it were, to one's spiritual childhood."¹⁰² And therefore, the heavenly Teacher well advises His disciples: "Let the children come to [M]e, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God." You too (He said to us), "unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3). How can we be converted? Through penance. How can we become children? Through consummated penance.

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, before He handed over His Spirit to the eternal Father, uttered that royal and divine word: "It is finished." By this, however, He desired to say that all things, which related to the redemption of the human race, have been perfectly fulfilled. The cardinal¹⁰³ from the very learned Society [of Jesus] has this same thought in mind when he emphatically clarifies this text: "From this word, 'It is finished,' we know that the Lord completed the work of His Passion from the beginning to the end so that nothing was lacking."¹⁰⁴

Jesus hurried to perform this work with such a fervent desire, with such determination, that neither the most awful torture, nor the most atrocious death, nor the shouts of the enemies were able to deter or divert Him. For, they cried out: "He is the King of Israel; let [H]im come down from the cross, and we will believe [H]im" (Mt 27:42). As if hearing this, St. Bernard says: "Indeed, because He is the King of Israel, let Him not betray the title of royal dignity."¹⁰⁵ Why? [Well], so that they want to believe, as in Messiah, if He descended from the Cross? Descend, Jesus, from the Cross; descend, and the Jews will believe and be saved. Otherwise, the obstinate will perish in their lack of faith. Bernard holds

¹⁰² The source of this text was not able to be found.

¹⁰³ St. Robert Bellarmine.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Bellarmine, Robertus, *De septem verbis a Christo in Cruce prolatis*, Ratisbonae 1925, Liber II, p. 187 (cap. 18).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Bernardus, *Sermo I in die Paschae*, in: *CLCE*, t. II: [*Commentarium*] *In S. Matthaeum*, P. II (c. XXII, 42), p. 387.

Him back so that we do not descend from the cross of penance either, for only the straight path leads to Heaven. The mellifluous Doctor¹⁰⁶ says: "It [i.e., the road] does not provide an excuse for shirking off our perseverance, which alone receives a crown."¹⁰⁷ That is perseverance in penance, in mourning, in tears, in austerities, in fasting, in alms, in various mortifications and finally in the constant carrying of the cross.

For only that penance is perfect in the highest degree, which is completed with the end of one's life. Thus, the penitent king¹⁰⁸ washed away his sins as he sang: "My eye wastes away because of grief, it grows weak because of all my foes" (Ps 6:7).

Thus Mary, the sinner from Egypt,¹⁰⁹ living among wild beasts in the desert for 46 years, washed away all stains of sin which she had contracted while living for a short time among men.

Thus Augustine, who transformed into a fervent Catholic from a Manichaean, from a very worldly man into a person full of purity and entirely heavenly, did not neglect to piously recite the seven psalms, which we call the penitential psalms, even when he was already about to depart from this world into blessed immortality.

Thus, so many others completed their praiseworthy practice of austere penance no earlier than the end of their life.

Who could count examples of so many saints who acted with cruelty against their own bodies for the sake of penance? Who would not be dumbfounded at the holy and salutary cruelty to himself of Dominic Loricatus¹¹⁰ alone, who is said to have inflicted upon himself three million lashes [with the discipline] during Lent only?

A certain recent author asserts that the distinguished Servant of God, Kasper Druzbicki, SJ,¹¹¹ a Pole, followed in the footsteps

¹⁰⁶ This is the title given to Bernard of Clairvaux. Cf. Third word, footnote 58 (p. 711).

¹⁰⁷ Idem, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ King David.

¹⁰⁹ St. Mary of Egypt.

¹¹⁰ St. Dominic the Ironclad († 1060), a Camaldolese monk.

¹¹¹ Kasper Druzbicki (1590-1662), a Jesuit.

of this Loricatus, who acquired no less renown for sanctity of life than for his teaching or his honors. Meanwhile, he reached the point, especially in his private life, where he inflicted upon himself — at different times of day and night — about fifteen thousand lashes that left incisions from iron combs and punctures from the barbed instrument.

I also personally knew a certain man, the first Polish Piarist born in Poznań,¹¹² who mortified his body in so extraordinary a manner that after his death it was noted that a wall in his cell was sprinkled with blood. Also, after awaking, he often very piously recited the entire Rosary with his arms outstretched. He read Sacred Scripture in no other way but on his knees. I never saw him laugh; he prayed constantly. He was much focused and extremely obedient. Nevertheless, even this steadfast lover of penance shuddered before the unfathomable judgments of God, as he was about to cross into the better life.

Who can recount other examples [of such mortification]? It was aptly stated by a bard: “Compare the ancient scourges [with the modern ones]: You say that they are true, [then] our serious ones would be a joke.”¹¹³ Compare your penance, my Christian, with the penance of John,¹¹⁴ Paul,¹¹⁵ Anthony,¹¹⁶ Onuphrius¹¹⁷ and with so many other hermits; with the penance of Benedict,¹¹⁸ Francis,¹¹⁹ Dominic,¹²⁰ Bernard,¹²¹ and so many others of our leaders; with the penance of Teresa of Avila,¹²² Catherine of Siena,¹²³ Rosa of

¹¹² St. Stanislaus is referring here to Kazimierz Bogatko († 1650), Piarist.

¹¹³ The author of this quotation is unknown.

¹¹⁴ Bl. John the Good (1169-1249).

¹¹⁵ St. Paul of Thebes (228-341).

¹¹⁶ St. Anthony († 356).

¹¹⁷ St. Onuphrius († ca. 400), hermit.

¹¹⁸ St. Benedict of Nursia (ca. 480-547), abbot, father of religious life in the West.

¹¹⁹ St. Francis of Assisi (ca. 1181-1226).

¹²⁰ St. Dominic (ca. 1170-1221), founder of the Dominicans.

¹²¹ St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

¹²² St. Teresa of Jesus (1515-1582), Carmelite.

¹²³ St. Catherine of Siena.

Lima,¹²⁴ Cunegunda of Poland,¹²⁵ Magdalene of Italy¹²⁶ and so many other spouses of Christ; “You say that they are true, [then] our serious ones you call a joke.”

What if I should show you a living example of penance, which all can see — would you still shudder at this penance? Turn your gaze upon the noble progeny of Romuald.¹²⁷ You see them in a coarse habit, gaunt from fasting, mortified by silence, in their whole life equal to the angels. Will you go to the Carthusians? You will find them groggy from vigils, cloistered in cells, fleeing from themselves, and intent only upon Heaven.

There are also many others who — having embraced precepts of the Gospel — chose the utmost poverty, and for the good of souls adopted a difficult external life. Without bags and staffs, barefoot and in coarse clothing, preaching Christ by word and example, they fulfilled the mission of true apostles of the entire world. Yet, [reflect on] the most sublime works of those who completely and with great perseverance devoted themselves to the writing of books for the good of the Church, to the formation and education of the youth, to the preaching of the Word of God, to the administration of Sacraments, the strengthening of Catholics in devotions, to the conversion of heretics and the inclusion of unbelievers into the flock of Christ. Who — I ask — would not place their wonderful deeds on the list of works of penance?

Precisely all of this, my man, can rightly persuade you — who sin gravely but do light penance — to perform an active, serious, and constant penance. To this I still add — if you allow me — the most salutary admonition of Sirach: “Do not be so confident of atonement that you add sin to sin” (Sir 5:5). You can be [confident] if you will tirelessly perform penance. Therefore, let us persevere in penance; let us persevere so that we may wash away our former sins and prevent access to new ones.

¹²⁴ St. Rose of Lima (1586-1617).

¹²⁵ St. Cunegunda (Kinga, 1224-1292), a princess from Krakow, a Poor Clare.

¹²⁶ St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi (1566-1607).

¹²⁷ St. Romuald († 1207), the founder of the Camaldolese.

Why boast of your month-, year-, or five-year-long penance? If we will perform solid works of penance throughout all of life, then at least we can expect and await Heaven in not too presumptuous a manner.

THE SEVENTH WORD OF THE CRUCIFIED ORATOR

“Father, into [Y]our hands I commend [M]y spirit!”
(Lk 23:46)

**We Must Frequently Entrust Our Souls to Christ the Lord,
Lest We Want to Fall Often Again and Again.**

We frequently notice that men — upon departing this world — entrust to their closest ones what they held dearest during their life. Thus did Turnus, King of the Rutuli, otherwise a very brave hero, defeated in a duel with Aeneas the Trojan, “on his knees, humbly raising his hands, with a gaze of supplication pleaded with his victor:

If any concern for a parent’s grief
Can touch you (you too had such a father, in Anchises)
I beg you to pity Daunus’s old age.”¹²⁸

On the other hand, our Redeemer dying upon the Cross, did not speak to any man or angel, but to His Heavenly Father, entrusting to Him His spirit: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit!” Saint Athanasius, meditating upon these words, stated: “Christ, saying these words from the cross: ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit,’ places all people before the

¹²⁸ Translation from http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/Virgil/AeneidXII.htm#_Toc6669721.

Father and entrusts them to Him, so that through Him and with Him, they might be brought to life. For we are members, and the members are one body, which is the Church. Therefore, He entrusted all to God in Himself.”¹²⁹

Cyril agrees with Athanasius, saying that the eternal Son “entrusted His spirit into the hands of the Father so that, beginning with Him and through Him, with a firm faith, we might have the certain hope of the same thing, that after death we will find ourselves in the hands of God.”¹³⁰ Euthymius¹³¹ also adds: “The Lord God did this for us, that henceforth the souls of the just will not descend into hell, but rather will ascend to God.”¹³² Therefore, we ought not to remain idle, but while Jesus Christ entrusts us to His eternal Father, we simultaneously must entrust ourselves to the eternal Son of the eternal Father, so that we might be protected in His hands from falling and turning from Him and henceforth quietly lead our lives. As it should and can be, I will briefly explain.

“Our spirit is something threefold: [...] thought, [...] soul [...], and conscience. We must entrust these three spiritual powers to God.”¹³³ Thus explains Didymus,¹³⁴ whom Cornelius¹³⁵ quotes in the *Catena*.

First, the thought must be addressed, because — as the Spirit of the Lord states — it [the thought] is entirely intent upon evil.¹³⁶ Through it, man lets himself be easily fooled by the crafty spirit of hell. We have a lamentable example here in the descendants of Isaac. Describing the incident, the inspired Historiographer writes: “While Israel dwelt in Shittim the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab” (Num 25:1). How did they

¹²⁹ Cf. Athanasius, *De Humana Christi natura contra Apollonium*, sub initium, in: *CLCE*, t. III, p. 462.

¹³⁰ Cf. Cyrillus, *Commentarium in Evangelium Ioannis*, Lib. XI, cap. 36, in: *CLCE*, t. III, p. 462.

¹³¹ St. Euthymius († ca. 473), was a Byzantine theologian and exegete.

¹³² Euthymus, *Commentarius in Quattor Evangelia: Commentarius in Lucam*, c. 24, in: *CLCE*, t. III, p. 462.

¹³³ Cf. Didymus, *Catena biblica*(?), in: *CLCE*, t. III, p. 463.

¹³⁴ Didymus the Blind (313- ca. 396) was a theologian in Alexandria.

¹³⁵ It is unknown to which Cornelius St. Stanislaus refers here.

¹³⁶ Cf. Gen. 6:5

come to depravity? They saw, they desired, they thought, they consented, and they carried it out. Richard [of Saint-Laurent] portrays this clearly, stating: "The Midianites preened their daughters and placed them before the sons of Israel, thus arousing their lust so that the latter might incur the wrath of God."¹³⁷ As indeed, they did.

But were Israelites the only ones to be trapped in such snares? No. The above-quoted Father adds: "What once happened historically, as we know, is what often every true Israelite (or Christian) experiences spiritually. It happens when the enemy thrusts before the eyes of our mind certain images from the realm of lust. By entertaining them, if the mind indulges in the illicit pleasure, it undoubtedly insults his Guardian."¹³⁸

The evil spirit is the most experienced and diligent Apelles. With a brush soaked in various colors, he always stands near the canvas of our thoughts; and if he notices that they are poorly guarded, he attempts to paint upon that canvas such images as he desires: They can be of the hunting Diana, the jealous and prideful Juno or the dissolute Venus. He endeavors to separate our mind from God and turn [it] toward the world, toward its vanities and curiosities; he strives to smear our mind with a delusion of ill ambition and revolting pleasure; he tries to ignite a fire of licentiousness through the injection of dirty images. For he knows that one persisting thought is enough for the commission of a mortal sin, and that the soul, marred by that thought, is destined for eternal pain. If, however, he cannot persuade man to a deed leading to death, then at least he suggests the worst thoughts to him, so that entangled by such tricks and ruses he can drag the soul with him into the eternal abyss.

Seeing that this very thing was occurring to him, the psalmist-king sighed deeply: "The cords of Sheol entangled me, the snares of death confronted me" (Ps 18:5). David considered idle, curious, and vain thoughts as the "cords of Sheol," for they precipitate the

¹³⁷ The source of this text was not able to be found.

¹³⁸ The source of this text is also unknown.

man who delights in them into the pains of hell. He [David] calls them also the “snares of death” because whoever is entangled by them, does not easily avoid grave sin, which brings death to the soul. In such a way did the ever-prudent king free himself from their bonds, as he teaches us clearly in these words: “My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for [H]e will pluck my feet out of the net” (Ps 25:15). For the mind continually raised to the Lord is impenetrable to the suggestions of the enemy.

Useful for this consideration is what Philip Neri, the very holy priest and founder of the Congregation of the Oratory, related about himself. Every day he continually repeated the declaration that he would expand the wound in the side of Christ our Lord, unless He place His bound hands upon his head. The head is the seat of thoughts. Thus Philip desired that his head continually remain in the hands of Christ, so that the accomplice of hell might not agitate his imagination with filthy images and poison his soul with pernicious thoughts.

Miserable and falling sinner, in no other way will you preserve your soul free from dangerous fall, if you — along with the psalmist — will not nag the Son of God with this request and unceasing supplication: “Into your hands,” Lord, “I commend my spirit” (cf. Ps 31:6). To You I want to dedicate my thoughts. I do not wish to have or allow any other thoughts, except those that come from You or are about You or for You, O Jesus! To You I commend my spirit!

Let us pass from the thought to the soul itself. The hellish thief plots to ambush it so very carefully and cleverly, that Peter, the Leader and Father of the Church, considered it necessary to admonish us so that we be earnestly guarded from and cleverly escape him: Brothers, “Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour” (1 Pet 5:8). He could not more explicitly show us our danger than by ascribing the lion’s raging and roaring to the devil, and [saying] that we would be his prey, if we are not prudently and alertly vigilant. By roaring, the lion confines the prey which he desires to seize. The demon acts similarly to capture our soul.

We, unhappy exiles from Paradise, dwell in this world as in a vast wilderness full of hellish beasts that encircle us, closing in on us with their gaping mouths in order to consume us. Small wonder, since the food of hellish beasts is nothing other than the souls of men stained as they are by original sin and thus destined for beasts. Each of us can recall the dish, the food that God — Creator of all — assigned to that ancient serpent, which ensnared our first Parents: “Dust you shall eat all the days of your life” (Gen 3:14). What sort of dust? In his commentary on Psalm 4, the Holy Father Gregory — the Sun of the Benedictine family and of the entire Church — gives this very wise response: “The eternal enemy eats dirt because he throws all sinners inside his iniquity.”¹³⁹

Rabanus states: “He ate... dirt, because he feeds on and enjoys the errors of sinners, and he brings them down to destruction by deluding them. As the saints are often called heaven, so those who relish earthly things are called earth.”¹⁴⁰

In this sense also [we] must understand the second punishment imposed upon the serpent. In the opinion of some people, he walked erect at first, but then he was punished and had to crawl upon his belly, henceforth. “Upon your belly you shall go” (Gen 3:14). Thus God struck him like lightning. The erudite Cajetan eloquently explains the reason for which God did this: “The belly is the workshop for digesting food. Thus, crawling upon the belly squashes the food by pressure, [...]. Therefore, the devil’s task — as the above-mentioned exegete concludes — is to oppress his food, that is the souls of sinners. We could say it more clearly: Not only will you, but also those close to you will be cursed, because they will be oppressed through you.”¹⁴¹ Such is the nourishment of the ancient serpent, the devil: the souls of sinners!

¹³⁹ Gregorius Magnus, *Commentarium in Psalmos Poenitentiales*, in: Lippomano Luigi, *Catena in Genesim*, Parisiis 1546, f. 92r (Genesis, cap. III).

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Rabanus, *Commentaria in Genesim*, Lib. I, in: LCG, f.92v. Also in: *PL* 107, 495.

¹⁴¹ Cf. Caietanus, *Commentarium In Genesim*, cap. III: Reverendissimi Domini D. Thomae de Vio Caietani, Cardinalis Xysti: *In Pentateuchum Mosis...commenta-*

Ah, flee, flee, O man! Flee, to your Savior, sinners. Imploring His almighty omnipotence against this untiring hunter of your soul, hand over and commend your soul with trust into His protection, guidance, and safekeeping. Call out to Him unceasingly: "Into Your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit." Let my soul cleave to You. May Your right hand protect me. May my soul be rescued by Your power like a bird from the snares of fowlers.

The conscience is connected to the soul. As long as the stain of vice does not taint it, it is cheerful, serene, and peaceful; it is a continual feast. However, as soon as [transgression] is committed, immediately a worm is born out of its decay and it incessantly gnaws, torments, and oppresses the sinner's interior so that he seems to be carrying a living hell within him.

It is a fable that poets devised about Tityus that a vulture relentlessly devours his liver but never finishes it, because it always grows back. Yet the vulture that tears the innards of sinners is both real and endures eternally. Does not Isaiah express this rather clearly in these words: "For their worm shall not die" (Is 66:24)?

Let us, however, enter the Elysian Fields, so that we might understand this even better. Here both sin and the worm of conscience were born for the first time, for man, created by God in the state of perfect innocence, was made king of Paradise. When I mention the word "Paradise," I refer to a place replete with all things which can be thought or which were desirable in a truly lawful manner.

What more can I say? It was a place of "pleasure" — as the sacred historian testifies. If only it had never been lost! But how quickly it happened! Scarcely was Adam stricken with the pestilence of sin, when he was immediately expelled from the flowery garden of delight. "Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden" (Gen 3:23). The soul of the father of us all possessed the most pleasant and attractive paradise as long as he was not conscious of any offense. Having committed the trans-

gression, [which resulted] from taking a bite of the apple from the forbidden tree, he lost Paradise because he lost peace, serenity, and joy of conscience.

Therefore, when the exceptionally gifted Theodoret¹⁴² thought about the eyes of the authors of our race being opened and seeing that they were naked, he added correctly: "Because they felt the reproach of conscience which tormented them."¹⁴³

Finally, the most eloquent among the bishops, the Golden Mouthed [John Chrysostom,] cites the reason why Adam and Eve hid themselves after the fall, having heard the Lord God strolling in the afternoon through Paradise. He said: "God desired [...] that a great panic envelop their souls, and so it happened. For since they felt as if God was present, they started hiding... because the voice of conscience usually arises against man, cries out, accuses, and reveals, and outlines before their eyes, as it were, the greatness of sin... Although, having committed a sin, a person hides from the eyes of all men [...], he cannot, however, hide from his own accuser. For wherever we might be, we carry [sin] within ourselves; it is all about us, it harasses us, tears [us apart], and scourges [...] at home, in the market, in church or at table. It assails the sleeping and the rising from sleep [...]. It puts before our eyes both the greatness of the fault and the looming punishment [...]. Hence, as soon as the Ancestor grasped the meaning of it and reflected upon the coming of the Lord, he immediately went into hiding [...]. For he saw that the fierce accuser stood next to him: namely, his conscience."¹⁴⁴

Should conscience be only called a fierce accuser, but not a cruel torturer, as well? Because it torments while accusing and it accuses as it torments. On account of accusations and torments, it frequently deprives us of hope for forgiveness. Cain — the first fratricide — experienced this for himself, when he called out to the Lord, after the murder of his brother Abel: "My punishment

¹⁴² Theodoret († 458) was the bishop of Cyrrhus, Syria and an exegete.

¹⁴³ Cf. Theodoretus, *Quaestiones in Octateuchum*, in: LCG, f.83v.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Chrysostomus, *Homiliae in Genesim*, in: Cap. III Gen., Hom. XVII, 1, in: LCG, f.86r.

is greater than I can bear. Behold, [Y]ou have driven me this day away from the ground; and from [Y]our face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me" (Gen 4:13-14). Note that he does not fear anything other than to be killed as punishment of revenge and to lose his own life for having taken the life of his brother, because he feared that he must be killed. When he declares that he must become a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth, does he not acknowledge that the crime divested him of peace of soul to such an extent that for this lack of peace in his heart, he could not settle in one place? When he says that he must hide himself from the face of God, he openly admits that he evidently merited the punishment of condemnation for shedding his brother's blood. Since he declares that his transgression is so great that it cannot be forgiven, he falls at once into total despair and screams that the salvation of his soul is already lost.

O the most savage torturer, the worm of conscience! O, sin, which should be accursed a thousand-fold and avoided more carefully than poison; which gives birth to our cruelest accuser and — at the same time — the severest torturer! Lippoman so rightly warns: "Let us, then, constantly fear that we may never commit such a shameful deed, for which we will be forced to bear the pangs of conscience eternally."¹⁴⁵

But how do we carry this out, if God does not support our conscience with His right hand, does not direct it by His light, so that it would not wander more shamefully, so that it would not fall more seriously? It is necessary, therefore, to pray to Him tirelessly, so that He does not cease to take continual care of our souls. It is necessary to constantly bother Him, following the example of the prophet-king: "Into Your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit." Our Savior inspires us to this by His own example, when He surrendered His most sacred spirit upon the hardest wood of the Cross. As He Himself entrusted His own spirit

¹⁴⁵ The source of this text was not able to be found.

to the eternal Father, so we also entrust our spirits to Him: our thoughts, our souls, and our consciences.

When we recognize the disease caused by our vices under which weight we lament, just coming to our senses is not enough. It is not enough to wash out our sins through sincere penance and to properly discard evil habits. We must add [to this] the avoidance of new sins. We must add the steady care for preventing the return of the disease — as doctors say — so that we do not return to the vomit in the disgusting manner of dogs; so that we might not get entangled in the diabolical snares, from which we have been set free thanks to the grace of God. But I ask: Who could do this on his own strength? Who could accomplish this even employing the greatest ingenuity, if not supported by Christ or strengthened by Him, without whom we can do nothing, nothing at all? We must then often sigh to Jesus, our Helper, and with great zeal — as the Church prescribes — always repeating: “Into [Y]our hands,” Lord, “I commend my spirit; [Y]ou will redeem me, LORD, God of truth” (cf. Ps 31:6) [*NAB*]. I commend then my spirit into Your hands, in every hour, in every place, in every moment, but especially the spirit as it departs from the body. “Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of [Y]our wings” (Ps 17:8). Amen.



CHRISTVS
PATIENS
SEPTEM DISCVRSIBVS,
*Quadragesimali Penitentia
accommodatis,*

Devotæ Piorum considera-
tioni Propositus.

Per Patrem STANISLAUM

• 2 •

IESV MARIA
Sacerdotem Polonum.



THE SUFFERING CHRIST

in seven meditations,
adapted to the penance of Lent,
[and] given to the faithful for fervent reflection
by Father Stanislaus
of Jesus and Mary Papczyński,
a Polish priest

Translated by
Thaddaeus Lancton, MIC
Edited by
Patrick Lynch, MIC

INTRODUCTION

1. The Work, Its Author, and the Circumstances of Its Creation

Christus Patiens (CP) is a collection of Lenten meditations. The full Latin title of this collection reads: *Christus Patiens, Septem Discursibus Quadragesimali Paenitentiae accomodatis, Devotae Piorum considerationi Propositus per Patrem Stanislaum a Iesu Maria Sacerdotem Polonum*. Neither the title nor the authorship of this work is subject to any doubt because its first edition was printed in 1690 through the efforts of its author himself, in the print shop of K.F. Schreiber in Warsaw. The front page of this work clearly shows the title and the author's name. We see that it was written by "Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, a Polish priest." It is true that the last name of the author was not mentioned, but in his earlier published works, Fr. Stanislaus also did not provide his surname, supplying only his religious name. To illustrate, in the first edition of *Prodromus* (1663), we read: "Authore Stanislao a Iesu Maria ex Scholis Piis," and in *Doctor Angelicus* (1664): "P. Stanislao a Iesu Maria Scholarum Piarum Sacerdote." Similarly, after founding his own Congregation, he continued to sign his works only with his religious name,¹ which he did not change after leaving the Piarists. *Christus Patiens* appears on the list of Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński's writings submitted to the Roman Congregation of Rites on May 29, 1769, for examination as part of his beatification process. The decree issued by that Congregation on July 15, 1775, declared his works to be in compliance with the teachings of the Church.²

¹ The only exception to that rule was *The Crucified Orator*, published at the time of Fr. Stanislaus' departure from the Piarists. There the author's name appears as "John Papczyński, a Polish priest." It was a time during which, one can surmise, Fr. Stanislaus had not resolved whether or not to keep his religious name.

² See PP f.364v; see also Decree in: *Summarium Additionale*, No. 3, § 2.

A number of remarks within the *CP* text indicate that these Lenten meditations had been composed over a long period of time prior to being submitted for print by their author in 1690. In 1677, Stephen Wierzbowski, Bishop of Poznan, donated to the Congregation of Marian Fathers the Church of the Lord's Cenacle located at the beginning of the Stations of the Cross that the bishop planned for Góra Kalwaria (New Jerusalem). This gift entailed the obligation of serving pilgrims, which included delivering sermons on the Lord's Passion. Consequently, this prompted Fr. Stanislaus to do a final revision of these sermons and publish them in book format. He dedicated this work to John Stanislaus Witwicki, the new Bishop of Poznań, who was not initially sympathetic to the new religious community of the Marians; at one time, his attitude even jeopardized the very existence of the Order. By dedicating *Christus Patiens* to the Bishop of the diocese in which both Marian monasteries stood, Fr. Papczyński hoped to gain the Bishop's benevolence and protection for his Congregation.

2. Composition, Content, and Purpose of the Work

Christus Patiens contains seven discourses which, as it appears from certain statements, Fr. Papczyński originally used for his Lenten sermons. Thus, the author meditated consecutively on Christ praying in the Garden of Olives (discourse I), Christ being captured (discourse II), the flagellation of Christ (discourse III), the crowning with thorns (discourse IV), the carrying of the Cross (discourse V), the Crucifixion (discourse VI), and Christ's death on the Cross (discourse VII).

Every individual discourse follows the same compositional scheme. Each meditation has a quote from the Gospel that sets a foundation for the meditation. Then follows a brief introduction specifying the goal of that meditation. The principal part of the meditation is divided into four, five, or six sections (discourse I), in which the author explains the passage from the Scriptures relating to Christ's sufferings.

On the one hand, the Passion of Christ is presented as a result of our sins, and on the other, as an act of Christ's love for mankind. In this way, St. Stanislaus wishes to move his readers to repentance and conversion, as well as to gratitude to the One who suffered so much for us and who, by the example of His Passion, showed us how to amend our ways. The author concludes the principal part of this work by encouraging his readers to abide by those counsels with contrite hearts, trust, and love. No sinner, however great, should doubt his salvation, because everyone in this life may have recourse to the Divine Mercy; what is more, they ought to do so. As a true apostle of mercy, Fr. Papczyński addresses sinners in these words: "Are you afraid, whoever you are, crushed with the burden of many sins, of the abyss of hell, and its punishments, terrible, incurable, and unending? Sigh, flee, and hasten to the scourges of the Savior with true contrition: 'Hoping in the Lord' (Ps 31:10) [*LV*], lest justice punish, 'His mercy will surround [you]'" (discourse III, 5).

At the end of each discourse, the author places two couplets, written in dactylic pentameter and hexameter, thus creating the so-called elegiac couplet. The couplet usually expresses a complete thought.

3. Sources of Preaching and Previous Editions

Father Papczyński bases his ascetical theology on the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, including St. Ambrose, St. Athanasius of Alexandria, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Leo the Great, St. Gregory the Great, St. Isidore of Seville, St. Peter Damian, St. Anselm of Canterbury, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Bonaventure, St. Lawrence Justinian, etc. He also draws from the works of illustrious Christian preachers and spiritual masters such as Tertullian, Anastasius Sinaita, Vincent Ferrer, Peter of Alcantara, Jacques Marchant, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Jesus, St. Kunegunda, and others.

He illustrates his meditations with examples borrowed from daily life. Basing his teachings on the Scriptures and other recognized authorities, as well as skillfully using the principles of rhetoric that he knew well, Fr. Papczyński achieved the result that, in spite of the flowery Baroque language, his sermons and meditations are doctrinally sound and still are not boring, but alive, dynamic, and convincing.

Since the first publication of this work by Fr. Stanislaus in 1690, no reprints were produced until the present day. For the first time, *Christus Patiens* was typeset from an old print and printed on a mimeograph in Rome (1959) for the purpose of the examination of Fr. Stanislaus' writings for his beatification. Later, this short work was printed in its original Latin as a critical edition in Warsaw (1998) through the efforts of Fr. Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC.

Ryszard Roman Piętka, MIC

The horns of the crescent moon shine with two stars; but its center is held fast by an arrow. The crescent moon means a pious, wise [person], and the two stars indicate strength of character. The straight arrow depicts an ardent heart. Since the crown shines by triple virtue, why would not the Bishop also shine by it?

Letter of Dedication

Having come out of my hermitage in hiding from the world together with *The Suffering Christ*, I immediately admired the wanderers' friendly star. For at the forefront of your coat-of-arms, most noble and most venerable Bishop,³ I find the crescent. [You were] placed in the firmament of the Church and the Polish Parliament to lead [us during] the night. Those who refuse to accept whatever is true and honest wander in the deepest darkness of night. You, noblest and most venerable Bishop, supply them with the light of firm wisdom, authentic virtue, and unblemished life. [You were] born with dignity into the old and glory-covered Witwicki family that takes pride in the triple star dispersing the darkness. Oh, if only all those who must would always look to you with attentiveness and openness of mind, there would not be any erring sheep in your flock! You radiate forth as many bright

³ Stanislaus Jan Witwicki (ca. 1630-1698), of the Sas coat-of-arms, was in turn the bishop of Kiev, Luck, and Poznań. He was also a writer on moral theology and ascetics. At the onset of his priestly life, he served as a secretary at the court of King John Casimir, becoming later the regent of the royal chancellery. In 1665, he became a member of the Gniezno Chapter. In 1671, he was made the mitered Superior of the collegiate church in Olyca, and in 1676, the commendatory abbot in Plock and the canon of Warsaw. At the royal chancellery, he consecutively served kings John Casimir, Michael Korybut, and John III Sobieski. The latter named him the bishop of Kiev. Bishop Witwicki combined his fervent devotion to diocesan matters with political involvement. In 1681, he became the bishop of Luck, where he undertook administrative measures aimed at improving the clergy. In 1688, he was transferred to Poznań. Bishop Witwicki died in Warsaw, which was his usual place of residence. (Cf. Wyszawski, H.E.; Witwicki, Jan Stanislaw, in: *Słownik Polskich Teologów Katolickich*, t. 4, Ed. H.E. Wyszawski, OFM, Warszawa 1983, pp. 449-451.)

and fiery rays as there are principles of eternal life [which] you propose in your books. You impart as many enlightenments for the mind as the many words you utter. You carry in front of you as many torches as there are the many deeds highly worthy of imitation, which you exhibit to the most prominent ones. In your own opinion, your lamp is small, but in the opinion of all others who pass their judgment on you, it is much greater, as it should be. I come [to that lamp], filled with admiration but free of fear, to be further enlightened. If something is unclear in this small pious work that I humbly offer you, noblest and most venerable Bishop, in place of my homage, I trust that it will become illuminated through your stars. Surely, if your triple star will guide me, I won't err and won't feel threatened by the wild beasts of the night. Similarly, I shall ignore the barking dogs, should they attack me as can happen in moonlight, having been strengthened by my trust in your light. Moreover, thanks to the proximity of your stars (as Heaven smiles down upon me), I shall happily put down my gray-ing head here. This way, we shall always respect you who are ever more noble, honored, and more famous thanks to God's graces.

Your noblest and most venerable Excellency's
most devout servant,
Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary.

DISCOURSE I

The Bath in the Garden

When Jesus had spoken these words, [H]e went forth with [H]is disciples across the Kidron valley, where there was a garden, which [H]e and [H]is disciples entered. (Jn 18:1)¹

Susanna, well-known from Sacred Scripture, daughter of Hilkiah, had a famous bath in her husband's orchard. She was seeking refreshment by washing herself, since she felt tired on account of the great heat. Then, "Once, while they [the wicked elders] were watching for an opportune day, she went in as before with only two maids, and wished to bathe in the garden, for it was very hot" (Dan 13:15). But, it so happened that through an unfortunate turn of events, she was charged with adultery, having been startled and caught by the most corrupt old men.

I hope that I will lead you, pious mortals, with better success into the Garden of Gethsemane. There, I will prepare for you a bath, or rather, I will point out the one that has already been prepared from the bloody sweat of Christ, so that you may be freed from the restlessness of your anxieties and worldly cares and that you may be cleansed from the filth of your sins with which your souls are infected. At least, [you may] certainly cleanse the spots of your more trifling faults, if you are not contaminated with more serious ones. Follow me at a brisk pace, to the place where I follow Christ Himself who leads the way.

1. Going into gardens usually serves the owners by relaxing [their] spirit. Here, they free themselves from their anxieties

¹ Scripture quotations will be taken from Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition, unless otherwise noted. Cf. *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version*. 2nd Catholic ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006).

and disperse the commotion of oppressive thoughts by the very pleasant sight of various types of trees, flower beds, as well as symmetrically laid out paths. Thus, one day, King Ahasuerus of the Assyrians, who was angered by the malice and cruelty of the most deceitful counselor Haman towards the Hebrews, rushed forth from the banquet and entered the palace garden. We read: "And the king rose from the feast in wrath and went into the palace garden" (Est 7:7).

John recounts that our Savior, being dismayed by the crime of Judas the traitor, arose in a similar manner from that most holy supper, in which He drew His most beloved band of disciples to Himself. He thereupon entered the Mount of Olives (where there was a garden), with the three principal [disciples]: "When Jesus had spoken these words [...]" (Jn 18:1, above). One might have believed He did this for the sake of alleviating His sorrow, which He Himself had confessed was tormenting Him: "And [H]e said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch'" (Mk 14:34). But on the other hand, the [Church] Father St. Cyril teaches something different: "After the supper the Lord departed to the Mount of Olives," he says, "where there was a garden: so that from where the fall derived its origin, from there would the redemption have its birth."² Human nature, in the midst of the most beautiful verdure of Eden, had been horribly blackened through original sin. To this first stain, almost every mortal has added his own many faults. Therefore, the Repairer of our race is entering the Garden of Olives to prepare the bath that not only washes away but thoroughly destroys our sins: "From where the fall derived its origin... etc." Who would refuse to rush into this place? Who would not want to bathe here?

2. Saint Matthew, describing the behavior of the Lord of Heaven in this garden, says, "And going a little farther [H]e fell on [H]is face and prayed [...]" (Mt 26:39). Did not even the strongest Samson fall to the ground in this manner? Did He, through whom all

² Cf. Cyrillus, Patriarcha Alexandrinus, *Commentarium in Ioannem*, PG 74, 579.

things stand firm, thus fall on His face? Why? Our sins crushed and overwhelmed Him (as Isaiah foretold). “And the LORD has laid on [H]im the iniquity of us all.” Vatable,³ translating from the Hebrew, says, “And God made the sin of us all fall upon [H]im” (Is 53:6).⁴ Our iniquities, like a very numerous and powerful army, attacked our Lord praying in the garden, and crushed Him to the ground. And so, the holy interpreter of the prophet, Ferrer,⁵ rightly addresses every one of us here: “Christian, consider closely how your sins and mine prove to be a part of that army, which rushed upon Christ.”⁶

3. Therefore, when we hear that Jesus declared war against the almost infinite legion of our sins, should we expect something other than blood? Ah! Truly, the bloody sweat flows, not only from His red forehead, but it flows from nearly the whole Body of our Atlas, bent down under the weight of the guilt of the whole world! For, as St. Luke records, “And there appeared to [H]im an angel from heaven, strengthening [H]im” (Lk 22:43). The ancient world was at one time astounded to look upon or hear about a statue of Hercules bathed with sweat. Who among us, witnessing so much, such excellent sweat, could refrain from tears, hearing that dark red streams flowed from the limbs of the true God-Man and beholding this with the eyes of a devout mind?

In truth, I have such great compassion for You, O so good and so sweet Jesus, for this battle taken up against our sins was so intense for You that this shower of Your Blood was so abundantly drawn out from Your Divine Body. But even so, I rejoice within my heart, and I am glad with the whole human race, that in the solitude of Gethsemane, Your Blood sprang forth to become a bath, in which we may be washed from our filth [...].

³ Cf. Anon., *Vatable, François* († 1547), *EI* XXXIV, 1032.

⁴ Cf. Is 53:6 in *Biblia Utriusque Testamenti*, cum adnotationibus Francisci Vatabli, Oliva Rob. Stephani 1557, p. 211.

⁵ This is probably St. Vincent Ferrer († 1419). Cf. Bertucci, Sadoc M., *Vincenzo Ferrer, santo: BS* XII, 1168-1176.

⁶ This text was not able to be found in the sermons of St. Vincent.

4. The repentant King (David) aspired toward this bath in spirit, when he sang with sighs:

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps 51:7).

Among the Jews, spring water, sprinkled with the ashes of heifers and the blood of bulls, was used for purifying oneself in the place of the cleansing water. David esteemed less this kind of purification, and was mindful of the more efficacious one, which for us is in the sweat of Christ, prepared for us in the bloody bath of the Garden of Olives. Certainly, the King of Jerusalem in great wisdom sighs with longing for this. Paul, the heavenly orator, says, “For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more the blood of Christ” (Heb 9:13-14).

5. The doctors advised Constantine the Great, the emperor of the world, to make use of the repulsive bath of the blood of infants in order to heal his leprosy with which he was infected. The clement and gentle Ruler spurned this medicine. How many of us are leprous Constantines now! How many sinners are we! “Leprosy spreads through man’s whole body” (the purple-clad Hugo asserts). “Similarly, sin [also] grows in the whole man after the manner of cancer.”⁷ For removing [this] leprosy, the most advantageous [way] is a bath: the bloody sweat of the innocent Christ (and even Constantine benefited from it). This sweat was salvific not only during the time [in which] it was poured out, but even more so now (if only we want and beg for it most eagerly): Up to now it is offered for us by the most merciful Son to the eternal Father.

Regarding the matter [just] related, St. Paul states most appropriately: “But God shows [H]is love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore we are now justified by

⁷ Cf. Hugo, *In Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, VIII, 3: *Ugonis de S. Charo S. Romanae Ecclesiae tit. S. Sabinae Cardinalis Primi Ord. Praedicatorum*, t. VI: *In Evangelia*, Coloniae Agrippinae 1621, f.31r (ad verba: *et ecce leprosus veniens*).

[H]is blood, much more shall we be saved by [H]im from the wrath of God” (Rom 5:8-9).

6. What further remains then, except that I exhort you with the prophet? “Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool” (Is 1:16-18) — washed in the bloody bath of the sweat of the Son of God.

*Although one drop is sufficient for us all,
Now we ask for one drop: Do not refuse, merciful Christ!
Many baths lay hidden in one drop of sweat,
The whole world in this will be washed — only give (it).*

DISCOURSE II

The Freely Accepted Bonds

*So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers
of the Jews seized Jesus and bound [H]im. (Jn 18:12)*

The most holy Bishop Paulinus of Nola⁸ handed himself over to be sold [as ransom] for a poor widow’s son who had been kidnapped by the Vandals, so that he might restore him to liberty and to his mother. Of his own accord, he went to Africa; he voluntarily offered himself to chains and to slavery. What fervent love of neighbor blazed within that episcopal heart! Yet, the far greater and almost infinite love of the Son of God for the human

⁸ Cf. Celletti, Maria Chiara, *Paolino, Ponzio Meropio Anicio, vescovo di Nola*, s. († 1419).

race has been manifested. He saw that we, bound and fettered by the tyrant of the netherworld, are held bound by the obligation of debt due to our sins. He was able to use six hundred other means of restoring liberty for us: He did not will it. Instead, having been made in the likeness of the guilty, He Himself desired to be bound in order to free us from our chains. First, He betook Himself from Heaven to earth, subsequently to Jerusalem as the hour of His death (in truth, the hour of our life) already loomed. Willingly, He permitted Himself to be captured and bound, preparing for us eternal liberty. O, what immense charity! O, what unprecedented goodness! What words can I use to describe you? What eloquence will I employ to express you? At least, I will show in these few words that these bonds were voluntary. I kiss them with tenderness, because through them, we were set free.

1. Our Savior had not yet finished the banquet of His supreme love, when still amid this heavenly bread and divine chalice of nectar, He was kindled with the greatest desire of suffering and dying for us. He was anxious to be bound as soon as possible in order that He may be offered to the eternal Father without delay. According to the testimony of John, He Himself thus goaded His traitor to carry out his intended crime without any delay: "What you are going to do, do quickly" (Jn 13:27). Already the hardened disciple was turning over and over in his mind the time and the manner of the betrayal of his Teacher. The hardened disciple even violated and defiled the sacred supper with these wicked thoughts. He was wholly intent upon this [crime], so that he might fill up his purse with the payment for the betrayal and so satisfy the madness of Christ's enemies through his nefarious betrayal. The One who searches hearts saw it, He before whom nothing is hidden, considering that this delay of the betrayer would exceedingly hurt both Him and us. Some criminals hasten as much as possible slow executioners to cut their throats, because they are ashamed of life. But Jesus urged Judas to hasten the betrayal, since He was weary of life. For, indeed, He desired to be bound for us as quickly as possible; for us, He desired to produce liberty from His captivity, to produce life from death

without any delay. From this heart of Etna, burning with the greatest flames of charity for us, was bursting out this fiery desire of being handed over as soon as possible: "What you are going to do, do quickly."

What do such words mean to me, that already as the betrayer was leaving the Cenacle, Jesus (whom the most beloved disciple remembers) rushed forth, almost triumphant in the tremendous glory attained by such a tremendous disgrace? "When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and in [H]im God is glorified'" (Jn 13:31). Bernard,⁹ pausing here to gaze upon Christ, says, "He rejoices, and He dances, He is gladdened and exults, and says, 'Now is the Son of man glorified.'"¹⁰

O unfathomable love of the Son of God for us most miserable and most ungrateful men! For them, He decided to hand Himself over in bonds voluntarily accepted, and He saw [this act] as His highest and exceptional glory. For their liberty, He so greatly desired to be bound that, out of regard for the bonds and the cohort, He released the traitor. And as the traitor was leaving, Jesus jumped and danced with joy. So then, who can deny to me that these voluntary bonds, by which our Redeemer and Savior was bound, were not for our sake?

2. After He had prayed for the third time in the Garden and had most willingly offered to the eternal Father the chalice of the most bitter suffering, which He Himself had to drink to the dregs, He noticed that Judas was already hastening near, and that by then the soldiers of the Praetorium, sent by the priests, were approaching. Indeed, almost as if He felt nothing, since He feared nothing, He urged His sleeping disciples to advance toward the enemy: "Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand" (Mt 26:46). He searches not for a hiding place, nor does He prepare defenses: He goes voluntarily to meet the enemies, in order that He would not be seized grudgingly and bound unwillingly; and,

⁹ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Doctor of the Church († 1153).

¹⁰ Cf. Bernardus (*Aliena et Suppositia, Ogerii Abbatis Lugedii Ordinis Cisterciensis*), Sermo IV: *De sermone Domini in ultima caena ad discipulos habita*, in: vers. 31-33, c. XIII Ioannis, n. 2: PL 184 (*S. Bernardi Operum tomus V*), 896.

all this is for our sake! For this is what the Teacher of the world, writing to the Romans, very strongly affirms and testifies: “Jesus our Lord [...] was put to death for our trespasses” (Rom 4:25). “Christ loved us and gave [H]imself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph 5:2).

Let a secular story give a pale illustration to a sacred deed. To prove his faithfulness to his friend (who was) in an extreme situation, a certain philosopher, went to jail in his stead so that the latter could settle his last affairs. But the tyrant (Dionysius the Sicilian, as Valerius Maximus¹¹ relates) granted him leave from jail on the condition that the hostage would be executed unless he would return at the time allotted for the punishment. The day arrived on which the deadly decree of the tyrant had to be carried out. They went to prison to get the victim for death, and since the guilty one was not present, the guarantor was led out to be killed for his most trusted friend. Do you think he shuddered at the sight of the executioners? Not at all. Do you think he regretted his promised faithfulness? Not in the least. Indeed, the most steadfast (friend) would go forth to the undeserved punishment, even to his own death, unless the other, who was sentenced to death, would not hasten back, having settled his affairs, and thus would halt the tyrant, filling him with admiration — and his friend with joy — for such a heroic act, and earning freedom for himself on account of such a close friendship.

The ancient world is astounded at such a splendid deed, but not I; it admires the remarkable friendship of Damon and Pythias, but not I. Indeed, why should I admire a philosopher who goes to prison for another philosopher, by whom he didn’t doubt he would be released from those (chains)? Rather, I admire, and exceedingly admire, the Son of God who was willingly encircled by chains for man, for sinful, ungrateful man, stained with every sort of crime. And further, [these were] the chains from which He was not disentangled and in no way released — but was

¹¹ Cf. Momigliano, Arnaldo, *Valerio Massimo (Valerius Maximus)*, EI XXXIV, 917-918.

rather escorted all the way up to that most shameful and most severe punishment. Cyril says: "When, however, they captured the Lord, they dragged with chains Him, who came to us for this reason: That He might release us from the chains of the devil."¹² O, what unprecedented charity! O, what inexplicable love of the Son of God for miserable men!

3. How exactly did our Liberator fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, speaking of His captivity through him in this way:

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; [H]e has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" (Is 61:1).

In what way does He speak of release to those confined (prisoners)? As always, He accustomed to teaching with deeds rather than words. When He was seized, the liberty to break free from diabolical bondage was granted to us. When He was confined in the dark prison at the house of Caiaphas, the prison of hell was opened for us. By those dreadful chains, which were thrown around His most sacred hands, we have been stripped of the snares both of the devils and of sins. By those weighty shackles, by which He desired His divine neck to be encircled and then to be imprisoned, He shattered from us the fetters of all evils.

O truly heavenly Orator! O truly most wise and most eloquent, most holy Mercury! So efficaciously did He beg for our liberty, that He deprived Himself of His own liberty for ours. Legal defense did not purchase this, by which we were redeemed; neither was it obtained by a compliance of votes, that we were acquitted from all slavery, whether on account of guilt or of punishment. As soon as our Advocate allowed His most merciful hands to be bound, the human race was immediately freed from captivity to the netherworld. "[He] who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25) cheerfully

¹² Cyrillus, *op. cit.*, Lib. XI: PG 74, 594 (ad Job 18, 12-14).

and willingly, regained for us the golden, heavenly, and eternal liberty. The entire bulk of all our chains broke down, when this heavenly Giant reached the earth to be freely bound.

Quite pertinently, the Doctor [of the Church] Leo¹³ says, “Although the ferocious mob accomplished what it intended and rejoiced in the execution of its crime, nonetheless, greater was the strength of the One captured than those who arrested Him. For the blindness of the Jews obtained nothing, except to destroy themselves by their own impiety; Christ acted with such patience in order to free all by His Passion” (*Sermon 6 on the Lord’s Passion*).¹⁴

Behold, what an excellent deed this Orator sent from Heaven undertook for our liberty: As He was chained by the impious, He brought forth the race of man from Gehenna into freedom; hereafter, He left no one to be surrendered to the power of the ministers of Tartarus, unless one foolishly will have desired to return. Indeed, although, our humanity groans even now in the prisons of eternal death — it is not through any defect of the chains of Christ — but rather, on account of the intentional desire of the reprobates that they bring that death upon themselves.

4. But now, let us come to the matter itself, not [just] looking at it closely, but almost touching it with our hands. When under the leadership of Judas, the Praetorians were rushing with the other most wicked attendants of the Synagogue into the fateful garden, our Savior, “knowing all that was to befall [H]im, came forward and said to them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ They answered [H]im, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am [H]e.’ Judas, who betrayed [H]im, was standing with them. When [H]e said to them, ‘I am [H]e,’ they drew back and fell to the ground” (Jn 18:4-6). And that was the second time that it happened once again.

Someone will interrupt here and cry out to me: O, how unfavorably our affairs proceed a second time! Liberty has been lost, while He, who crushed all the enemies onto the ground and

¹³ Cf. Capua, Fr. Di, *Leone I, detto Magno*, s. († 461), *ECat VII*, 1139.

¹⁴ Leo Magnus, *Tractatus de Passione Domini*, Feria Quarta (31 Martii 443): *CChrL* 138A, 333.

knocked them over with [His] word, must be bound for it [i.e., our freedom]. Let no one become frightened of evil, who understands this mystery here contained. He frightens the enemies, and our Savior forces them to the ground in order that He might reveal to them His power [and] unveil to us His immeasurable charity. He was able with that omnipotent, divine word of His to expel them to Tartarus itself; yet, because He desired to pluck us up from there, He raised upright those who were prostrate and revived again those who were almost dead. He fortified all those lacking strength [and] gave His permission to be assaulted, to be seized, and for whatever [else] pleased their hostile profanity and arrogance. Luke, skillfully depicting all this with his sacred pen, shows Jesus speaking a second time in this manner to the already standing enemies: "Then Jesus said to the chief priests and captains of the temple and elders, who had come out against [H]im, 'Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on [M]e. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness'" (Lk 22:52-53).

He [St. Luke] rightly rebuked the wicked servants who came to seize as though a criminal the One, who being without any personal crime of His own, had decided to be bound for any and all criminals! For only thieves and malefactors flee from the chains, inasmuch they can, and they do not allow themselves to be captured since they are guilty of the crimes and are certain of punishment. They seek hiding places; furthermore, they protect themselves with weapons as long as they are able. He [Christ] would allow Himself to be captured by someone, to be led, and to be sacrificed! On account of our evil deeds and sins, He who committed no evil at any time, whom no one dared to accuse of sin, desired to be captured; He desired to be bound, He desired to suffer, He desired to die. The eternal Father ratified this most holy will of the eternal Son and: "[...] did not spare [H]is own Son" as the Apostle taught the Romans, "but gave [H]im up for us all" (Rom 8:32) to be bound tightly, to be crucified, and to be put to death.

Indeed, when I contemplate this freely undertaken captivity of Christ the Lord, I reckon it to be held in preference to the similarly voluntary captivity of a certain Trojan soldier. The two men, Nisus and Euryalus, were the fellow comrades of Aeneas, united to him with the closest bond of love. Those men set forth from the encircled camp and passed to their leader through the watches of the Rutulians. Seeing that a battalion of the enemy was coming against them, they separated from each other and were evading the entirely unexpected crisis with the help of darkness. However, Euryalus, the younger, was caught. So now, Nisus, pitying the flight of his comrade who was dearer to him than his own life, determined to either deliver him from the enemies or to die himself, shouted as he jumped forth from his hiding place: "I, here I am, I did it! Direct the sword to me, O Rutulians, since all the trickery is my own; this one would not dare anything, nor was he able; I call to witness the sky and the stars are aware of this."¹⁵

Nisus was fearing, as it finally occurred, that the oppressors would enact a punishment of death on Euryalus for the deed done while the Rutulian sentinels were fast asleep. Therefore, the true friend tried to undertake the evil, diverting it from his most dear companion to himself, to transfer the most insolent madness of the furious enemy to his own shoulders.

This is either a very splendid testimony of the most steadfast friendship or a tale (because the greatest Roman poet sings of tragic themes). Nevertheless, He accomplished [it], as our Fellow Man, of the same nature as us, the Incarnate Son of God, dared greater and more real things. For our sake, He offered Himself to be seized, to be tightly bound in a most savage manner, to be violently dragged off toward suffering; and [He did] all this willingly, resolutely, and without delay. He did not wish to either destroy His enemies, though He could, nor to save us in any other manner, which was easily attainable to Him, except through His own chains. He, therefore, gave an opportunity to the henchmen to

¹⁵ Publius Virgilius Maro, *Aeneis*, 1. IX, vv. 427-429, *Publii Virgilii Maronis Opera*, Ed. C.H. Weise, Lipsiae 1844, p. 309.

take a hold of Him, so that we may slip away from the hands of hell's servants. He allowed Himself to be chained, in order that our chains may be cut asunder. He carried the crime of us all, as if neither Adam nor his unhappy posterity had offended God most grievously. Thus, for us all, He threw Himself before the divine justice, voluntarily making Himself guilty, while guilty of nothing. "Being born in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:7) in order that, as a man He may be seized, tortured, condemned, scourged, and killed for us. "Who for the joy that was set before [H]im endured the cross" (Heb 12:2), as the Teacher of the Gentiles astonishingly noted. "Teaching us," as Gregory¹⁶ adds, "to hold prosperity in contempt and to fear it, and to love and to bear adversities for the sake of the truth."¹⁷ For this is the liberty of the sons of God, freed from the slavery of the devil through the voluntary bondage of Christ.

5. I advance even further in this arena of our heavenly Hercules. Already He was seized; by then they had thrown the chains on the One arrested, when mindful of the loyalty sworn at the table, to confirm his words with deeds, the most zealous Peter — like another Theseus drew the sword from its sheath to protect his most beloved Teacher and to disperse the enemy with his weapon. Accordingly, he attacked Malchus, who was nearby (who was a slave of the high priest); he struck the ear, which despised the divine Teacher. He held back the rest of the bold attackers.

Do you believe that Christ praised this act of defense? In fact, looking with severity upon the (as it were) importunate defender: "Put," He was saying, "your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the chalice which the Father has given [M]e?" (Jn 18:11).

When I hear the heavenly King saying these words, the heroic deed of Vladislaus Jagiellonian III comes to my mind. This most

¹⁶ This probably refers to St. Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church. Cf. Pesci, Benedetto, *Gregorio I, Papa, detto Magno*, ECat VI, 1112-1124.

¹⁷ The source of this text was not able to be found in the works of Gregory the Great. A text with similar sense was found in *Homilia in Ezechielem Prophetam*, Lib. II, n. 6: PL 76, 952.

valiant king of Poland and Hungary whose example is appropriate to illustrate the deed of [our] Lord. As it was, Vladislaus broke the peace treaty with the Turks, on account both of the advice and the authority of the Roman Pontiff, obedience to whom he considered to be his most holy duty. He caused and made war against those who were pillaging Europe anew. He recovered much [from them], and also regained entire kingdoms. He succeeded in the battle line several times. Finally, the sultan gathered the strength of the entire Orient and crossed the sea on the ships of Christian merchants (what a shame! let's not name this stingy nation that provided him with the ships). The sultan stopped Vladislaus who was on his way to Asia with a most victorious army, in the Caucasus mountains. There, the fighting was the fiercest: The enemies were cut down, and all the horses were flung into the most disorderly flight. Only the foot soldiers protected the sultan (there was, at that time, the glory of the Turkish military, which we call the Janissaries, grown full of power). For Vladislaus, intent upon completely destroying them, attacked with the most chivalrous spirit. John Hunyadi, the leader of the Hungarian army, seeing the most evident danger threatening the king, besought him many times to return to camp. However, disregarding death for the defense of the Christian people, he [Vladislaus] said boldly: "It is a shameful thing to draw back from the advancing war; I sacrifice my life and blood willingly and with pleasure for the defense of the most holy Faith and the protection of my kingdoms."¹⁸ He said this and then fought with great bravery; he was among the first to be killed.

This king's piety is great and worthy of the catalogue of the saints, and his great love of Hungary deserves perpetual recognition. But this is only a shadow in comparison to the eternal Sun [meaning Christ]. For He raised His enemies crushed to the ground; He gave them a chance to arrest Him. He did not let Peter force into flight His captors who were binding His holy hands. By a severe rebuke, He restrained Peter who was attacking

¹⁸ Cf. Halecki, Oskar, *Storia della Polonia*, Roma 1996, pp. 122-124.

the servants with the sword. He did not desire to withdraw from the danger, nor did He allow the enemy to be struck; because they could do nothing against Him without His consent, He freely allowed the atrocities they desired to commit against Him. In complete freedom, He desired to be seized, to be held, to be bound; and all these things for us, Christians, for us.

For this reason, I will close with Paul's words: "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave [H]imself for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:1-2). Truly, we are able to show no greater or more manifest love to our Savior than by remembering continuously and perpetually that He voluntarily accepted His bonds. By His captivity, He destroyed our own; by His bondage, He brought eternal freedom to us.

Therefore, let us in spirit, if we are not able with lips, fondly kiss those consecrated bonds, which were drawn tightly and most dreadfully around Christ in whom divinity is joined to humanity. Let us adore with tears those most sacred bonds, which burdened Him who is the Holy of Holies. In short, let us beseech the kind Savior, that He would not permit us to be led away to hell with the bonds of our sins, but to be most lovingly released. May He bestow the most perfect, the most sure freedom that will know no end in the heavenly Homeland.

*O [You], who were captured for me of [Your] own accord,
and for me were bound,
You suffered! Free me if only from my bonds,
That I may be captive to nothing, and bound by nothing —
I desire only to be Your slave, O Christ.*

DISCOURSE III

The Scourging of the Sinner

Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged [H]im. (Jn 19:1)

Once, having departed with the divine permission, “Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD, and afflicted Job” (Job 2:7), that man, not only the most blessed, but also the most just under the sun, “with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.” Who could gaze with dry eyes upon such misfortune of the most well-known and holiest Prince? Who would not be moved to compassion by that foul pus flowing forth from every part of his body? The friends of Job fulfilled their obligation admirably well. For, when they came to visit him, “they raised their voices and wept; and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward Heaven. And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great” (Job 2:12-13).

Behold! Before our eyes, Christians, a more dreadful spectacle is daily observed: The Son of God was far more violently wounded. The Leader of all the just, that King and Source of all the saints, that Head of all the Elect, who, descending from Heaven, put on human flesh to veil the Majesty of His divinity, so that He might allow the cruelty of the most degenerate of men, who were instruments of the demons, to torture Him more freely. Look upon Him, the most forsaken of men (cf. Is 53:4), mangled from the heel of the foot, all through the body up to the crown of the head (cf. Job 2:7); look upon Him, and meanwhile, as I describe in detail His most dreadful scourging, make ready loving tears for cleansing the wounds. For the scourges, by which He was struck, have especially come from your and my sins.

1. Alas! Where shall I begin? Or what shall I utter regarding the incredible slaughter of our Lord and Savior? Let me employ here at the beginning a few words of the pious Patriarch of Venice, St.

Lawrence Justinian: "He is bound," he says, "Jesus is scourged, and His whole body is completely destroyed by the scourges; now the shoulders, now the abdomen, now the arms, now the legs they surround: They add wounds to wounds, blows to fresh blows."¹⁹

At one time, on account of the insistence of the Jews, the tribune ordered Paul to be whipped with scourges and to be tortured. "But when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen, and uncondemned?" [...] So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him instantly; and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him" (Acts 22:25-29). He [Paul] was so greatly esteemed that he was written down in the records of the city of Rome.

The only begotten Son of the Lord and eternal Author of all things, the all-powerful King of all kingdoms, of men and Angels, and moreover all the heavens, while fettered to a pillar of marble, is most cruelly struck to pieces by the most wicked servants of the devils. The sun never beheld such an excellent man neither in the deadly array of criminals, nor among those seated upon a royal throne. What is [the significance of] the Roman citizen [Paul] compared to this One? What [is the significance of] the leaders, kings, and Caesars of all the centuries? Together, they are but shadow and dust. Yet no one is found who would cry out, while the most holy, the Son of God in person and by nature, is placed under the most dreadful scourges in the very bloody hands of the most bloodthirsty henchmen: Hebrews, what are you doing? Is it permissible to hand over the promised Messiah, whom you ought to receive with the greatest gratitude and adore with the highest worship, to be tortured by wicked men, to be torn to pieces in a way worthy of tears? He, whom your patriarchs were begging for from the Heavenly Father in the most fervent prayers, whom the most faithful prophets were foretelling was to

¹⁹ Cf. Laurentius Iustinianus, *De triumphali agone mediatoris Christi*, c. 13: *Divi Laurenti Iustiniani Protopatriarche Veneti Opera Omnia*, Venetiis 1606, f.204r.

come, whom the holiest kings greatly desired to see — who for your salvation, instruction, consolation, and glory was sent down from Heaven, is it Him you so irreverently, impudently, and ungratefully despised? Do you rejoice when He, with unheard of cruelty, is lashed on His whole body, is torn apart, and is pulled to pieces with the most dreadful whips, as if He was the most vicious evildoer? Alas, is it permissible for you to whip the Son of God? No one said these words when our most merciful Savior suffered at the pillar. Scarcely anyone could be found who was moved by pity for Him, and no one who would weep over Him. Indeed, as many as were present, absorbed by this horrible spectacle, displayed such a cheerful countenance, as if wanting to testify that by His wounds they were particularly invigorated. The scourged Jesus, predicting this beforehand through the mouthpiece of the prophet-king, said: “But at my stumbling they gathered in glee, they gathered together against me; cripples whom I did not know slandered me without ceasing” (Ps 35:15). And undoubtedly they cried: “Aha, we have our heart’s desire! [...] We have swallowed him up” (Ps 35:25).

Therefore, while the Chosen People take this wicked delight from the cruel and nearly lethal scourging of Christ our Lord, at least we, who are adopted into His family, should groan in compassion over such a deadly scourging of His, and should sigh with the most devout Bishop of Hippo: “Lord Jesus, when I see You all scourged, I do not desire (my own body) to be without scourges.”²⁰ It is a consolation for the miserable to have allies in their suffering. Whenever I see You bleeding, I would desire to pour out an ocean of tears. When I see You wounded from top to bottom, I consecrate to You most humbly all the blows of my afflictions, disasters, pains, toils, sorrows, temptations, insults, injuries, and any adversities whatever, annoyances, hardships, mortifications, even all the anxieties of duties and all worries, all pricks and all wounds of my soul and my heart. From this moment on, I desire to be bound with you to the pillar: If You would unite me to You

²⁰ This text was not able to be found in the works of St. Augustine.

through charity, who will wrench me from You? If you will join me to You through mercy, who will sever me from You? Let my spirit cleave to You, let Your most merciful right hand support me. May the unworthiest member cling to the Head, and may this small atom suffer along with the entire sacred, afflicted body.

2. Let us examine, then, the cruel instruments of such unheard of torture and the hateful means of slaughter. The holy Vincent Ferrer, the extraordinary torch of the Dominican family, reveals this: "First, they scourged Christ with briars and thorns, then with sharp whips, and finally they used chains, to the ends of which they attached barbed iron. So He was harshly whipped with thorns, then more harshly with whips, and finally in the harshest manner with chains" (*Serm. de paras.*).²¹

However, Lanspergius,²² the pious author, weighing this most dreadful scourging, says: "After they bound the Lord to the pillar, six robust men came forward to scourge Christ with whips, with rods, and with small scorpions (in which were hooked pieces of iron)."²³

These tools were employed to cut the divine, most Sacred Body; this mode of horrible scourging was revealed to the holy Fathers during their loving contemplation. He who is the delight of Heaven and earth, the most beloved, only begotten Son of the Heavenly Father and Immaculate Mother, was beaten with rods by two lictors. And if we accept St. Vincent's testimony, He was thereupon beaten with the same number of barbed scourges, and at last, either with sharpened chains or with hooked scorpions.

In the past, the foolish Rehoboam, the offspring of the wisest king (Solomon), is said to have answered the people who were asking him to lighten their burden: "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions" (1 Kings 12:14).

²¹ From his sermon for Good Friday: Cf. Vincentius Ferrerius, *Sermones hyemales*, Lugduni 1558, p. 735 (*In die Parasceves Sermo unicus*).

²² Cf. Testore, Celestino, *Lansperger (Lanspergio)*, *Johann (Iustus von Landsberg)* († 1531), *ECat* VII, 896-897.

²³ This text was not able to be found in the works of Lanspergius.

He so greatly displeased the free-born Israelites with his hard-hearted, insensitive response that they would defect tribe by tribe to Jeroboam, having repudiated forever the house of David. O wicked people! They were not able to bear the scourges of Rehoboam, which were not even inflicted on their backs; indeed, they were only threatened. And now, they nonetheless maltreat with the barbarity of wild beasts the Son of God, the royal offspring of David according to the flesh! Where is that natural precept that teaches one to love one's neighbor: That you should not to do another what you would not want done to yourself?

But, let us leave behind the executors of such incredible savagery: Rather, let us admire the long-suffering of the most innocent and most holy Lord to the end. The torturers were being changed, but not He; the muscles of those [who were] scourging [Him] were becoming weak, but His were strengthening. He was standing more motionless than His own pillar. Cheerful and light-hearted, He pondered in spirit the words of the prophet: "Behold, I am prepared for the whips" (Ps 37:18) [LV].²⁴

O unconquerable fortitude of spirit! O inexplicable ardor and readiness to suffer for us!

Eyewitnesses relate, that you may find among Turkish commoners such excellent flatterers, who, in honor of the sultan passing-by, would cut their own body, face, and sometimes chest or would seriously wound their arms. However, they would completely recover soon after by pouring ointment into the open wounds. Indeed, for a very small price, they squandered their blood. I condemn the misers, I condemn the cruelty, intended as flattery, against their own bodies. I kiss the scourged wounds of my Emperor, Christ the Lord, because they bring salvation to me; I embrace the scourges, because they are undertaken for my life, for my honor, for my eternal glory.

3. Nevertheless, I have said nothing, when I have only said that Christ was scourged for us, whomever we may be. Those

²⁴ This verse was translated literally from the Latin Vulgate to best convey the meaning intended by St. Stanislaus.

very scourges, by which His most handsome and most holy Body was furrowed (at the sight of which anyone would tremble and rightly lament), what were they, if not our sins? He Himself spoke through the mouth of David regarding this: "They gathered around me with scourges, yet I did not take notice" (Ps 35:15) [DRB]. The Archbishop of Canterbury Anselm,²⁵ both an eloquent and astute scholar of the Holy Scriptures, ponders and explains those words: "The Lord heard the raging strokes of the whip," he says, "but He did not know of the scourges which touched Him."²⁶

How could He not know? To impute a lack of knowledge to Christ, who is Eternal Wisdom, would be very mistaken and very inappropriate, I believe. He did know in His heart by whom and for whom He was flogged by such instruments. So, the true God from eternity was not ignorant of His lashes. Nevertheless, He was truly innocent, to such an extent unworthy of injuries, that it was justly proclaimed through David: "They gathered around me with scourges, yet I did not take notice" (Ps 35:15). It is as if He had said, in our own way of speaking: "I am conscious of no fault of my own, of not even the smallest imperfection. I do not know of any personal transgression, for which I am lashed so violently." Who can tell us, then, if He who knows everything, says He does not know?

Let the Heavenly Father Himself respond through Isaiah: "[He was] stricken for the transgression of [M]y people" (Is 53:8), the Son of God was altogether "wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole" (Is 53:5).

Thus, let everyone individually own up to their responsibility, since Christ was flogged for our sins. And even more, let everyone mourn, weep most bitterly, and cry over [their sins] until at death

²⁵ Cf. Vagaggini, Cipriano, *Anselmo d'Aosta, santo e dottore della Chiesa* (+ 1109), *ECat* I, 1406-1415. He was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093.

²⁶ This quote was noted by Stanislaus as taken from the "*tractatum de Passione*," however this work was not able to be found among the works of Anselm and may no longer be extant.

their eyes won't be needed anymore (for weeping). Let everyone shed tears into the Blood of the Lord, both so that they would declare their genuine love for Him and obtain pardon of sins more quickly: "So that he who merits punishment by himself" (I use the words of Augustine) "may through His atonement merit His pardon; and in Him who survived hell for sins, may yet have confidence to be recalled by such a leader to the homeland. For what kind of evil has man accomplished that the Son of God become man did not redeem?"²⁷

4. I was wishing to finish but contemplation holds me bound to the column of my bound Lord. Consequently, give your pardon, and devote your attention for a while longer to this most cruel scourging, and further (give) your good will that we might progress in unfolding our contemplation and not let it be lost.

Very severe thirst was pressing the Hebrew people after their departure from Egypt into the desert. However, no spring could be found there, no flowing or standing waters to sprinkle upon their parched and almost dead lips: The rocks and crags had indeed overtaken them on every side. Consequently, God, filled with pity for that nation, although stubborn and rebellious, charged the leaders Moses and Aaron to bring forth water from the rocks: "Tell the rock before their eyes," He was saying, "to yield its water" (Num 20:8). Moses, in fact, dared more: "He struck the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed" (Ps 78:20).

(Let us turn) now to Christ, whose dew was implored by the thirsty souls of the just (men) in limbo. They prayed with sighs almost incessantly throughout so many ages. Although the eternal Father was able to refresh and quench this thirst in many ways, nevertheless, in order to manifest an example of more eminent charity, He "struck the rock so that water gushed out" (Ps 78:20). "And the Rock was Christ" (1 Cor 10:4). Am I dreaming that waters flowed forth from this Rock? Blood, such abundant blood flowed forth; so much gushed forth that the Holy Father [of the

²⁷ Augustinus, *Meditationes*, c. 8, nn. 3. 5, in: AMS, pp. 18-19.

Church] Gregory of Nazianzus²⁸ did not hesitate to compare this gushing Blood to the four rivers of Paradise: “The blood flowed,” he said, “and from this paradise, rivers of heavenly blood sprung forth” (*Sermon on Christ Suffering*).²⁹

Hereafter, the mellifluous Teacher converted this Blood of Christ into oil, which is a symbol of mercy, to show that it flowed from His infinite charity as propitiation of our sins. “O Jews” (St. Bernard³⁰ uttered with a loud cry against the enemies of the most innocent Savior), “you are the rocks, but you are striking the meeker rock! From whom resounds the ringing of forgiveness, and pours forth the oil of mercy!” (*Sermon 4*).³¹ Surely, how great is the loyalty of the Son of God to us, miserable ones, that we were not most deservedly scourged for our crimes. He desired so ardently, so clemently, so mercifully to be most unjustly scourged for these same people, in order that His most sacred Blood (being converted into the oil of mercy), which gushed forth from His mangled body in the form of rivers, might be reckoned as most suitable for healing the wounds of our souls.

Bound to the marble pillar, Jesus was inundated with deep red liquid, being most cruelly cut to pieces for every sin of every sinner, so that any sinner whosoever might “suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock” (Dt 32:13). As you see, the most bitter scourging of our Lord is transformed for us into the sweetest honey, and the most sacred Blood becomes like the oil of mercy.

In order that I may explain more in depth, I have recourse to three miraculous founts, which even today are seen in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, in Rome.³² When I tasted the water

²⁸ Cf. Cataudella, Quintino, *Gregorio Nazianzeno, Doctor of the Church* (+ 389/390), *ECat* VI, 1088-1096.

²⁹ The sermon here quoted was not able to be found among the works of St. Gregory.

³⁰ This is St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

³¹ Bernardus, *Sermo Feria Quarta Hebdomadae Poenosae, De Passione Domini*, in *Sancti Bernardi Claraevallensis Abbatis Primi Opera Omnia*, Parisiis 1615, col. 142.

³² In reality these three founts are not inside the Basilica, but are about 2.4 km away from it.

from the first one, it had the taste of blood. Water from the second had the taste of milk, and from the third the water had its very own individual taste. Moreover, sacred history testifies that when the sacred head of the Prince of the Church (St. Paul) was cut off at that place, falling to the ground three times, it skipped three times and immediately there came forth three springs of blood, milk, and very clean delicious water. The color is the same today, but the taste, as I related, surprised me as being entirely different. Also, it is not without great mystery, because the fount of blood signifies the most impetuous zeal of the Apostle in preaching, loving, and confessing Christ up to the point of giving his blood, according to words of Christ about him: "He is a chosen instrument of [M]ine to carry [M]y name before the Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of [M]y name" (Acts 9:15-16). How much (must he suffer)? Hear the Apostle himself, as he gives evidence, enumerating how much [this] servant of Christ was tried more than the others: "Far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches" (2 Cor 1:23-28). And finally, his neck (was) placed under the sword. These are the characteristics of the fount of blood.

To the fount of milk is connected the idea of maternal tenderness with which he brought forth children to Christ, brought them up with such wonderful, admirable sweetness, that becoming everything for everyone, he seemed to be all milk. And he did not deny this, speaking in this way to the Corinthians: "As infants

in Christ [...] I fed you with milk, not solid food" (1 Cor 3:1-2), like those to whom milk is beneficial, not solid food.

The third fount signifies the water of the salvific wisdom, which the Teacher of the Gentiles gives to all: "Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification" (1 Cor 2:6-7).

Therefore, as Paul's mysterious founts — which have the color of water — [yet] are reminiscent in taste of blood, milk, and pure water, so also the rivers that gushed forth most abundantly from the scourged body of Christ, our Lord and Savior, have the power and efficacy of honey and oil, although they are perceived to be red in color. (This is) the honey of gentle kindness for all sinners whose salvation and conversion the Redeemer of all longs for the most. But recall to mind the different tastes of blood, milk, and water. (This is) the oil of mercy, by which He forgives our sins, and He most graciously removes our punishments, both temporal and eternal, on account of His Blood that flowed out at the pillar, so even the most hardened criminal may "suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock" (Dt 32:13).

5. This is probably what the penitent King [David] had in mind, when he sang: "Many are the pangs of the wicked; but steadfast love surrounds him who trusts in the LORD" (Ps 32:10). How many scourges do they merit through their crimes, that is, the proud, the greedy, the lustful, the furious, the murderers, the adulterers, the robbers, the drunkards, the hostile, the spiteful, the liars, the blasphemers, the impious, the sacrilegious, and other criminals deserving of that name?

All these things, the most innocent Son of God bore alone in His most sacred Body up to the end for all men, bound to the column not so much by chains of iron, as much as with the ropes of charity: In order that we may acquire mercy, placing all our confidence without presumption in this His most dreadful flagellation that He accepted out of utmost love.

Are you afraid, whoever you are, crushed by the burden of many sins, of the abyss of hell, and its punishments, terrible, incurable, and unending? Sigh, flee, and hasten to the scourges of the Savior with true contrition: "Hoping in the Lord," lest justice punish, "His mercy will surround [you]" (Ps 31:10) [LV].³³

Are even you, who have a more tender conscience, afraid of being sent one day to the purifying prison, since you are not yet free from [the punishment due to] sins committed or [good acts] omitted? Have recourse to the scourged Jesus: "Hoping" in Him, "mercy will surround [you]." For, "If, as it is right," the saintly Augustine thus perceives, "the just Heavenly Father disdains you for your sin, may He gaze upon you at least mercifully out of the charity that He has for his beloved Son" (cf. *Contemplation* 8).³⁴

But if perhaps, someone is here and now scourged by God temporally, in order not to be scourged eternally, let him [who was] scourged prostrate [himself] before Jesus, and Jesus will bear his scourges or lessen them or strengthen him with heavenly sweetness, that he may sing with a most blessed tongue the sweetest praises of the omnipotent God!

O Jesus! As I do not know how to count up Your wounds:
 So I do not know how to count the wounds of my soul!
 But I do know this: For the healing of these, those are more
 than sure;
 They suffice; therefore, what I know, the same do I ask.

³³ This quotation was translated directly from the Latin Vulgate in order to best convey the meaning intended by Stanislaus. In the RSV this is Psalm 32:10.

³⁴ Augustinas, *Meditationes*, Ch. VIII, 4, in: AMS, p. 19.

DISCOURSE IV

The Crown of Thorns

[P]laiting a crown of thorns they put it on [H]im. (Mk 15:17)

Those who have attended the most blessed inauguration of our graciously reigning king³⁵ can tell us about many things, (and) how the coronation of kings is not only festive but glorious. We saw him clothed in a golden cloak, his head encircled with a diadem glittering with precious gems, illustrious with the powerful scepter placed in his right hand. We saw the Sarmatian Eagle³⁶ and sword carried before him, and we gazed upon him completely surrounded with remarkable splendor. Hereafter, the joy of the nobles watching him and the crowds jumping with joy were so great, that not being able to hold it locked within themselves, they burst out in the loudest innumerable cries: “Long live the King!”

However, in this brief time granted to us by Divine Providence, let us ponder again the coronation of the Immortal King, carried out in the royal capital of Judea some 1,630 years ago.³⁷

Alas! With what abundance of words, with what magnificence of inflection will I relate this to you? One’s voice and life ought to stop at the sight of this astonishment combined with the enormity of its pain. However, I will make an effort, while the pain is enclosed within the threshold of silent pity, to weave the thread of this sermon I have begun with whatever strength that can be provided (albeit the weakest). All the responsibility for this most inhuman spectacle, this most ignominious pomp, and this most painful torture of our King (Jesus), is to be laid upon our sins.

³⁵ St. Stanislaus speaks of the coronation of King Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki (1669-1973), which took place in Krakow on Sept. 26, 1669.

³⁶ “Sarmatian Eagle” was the term St. Stanislaus used to describe the emblem of the Polish State.

³⁷ This work was first published in 1690, but was composed over a long period of time before that.

1. After the Prince of Peace, Christ the Lord, was already most frightfully flogged with scourges, and when the rage of the Rabbis was not yet satisfied, "And the soldiers led [H]im away inside the palace (that is, the praetorium); and they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on [H]im" (Mk 15:16-17).

You remember quite well what the the leaders of the Synagogue, the heads of the plot against Jesus, did before the very wicked Praetor, Pilate: "And they began to accuse [H]im, saying 'We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that [H]e [H]imself is Christ a king'" (Lk 23:2). Therefore, in order that He might be afflicted with greater contempt, a king indeed, but [like one] from the theater, they mockingly worshipped [H]im, covered [by them] with royal purple, but worn out and torn; with a royal diadem, but fashioned out of thorns; with a royal scepter but composed of reeds, and they saluted: "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Mk 15:18).

Now, what Christian heart is harder than diamond, that it will not be moved with such bitter mourning by the inhuman and infamous crowning of the Lord of Lords? What eyes are so dry, from which this most sorrowful and frightful spectacle would not at least elicit as many drops of tears as they see have flowed from the bloodied head and face of the Savior? Whose feelings are so savage, and moreover inhuman, that even the contempt and the stains of blood (ah! how many!) of the God-Man would still not soften hard hearts?

2. If it is His purple cloak, more than any other symbol of mockery and cruelty, that we look upon with admiration that flows not out of curiosity but out of piety, and if we embrace it not with the bodily eyes but with the light of a devout mind, will we not perceive a more splendid beauty flowing forth in the midst of disgrace and contempt of the sons of men?

Once, the Israelite Mordecai, through Haman, the highest leader in the royal city of Susa, was richly adorned with the royal robe, shining with the royal crown, and seated atop the royal horse. He was led, by command of King Ahasuerus, with great

honor through all the crossroads of the city, so much that the entire people turned their eyes to the most magnificent pomp of such a joyful spectacle. Even Haman, in the place of the herald, proclaimed with an unwilling tongue: "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor" (Est 6:11).

Such great honor was decreed and given to Mordecai as a reward for discovering the plot of two of the eunuchs directed against the King. How many [even] greater benefits have we all, together with the wicked Hebrew Synagogue, received from the Son of God, above all Kings the most excellent and the most dignified! And with what honor was He endowed by us? "[H]e put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in fury as a mantle" (Is 59:17). The eternal Father punishes in His Son the evil deeds we have committed; the wounds and penalties that we deserve are inflicted upon Him; the anger we should bear is poured upon Him.

One of the Phoenician Kings, whom Josephus, the Hebrew Livy,³⁸ remembers in the fourth book of the *Antiquities*, "designated his son to be dressed in purple as sacrifice"³⁹ to placate the gods.

Regarding our Savior, the Doctor (of the Church) Jerome says: "Before the people, He was seen clothed in purple, to indicate the uniqueness of the sacrifice."⁴⁰ But what is the uniqueness of this sacrifice? Truly, the Prince and Author of Sacrifices, the Creator of Priests and the High Priest, was designated to be sacrificed. The most just wrath of God had to be appeased for human wickedness, which was justly judged. Who is worthy to appease God if not God Himself? Therefore, in order to be satisfied, the very angered Heavenly Father "designated [His] Son," who willingly and freely offered Himself to it, "to be clothed in purple for sacrifice."

3. The immensity of such kindness overwhelms me! I cannot understand, I cannot grasp such love. And so, I go further. I pass from the purple [cloak] to the crown of the heavenly King. To the

³⁸ Cf. Momigliano, A., *Giuseppe, Flavio (Flavius Iosephus)*, EI XVII, 376-377.

³⁹ This quote was not able to be found in the text of the *Antiquities*.

⁴⁰ This text was not able to be found in the commentary of St. Jerome.

crown — I say — both abject and at the same time cruel: abject, for it is made of thorns; cruel, for it is sharp, frightfully pressed, and hammered into [His] head.

Some time ago, one of the young brides of Jerusalem invited some girls to witness the coronation of Solomon: “Go forth,” she said, “O daughters of Zion, behold King Solomon, with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day of the gladness of his heart” (Cant 3:11). How much greater than Solomon is this [One], to whose coronation Isidore summons us: “Go forth,” he says, “to see the crown of thorns, which the Synagogue placed upon the head of Christ.”⁴¹

Both Solomon and Christ were crowned in Jerusalem; but the former was crowned with a golden diadem and shining gems, the latter with a frightful crown of piercing thorns; the former for glory, the latter for disgrace; the former by a most beloved mother, the latter by the worst stepmother, the Synagogue; that first on the day of his betrothal, this One on the day of [His] murder; the first in great gladness of the heart, this One in great sorrow of the heart.

Who would come forth to contemplate such a sad spectacle, such calamitous and mournful splendor? However, it is necessary to come forth. Why? So that we may acknowledge our sins with which the heavenly Solomon is crowned. Yet, how can this be accomplished? Surely, it is well known to us that the origin of the thorns and of sin is one and the same. Why, for instance, did God curse the earth, so that it would yield thorns and thistles, if not because He was most grievously offended by that sin of pride and rebellion of our common parent, Adam, and by us all in Adam! [It was a sin] of pride, because we were wanting to be gods, knowing good and evil; [it was a sin] of rebellion, because we most shamelessly violated the admonition of our most holy and most kind Creator in regards to not eating the deadly fruit of the forbidden tree.

⁴¹ Isidorus, *De Nativitate Domini, Passione, et Resurrectione ...*, *Libri Duo*, Haganoae 1529, c. 31: “*Quia Spinis coronatus est.*”

Consequently, original sin is punished by the sowing of thorns upon the earth; moreover, the crown of thorns is likewise plaited for Christ for the same reason. There would not be this shameful and cruel crowning if our sin didn't sow the thorns in the earth, since it was the origin of that most disgraceful crowning. Therefore, Basil the Great⁴² says with the most loving and just lament: "Indeed, the rose is beautiful," he says, "but it inflicts sadness upon me; for whenever I behold this flower, I am reminded of my sins, on account of which, the earth is cursed to yield thorns and thistles" (*Oratio: de Paradiso*).⁴³

Still, not only that original sin, but all the other sins of mortal men are thorns as well. Most appropriately, the golden-mouthed Bishop [St. John Chrysostom] mentions this, saying, "Whoever has sinned is full of thorns like a hedgehog."⁴⁴ Since none of us are without sin, we are such hedgehogs, and we sinfully provide the thorns [set] on the sacred and majestic head of Christ, piercing it and drawing blood. Nevertheless, He sustained this unheard of torture so strongly and cheerfully according to His own great love for us, that He asked for more and more painful things, so much so, that these thorns aroused in Him a new zeal for suffering. This is just as the most learned Tertullian indicated: "In the times of our Lord (Jesus) Christ," this ancient author says, "the thorns indeed tore into [Him] with deadly wounds; but love sustained Him in His intense zeal for new punishments."⁴⁵

O unheard of love! On account of which death is delayed, life is prolonged, so that greater things will be suffered for the lost ones! The deadly tips of thorns, penetrating at every point the enclosure of the brain, divert the King from the death to be died on the Cross; the blood flowing forth from there becomes food for the mighty spirit, lest God who is destined to rule from the Cross die before the hour of death in the trappings of the coronation.

⁴² St. Basil the Great, Doctor of the Church († 379).

⁴³ Basilus Magnus, *Oratio: De Paradiso*: PG 30, 66.

⁴⁴ Ioannes Chrysostomus, *Expositio Psalmi Nonagesimi*, in *D. Ioannis Chrysostomi vere Aureae in Psalmos Homiliae*, Venetiis 1549, f.75v.

⁴⁵ Cf. Tertullianus, *De Corona* XIV, 4: CChrL 2, 1063.

Doubtless, it was necessary that the Renewer of the World must gather “flowers and fruit of glory and virtue” (Eccl 24:23) [DRB], not only from the thorns, but equally from the tree of fate.

When Christ pondered this in His heart (and) — like a boxer who has just entered into battle not thinking about his wounds, although they are life-threatening — He was becoming more courageous and more vigorous due to the wounds suffered in battle. The more difficult it was to finish what remained to be accomplished, the more zealously He desired the battle that was to bring Him greatly distinguished glory and splendid honor. This way, “love sustained Him in His intense zeal for new punishments.”

4. We come at last to contemplate that scepter of the King, a theatrical king for the Hebrews, but for us and those living in Heaven, the Most High. “[They] put,” says Matthew, “a reed in [H]is right hand” (Mt 27:29). Is He adorned by this royal staff, with which kings rule, princes command, the powerful determine justice? Indeed, it is so. Why? So that through His humility He may completely destroy our pride. The symbol of humility is the reed: For as this reed is moved by every movement of wind without any resistance, so the humble spirit gives reverence to all.

He was the most humble man, about whom Truth says: “What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind?” (Mt 11:7). Therefore, Anselm says most truly about Christ Himself: “In order that the account written against us because of sin, (I supposed it to be pride) may be completely destroyed, He assumed a reed” (*Tract. de Passione*).⁴⁶

No one was permitted to come near the Assyrian kings unless called. For this reason, when Mordecai was urging Esther to go to Ahasuerus to beg for the salvation of her own people, she responded: “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law; all alike

⁴⁶ This *Tractatum de Passione* was not able to be found among the existing works of Anselm.

are to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter that he may live" (Est 4:11).

Jesus fled, when the people desired to choose our Savior as king, as they had been fed by Him to satiety. Indeed, He was alone in solitude. Now, however, He rejoices to be crowned with thorns, and to take up the scepter of reeds, and "love sustained Him in His intense zeal for new punishments." So that to each sinner who approaches Him as a beggar, He stretches out this scepter of reeds as a sign of clemency, and accepts him completely absolved by grace.

May our most gentle King live forever! Long live Jesus! He who desired to be disdained, that He may restore us to honor; to be clothed with a tattered purple cloak, so that He may adorn us with vestments of glory; to be encircled with the diadem of thorns, so that He would give the undying laurels; to be adorned with the reed scepter so that through His humility, we, having been mercifully raised, may inherit the kingdom prepared for us from the beginning of the world. He turns His own contempt into honor for us, His own punishment into our pardon, His fear into our security, His torments inflicted by us into our beatitude.

Therefore, hail! However abject is the purple that
clothes You,
Although the head is covered with thorns,
with the reed in the hand,
Hail, King of Kings! Let the Jews be for Caesar,
Besides You, Jesus, no one will be my King!

DISCOURSE V

The Light Burden

So they took Jesus, and [H]e went out, bearing [H]is own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha. (Jn 19:17)

God desired to test both the obedience and the faith of Abraham, the first of the holy patriarchs. So, He granted to the parents in their feeble old age a single little son (which is nothing short of a miracle of nature). That child was the one in whose seed all nations were destined to be blessed and through whom the Hebrew nation was [to become] comparable to the number of the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. So, God commanded Isaac to be offered to Himself as a victim in sacrifice: “Take your son, your only begotten son Isaac, whom you love, and to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you” (Gen 22:2). That righteous parent obeyed the divine voice. Immediately, he began the destined journey: “And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on Isaac his son” (Gen 22:6). Go forward, under the most favorable signs, most divinely inspired old man! For already, you made God so bound to you through your loyal obedience, faith, and especially love, that while sparing your son Isaac, He intended His own Firstborn to be immolated for the salvation of the whole human race.

Behold! Now, at the command of the Father, out of His own volition, condemned to execution by the sentence of Pilate, “[H]e went out, bearing [H]is own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha” (Jn 19:17). Let us accompany Him, Christians, but let us not accompany Him without sorrow. For, though the Cross imposed upon Him seems a LIGHT BURDEN⁴⁷ on account of [His] love for us, we will have

⁴⁷ The emphasis of these words is copied from the Latin of St. Stanislaus.

made it lighter still, if we acknowledge that it has been fashioned from our sins. We will support Jesus when He stumbles under the Cross, by stirring up a sincere disgust for our sins, and by making a firm intention not to commit them anymore.

1. David, the King of Jerusalem, reflecting in spirit what we consider now, sang of these considerations about Christ carrying the Cross: "He has exulted as a giant to run [His] way; His going out [is] from the end of heaven" (Ps 18:6-7) [LV]. Truly, we ought to admit that the Lord had the shoulders of a giant, given that He was decidedly carrying the most burdensome, lethal wood. It was recorded to be heavy to such an extent that, I believe, two men would have fallen under that Cross. "Certainly that cross was a heavy burden to Him," (Marchant⁴⁸ piously reflects) "on account of the weakness of His body, which was completely exhausted from so many gashes, and from which such a copious amount of blood poured forth. [It was heavy] secondly, on account of the length and width of the cross and its roughness because it was unfinished due to the haste with which it was fashioned. The weight was also producing a wound more serious than all the wounds of the entire body. The cross was like a wine press, under which His flesh was once more pressed as grapes, so that the streets of Jerusalem might be spotted with His bloodstained footprints."⁴⁹

Therefore, when such a heavy cross, so described, has been cast upon the Lord, why or how is He said to have rejoiced beneath it? The reason is in [His] willingness. A burden taken up for another is carried most eagerly; therefore, He does not feel its weight. For all labor seems light, which is voluntarily taken up; lighter still, if it is taken up for the sake of friends; lightest, if for rewards. All these [reasons] transformed the weight of the Cross upon our Savior to make it very light. In that Cross (according to the testimony of Isaiah), "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our

⁴⁸ Cf. Škarvada, Jaroslav, *Marchant (Marchantius), Jacques* († 1648), *ECat* VIII, 20.

⁴⁹ Marchantius, Iacobus, *Opusculum VI: Lilium inter Spinās sive De Passione Domini nostri Iesu Christi, Lectio X: De Christo crucem baiulante*, in *Iacobi Marchantii Opuscula Pastoralia sive Commistum Migma Pascendis animabus...*, Coloniae Agrippinae 1642, p. 366.

sorrows" (Is 53:4). Freely, however, He accomplished what was asserted in like manner through the royal psalmist: "I voluntarily sacrifice to you" (Ps 53:8) [LV]. He accomplished it out of love for us: "Because He loved us" (says the Apocalyptic prophet), "He washed us from our sins" (Rev 1:5) [LV]. Finally, He did it for the sake of a reward: In the Cross, you see, were stored up all of His glory and power, as I will elaborate on in somewhat greater detail.

2. Isaiah, the prophet mentioned (above), speaking prophetically of many things concerning Christ, even sketched this journey of His carrying the Cross to the sacrifice in these words: "And the dominion," he says, "will rest on His shoulders" (Is 9:6) [LV]. The dominion calls for the gibbet to be hurled upon Christ. For what reason? I don't know whether I discovered the real cause of this matter; I imagine it to be truly so, which I propose to be further explained.

I see four ways by which the dominion may be acquired: by heredity, by election, through arms, or by a price. That Christ is the heir of the Kingdom of Heaven, nay, of the whole universe, is testified to by what St. Paul says: "[I]n these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom [H]e appointed the heir of all things, through whom also [H]e created the ages" (Heb 1:2). Sirach confirms in these words that Christ (under the figure of Moses) rightly delights in His election: "[H]e chose him out of all mankind" (Sir 45:4). Solomon suggests that the right applies to Him through weapons, also: "And the whole world shall fight with him against the unwise" (Wis 5:21) [DRB], in order to specifically gain the leadership of the whole world, which the haughty Lucifer ambitiously desired to usurp. Finally, to the three (above-discussed) ways our Lord added a price: and not a little one, but infinitely, inestimably, inexhaustibly huge — [the price] of His life, His Blood, His Passion, and His death. Indeed, He paid it fully when He expired upon the Cross. He Himself predicted this beforehand, when He said: "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to [M]yself" (Jn 12:31-32).

When the Son of God was carrying the Cross, on which He was to be lifted up, He was then carrying the dominion upon His shoulders, as the prophet (Isaiah) alluded to quite well. For would it be appropriate for the Son of God to be sad under the weight of the Cross, on which, lifted up as if on a royal throne, He was to draw all things to Himself. "He therefore rejoiced as a champion to run the course carrying the cross, carrying the dominion [that came from it]. He would have walked slower, if not for the beam, which — like a feather of feathers and a wing of charity fastened to His most holy shoulders — was carrying the weight of the tortured body, instead of being carried [by Him]" (Lawrence Justinian, *De triumphali agone*, 16).⁵⁰

3. Although we see that the Son of God, proceeding to the place of execution, exults under the most heavy burden of the Cross, nevertheless, it is an abomination for us to be in the midst of such a horrible and cruel spectacle without tears: Especially because we are precisely those who have constructed such a dreadful and cruel gibbet, which we hurled on His most sacred shoulders without mercy. "The plowers plowed upon my back" (so complains our most meek Lamb to each one of us through the mouth of David), "they made long their furrows" (Ps 129:3). Every crime already committed and yet to be committed since the expulsion of man from Paradise to the present day, to the moment of which I speak, everything has been placed upon the shoulders of the most holy and courageous Atlas. All of this is embodied in the Cross that He carries; all of this is placed on a triumphant chariot, which He is guiding. All of our sins have been placed together on Him. We are the builders of His most savage gibbet; we are the murderers of this gentlest Prince. "All we like sheep have gone astray," testifies the prophet Isaiah, "we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Is 53:6). Will we not expiate such a great crime through the sincere renunciation of our sins? But if we are

⁵⁰ Cf. Laurentius Iustinianus, *De triumphali agone mediatoris Christi: Divi Laurenti Iustiniani Protopatriarche Veneti Opera Omnia*, Venetiis 1606.

so stubborn that we are not at all moved by this, our cruelty and ingratitude, then at least the utterly pitiable sight of Him ought to move us, who was as though having nothing human in Him. “[H]e had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him” (Is 53:2).

[In the sight of] a bride, “His head” looked once [like] “the finest gold” (Cant 5:11); now it is completely covered with thorns. Once, “[H]is locks” were “wavy, black as a raven,” now they are falling down, torn out, and defiled. Once, “His eyes” were “like doves beside springs of water, bathed in mild, fitly set” (Cant 5:12); now they are full of discharge. Once, “[H]is cheeks” were “like a bed of spices, yielding fragrance” (Cant 5:13). Now, they are pale, heaving spittle, and swollen. “His lips” were “lilies distilling liquid myrrh.” Now, [they are] discolored, darker than coal. Once, “His arms” were “rounded gold, set with jewels,” but now, they are bound by chains of iron. Once, “His body” was “ivory work, encrusted with sapphires” (Cant 5:14); now [it is] cut all over with gashes. Once, “His legs” were “alabaster columns, set upon bases of gold” (Cant 5:15); now, they waver, stagger, dash against the ground. Once, “His appearance” was “like Lebanon, choice as the cedars” (Cant 5:15); now it is like a worm, a source of reproach, and an outcast. Once, he was “altogether desirable,” now totally miserable. “[H]e had no form of comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him” (Is 53:2-3). I plead with you: [Is there] anyone with a heart harder than stone who would not be moved to repentance by this beauty without beauty of the King of Angels and men? Who would not give forth streams of tears from the heart [and] the eyes?

4. Let us turn, then, and gaze upon His most Immaculate Mother. She, as testified by St. Bernard, “seeing Him burdened with such a great cross, the likes of which she never saw before, she was breathless on account of anguish, nor was she able to say a word” (*Contemplations*, chapt. 77).⁵¹ And certainly no one among us could look out toward such a sad spectacle with laughter! Ah,

⁵¹ The source of this quote was not able to be found in the works of St. Bernard.

may our eyes perish, if they will not cry at seeing such a tragic carrying of a cross!

It is testified to in the Sacred Scriptures most clearly, that the Hebrews stirred up and spilled their own tears seated upon those banks of the rivers of Babylon, as they remembered their most beloved Zion. The unhappy exiles speak of these tears in the Psalms with great eloquence: "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion" (Ps 137:1). The remembrance of the fatherland elicited weeping from the captives. Does it not elicit our [weeping] at the sight of the heavenly homeland of the Father, of our Savior, of our Redeemer? Christ carried His Cross built out of our sins, so that He could be transfixed on it for us; He does not have the appearance or beauty of men, for He is the one who was so dreadfully scourged, so shamefully exhausted, and so enormously disfigured.

But in fact, you say, one may object to weeping over His situation, for He Himself thus spoke to some of the women who were affectionately grieving in sorrow, when He passed them by: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for [M]e, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Lk 23:28). I am not opposing the truth. But, together with St. Leo, I do not consider as proper the reason for tears in the present situation. This very holy and most eloquent Bishop says: "For the weaker sex is accustomed to cry over the death of those who are guilty and sympathize with their fate because of our common nature. The Lord Jesus did not wish this lament of theirs to be directed toward Him, because grief was not proper for a victory parade, nor mourning for a triumph. Therefore He says: Do not weep for Me. I suffer the cross willingly, and I accept death, which I am about to destroy. Do not weep for the One dying to bring about redemption, [the One] whom you shall see judging in the majesty of the Father."⁵² These weak women were without a doubt weeping aloud, not over Christ burdened with their sins, but over one beneficent and innocent man inflicted with the penalty of death.

⁵² Leo Magnus, *Tractatus de Passione* (4 aprilis 445): CChrL 138A, 371-372 (Tract. LXI, n. 3).

Truly, it is not right for us to refrain from tears, because on the back of the Incarnate Son of God, we have laid an enormous pile of evil deeds. We have constructed out of our crimes a gibbet for Him, and we have stretched out our iniquities upon Him. Although out of love for us, He Himself most bravely carried and fully expiated them, yet we still decline to carry out of love for Him [our] little crosses, insignificant afflictions. Either we avoid them, or we rush through them with many complaints and sometimes shameful impatience. Did we expect that we would enter into a different glory while partying, drinking, indulging ourselves, when even the King Himself obtained glory through His suffering? Or did we wholly forget His words and salvific warnings, which He made so clearly for us through the writer of His deeds that no explanation is needed? He said sometime: "If any man would come after [M]e, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow [M]e" (Mt 16:24).

The Cross is an accepted affliction of the body; the Cross is uninterrupted, serious penance; the Cross is infamy, contempt, injury, and any kind of tribulation; the Cross is infirmity, lack of goods, hardships, forfeiting temporal goods, loss of wealth; the Cross is the lack of necessities, the pruning off of the superfluous, the subtraction of success, the entrance of adversity, and whatever either in the spirit or in the body causes difficulty. To carry such a cross out of love for Christ with an eager and joyful heart, we are all called by Christ Himself through His word and example — particularly, through the most bitter carrying of the salvific wood of the Cross — so that, ultimately, we may attain together with Him the eternal inheritance of everlasting joy and glory by following after our Predecessor on the way of the Cross.

Christ, I go there, wherever You call me:
Through hostility and fire,
And through waters, and deserts, rocks, and thorns,
Under Your leadership,
all difficult roads will be made easier
Especially if [our] companion Love imparts [to us] wings.

DISCOURSE VI

The Glorious Cross

And it was the third hour, when they crucified [H]im. (Mk 15:25)

In times past, nothing proved to be more disgraceful than the punishment of the cross, as the accounts of the preceding ages have taught us most clearly. In the annals of the kings, there is recorded a most infamous and odious example of such a shameful death. A great famine for three continuous years afflicted the territories under the stewardship of King David. Having consulted the oracle of the Lord, the King learned that the Israelites were to be punished with that affliction on account of the slaughter of the Gibeonites accomplished through the foolish zeal of Saul. For which reason, in order to placate the wrath of God, he called the Gibeonites to ask what they desired to be done to the wicked for their unjust destruction. He endeavored [to carry it out]: “They said to the king, ‘The man who consumed us and planned to destroy us, so that we should have no place in all the territory of Israel, let seven of his sons be given to us, so that we may hang them up before the LORD at Gibeon on the mountain of the LORD’” (2 Sam 21:5-6). There couldn’t have been a more severe revenge of the slaughter of innocent people than by the most calamitous punishment of the lineage of Saul raised on crosses. Indeed, it was ordained that this most justified disgrace fell upon the sons and descendants of Saul, who did not have the honor of perishing by the sword (as befits heroes in battle) but died on the cross.

And what kind of crime did the Son of God, our Lord and Savior, commit that the punishment of the cross would be most insistently demanded for Him by the Jewish people? He did nothing that deserved punishment by the cross — nothing. But He wished to destroy by His death the ignominy of the cross and to render it most glorious by repairing the damage of the tree [of Eden] on the tree [of the Cross]. By His Blood, He consecrated it and rendered it exceedingly noble.

1. God sent among the Hebrew people fiery serpents, in order to punish their murmuring. And when the wild beasts had struck very many with wounds and death, then the people, prompted by regret for their offense, besought on their knees their leader Moses that by his prayers, he would avert this severe punishment and placate the divine anger against them. "So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it up as a sign; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.' So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it up as a sign; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live" (Num 21:7-9).

Eternal Wisdom — Christ our leader and Lawgiver — saw that the whole of mankind was perishing through the fruit infused with the venom of the hellish serpent, which [the serpent] inticed our first parents into eating. Consequently, out of His own immense love for mankind, preparing and holding out to us a most efficacious antidote for that original fault, He taught us about this accordingly: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life" (Jn 3:14-15).

O most glorious Cross, on which was lifted up the Son of God after the manner of the snake, that quenched the venom of the ancient serpent and truly brought to us life immortal! O most blessed wood on which hung the salvation of the world! O most noble wood, which made way for the King of glory on [His] throne! Once infamous, now the Cross is the throne and the chariot of God. As you see, so great is the majesty of the Cross — how much majesty, how much courage, how much fortitude, how much patience, how much love the Crucified One has for us! For who occupies this most Sacred Cross? Our King. For what reason does He embrace it? Our salvation! With what disposition does He occupy it? One that is full of sweetness and courage.

In a few brief words, but most pregnant [with meaning], St. Isidore has summed up all these things: "On account of us," he says, "the Son of God suffered, yet He was not moved by anger against these, by whom He was afflicted with so many injuries.

He did not respond with anything, and remained immobile similar to the bronze serpents" (*Orat.* 25).⁵³

And finally, since it is not the place that makes a man noble but the man who makes noble the place, ponder carefully if you can: What respect should now the once ignoble wood of the Cross enjoy, which was made noble by the One who hung upon it? [The One] whose dignity, excellence, and splendor no one can fully understand. For this reason, St. Jerome writes, "The image of the salvific cross embellishes the purple robes of kings and brilliant gems of crowns."⁵⁴ Turn your attention to the glory of the Cross itself: "Now on the heads of kings is placed that Cross, which His enemies had insulted,"⁵⁵ adds St. Augustine.

2. However, I suppose that you desire to know, on account of your devotion to the crucified King of glory, the manner of His crucifixion. Matthew, describing this very briefly, says: "And when they had crucified [H]im, they divided [H]is garments among them by casting lots" (Mt 27:35). From these words, we can easily infer that the sacred robe of Christ our Lord was stripped from Him before He was fastened to the fatal beam. Not without reason does the Doctor [of the Church] Anselm invoke Christ's most holy Mother, as if speaking for her about these things: "When He had come to the most ignominious place of Calvary, they totally stripped Jesus, my only Son, of His clothing, and I was almost lifeless [on account of pain]; however, taking the covering of my head, I wrapped it around his loins" (said Anselm or whoever was the author of this dialogue of the Passion).⁵⁶

The Seraphic Doctor⁵⁷ agreed, as he said: "Therefore He was despoiled and now was naked for the third time in the presence

⁵³ The source of this text was not able to be found.

⁵⁴ Hieronymus, *Epistola CVII ad Laetam*: PL 22, 870.

⁵⁵ Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum LIV*, v. 10: PL 36-637.

⁵⁶ This *Dyalogus Anselmi devotissimi de passione Iesu Christi querentis et gloriosissimae Virginis Mariae respondentis* is a dubious work of St. Anselm. Cf. Nicola De Lyre, OFM, *Preceptorium*, Coloniae 1504.

⁵⁷ Cf. This is St. Bonaventura, a Franciscan and Doctor of the Church, who is known as "Doctor Seraphicus" († 1274); cf. Bonnefoy, Giovanni Francesco Bonaventura, *santo. Dottore della Chiesa*, *ECat* II, 1837-1845.

of the whole crowd," namely, Jesus, who is to be crucified. "The wounds were reopened because of the tunic that adhered to His flesh" (1. *Med*, Ch. 7).⁵⁸ This, truly, was permitted by the divine will in order to fulfill the prophecy of the royal psalmist. Yet, it was by no means accomplished by the murderers through any other intention except that they might afflict on Him greater dishonor when they thus exposed Him to be seen by His enemies naked on the Cross. But what the perverse and cruel men did for the sake of shame, this greatest meekness and love transformed into the highest glory for Christ.

For Christ consecrated that cursed wood by touching it with His most sacred body. This is so much so, that after the most sacred Eucharistic bread, nothing is held to be holier, nothing is honored more reverently, nothing is acknowledged as more glorious than the Cross. And [this is] not without reason. For the place where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush was so holy to God that it was said [to Moses] as he tried to come near to Him: "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground" (Ex 3:5).

How much holier should be considered that Cross, to which Christ's human flesh was affixed with the most cruel nails? That Cross designated by the [burning] bush, on which the Incarnate Deity burned with love for us and was not consumed; He burned surrounded with the fire of hatred, blasphemy, envy, the anger of His enemies, and He was not consumed. For this reason, when the form of His own Cross, through which we remember the Passion of our Lord, is venerated on the day of that sacred mystery, the faithful are bidden to offer the duty of veneration only on bent knees and with the shoes taken off. Moreover, it is wrong if we bestow too little adoration upon that most blessed Cross, on which the Lord of life and death most lovingly laid down for us, fastening it to His own body and making it very holy with the sprinkling of His most Precious Blood.

⁵⁸ Bonaventura, *Meditatio Quomodo dominus crucifigitur presente matre*, in: *Meditationes devotissimae totius vitae domini nostri Iesu Christi* [Papiae 1490], f.42r.

3. Certain masters of sacred contemplation recount that the blood poured forth most abundantly from the wounds of Christ stretched out on the Cross. There are some who assert that the Cross, when it was raised the first time, slipped and fell upon the ground together with Christ. When it was erected the second time, then immediately from [His] four wounds, pierced with the tips of the nails, poured forth in the most plentiful currents, the four streams of the most Precious Blood, sprinkling that sacred beam most bountifully.

Certainly, it seems to be credible what St. Peter Alcantara, commended by many but most exceptionally by the testimony of the St. Teresa [of Avila] to be a most trusted friend of Christ, affirmed of His Passion in [his] most devoted little book: “The murderers and torturers of Christ were roused to such a frenzy of malice that they lifted the Cross on high with mighty racket and noise. They allowed the Cross to fall into the ditch, and the body of Christ our Lord, which was hanging firmly by the nails, shook in the most horrible manner. His wounds, which were already insufferable because of the torture, were enlarged even more.”⁵⁹ Thereupon, you would have seen “rivers of blood running from His hands and feet.”

And so, who would doubt that the Cross was any less drenched (in His Blood) than the pillar at which He was flogged by the most monstrous scourges? Our Catholic Church perceives this, when she sings, lifting up the Cross of the Lord: “Which the holy blood shed from the body of the Lamb thoroughly anointed.” Away with the ancient impiety — rather than a devotion — that dedicates a rose to Venus since it was stained with her blood! To me, the holiest is that wood (of the Cross), “which the holy blood shed from the body of the Lamb thoroughly anointed.” Indeed, God Himself appears to esteem the salvific wood (of the Cross) so much that He Himself venerates it.

⁵⁹ Petrus de Alcantara, *De Meditatione et Oratione*, c. IV: *De septem Meditationibus aliis Dominicae Passionis...*, in: *Petri Alcantarae Hispani Viri Illuminatissimi, Ordinis Discalceatorum S. Patris Francisci, De Meditatione et Oratione libellus aureus*, Coloniae Agrippinae 1624, p. 108.

Let us recall here the fragment from the Sacred Scriptures, which is most deserving of admiration and particularly relevant to our topic. The Almighty God commanded the Hebrews to smear the doorpost and lintels of their houses with the blood of a lamb (which they were to slaughter and eat as a sign and token of God's passage through Egypt). What was it for? "When I see the blood," He Himself says, "I will pass over you, and no plague shall fall upon to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt" (Ex 12:13).

O, what a mystery! The angry Lord of hosts passed over, and treated with respect, as it were, the homes of the Hebrews, marked by the blood of a lamb. Does He not venerate and honor even more so the Cross, anointed with the Blood of His own Son? This very Cross, the one, "which the holy blood shed from the body of the Lamb thoroughly anointed?" Not any lamb, but the true, heavenly, and immaculate Lamb: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter" (Is 53:7), among those who were killing Him. And will not this Wood be sacred to us, thanks to which benefit we would escape free from the edict of eternal damnation that struck the unfaithful Egyptians? Would this Wood not be most glorious to us, which the King of glory by His ascension [upon it], [and] which the Lamb of God by His Blood ennobled and consecrated?

4. We learned from the holy historiographers of our Savior that He was hanged in the middle cross between two thieves. "There they crucified [H]im," says the beloved Evangelist, "and with [H]im two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them" (Jn 19:18). O Lord of infinite majesty! Are You so despised that You are to die between two thieves? O most Holy of Holies! Are You hanged among evildoers and criminals? Are You "reputed to be among sinners?" (cf. Mk 15:28). You decided to be born among beasts of burden and to exhale the sacred Spirit among men inferior to beasts? Are Your honor, glory, and majesty nearly forgotten?

Not at all, says Athanasius: “He raised [His] body on the cross” (these are words of the saintly Father), “yet He was not humiliated through this but remained glorious in Himself, producing such signs that revealed Him at that time not as a man but as the Word of God.”⁶⁰ Let the King of glory hang and die on the gibbet of the Cross, [placed] between the thieves. Let Him entrust His spirit into the hands of the Father, and hand over His spirit. On His command, let the sun darken, the sky thunder, the earth shake, the rocks burst, hell quake violently, ghosts of the dead come forth from the tombs, the veil of the temple be torn, and all of nature be stuck dumb. Let the crowds, striking their chests, come back to their senses and return together to the city. And let the unmerciful centurion who drew from the side of the Crucified the light of faith and the river of redemption recognize as the Son of God the One whom he pierced through. May he further seal with his own death and blood the testimony of his faith and love for the Crucified.⁶¹

However, since it was on the Cross and nowhere else or at any other time, that He, Jesus Crucified did exercise such power — who would deny that this [power] was obtained through the Cross? Because it was not before His death but after His Resurrection, that He was glorified before His disciples, and that He, the most omnipotent, was [recognized as] King of Heaven and earth. As He said: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to [M]e” (Mt 28:18). “And if He openly said this,” — this is the most remarkable astuteness of Athanasius of Sinai — “that the origin of glory is the Cross, through the death inflicted on the Cross; [it was] because, never before during His whole life, did He reveal His power more. This happened in order that already the cause of His glory may manifestly be revealed as the Cross.”⁶²

⁶⁰ The source of this quotation was not able to be found.

⁶¹ Tradition holds this centurion to be St. Longinus, who after his conversion later died a martyr.

⁶² Cf. Anastasius “Sinaita,” *Oratio IV: De Passione et Impassibilitate Christi*, III: PG 89, 1350: *Sancti Anastasii, Patriarchae Antiocheni, De Nostris Rectis Dogmatibus Veritatis, Orationes Quinque*.

5. This being the case, let us give honor and continue to show supreme veneration to this wood (of the Cross), which our most loving and most merciful Savior made most glorious, most noble, and most sacred by affixing His body to it, by pouring His Blood, by suffering the most painful death, by the display of His greatest power. Nay more, [it is the Cross] through which He Himself was made more glorious and more powerful. And let us not avoid the crosses prepared for us, because one day we will attain through them glory, nobility, true sanctity, and a certain omnipotence.

Therefore, the Cross; I repeat after the purple-clad (the Cardinal) Damian: “Whoever desires to be freed from all chains of the curse and to acquire a full blessing of new grace — I say — let him love the Cross, from which, one may see, emanates forth the beauty of this blessing. Through the Cross, may he commit himself to the commandments of God. Through the Cross, may the melody of the unbridled (passions of) the flesh be restrained.”⁶³

My crucified Jesus, I do not spurn the cross, but clasping
 with both arms, I give You a thousand kisses.
 My crucified Jesus, I wish to be nailed on the cross with You.
 Bring about what You have bidden me to do, that
 I may accomplish [it].

DISCOURSE VII

The Death of Death

Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed [H]is last. (Mk 15:37)

Finally, the Word made flesh fell silent, and by His own will, He closed his mouth as He ended His life. The King and Creator of time has ended His days among mortals, and the Spirit, who

⁶³ Petrus Damianus, *Sermo De Inventione S. Crucis*, in: *B. Petri Damiani Monachi Ordinis S. Benedicti, S.R.E. Cardinalis Episcopi Ostiensis, et Doctoris sanctissimi...*, *Opera*, Romae 1606, t. II, 55.

gives life to all, has returned to the Father. The heavenly pilgrim has traversed His difficult journey on the earth, the consuming Fire has been extinguished, the River flowing forth from the heavenly Paradise to water the earthly paradise has dried up, the Champion who descended from the highest heaven to run the course grows faint, the Sun of Justice has suffered an eclipse, the Teacher who spoke the words of eternal life has been destroyed by death, the Good Shepherd has laid down His life for His sheep.

Jesus “uttered a loud cry, and breathed [H]is last.” What a fate!

Lament, O hard marble,
Let the stones and rocks split into pieces:
Let the sun with the cloud of sorrow
clothe the cloudless day:
Let the violently shaken earth
cry out mightily,
All of nature, let it not restrain
its heavy pain.

You alone, O mortal, prepare the triumph. For indeed death, that murderer of our race, that tyrant of the whole world, suffered total defeat by the death of Life. O what joy! It is most beneficial to expound more eloquently upon this most blessed fight and most glorious victory.

Sound the trumpets, O men; the Leader of Life, fastened upon the cross, clashes with death. All others, watch the duel.

1. The most illustrious author Valerius Maximus recalls that a region of Attica, weakened by the vast army of the enemy, was ravaged by sword and by fire. Distrustful of people's aid, its king [Codrus] sent envoys to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, asking through them how to bring this bitter war to an end. The answer was: It will only end when the king himself should die at the hand of the enemies. What do you think King Codrus did? [He did] what love for the fatherland dictated. He decided to die. But the clever and devious enemies declared that no one was to

raise a hand against Codrus, even if he were to throw himself at them. They wanted him to live. They wanted victory. However, shrewdness discovered a way, by which [he] obtained the glory of courage and saved the fatherland. Having taken off his royal finery, Codrus dressed himself as a slave. He threw himself before the horde of an insolent enemy. He struck one with his curved blade, so that through revenge he might find death. He perished as a worthless [slave], not as the King of Athens, but he conquered the enemy with his own death.⁶⁴

I said this so the man's greatest deed may make it easier to understand God's action. I absolutely do not allow any comparison between Codrus and Christ; I am simply helping our minds to understand with less difficulty the mysteries of Heaven. Therefore, this King was Christ, but, as it said so often, an immortal King. Christ was King, but not of one people, but King of all men and angels: And because He possessed infinite majesty and omnipotence, He was King and God at the same time. Indeed, we are His people and the sheep of His pasture; but very unhappy ones because rapacious wolves, death, and hell were attacking, mangling, and destroying [us]. These enemies can be overcome in no other way except by Him; He who, since He is our King, desired to willingly be put to death for us. The high priest of the Hebrews, Caiaphas himself, although most enraged with our Lord, nevertheless brought forth this prophecy concerning Him in the council of his colleagues: "You do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish" (Jn 11:50-52). Therefore, Christ our King had to die when He had determined to conquer and annihilate death, to which we all yield as prey. But God could not die: Who could stand up against God? Who could threaten Him with the sword? Who could attempt [His] murder? "Therefore, the all powerful Lord" (the words are of St. Leo the Great) "came face to face with the most ferocious enemy not in His Majesty, but in our lowliness, presenting to it the same form

⁶⁴ Cf. Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium Libri Novem*, Ed. C. Kempf, Lipsiae 1888, pp. 207-208.

and same nature, a partner in our mortality, entirely innocent of any sin.”⁶⁵ For that reason, then, He clothed Himself in human flesh, in the style of slaves that He might die. But He desired that His flesh have no stain of any sin, lest death, which came into the world on account of sin, would seem to accuse Him of any little breakage of the law. Hence [death] would have reckoned to be engaging in battle with its slave and not [its] Lord.

Therefore, armed with our weakness, more truly, I should say, covered with the garment of slavery, our Codrus, our Christ attacked death; and dying, He conquered death, and by that strike by which He was struck, He conquered it. “Death underwent defeat as the dead body gave to it its fatal blow.”⁶⁶ Most insolent death was hoping to be the future conqueror by our King’s death on the Cross when, behold, it was conquered and vanquished; the death of the King brought forth eternal salvation for His people.

2. David, not yet having left his youth, entered the camp of Saul, the King of the Israelites, with the provisions he carried for his fighting brothers. There, he noticed that Goliath the Philistine was insulting the Hebrew army, since no one among them desired, nor did anyone dare, to enter into a one-on-one match. In view of the fact that a duel had been proposed, [and] that if someone put him down on the ground, he could consider all the Philistines vanquished and slaves in the one Goliath. This arrogance of the wicked enemy provoked the heart of this noblest and most courageous adolescent. So, offering himself to enter the sacred duel with Goliath on behalf of the sacred altars and hearths of the holy people, he demanded to be admitted into the battle. “For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? [...] And David said to Saul, ‘Let no man’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine’” (1 Sam 17:26, 32). Accordingly, he is armed like a king: The helmet of Saul protects his head, chain

⁶⁵ The source of this text was not able to be found.

⁶⁶ Ioannes Chrysostomus, *In Epistolam ad Colossenses Commentarius*, c. II, Homilia VI: PG 62, 341.

mail his chest and back, a shield in hand, a sword at his side. Behold the soldier! He advances. But, suddenly, he stops. Why? "I cannot go with these; for I am not used to them" (1 Sam 17:39). Therefore, having thrown off all these things, "Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in his shepherd's bag or wallet; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine. [...] So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him there" (1 Sam 17:40, 50).

Behold the triumph! The giant has been conquered, the boy has conquered! But that boy who conquers prefigures Christ; the giant, who represents death, is conquered. For what is the staff of David, if not the Cross of Christ? What are the five stones, if not the wounds of Christ? With these weapons, He prostrated the most fierce and arrogant Goliath — death, I mean — that was insulting us all. The parent of the human race swallowed death in the forbidden apple and was, in turn, devoured by it. Indeed, it was said to him: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen 2:17). But he, scorning the mandate of God, ate the worst apple, and in the apple [received] the worst death. And further, Paul testifies in this way, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Rom 5:12).

That terrible Goliath, which is death dreaded by all, prowled around the whole earth. Everywhere, it was the victor; everywhere, it was the conqueror. No one dared to oppose it, because no one was able. Yet, it pursued all, and it killed all. For this reason, men are now said to be mortal, since they are subject to death.⁶⁷ Finally, the new David came into the camp of men, into this world under the moon. I refer to Christ, our King and Savior, who took up the staff, the wood of the Cross, and went forth to battle against death. But what of the voracious beast [death]? Is it also sharpening its teeth? I see it, moreover, having come forth from the

⁶⁷ In Latin, the similarity between *mors*, death, and *mortalis*, mortal, is clearly seen.

wood [of the tree of knowledge], and [so] through this wood [of the Cross], it must be killed. This little boy, on whose shoulders is placed the authority, rightly ought to be dreadful to it. Till now it has devoured even giants, but now, it cannot even swallow a little boy. Indeed, He “humbled [H]imself and become obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8), truly not only undergoing it, but destroying, extinguishing, and eradicating it.

Do you [death] hear how this humble Crucified One insults you, the proud mocker? “From the hand of death I will free them” (us, I say, us whom you have destroyed until now), “I will redeem them from death: I will be your death, O death” (Hos 13:14) [LV].⁶⁸ What is said, is done. “Death, which entered through a tree, has been conquered by a tree” (St. Augustine, *Sermon 10, On the Saints*).⁶⁹ And so, we who thus were prisoners, slaves to sin, indeed, fuel for death, have now been freed from this tyranny through the Cross, through the wounds, through the death of our King Jesus Christ. Already, we are made His coheirs, sons of God. O death of Christ most victorious, which brought death to death, and has brought to us immortality. “And the dead,” in truth, “in Christ will rise first” (1 Thess 4:16).

3. Three Evangelists come together to a conclusion that Jesus “uttered a loud cry, and breathed [H]is last” (Mk 15:37). Being about to vanquish death, He cries out? Why? I reckon that this most terrible beast began to flee because it felt its own annihilation was near. However, He, the lion of the tribe of Judah, checked it with His roar and killed it. Evidently, it was usual for Christ to rise up against death with a great cry. Lazarus — Christ’s friend, whom you well remember — fell asleep with the sleep of death and was giving an offensive odor, after being already four days in the tomb (cf. Jn 11). However, so to stir up the one sleeping and to expel the sleep of death from his eyes, “Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb [...] [H]e cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out.’ The dead man came out” (Jn 11:38,

⁶⁸ This Scripture quotation was translated directly from the Latin Vulgate in order to best convey the meaning intended by St. Stanislaus.

⁶⁹ The source of this text was not able to be found.

43-44). At the intimidating voice of the Lord of life and death, death abandoned Lazarus, and life was restored: He who was dead lived again.

The infernal fury must be overcome this way [in defeat], the nocturnal thief ought to be thus exposed, the tyrant of our race is to be thus overthrown [when], “[Jesus] uttered a loud cry.” This, the prophet Isaiah foresaw, and predicted regarding the eternal God wrestling against death on the mount of Golgotha. He was promised certain victory over it in these words: “And [H]e will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death for ever, and the LORD GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of [H]is people [H]e will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken” (Is 25:7-9). Now this prophecy became at last a reality: Death is conquered; we are to be immortal, if only we do not receive the grace of Christ in vain.

4. John the beloved of Christ, both the most trustworthy disciple and a friend until death, describes His most sacred death: “And [H]e bowed [H]is head” he says, “and gave up [H]is spirit” (Jn 19:30). There is no lack of those who firmly believe that Christ inclined His Sacred Head [shortly] before exhaling His mighty and divine spirit, in order to lure fearful death by this nod [of the head], and, having enticed it, to suffocate [it] by dying. For just as the death of Christ is medicine for us, so it is poison to death. For death already smelled [its defeat] and trembled to come near to the One already greatly tortured and half-alive. For what, death was saying to itself, will I do with this mouthful? Shall I swallow it? I’d be afraid lest I burst in half, and I have to give up everything I have eaten up until now.

What death feared was what completely took hold of it. For as it gave its own venom to Christ, with His head lowered, it itself astonishingly perished, having been breathed upon by Him. We ought to listen here to [St. John] Chrysostom who perceptively explains in these words, what has just come to our attention: “Just like those who take food but cannot keep it [down], they vomit together with it not only that food but what they have

eaten before. Thus it happened in the death of Christ. Since death accepted the body, which it was not able to digest, it actually vomited what it had swallowed. Since it had swallowed Christ, it was suffering and was tortured until it spewed Him forth.”⁷⁰

Allow me to join to the words of such a great orator a bit of history; seeing that I deliver these words to the Poles, I will render the present subject matter clearer through a Pole’s deed. At the base of Wavel Hill, on which the citadel of Krakow is placed, to this day exists a cave, commonly called the Dragon’s Cave. Among writers of Polish history, also the Bishop of Warmia,⁷¹ records that this beast — called a dragon by our writers, but which Solinus⁷² calls a Boa — inhabited this cave and violently afflicted the entire neighborhood with continual slaughters of men and domestic animals. Therefore, Kracus, a man no less strong than prudent (from whom Krakow, our capital has its name and draws its origin) devised an easy and equally very ingenious plan to do away with the impetuous beast. He ordered that the animal carcasses to be stuffed with tar, sulphur, and chips of kindling, be thrown before the dragon. As the dragon ate them most ravenously, the fire ignited and convulsed the beast’s insides with so much heat, that the thirsty beast swallowed so much of the pure water of the nearby Vistula River that it [the beast] burst asunder.⁷³

This is not unlike the deed of Daniel put on record in the Sacred Scriptures. The great dragon was venerated by the Babylonians in place of God: Ordered to accomplish that same foolishness, Daniel refused magnanimously, and told the King: “I will worship the Lord my God, for [H]e is the living God. But if you, O king, will give me permission, I will slay the dragon without sword or club” (Dan 14:25-26).

⁷⁰ Ioannes Chrysostomus, Homilia 24, *In Epistolam Pauli ad Corinthios Primam*, Francisco Aretino Interprete, in: *D. Ioannis Chrysostomi Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani in omnes D. Pauli epistolas commentarii*, Basileae 1536, p. 365, A.

⁷¹ Cf. Sannazzaro, Piero, *Kromer, Martin* († 1589), *ECat* VII, 749.

⁷² Cf. Falco, Vittorio De, *Solino, Caio Giulio* (C. Iulius Solinus): *EI* XXXII, 77-78.

⁷³ Cf. Cromer, Martinus, *De Origine et Rebus gestis Polonorum Libri XXX*, Basileae 1568, p. 21, A (Liber II).

O how insatiable is that beast, most gluttonous death! No state or gender seems to be spared. It compels human minds to adore and venerate it like a goddess. From there, the temples erected (in honor) of Libitina originated, and death was honored by the pagan world because it was held in fear. But behold, the heavenly Kracus, behold Daniel, our most holy Christ, our God, about to free us from fear. He casts Himself before this monster, to be eaten up but not to be consumed. "Indeed, no woman in labor" (the golden mouth Bishop says) "suffers as much as death did, when it devoured the body of the Lord; it was burst asunder and torn apart. This is the same thing that happened to the Babylonian dragon, when it burst asunder in the middle, after having eaten the food. For not through the mouth of death did the most illustrious Christ escape again, but from the middle of the stomach of the dragon, He burst forth"⁷⁴ to render us equally illustrious.

Surely, He promised this through the prophet Hosea: "From the hand of death I will free them, I will redeem them from death: I will be your death, O death" (Hos 13:14) [LV]. Wherefore rightly and deservedly, the Church joyfully sings: "O great work of merciful love!" Death has died, when Life died on the tree. For when Jesus "inclined his head" giving the signal of death, He expired and gave back to us the breath of life; when He was dying, He was supporting us; when He conquered death, He prepared for us the joy of the immortal triumph: Behold the triumph! "Death is swallowed up in victory." (Paul, rejoicing, insults death). "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:54-57).

Jesus, by dying You defeated death: What more remains?
 That also You teach me to conquer this [death].
 May You teach me to conquer, [and] grant me to live together
 [with You]
 On the Wood of life, since [it is] there I believe [victory] to be.

⁷⁴ Ioannes Chrysostomus, Homilia 24, *In Epistolam Pauli ad Corinthios Primam*, in op. cit., p. 365, B.



DOCTOR
ANGELICVS,
In sui Ordinis Varsaviensi Ba-
filica
PRO ROSTRIS
LAVDATVS

A

P. STANISLAO à IESV MARIA,
Clericorum Paup: MATRIS DEI
SCHOL: PIARVM

SACERDOTE,

M. DC. LXIV,

Die vij Martij.



ANGELIC DOCTOR

In the Basilica of his Order at Warsaw
on March 7, 1664

praised in a public speech
by Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary,
a priest
of the Poor Clerics
of the Mother of God of Pious Schools

Translated and Edited by
Patrick Lynch, MIC

INTRODUCTION

a. Author

Doctor Angelicus (DA) is an oration delivered in 1664, on the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas at the Dominican Church in Warsaw,¹ by St. Stanislaus Papczyński, a member of the Piarist Order at that time. Later this oration appeared in print under the full title given on the title page as *Doctor Angelicus in sui Ordinis Varsaviensi Basilica, pro nostri laudatus a P. Stanislao a Iesu Maria, Clericorum Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum Sacerdote*.

There is no doubt that Fr. Papczyński is the author of the oration, furthermore, it is certain that he not only delivered the oration, but also composed it. This is proven by the title page, which names him as the speaker, and it was customary that the speaker would deliver an oration of his own authorship. Admittedly, the speaker's last name is not given, but it can be asserted that it meant Stanislaus Papczyński, since at that time, i.e., in 1664, there was no other Piarist by the name of Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary in the Polish Province of the Institute of the Pious Schools. We know from many documents that John Papczyński accepted that religious name after joining the Institute of the Pious Schools, and various documents from the time of his membership in this Institute (1654-1670) simultaneously mention him by his name in the Congregation (Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary), and by his secular name (John Papczyński). Father Papczyński's authorship is also indicated by the note added by Franciszek Grzybowski to the dedication of this oration: "he of whom [i.e.,

¹ Meaning the Church of St. Jacek, which was sponsored by the Dominican Fathers in Warsaw in 1603; however, its construction started later and was finished in 1638.

the one who delivered the oration] I boast and declare myself to be a student in Rhetoric.” And we know that Fr. Papczyński taught rhetoric at the College of the Pious Schools in Warsaw from 1663 to 1667.

Father Stanislaus appears as the author of other writings under the name of Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary. He was known both in the Order of the Pious Schools and the Congregation of Marian Fathers which he founded, as the author of *Doctor Angelicus* and was also mentioned as such by his bibliographers.²

It should be noted that Fr. Papczyński's surviving manuscripts include a document entitled *The Sun of the Theologians, on Saint Thomas* or, *The Sun of the Theologians, Saint Thomas*. It is possible that this may be a different speech that Fr. Papczyński delivered as a preacher of the Warsaw monastery of the Pious Schools at the Dominican Church in Warsaw in the years 1663-1667.

b. Time of the Creation of the Work

It may be assumed that Fr. Papczyński composed this speech (which received the title *Doctor Angelicus* when printed) before March 7 this same year of 1664, when he received an invitation from the Dominicans to speak at their church during the celebrations in honor of St. Thomas. *DA* was prepared for this occasion and was wholly connected to the feast. This is supported by the frequent salutations to “my learned hearers” who were present in the Church at that time.

c. Original Edition

The title page shows the place of printing as Elert's Printing House; no year of publication was given. However, it may be assumed with a good deal of certainty that the release took place the same year. This is confirmed to some extent by the fact that *DA* is dedicated to Albert Grabiecki as the Superior of the Dominican

² Cf. St. Estreicher, “*Bibliografia Polska XXIV*,” Kraków 1912, p. 54.

Fathers monastery in Warsaw; yet we know that Grabiecki ceased to be the Superior of this monastery in 1664.

Along with the speech itself, *DA* includes the following, which precede the main text:

- a quote from the Book of Sirach, probably chosen and added to the printed version by Franciszek Grzybowski — the promoter of this release,
- a dedication to Fr. Albert Grabiecki from the same promoter.

Moreover, at the end of the speech, Franciszek Grzybowski placed a short poem of his own composition, which reads thus:

Aquinas is deservedly hailed as the Angelic Doctor,
For his life and knowledge were angelic.
He is regarded as a lover and a rock of angelic virtue,
He worshiped Hera³ with a pure angelic mind
Angelic were his customs, brain, and angelic
Heart; he is called deservedly the Angelic Doctor.

d. Sources

In his speech, Fr. Papczyński used a variety of sources to illustrate and prove his statements. He used both the Holy Scriptures (e.g., Ezekiel, Tobias, etc.) and the history of the Church (St. Dominic, John XXII), as well as drawing on rich materials from secular history, particularly Greek and Roman (Alexander the Great, Scipio, Marius). He also included examples from mythology (Hercules). It is characteristic that he did not give references to the quoted material, but retold it in his own words instead.

Father Stanislaus' perfect mastery and usage of a rich array of compositional and stylistic instruments of the rhetorical art is noteworthy. He generously employed rhetorical tropes and figures along with sophisticated language.

³ Hera is the Queen of the Gods and the wife and sister of Zeus in the Olympian pantheon. She was worshiped as Angelic Hera — the Queen of the Virtues; cf. Parandowski, *"Mitologia,"* Warszawa 1990, pp. 63-65.

This introductory note was based to a large extent on the introduction to the critical edition published by Fr. Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC, in *Norma vitae et Alia Scripta*, Varsaviae 2001.

Andrzej Stefańczyk

*“He will reveal instruction in his teaching,
and will glory in the law of the Lord’s covenant.
Many will praise his understanding,
and it will never be blotted out”*

— Sirach 39:8-9

To the most reverend Father in Christ,
Fr. Albert Grabiecki,
Teacher of Sacred Theology,
Prior in the Convent of Warsaw,
Vicar of the Mazovian Province of the Order of Preachers⁴
And of the entire Warsaw Congregation

Franciscus Grzybowski⁵
[With] dutiful veneration

I present to you, most reverend Father, and to your entire convent, the Angelic Doctor, he himself, who that man [Fr. Stanislaus] represented not long ago by the colors of his eloquence in your most frequent assembly, and that of many learned men, he of whom I boast and declare myself to be a student in Rhetoric.⁶

For I did not wish that voice, which sounds so pleasing in the ears of all hearers, to be only momentary and not eternal.

⁴ P.A. Grabiecki, O.P., Prior of the Dominican monastery in Warsaw from 1650 to 1653 and 1659 to 1664. Cf. Świętochowski, Robert, art. *Grabiecki Wojciech*: *PSB* VIII, 465. Cf. also: Sokołowski, Czesław, art. *Grabiecki Wojciech*: *PEK* XIII-XIV, 284.

⁵ It is to be noted that in 1699, Fr. Papczyński obtained two commendatory letters for the pontifical approval of his Marian Institute from Francis Grzybowski; cf. *Positio*, pp. 532-534.

⁶ This refers to Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński, who from 1663 to 1667 was “*Magister Rhetorices*” or “*Magister Eloquentiae*” in the Warsaw College of the Pious Schools; cf. *Positio*, pp. 60-62.

I did not wish that the praise of the Angelic Doctor, as great as it may be, should perish buried in the darkness of oblivion.

Hence, with the kind permission of the author I have brought this into the light, that publicly in the sun this holy Oration about the Sun of Theologians may be enjoyed for all eternity.

Therefore because of this benevolence you have heard the Orator himself, as well as his Oration, which having been prepared by me from the ears comes to your eyes, that you receive [it] earnestly I beg.

ANGELIC DOCTOR

Although your attendance, Learned Hearers, should delight me rather than confound me, and your assembly should give courage to me as I behold how select and pleasant it is; nevertheless the weight of the matter I have undertaken, entrusted to me by the requests of those who sweetly entreated me, overwhelms me. It is such that unless I were strengthened by a certain divine virtue, [my ability] would be insufficient, and I would succumb.

For, as you know perfectly well, the dignity of the Angelic Doctor is so great, the copiousness of his virtues so innumerable, the ocean of his praises so vast, that here the dignity [of this man] exceeds all the power of eloquence, all the calculations of Arithmetic, the longest speech, and even the most sublime contemplation. And if anyone draws near to his knowledge and wisdom, this person will feel overwhelmed by a stupor, so that it is recognized, whether at first or later, that they do not know how to praise him.

So what am I to do? What can I do, since I am trying to speak about the praises of a man who can never be praised enough, and who is among the extraordinary saints of his Order? I can do this, which some do: those who, when they cannot look directly at the sun with their eyes, cover them with their hands, so that in this way they can see at least some part of the light. This is how I will proceed with the brightest Sun among the Doctors. Unable

to penetrate the light of his virtue and wisdom, I shall contemplate only one ray. I shall confirm with arguments of no small importance that by a vote from the entire senate of all the wise in agreement, the title of Angelic Doctor is justly given to him.

I ask from you, most Learned Hearers, because of your devotion toward the common Patron of the learned and great reverence for the Angelic Doctor, that you would hear me not only attentively, but also kindly. For in your benevolence you ought to [help] bring it about, that I satisfactorily accomplish the duty undertaken, and that you all will leave this esteemed assembly with the utmost satisfaction.

No one doubts that the future character of men is wont to appear in earliest childhood. What each [will be], indeed who [he] shall be in the age of manhood, is first demonstrated in infancy. A mother gifted with a good disposition, by certain indications from his state, actions, skills, and functions, can form a ready conjecture about the infant whom she warms in her bosom.

But if certain things regarding the impulse of nature have been connected with prodigies, who would not judge that these signs are unlikely to be false prediction of certain events?

For what do the serpents crushed by Hercules in his infancy denote, other than his future strength, by which the entire world was to be purged of pernicious monsters?⁷

What did the honey that bees made in the mouth of little Pinder indicate, other than his mellifluous eloquence⁸ by which he hitherto nourishes and delights Greece?

What do the seven eagles found in the bosom of the boy Marius designate, other than his seven consulates, which he carried out as much for the glory of the Roman people as for his own glory?⁹

⁷ Cf. Mingazzini, Paolino, art. *Ercole (Hercules)*: *EI* XIV, 191-193; cf. also: Parandowski, Jan, *Mitologia*, Warszawa 1990, p. 175.

⁸ Cf. Kopalinski, Władysław, *Słownik mitów i tradycji kultury*, Warszawa 1987, 945-946.

⁹ Cf. Levi, Mario, A., art. *Mario, Gaio (C. Marius)*: *EI* XXII, 353-355. Cf. Plutarchus, *Vitae comparatae illustrium virorum, Graecorum et Romanorum*, Venice 1572, p. 207 (s.v. *C. Marius*).

We come to Philip, second to none among kings, by both the greatness of his son, and his own strength.¹⁰ Once in a dream he impressed a seal in the form of a lion on the womb of his wife Olympias, and soon after, an event proved him not to have dreamt in vain. For his wife Olympias bore him a son who by his greatness surpassed all lions.¹¹

One cannot ignore here Atia, a woman famous in [her] offspring, who in the quiet of night once sensed her bowels rise upwards and spread over the earth. The empire, victories, triumphs and glory of Caesar Augustus, who was born from her, demonstrate that this mystery in sleep was not a trifle. For gaining rule over the whole world, with virtue as a leader [and] fortune as companion, he surpassed all his successors in the Roman Empire, by [his] fame and success.¹²

This truly may be seen as ridiculous, which a writer of the esteemed name Fulgosius¹³ passed on to the memory of posterity, concerning a certain British woman, the wife of a simple man. When sleep had closed her eyes, she saw herself to give birth to a moon that went around and illuminated the whole of the Kingdom of Britain. What truth do you think was contained in this dream? Of this woman was born a girl, who later became the mother of Athelstan, the most celebrated of the British kings.¹⁴

But let us not any longer wander around the fence. Who, Learned Hearers, gave origin to this holy family¹⁵ of which I speak? Was it not he, who before being born, was seen by his dreaming mother as an evangelical dog carrying a torch in his mouth to illuminate the whole world? We see how a blessed event corresponds to this blessed dream; since we see that by the most holy patriarch Dominic and his sons who followed him,

¹⁰ Cf. Momigliano, Arnaldo, art. *Filippo de Macedonia*: *EI* XV, 310-313.

¹¹ This refers to Alexander the Great. Cf. Giannelli, Giulio, art. *Alessandro III di Macedonia, Magno*: *EI* II, 328-336. Cf. Plutarchus op. cit., p. 322 (s.v. *Alexander*).

¹² Cf. Colini, Antonio M., art. *Augusto, Gaio Giulio Cesare Ottaviano (Gaius Iulius Caesar Octavianus Augustus)*: *EI* V, 346-357

¹³ Cf. Vitale, Vito Antonio, art. *Fregoso*: *EI* XVI, 54.

¹⁴ Cf. Fulgosius, op. cit., p. 73. Cf. Gordon E. V., art. *Inghilterra*: *EI* XIX, 233.

¹⁵ This refers to the "family" of the Order of Preachers (i.e., Dominicans).

every part of the earth and every region was enlightened by doctrine, virtues, and miracles.¹⁶

Now we descend to the greatest Son of the greatest Father, and we seek some certain reason by which it may be shown that Thomas Aquinas was already in the cradle designated as the Angelic Doctor. If you are favorable [to it], Learned Hearers, I shall demonstrate to you nothing other than this. For I encountered a wonder ascending beyond nature, yet not progressing beyond the virtue of Thomas, that was observed in his infancy. Which although I do not doubt to be already known by you all, I shall repeat nonetheless most briefly, so that I may be sure that your minds see the truth of what I have proposed.

The nurse happened to be wrapping the tender child in soft clothes, and seeing a small piece of paper in the child's fingers, and she wanted to take it away so that he could open his clenched fists more comfortably. The little child however would not allow and opposed and resisted. Hence, because of the heavens themselves, a most sweet fight began. The nurse pulled the little paper, the infant pulled back; she pleaded, he held on, until [his] mother called to help, took it away from the child in her caresses. And was he defeated in this way? By no means. So long with loud wailing did he pierce his mother's heart, and so long did he cover his red cheeks with bitter tears, until the treasure taken away was restored [to him]. The mother was defeated, then, by the crying of [her] little son, and was overcome by the incredible constancy [with which] he demanded the little piece of paper, on which she saw that there was written the salutation of the Archangel to Mary. Imbued with a singular piety, she gave the paper to the crying child.

You have won, little Hercules, you have won. But where will you hide the treasure returned [to you], of which you could be deprived again? The nurse is unfaithful, even if the mother is pious. What she restored, the other may take away again not to

¹⁶ Cf. Theodoricus de Appoldia [al. Apolda], *Vita S. Dominici fundatoris ord. Praed.* (1292).

be returned. The wise infant found a hiding place for his treasure. He swallowed the golden words and concealed them in the hidden place of [his] heart.¹⁷

At this point I may now explain this marvelous thing, Learned Hearers. And perhaps I can strike this with a needle if I shall mention that the white color of this little piece of paper, distinct from the black letters, is no different than and signified the religious habit, in which he was to be clothed, of this most holy family [the Dominicans], to whom later he was to give [his] name.

Yet the words of the Angelic Salutation contained more mysteries or prophecies than able to be thought. Without a doubt, they denoted that he would one day be the Angelic Doctor, who being an infant still unable to chew, had swallowed the Angelic Salutation full of mysteries.

By what argument will you prove that, someone will say? By the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. The eternal Mind decreed to fill Ezekiel with knowledge about the future, but did impart it to this pious man supernaturally; but following nature in a certain way, gave him a scroll to eat, that by this the bowels [and] head of the prophet would be filled with knowledge.¹⁸ Ezekiel did as he was commanded, and having eaten and digested the scroll, he spoke many glorious and astounding things with a prophetic voice.

Now return to the holy Aquinas, Learned Hearers, and deny if you are yet able, that when he ate the salutation of the Archangel, [he was] marked as the Angelic Doctor. For me fights the authority of the Divine Book, a highly probable opinion, [and] the most evident argument. Lest perhaps that [argument] seem clever rather than strong, I shall join other arguments to [its] substance, which I already began to use. [By doing so] I shall confirm the title of Angelic Doctor.

Above all the angelic virtue [of chastity] must be spoken about, in which [Thomas] excelled so much, that he is not undeservedly

¹⁷ Cf. Tocco, Guillelmus, *Vita S. Thomae Aquinatis: Rthom XIII* (suppl. 1914), 67-68. Cf. Petitot, L.H., *Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris 1923, p. 10. Cf. *Die 7 Mart.* — *S. Thomae de Aquino*, in *II Nocturno: BR, Pars Hiemalis*, pp. 1044-1045.

¹⁸ Cf. Ez 2:8, 3:3.

called an angel clothed in a body. A pigeon was at one time a symbol of chastity among the ancients,¹⁹ because it was the most continent bird. Bees also represented this virtue to the ancients, which is why they were called by the poets “virginal insects.”²⁰

If, however, a Christian wanted to represent chastity with a true and genuine symbol, he would not be able to do so more aptly and more fittingly, than if he would procure St. Thomas to be painted with wings.

*For all who are most diligent guardians of an intact virginity, all these I call earthly angels, not being such only by name, but by the truth of the matter.*²¹ However, just as among angels there are found great differences, so also among men distinguished with the gift of chastity. For from among these some are chaste by nature, others by vow, or by proposition. Among them all those stand out with the greatest praise, who strive to preserve so inviolate the lily of a pure soul consecrated to the Almighty God, that they would prefer to suffer the most difficult battles and the cruelest deaths than to allow the fragrance of the most divine flower to be not even ruined, but touched, by the breath of the Stygian wind.

Holy Thomas was such that one does not know [him], who does not know how much struggle he went through for the sake of defending chastity. [His] mother attacked the most chaste mind of the untouched youth;²² he resisted. [His] brothers attacked [him] like the most furious soldiers;²³ he did not yield.

¹⁹ Cf. Thomas de Aquino, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 39, art. 6: “*Columba autem est animal simplex, astutia et dolo carens; unde dicitur Math. X, 16: ‘Estote simplices sicut columbae.’*”

²⁰ In Latin: “*virgineas volucres.*” Cf. Ambrosius, “*De virginitatibus*”, lib. I: *Opera*, IV, Romae 1582, 347, A.

²¹ These words written with italics are probably the quote of some author, who was not able to be identified (no citation was given in the text). It is possible that it was the sentence of the author himself, which he emphasized in this way to indicate its importance.

²² Cf. Petitot, op. cit., p. 28.

²³ Cf. Thomas, “[...] iam adolescens fratrum Praedicatorum ordinem suscepit. Sed matre ac fratribus id indigne ferentibus, Lutetiam Parisiorum mittitur. Quem fratres, [Reginaldus et Landolphus] in itinere per vim raptum, in arcem castri

His sisters attacked [him] with the most charming arguments, because they could not [fight] with weapons;²⁴ while he stood as an unmoved rock. Finally, a prostitute, having been procured [by them], came to the fight. Armed with a more beautiful form, with a more elegant dress, with a more charming eloquence, bringing with her the whole of the river Styx for reinforcement. What did this Christian athlete do? Did he perhaps succumb, having been attacked by so many enemies? Not at all. Did he surrender the treasure of the lily of [his] heart to the boar of hell? In no way. Did he at least shudder, terrified at the reinforcements sent by hell, or stagger at the allurements of the woman Siren?²⁵ No indeed, truly greater than [the temptation] itself, attacking with flames the inflamed Venus before he felt her flames, he overcame, put to flight,²⁶ and was victorious.

Let the ancient days be silent here, and no more praise their Melanion with full lips and with the sound of trumpets. In order to be chaste, he turned away from the company of men and withdrew to the forest;²⁷ but what victory is there without an enemy? What praise without a victory? Our Melanion [Thomas] preserved his chaste spirit from an impure fall among men more savage than wild beasts and brought back a most glorious triumph over Venus herself.

Let the ancient days no more exalt their Scipio beyond the stars because, being continent, he refused when a maiden of eminent beauty was offered [to him].²⁸ The Roman emperor was easily able to do this, since he was not being attacked. But our Scipio

sancti Ioannis perducunt: ubi varie exagitatus, ut sanctum propositum mutaret." *BR*, p. 1045. Cf. also: Petitot, op. cit., pp. 25-28.

²⁴ His sisters, Marotta and Theodora, visited him with the permission of their mother to try and discourage him from his holy intention. Cf. Petitot, op. cit., 29.

²⁵ A Siren is a mythical sea monster with the appearance partly of a woman and partly of a vulture, which would lead sailors into shipwreck by singing sweetly and then devour them. Cf. *FLL*, s.v. *Siren*, *enis*. Cf. Parandowski, op. cit., p. 267.

²⁶ Cf. G. de Tocco, op. cit., pp. 74-75. Cf. *BR*, loc. cit.

²⁷ This story about Melanion is found in a fable told by the Greek comedian Aristophanes. Cf. *Lysistrata*, in: *Aristophanis Comoediae*, ed. Graece et Latine, Parisiis 1884, 270.

²⁸ Cf. Plutarchus, op. cit., 106 (s.v. *Scipio Africanus*).

[Thomas], the great lover of purity, did not fall to a beauty nearly miraculous, and [fighting] in the arena did not surrender [his] palm before all the strength of Styx.

Let the ancient days not glory in their Alexander of Macedon, because he won a greater victory over himself than over Darius, when he refused to shamelessly touch any of the captive women, although they were royal and beautiful.²⁹ This Alexander distinguished himself once, not always. But our Angel, more constant than any Alexander, stands forth perpetually as a victor over himself; never corrupted, never stained.

And so, shall we not approve the name of Angelic Doctor for one who thus vowed the angelic virtue to God, so that he might preserve [it]; he thus defended it, so that he might conquer; and gave to all fighting in this arena the method of overcoming the enemy, by which alone that enemy is able to be overcome? Thomas taught of course to conquer fire with fire; he taught that Venus fears nothing more than flames; he taught that constancy is needed in defending chastity, and that in this matter constancy alone shall be awarded the crown.

Wherefore, the heavenly [spirits] offer to him, the angelic wrestler, a belt with which they girded his chaste loins as he rested after the fight.³⁰ And we rightly confess that the laurel was justly awarded to the Angelic Doctor as the champion of the angelic virtue and its teacher for all those who desire it.

Let us proceed from virtue to wisdom, from chastity to doctrine, which being entirely angelic, made our Doctor Angelic. Truly, not only shall we say this, but also prove [it]. Since in this matter I am giving an argument, I entreat you to try to understand it, as far as your education allows.

I consider everything, Learned Hearers, which exceeds the order or powers of nature and for that reason is called miraculous, to be an angelic work. Are we amazed that the prayers of the fierce leader Joshua stopped the course of the sun?³¹ An

²⁹ Plutarchus, op. cit., 327 (s.v. *Alexander*).

³⁰ Cf. *BR*, p. 1045.

³¹ Cf. Josh 10:12-14.

angel stopped it. Are we amazed that in a space of three days seventy thousand of David's subjects were killed as a punishment for the presumption of the king?³² An angel killed [them]. Are we amazed that over one hundred and eighty five thousand men were cut down in the camps of the Assyrians in the course of only one night?³³ An angel cut [them] down. Next, who saved the younger Tobias from being devoured by the monstrous fish?³⁴ An angel. Who protected the same [young man] from the most cruel accomplice of hell?³⁵ An angel. Who restored light to the eyes of his father?³⁶ An angel.

And truly that terrible rider, who struck down to the ground Heliodorus, the invader of the divine treasure, was not anyone else but an angel.³⁷ Also those two young men, who attacked the sacrilegious robber and inflicted him with sufficient blows, are not thought to have been anyone other than angels.

What more should I remind you of? I would run out of daylight and voice to speak sooner than I could enumerate the examples and testimonies. I say, in a word, that all miraculous works are angelic, and all angelic works are miraculous. And hence, if we wish to demonstrate the doctrine of St. Thomas to be angelic, it follows that it will be proven by us that [this doctrine] is miraculous. And certainly it is. For besides the fact that [Thomas] acquired it beyond all the powers of human diligence, it is this that is especially to be admired: that it is praised, loved, and approved by all the Doctors, Academies, Councils, and finally by the whole of the true Church.

It is thought that the speech of Marcus Tullius³⁸ had a certain allure, by which he always drew to his side both the senators as well as the equites and the Roman people. The doctrine of St.

³² Cf. 1 Chron 21:14-17.

³³ Cf. 2 Kings 19:35.

³⁴ Cf. Tob 6:2-4.

³⁵ Cf. Tob 6:14-17. Tob 8:1-14.

³⁶ Cf. Tob 11:7-15.

³⁷ Cf. 2 Macc 3:23-28.

³⁸ This is the orator Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.) Cf. Arnaldi, Francesco, art. *Cicerone, Marco Tullio: EI X*, 200-205.

Thomas is of that sort, which all the schools of theologians, all the debate halls of doctors, if not following [his doctrine] in all things, at least admire, wonder at, and venerate [it].

And just as once all the world flocked to the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi seeking to know the future and to investigate the events of causes and the causes of events;³⁹ thus also shortly before these fallen and modern times all Christianity, as if to a certain temple of wisdom, came to the books filled with the extraordinary doctrine of this most wise Phoebus⁴⁰ of theologians; in which as many times as one reads conclusions, so also [does he read] oracles; [and] as many times [as one reads] opinions, so also [does he read] responses.

Concerning this matter, [the one known as] the eye of writers,⁴¹ no less eloquent than learned gives a brilliant testimony: "The wisdom of Thomas", he says, "is so illustrious, subtle, and divine, that geniuses marvel and are astounded at it, no matter how great, acute, and blessed [they may be]. There is nothing in all of theology so arduous, nothing in philosophy so difficult and obscure, that he cannot explain [it]; nothing so obscure, that he cannot declare [it]; nothing so hidden and covered that he cannot dig it up and disclose [it]. And indeed, with a method so laconic, that there are seen to be as many ideas as there are words; and with the shortest sentences he comprehends everything, about which other doctors have composed huge volumes. Moreover, the clarity and distinction of his doctrine, and the connection of things is so marvelous, that as a likeness of corporeal light, it is seen to be nothing except light."

He goes on further, comparing the most holy doctor to a unicorn: "Just as," he says, "a unicorn heals water with its horn, then the other animals drink protected against poison; thus, whoever drinks from the books of St. Thomas as from the springs

³⁹ Drączowski, Franciszek, art. *Delfy*: EK III, 1130.

⁴⁰ Phoebus is another name for Apollo, and hence is sometimes said in place of the word "sun" Cf. *CLD*: *Phoebus, -I, Apollo, the Sun-god. Poet. The sun.*

⁴¹ We do not know to whom Stanislaus is referring here, and the source of this quote has not been found.

of wisdom, does not fear any virus of error. And in indeed, this water of wisdom is not only limpid, clear, refined, pure, and health-giving for those who drink [it], but is also a medicine against every virus of heresy." For which he gives evidence: "For every heresy", he says, "has either been expressly refuted by this holy Doctor, or is easily able to be refuted by the irrefragable principles and foundations left by him."

Therefore, this is perhaps what the teacher of this Doctor, St. Albert the great, had predicted when he called him an ox whose bellowing would be heard by the whole world.⁴²

Though he would have more rightly called [him] an ocean of knowledge, from which so many rivers and springs bursting forth everywhere fertilized the holy Church of God with salubrious and rich documents, and refreshed the minds of so many philosophers and theologians, that it is barely able to be thought that someone could confess his teaching not to flow from or be full of [the teaching] of St. Thomas. From this vast ocean arise that Suarian river,⁴³ those most pleasant Opatovian springs, [and] those sweetest waters of Philippe de Gamaches.⁴⁴ Whatever we contemplate and enjoy anywhere of more pure and sound doctrine, it is necessary that we concede it to have flowed out as water from this ocean.

But I said too little, when I called this most wise doctor an ocean of knowledge. He is the trumpet, that archangelic trumpet, admirable efficacious, awe inspiring. For just as at the sound of that fated trumpet by an unheard miracle the souls of all men from the Stygian marsh, the cleansing flames, and the heavenly dwellings going forth in a moment will be clothed with their bodies and will be summoned to the divine tribunal;⁴⁵ thus the whole world [being] moved and roused comes to hear the voice of our angelic doctor and reformed by [his] salutary doctrine puts on

⁴² Cf. G. de Tocco, *Vita S. Thomae Aquinatis*, §12 (c. III).

⁴³ Cf. Dalmau, Giuseppe, art. *Suarez, Francisco (1548-1617)*: *ECat* XI, 1451-1458.

⁴⁴ Cf. Anon., art. *Filip z Gamaches (1568-1625)*: *PEK* XI-XII, 272.

⁴⁵ Cf. Mt 25:31-46.

the new man; and anticipating the judgment of God through the pious examination [of conscience] and inquiring by their own will into their faults and voluntarily doing penance, there is fashioned in the end, by the help of the Angelic Doctor, an angel out of [this new] man.

I believe I have spent too much time proving this part [of the argument], Learned Hearers, and I seem to myself to have offended your benevolence, [and] to have exacerbated [your] kindness. Wherefore I hurry to the end, only adding for the cause of more firmly strengthening [my argument], what the Roman Oracle pronounced about the doctrine of Aquinas. This was John the 22nd,⁴⁶ the Roman Pontiff who, when he enrolled this saint in the album of saints, said that no miracles were necessary to confirm his sanctity, because there were as many miracles accomplished, as there were lines written. If therefore his doctrine is to be so admired that each question is said to be a miracle, who finally would deny it that it is angelic and likewise would not grant him the merited title of Angelic Doctor?⁴⁷ Truly for me, having examined the matter more closely, the title presented and confirmed seems to be too little a reward for such great virtue and wisdom. Therefore as a supplement to our weakness, let us name this saint according to the opinion of many the flower of theology, the glory of philosophy, the jewel of the sciences; let us name [him] the delight of geniuses, the sanctuary of religion, the fulcrum of the Church, the shield of the Catholic Faith; let us name [him] the hammer of heretics, the light of the schools, Theodidact,⁴⁸ [for he] drank from the very fount of divinity; let us name [him] a brilliant lamp-stand, a burning torch, a shining light of holiness, virtue and knowledge; let us name [him] a most splendid star, a most noble pearl, a treasure house of every kind

⁴⁶ Pope John XXII canonized St. Thomas in 1323. Cf. *BR*, p. 1046.

⁴⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas was declared "*Doctor Angelicus*" by Pope Pius V in 1567. Cf. *BR*, pp. 1046-1047.

⁴⁸ This is a Greek word: θεοδιδάκτορ, which means: "taught by God." For reference, a form of this word is used by St. Paul in 1 Thess 4:9.

of wisdom, the most saintly of the learned, the most learned of the saints.

And yet, even when we have so exalted him, and when we have decorated him with so many splendid words of praise, so much that we have said that there is nothing equal to his virtue and wisdom; [still] pardon is to be asked for me from all of you, Learned Hearers, because I resolved in your most learned and wise assembly to praise him, who not even by any doctor or angelic orator is able to be praised worthily.

TRIUMPH
of the Great Virgin
conceived without original sin,
beautifully celebrated in a new manner

Translated and Edited by
Patrick Lynch, MIC

*Hinc, Tu, deinceps, KOCHANOVĭ, pro pio,
Quem, preparaſti VIRGINI
Magne, Triumpho, iure KOCHANOVIVS
Dicēris ipſi VIRGINI.*

Cecinit P. STANISLAUS PARCZYŃSKI

Ordinis Clericorum Regularium Pauperum Matris DEI Piarum Scholarum.



T A B U L A

AVTHORVM QVORVM POTISSIMVM VSVS IN HOC OPERE CERNITVR.

Abdias Babylonicus
Albertus Magnus.
Alexander Alenſis
Doct̃or Irrefragabilis.
Aluarus de Palacios.
Ægidius Romanus.
B. Amadeus.
S. Ambrosius Episcopus Mediolanē-
sis Doct̃or Ecclesiæ.
Ambrosius Catharinus.
Ammonius.
S. Anastasius Sinaita.
S. Andreas Cretensis.
S. Andreas Jerosolymitanus.
S. Anselmus. Archiepiscopus Cantu-
ariensis.
S. Antoninus Archiepiscopus Florentiæ.
Arator.
Aristotēles.
Arnoldus Carnotensis Episcopus.
S. Athanasius.
S. Augustinus. Episcopus Hypponen-
sis Doct̃or Ecclesiæ.
Baronius.
S. Basilus Magnus.
Basilus Seleucensis.

Venerabilis Beda.
S. Bernardus. Abbas Clareuallensis
S. Bernardinus Senensis.
Bernardinus de Busto,
S. Birgitta.
S. Bonauentura Doct̃or Seraphicus
Cardinalis S. R. E.
Caietanus S. R. E. Cardinalis.
Carthagera.
Cerdanus
S. Chrysostomus. Patriarcha Con-
stantinopolitanus Doct̃or Ecclesiæ.
Conſtantius Sarnanus.
Cornelius à Lapide.
Cornelius Musſus Episc: Bitontinus.
S. Cyprianus Martyr Episcopus Car-
thaginensis.
S. Cyrillus Jerosolymitanus.
S. Dominicus Patriarcha Prædica-
torum.
S. Dionysius Areopagita.
Dionysius Carthusianus.
Elſinus Abbas Rhemenſis.
S. Eliſabeth.
S. Ephrem Diaconus Syrus.
S. Epiphanius. Episcopus Cypri
Euse:

Vene.

INTRODUCTION

a. Source and Purpose of this Work

Triumphus sine originali macula conceptae Magnae Virgini (TMV) is a devout poetic work. Father Stanislaus Papczyński, one of the main Polish immaculists, had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and devoutly defended her title of “Immaculately Conceived.” In 1663, he wrote an epigram in which he argued [the concept] of the Immaculate Conception “based on the consequences” (*ex consequentibus*). To support this position, he included the epigram in his book *Prodrum Reginae Artium*.

In September 1669, Fr. Stanislaus moved from Warsaw to the Piarist headquarters in Kazimierz near Krakow. There he began making efforts for the release of the fourth edition of his *Prodrum* by the local printing house. At that very time, the print shop was printing for the second time the work of Dominic Korwin Kochanowski entitled *Novus asserendae Immaculatae Conceptionis Deiparae Virginis modus*.⁴⁹ Father Papczyński had the opportunity to get acquainted with this book even before its publication.

In 1670, on the occasion of his act of solemnly offering himself, as he cherished the hope of founding the “Marians of the Immaculate Conception,” Fr. Stanislaus clearly stated his position on the Immaculate Conception: “I confess that the Blessed Mother of God Mary has been conceived without original sin.” No wonder that the work, in which Kochanowski presented a new way of

⁴⁹ The circumstances of the second edition of this book were explained on its title page: “For the first time, [this book] was written and published in Vienna, Austria, in 1666, by the Venerable Father Dominic Korwin Kochanowski, a Pole, General Lector of OFM Observ., Alumnus of the Lesser Poland Province. Now, after the author’s death, the book comes out again, enriched with numerous comments by Father Franciszek Korwin Kochanowski, the Deceased’s own brother.”

confirming the thesis of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, gained his recognition.

We do not know whether it was on Fr. Papczyński's own initiative or through a suggestion on the part of Dominic's own brother, Fr. Franciszek Kochanowski, who supervised the second edition of *Novus asserendae* ..., that St. Stanislaus expressed his appreciation and high opinion [of the book] in the short poetic piece *TMV*, which was included in the introductory part of the second edition.⁵⁰ At the beginning of *TMV*, Fr. Papczyński praised the new way of asserting the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary "in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Fathers, previously expressed by the saints and classical doctors of the Church, derived from the principles of the venerable Servant of God John Duns Scotus, the Subtle Doctor."⁵¹ An extensive book by Dominic Korwin Kochanowski, numbering 317 pages, consisted of three parts called "decades" by the author, because each contains 10 "resolutions" advocating for the Immaculate Conception. Its author claimed that only the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ, was free from the original sin committed by Adam and Eve (Dec. I), and was⁵² Immaculately Conceived (Dec. II); she was also free from weakness and the sinfulness of our fallen nature (Dec. III).

According to Fr. Papczyński, the book by Dominic Korwin Kochanowski presented the traditional teachings, but delivered them in a "new manner," in which he probably saw "the beauty of the argumentation." The presentation of this teaching was preceded by a well-ordered introduction, with logical arguments and convincing allocution. Therefore, Fr. Papczyński regarded the publication of this book as a "clearly substantiated victory" of

⁵⁰ D.K. Kochanowski OFM, *Novus asserendae Immaculatae Conceptionis Deiparare Virginis modus*, Casimiriae ad Cracoviam 1699, p. [XVI-XVII]. Cf. K.J. Estreicher, *Bibliografia Polska*, XIX, Kraków 1903, p. 358.

⁵¹ See the title page of *TMV*.

⁵² This introduction has been edited here in the English translation to correct a mistake found in the original Polish.

the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary over the Dragon and thus called it a “triumph of the Great Virgin.”

b. Contents

In this poem, composed of 13 open couplets (distiches of iambic meter used in antiquity, among others, by Horace), Fr. Papczyński celebrated the victory of Mary, who defeated Satan, called by the poem a “Stygian snake.” He evoked (referring to Gen 3:15) the image of Mary trampling the serpent’s head and narrated the story of the first people — Adam and Eve — who were poisoned by its venom. Mary, however, was impervious to the venom; she also avoided humanity’s universal fate — the consequences of original sin. The rules of classic logic were used to prove her Immaculate Conception: since Mary’s birth was the consequence, bearing the marks of truthfulness, which constitutes (similar to her supernaturally giving birth to God) the negation of the ordinary order of nature (*nature ordinem contra*), her Immaculate Conception is also to be recognized as the logical reason for this argument, which — as Fr. Papczyński stated — Dominic Kochanowski, whose surname alone (according to the baroque concept) was a visible manifestation of the love of Mary, “rightly instructs in a learned book and beautifully proves it.”

Robert Sawa

**THE TRIUMPH
OF THE GREAT VIRGIN
CONCEIVED WITHOUT ORIGINAL SIN,
BEAUTIFULLY CELEBRATED IN A NEW MANNER.**

Behold the triumph! Under the Marian foot
The head of the hostile Dragon
He groans: we sing without sin conceived,
Behold the triumph! Of the Virgin.
The Stygian serpent was able to infect
The first Parents with his venom:
He was not able to breathe on the Great Virgin,
The Virgin Parent of God;
All are born, however many from the loins of Adam
Are born, children of wrath:
From a Mother born of gracious name⁵³
Is born, the Virgin of Grace.
The sin which pollutes all of humankind,
is absent is absent from the Virgin.
Conceived against the order of nature she was;
As she herself conceived God.
Therefore when [what is] posterior is believed,
Why is [what is] prior not suitable for believing?
In this learned book KOCHANOVIVS
Rightly teaches, beautifully proves.
Behold the triumph! The wicked Dragon is conquered,
Behold the triumph! He is conquered.
Hence, you, then, KOCHANOVIVS,
By the pious triumph that you have prepared for the Great Virgin
You are rightly called KOCHANOVIVS⁵⁴ of the Virgin Herself.

[Thus] speaks Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński of the Order of Clerics
Regular of the Pious Schools of the Mother of God.

⁵³ This is Anna, the mother of the Blessed Virgin. In Hebrew, the name Anna becomes "Hannah," which signifies "grace."

⁵⁴ The name *Kochanovivus* is derived from the Polish word for "beloved."

TRIUMPHUS
SINE ORIGINALI MACULA CONCEPTAE
MAGNAE VIRGINI,
NOVA METHODO, CELEBERRIME ADORNATAE.

Io triumphe! Mariano sub pede
Draconis infesti caput
Gemit: canamus absque labe conditae,
Io triumphe! Virgini.
Potuit cerastes stygius inficere suo
Primos parentes toxico:
Non potuit afflavisce Magnam Virginem,
Dei parentem Virginem;
Nascuntur omnes, quotquot ex lumbis Adae
Nascuntur, irae filii:
Ex Matre nata gratiosi nominis
Est nata, Virgo Gratiae.
Quae culpa totum polluit hominum genus,
Abest abest a Virgine.
Concepta naturae ordinem contra fuit;
Ut ipsa concepit Deum.
Posterius ergo quando creditur, prius
Cur non sit aptum creditu?
Hoc erudito KOCHANOVIVS libro
Recte docet, pulchre probat.
Io triumphe! victus est nequam Draco,
Io triumphe! victus est.
Hinc, Tu, deinceps, KOCHANOVIVS, pro pio,
Quem, praeparasti Virgini
Magna, Triumpho, iure KOCHANOVIVS
Diceris ipsi Virgini.

Cecinit P. Stanislaus Papczyński Ordinis Clericorum
Regularium Pauperum Matris Dei Piarum Scholarum.



*In Nomine Domini Nostri
Iesu Christi Crucifixi Amen*

Ego Stanislaus a Iesu Maria Papczyński Filius secundum carnem Thomae de Podegrodzie Diacensis Cracoviensis, annorum quadraginta, offero, ac dedico Omnipotenti Deo Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto, ac Deiparae semper Virgini Mariae, sine macula originali Conceptae, cor meum, animam meam, intellectum, memoriam, voluntatem, affectus, mentem totam, animum totum, sensus interiores et exteriores, et corpus meum, nihil mihi penitus relinquendo, ut sic deinceps sim totus eiusdem Omnipotentis a: B. V. Mariae Servus.

Quapropter Iisdem promitto me in vitae meae caste ac ferventer famulatum in hac (quam condere Deo gratia volo) Societate Clericorum Marianorum um Immaculate Conceptionis, atque huius legibus, statutis, ac ritibus mores meos accommodatum, neque unquam acturum, neque permissurum aut consensurum, neque indereute quidem, ut haec aliquomodo tollantur, aut mutantur, aut dispensentur, nisi in gravi et legitima necessitate.

Promitto praeterea Sanctissimo Iesu Christi Vicario eiusque delegatae potestati, ac omnibus meis mediatis et immediatis Superioribus obedientiam samo modo intellectam, et quod nihil privum, sed omnia communia habeo.

Profiteor me credere, quicquid Sancta Romana Ecclesia credit, atque deinceps ad credendum praecipiet, maxime vero Sanctissimam Dei Genitricem Mariam abique macula originali esse conceptam profiteor, eiusque honorem etiam cum dispendio vitae meae pollicor a me propagatum ac defensum iri. Sic me Deus adiuvent et haec Sancta Evangelia Dei.



1. *Synodus a Jesu Maria Congregationis Immaculae Conceptionis Clericorum Marianorum Pluribus Suffragantibus insignis Praepositis. Fratribus in Ermo salutem et benedictionem.*
2. *Quo aut quatuordecim quibus sacra vehementer discent, modicula: Fortis et crudelis. Illam Regulas observantia demonstrat, hanc proximorum commendat, diligit. Quocirca Nos Divina dispositione Congregationis Nostrae admodum regimini et obsequio, in hoc toto studio alacritas incumbere, ut omnes Nostris in Domino Fratres Religiosae vitae disciplina proficiat, et sufficientis scientiae deum conspicuos videamus et habeamus.*
3. *Et sicut hactenus vestis nostris ex integro potiri non poterimus, tamen aequale Domino Deo nostris deinceps Nos ut auctoritatem minime subiamus, ac ne deesse quicquam queat, quod manus nostrum officiumque concernit. Instruimus vobis tam in vero, ac solido spiritu et Religiosa perfectione, quam in Libero humanioribus et Theologiae Moralis et Philosophiae excitationibus Charitativum in Domino Fratrem Joachimum a S. Anna Congregationis Nostrae subiacuam ad biennium submittimus, constituimus et ordinamus, confidentes in Dei misericordibus quae vobis demandatum ad meritum obedientiae et Charitatis partem erga se optinatur.*
4. *Proinde sicut eidem arto inungimus et praecipimus, ut inquit et assidue et diligentissime observantiae legum nostrarum, rigorem, ac Liberris excitationibus: ita Charitatis vestras omnes et singulas commoneamus et per omnia sacra cretemur, ut illi in atque impie, prompti, filiales, fideles, humiles, constantes, potius obtemperetis.*
5. *Itaque nemo Nostrum deinceps abs excommunicationis poena, absque Nostra expressa scientia ex Ermo prohibet etiam ad vicinos viros aut benefactores excepto Nostro et Episcoporum ac Domus Procuratore, quem talem praesentibus declaramus charitativum in Christo Fratrem Andream juniorem.*
6. *Nemo se ad orationem tam mentali quam vocali assidue committat et constantis exercitii nostris ac studio (nisi legitime aliqua cum actu Nostro aut Instruendi actione impediatur) abstinat; ad mensum ordines habendamque, (sive Nostro exemplo) Lectioni Sacrae intendant. Per mensum istum absoluta Reservi parte Theologiae vacantis morali quae pro arbitrio Instruendi res ad casuum vobis dicatur res ex probatis auctoribus persequatur, ac per adhibito examine, quantum quis profecerit.*
7. *Singulis diebus Salvatoris ordines habebunt sermones breves de virtutibus sectandis vitisque extirpandis, ac virantibus ac de aliis materiis subleantibus, quos deinde (si illa videbitur Nostro ac Instruendi) die sequenti Dominio in ecclesiis ad usum statim non ex cathedra noster ad populum si praeconi dedit fructuosus poterunt.*
8. *Rubricae Missae ac Brevarii Romani singulis Dominicis et Festis post meridianaem refectorem legentur; Norma vitae, Sacrae Litterae, Speculum parvum Religiosorum, Exemplorum Liber et parvum SS. Cordulorum, cum de imitatione Christi, quotidie omnibus universis, nec unquam hoc omnium Nostro dispensante in mensa meridiana et vespertina ad Instructionem spiritus et profectum in virtutibus distincte perlegentur.*
9. *Sacrum deus Dominicis et Festis cantabatur more nostro. Litaniae vero Laurentiae, aut de Nomine Jesu feriales tempore festae Missae ab omnibus recitabantur pro nostra Congregatione.*
10. *Communis supplicatio, quam visio disciplinam vocant, frivola secunda, quarta ex octo in communi per Psalmum Misereor et De profundis habebatur, privatim quotidie augendo et decemendo pie recommendamus. Exordium manuale tamet brevissimum nunquam intermitteretur.*
11. *Denique omnibus vobis amorem in Deum, devotionem in Virginem Speciosissimam et SS. Patres, multum Charitatem, pacem, concordiam, votum Sanctorum custodiam, studium fervoris orationis et assidue mortificationis, humilitatem, patientiam, gratitudinem, et in sancta vocatione cum adversario Dei percontantem ardenter commendamus, atque vestris orationibus me miserum seriem Domino Deo iugiter commendare non intermissis vehementer obsecramus.*

Datum in Caenaculo Domini Nostraeconfratiano. Die 19 Aprilis 1690.

*Insignis Sermos vester in Domino
Sancissimus a Jesu Maria mpp.*

HISTORICAL WRITINGS

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THE FIRST COAT OF ARMS OF THE MARIANS
DESIGNED BY ST. STANISLAUS.

INTRODUCTION

In this part of the book, we present letters and documents (named “historical writings”) of St. Stanislaus Papczyński. Unlike his other written works, whose subjects *ex professo* were religious or ascetic issues (although some personal elements, serving as examples, can be found in them), they relate to Fr. Papczyński’s life and activities. Only one of these documents reflect Fr. Stanislaus’ experience from before entering the religious life (No. 1). All the other writings relate to his religious life and work, first in the Institute of the Pious Schools (Nos. 2-4, 6), and then in the Institute (Congregation and finally the Order) of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, of which he was the founder (Nos. 5, 7-19). However, some documents, although written by Fr. Stanislaus as a Marian, refer to his life in the Institute of the Pious Schools (Nos. 7, 8, 13, 14).

The following documents are given in chronological order, as they appear in their critical edition (entitled *Scripta Historica P. Stanislai a J.M. Papczyński*, Varsaviae 1999). The collection does not include three documents. A letter of St. Stanislaus Papczyński to the Procurator¹ of the Piarist Fathers (the then Office of the Procurator corresponds to today’s Office of the Postulator) was also omitted from the critical edition of Fr. Papczyński’s historical writings. This letter was not included because nearly the whole of its text is a copy of John Casimir Krasiński’s petition for the prompt beatification of the Piarist Founder, Fr. Joseph Calasanz (†1648), while the text written by Fr. Papczyński (who received a

¹ See *Positio*, pp. 81-82.

special instruction to collect such requests in Poland²) is limited to a brief introduction³ and closing.⁴

Many of Papczyński's written works, including letters and documents, did not survive. It is known from various sources that he wrote them, but their contents remain unknown, for no copies survived, if they had ever been made.

*Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC*⁵

² See *Positio*, pp. 72-74.

³ In the Polish translation it reads: "Pokój Chrystusa! Wysłał list do Jego Świątobliwości Podskarbiego Królestwa Polskiego wraz z kopią, o następującej treści." ["Peace of Christ! I am sending this letter to His Eminence, the Treasurer of the Kingdom of Poland with a copy of the following content."]

⁴ In the Polish translation it reads: "Taka to była sposobność zwrócenia się do Waszej Wielbności, którego świętym modlitwom się polecam. Warszawa, 16 stycznia 1666 r. — Waszej Wielbności Sługa najpokorniejszy, Stanisław od J.M., (własnoręcznie). [P.S.] Proszę, aby [Wasza Wielbność] zechciał mnie powiadomić, czy o. Generał odwiedzi Prowincję? I czy przybędzie do nas?" [This was an opportunity to write to Your Reverence, to whose holy prayers I commend myself. Warsaw, January 16, 1666 — Your Reverence's most humble servant, Stanislaus of J.M. (by his own hand). [P.S.] Please, [Your Reverence] kindly inform me if Fr. General would be visiting the Provinces? Would he also come to us?] Probably, the recipient of this letter in Rome was Fr. John Charles Caputi.

⁵ All the subsequent introductions in *Historical Writings* were also prepared by Fr. Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC, except the introduction to the *Self-Offering (Oblatio)*.

1. Secrets of Conscience

Secreta Conscientiae

Warsaw(?) ca. June of 1656; Two Fragments

Introduction

The full title of this writing of Stanislaus Papczyński, known to us from his writings that were studied during the beatification process¹, is: *Secreta Conscientiae ad Reverendum Patrem N.N. Poloniae V[icarium?] meum in Spiritualibus Magistrum* [Secrets of Conscience for Reverend Father N.N. Vicar of Poland and my Teacher in Spiritual Matters]. Thus, this writing was directed to Stanislaus' spiritual director during the novitiate, Fr. Alexander Novari, who in 1656 was the Vicar of the Provincial (Fr. Conti) for the Piarist houses in Poland.² Papczyński wrote *Secreta conscientiae* (SC) probably toward the end of his novitiate, as the Constitutions recommended that each novice, before professing vows, make a sort of general confession "*totius vitae anteactae*" (of the entirety of one's life before entering). Such is the character of SC, written like a booklet as "his confession, his failures and sins, which he committed in his youth, before entering the Order."³

Papczyński was admitted to the novitiate on July 2, 1654, and so he would have finished his two-year novitiate on July 2, 1656. We can thus assume that about a month before, he was preparing to make a general confession, as was spoken of above. It was probably sufficient to do this from memory, but he decided to write down what he intended to reveal in confes-

¹ Cf. *Positio*, p. 32, n. 141

² Cf. *Ibid*, pp. 32-33.

³ *PP*, f.71r: art. 44.

sion to Fr. Novari. This is how *SC* came to be written. After the death of Fr. Papczyński, this writing was kept in the archive of the Marian Order, but later disappeared, together with other items from the archive. Fr. Wyszyński read it during his stay in the Korabiew Forest. A copy was then sent to him in Rome, and he brought it with him to Portugal. There, he made use of it to describe the youth of Fr. Papczyński in his biography, without speaking of his sins, for these are mentioned in *SC* in the broader context of Papczyński's life before entering the Piarist Order. This biography (manuscript 1754) is entitled *Vita Ven. S.D. Patris Stanislai a I.M. qui Congregationem Religiosorum Marianorum Immaculae Conceptionis B.V.M., [...] instituit* (VW), and in it (§§ 18 and 20) are included both the fragments quoted below. The rest of the text of *SC* is unknown, because Fr. Wyszyński's copy was lost after his death.

The first fragment of *SC* contains a reflection of Fr. Papczyński that has the form of a thanksgiving to God and follows in VW after the story of Papczyński's sufferings in Lvov during the years 1648-1649.⁴ Fr. Papczyński's first stay in Lvov brought him much physical and spiritual suffering, which Fr. Wyszyński calls the *crux Leopoliensis* (Lvovian cross). Fr. Wyszyński testifies to the authenticity of the quoted fragment of *SC* with the words: "Here I am quoting words written by the hand of the venerable servant of God Stanislaus himself; they are as follows."⁵ And after quoting the fragment he adds: "By this thanksgiving to God he (Papczyński) ends this his account of that Lvovian cross..."⁶

In the second fragment of *SC*, Fr. Papczyński gives thanks to God for the spiritual benefit gained by the experience of shepherding sheep in the summer of 1650. After returning from Lvov to Podegrodzie (around March 1649), Jan Papczyński convalesced at his home for about a month, and then went to the Piarist College in Podoliniec. He was there during the school

⁴ Cf. *Vita Venerabilis Servi Dei Patris Stanislai a Iesu Maria...* (VW), §§ 14-19: *Positio*, pp. 666-670.

⁵ *Ibid.*, § 18: *Positio*, p. 670.

⁶ VW, § 18 at the end: *Positio*, p. 670.

year of 1649-1650 that he was a student in the course of syntax⁷ (on the student list his name is written as: "Joannes Papczyński polonus Syntaxista").⁸ In mid-May of the year 1650, the college closed due to an approaching plague and Papczyński returned to his family home in Podegrodzie.⁹ Here, his father sent him to shepherd sheep, because (as Fr. Wyszyński notes) his father "gratis victum non dabat" (did not give food for free). Fr. Wyszyński says that this young "Podolinensium Musarum Alumnus," now pasturing sheep, was "in schola humilitatis"¹⁰ (in the school of humility), because for a youngster with a such an education, shepherding was a humbling occupation.

Both fragments appeared in print in the year 1977 as part of the biography VW contained in the *Positio*.¹¹

First Fragment

May You be forever blessed, O Lord, and grant that, after [doing] so many evil deeds,¹² I may do good deeds in my vocation, since I truly recognize that, of myself, I am not capable of doing anything that is good. You, though, who read this, do not be surprised by the things I have presented, since I considered it unworthy to hide the goodness of God, and I wanted to encourage you to praise God's omnipotence and His care for us. To Him be glory, honor, and praise forever. Amen.

Second fragment

Thus do I thank God, that by His Will, I was then obligated by my parents to pasture sheep (I dare to admit this with a peaceful

⁷ The word "syntax" here refers to a part of the study of classical Latin grammar that deals with the proper construction of sentences.

⁸ *Positio*, p. 18.

⁹ Cf. VW, § 19 at the end; *Positio*, p. 671, and also, n. 34.

¹⁰ VW, § 20; *Positio*, p. 671.

¹¹ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 669-670, 671.

¹² Father Papczyński wrote about his "many evil deeds" in SC for his own humiliation, and left these memories, just like Augustine, so that everyone could despise him — as is testified in the informative process (cf. PP, f.71r; art. 44).

conscience), since while I was in the pastures amid the flock, I kept my conscience pure and holy! O Lord! I humbly ask this of You, that this, the Providence of Your Majesty — which I expect [to guide me] in the future and in which I trust — guide me until the end of my life, that You may be praised in all of my deeds, thoughts, and words. Amen.

2. Profession of Simple Vows

With the Oath of Perseverance in the Congregation of Piarists

Professio Votorum Simplicium

Warsaw — July 22, 1656

Introduction

We refer the reader to the biography prepared by T. Rogalewski,¹³ in which it is explained why the novice Papczyński did not profess religious vows at the end of his two-year novitiate on July 2, 1656. It also speaks there about the formula prepared for this profession, which in addition to the main part relating to simple vows, also contained an oath to persevere in the Piarist Congregation until the end of his life,¹⁴ and the four promises which were present in the original formula of profession. The need to use a new form of profession resulted from the fact that Pope Alexander VII made it possible for the Piarists to make simple vows on January 24 1656.

I, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, in the world [known as] Jan Papczyński, being 25 years of age, make my profession in the Congregation of the Poor of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools, and I profess to Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy

¹³ T. Rogalewski, MIC, *Stanisław Papczyński* (1631-1701), Lublin — Warsaw 2001, p. 86.

¹⁴ This oath added to the profession was necessary, because simple vows did not have the same binding force as solemn vows.

Spirit, as well as to Mary, the ever-Virgin Mother of God, and to you, Very Reverend Fr. Alexander of St. Bernard,¹⁵ in the place of God and representing the Most Reverend Fr. General John of Jesus and Mary,¹⁶ and to all his successors who are [yet] to be chosen according to the law, three simple vows: poverty,¹⁷ chastity, obedience, and in accordance with this, particular concern for the education of boys, according to the example given in the brief of Paul V and contained in our Constitutions.¹⁸ In addition, I promise that I will persevere in the same Congregation until the end of my life, according to the formula of the brief of Alexander VII.¹⁹ I desire that this profession and the vows, without regarding anything to the contrary which I now freely and entirely renounce, be always lasting, binding, and valid. In evidence of this, I give my signature on July 22, 1656, in Warsaw.

In addition, I promise that I will never undertake any activity nor will I attempt, nor for any reason will I agree to it, that the prescriptions regarding poverty in the Constitutions of our Congregation be modified, except, if for a worthy reason, it should seem that such poverty should be stricter and more severe.

Beyond this, I promise that I will never undertake any activity nor will I attempt, even indirectly, to be elected or elevated to the position as a Superior or any other dignity in the Congregation.

I also promise that I will never seek any dignity or position as a Superior outside the Congregation, nor will I agree to it, except that I be forced by order of obedience through the one who could

¹⁵ Fr. Alexander Novari (d. 1657), Vicar Provincial for Poland, residing in Warsaw since 1653.

¹⁶ Fr. John Garcia del Castillo, Superior General of the Piarists from March 12, 1656 until his death in 1659.

¹⁷ Before the brief *Dudum felicitis recordationis* received in 1656, the Piarists, in the spirit of the founder, took the vow of "highest poverty," the restoration of which Fr. Papczyński probably demanded in his *Apologia pro summa paupertate*, the contents of which we do not know, since this work did not survive. Cf. below, *HW*, pp. 890-891, n. 6 (Apologia), § 35. Cf. *SH*, p. 60, n. 124.

¹⁸ Cf. *ConstSP*, pp. 111-113, where we find the text of the brief *Ad ea, per quae* (March 6, 1617).

¹⁹ Cf. *Dudum felicitis recordationis* (January 24, 1656) in: *BullRom* 16 (1869), 118a-122b.

order me to do so under pain of sin. Lastly, if I were to find out that another is trying to attain one of the two things mentioned above, I promise that I will reveal that person and this entire matter to the Congregation or to the General Superior.²⁰

I entrust my vows to the Lord before all His People (...), in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem.²¹

I, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, confirm all the above with my own handwritten signature.

Jacob of St. Barbara²² — I was present (*handwritten*)

John Casimir of St. Theophilus²³ (*handwritten*)

3. Declaration of the One Departing for Rome

Protestatio Romam abeuntis

Warsaw — ca. October 20, 1667

Introduction

The original text of the *Protestatio*, written by the hand of Fr. Papczyński, has not survived to our times, and it seems that he did not give this work any title. The content of the *Protestatio* is known to us today only from the *Protocollum of the Marian Order* (*Prot.*), where the publisher divided the text into two parts, giving each its own title. Admittedly, the title of *Protestatio Romam abeuntis* was given only to the first part, but we give this title to the whole work, following Sidry (1937), Navikevicius (1960) and the *Positio* (1977). Father Papczyński, a member

²⁰ The above three promises, included in the original formula of profession (cf. *ConstSP*, Part I, Ch. 3, n. IV), were replaced by a new formula in Rome on July 18, 1656.

²¹ Ps 115:14-19. Numbering of the Psalms according to the Vulgate.

²² Father Jacob Weczirka (Wezyrka) of St. Barbara (d. 1668) had been a resident of Warsaw since August 1654. Cf. *Positio*, p. 43, n. 6.

²³ Jan Kazimierz Bukar of St. Theophilus was clothed in the religious habit at the hands of Fr. Alexander Novari on March 4, 1655. He submitted his religious profession in 1657 in Rzeszów.

of the Piarist house in Warsaw, wrote this *Protestatio* shortly before embarking on a journey to Rome, where he had been called by the Piarist General, Fr. Kosma Chiara.

I. Declaration of the One Departing for Rome

1. In the Name of the Lord: Amen. I, a sinner, called Stanislaus of (the most holy Names of) Jesus and Mary, born in Podegrodzie near Sącz, of Polish nationality, by the decree of holy Divine Providence called to Rome²⁴ by our Superior General, Fr. Cosmas of Jesus and Mary²⁵ through two letters sent to our Fr. Provincial (Wenceslaus) of the Most Blessed Sacrament.²⁶ This order, given to me on September 27, 1667, under religious obedience, I accept with the greatest respect, humility, desire, and docility, only on account of love for God and our Lord Jesus Christ, in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin, my Lady, and of all my holy patrons, guardian angels, as well as in honor of the entire heavenly court. I intend to fulfill this command as perfectly as possible, as is pleasing to God, offering to the Lord, my God, in union with the obedience and merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as of the Most Blessed Virgin and all the other saints, the exhaustion, difficulty, discomfort, annoyances, thoughts, prayers, words, conversations, activities and work, unfortunate accidents of this entire journey, for all the benefits bestowed upon me (including even death, if this should occur), for my sins, for the protection of my fatherland from all disasters, for my own persecutors and those of my Institute, for benefactors, particularly those living, for

²⁴ Father Papczyński was called to Rome primarily because, as is said in the second part of this latter, they wanted to prevent him from taking part in the next Provincial Chapter in Poland. Cf. *Positio*, p. 100 (intr. B, 2).

²⁵ Father Cosmas Chiara of Jesus and Mary (1616-1681), Superior General of the Piarists (1665-1671). Cf: G. Santha, S.P., *P. Cosmus Chiara a Iesu et Maria (1616-1681), tertius S. Iosephi Calasanctii successor...*, in: *EphCal* XXX (1961). Cf: by the same author, *P. Cosmus Chiara a Iesu et Maria (1616-1681)*, Romae 1962.

²⁶ Father Wenceslaus Opatowski of the Most Blessed Sacrament (1627-1680), Superior of the Polish Province (1665-1671). Cf. M. Kraus, *Provincia Poloniae CC. RR. Pauperum Matris Dei S.P.*, [Kr.]. manuscript, pp. 263-342.

friends and enemies. I only desire that the Lord God be praised in this my journey undertaken out of obedience, just as He was praised in the journey and wandering of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, in the obedience of all of his creatures, in the difficulties, exhaustion, teaching, persecutions, and Passion of my Lord, Jesus Christ, in the sorrows of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the obedience of all His apostles and servants.

II. [Reason for Stanislaus' Journey to Rome]

2. The reason for my journey was the ardent zeal in regard to the strict observance, in our Polish Province, in an uncompromising manner, the decrees and prescriptions of our Constitutions, customs, chapters, and particularly those regarding the election of Superiors which are to take place in the Province, in accord with the holy canons of the Council of Trent,²⁷ in accord with the first brief given to us by Alexander VII²⁸ and the decree of the first Provincial Chapter which took place in Podoliniec²⁹ when Fr. Jacob of St. Barbara³⁰ was Provincial, in which I participated as delegate of the Warsaw house,³¹ there was a unanimous decision to send to the General Chapter a petition to receive permission for the election of all the Superiors in the [Polish] Province.³² And our delegates³³ brought us from Rome the following answer:

²⁷ According to the Council of Trent, the Superiors of religious institutes were to be chosen "per vota secreta" (cf. Session XXV: *De Regularibus et Monialibus*, Ch. 6: *Ratio eligendi superiores*). This was not always followed in the election of Superiors in the Piarists. Cf. *Positio*, p. 89, Ad primum.

²⁸ This was the brief *Dudum felicitis recordationis* (January 24, 1656). Cf. *Positio*, pp. 91-93, Ad secundum.

²⁹ This was the chapter of 1664. Cf. *Positio*, p. 129, n. 6.

³⁰ Father Jacob Wezyrka (Weczirka) of St. Barbara (d. 1668) was Provincial in Poland from February 1664 to May 1665. Cf. Kr., pp. 217-263.

³¹ At the Chapter of the Piarist house in Warsaw, which probably took place at the beginning of July 1664, Fr. Papczyński was elected the delegate (vocalis) of this house. Cf. *Positio*, p. 87 (Doc. V, intr. A, 1).

³² Among the points (petitions) that were to be submitted to the General Chapter, we find in the first place a petition of such content. Cf. *Positio*, p. 88 (Intr. A, 1, ed. 11, where its content is given).

³³ The delegates (vocales) of the Polish Province to the General Chapter (Rome, May 1665) were: Fr. Jacob Wezyrka the Provincial, Fr. Opatowski and Fr.

"The Polish Province in the next Provincial Chapter is to elect for itself [candidates for Superiors] (Fr. Wenceslaus, who was at that time a delegate, but later on became Provincial, limited the number of candidates for the position of Provincial to only three), whom shall be confirmed by the General and his Assistants."³⁴ When therefore the time came near for the Provincial Chapter,³⁵ I insisted that it take place. But because this matter [of conducting this Provincial Chapter] seemed to undermine the ideas of my Superiors (who certainly wanted to delay elections, so that they could govern for a longer period of time), they wrote to the General, that there is no need for such a chapter.³⁶ Therefore, already after designating the place where it ought to take place, namely in Podoliniec, the Provincial declared that it would not occur, and he wrote that if anyone should want it to take place, he should turn to Rome, so as to be granted permission for it to take place, since he himself did not want to prevent the Chapter [from taking place].³⁷

3. I read the Provincial's letter to the fathers of the Warsaw house, for whom I served as Superior in place of the gravely ill Fr. Jacob.³⁸ Everybody became livid, and some proposed that we ought to reject the yoke of the present Superiors, who impeded this matter in accord with the law, as if incited by an explicit desire to run for office. A Pole, Fr. Casimir of the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary³⁹ and a Silesian, Fr. Nicholas of St.

Frankovič. Cf. *Positio*, p. 94 (intr. A, 2), Ad tertium.

³⁴ Cf. *Positio* p. 94 (intr. A, 2), Ad tertium.

³⁵ According to the Constitution of the Piarists, the Provincial Chapter was to be held every three years. As the last Provincial Chapter in Poland took place in August 1664, the next one should have taken place in August 1667.

³⁶ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 295-296 (Kr. 6, 1667 A.D., § 3). The aforementioned letter, no longer extant, must have been written in early April 1667.

³⁷ This circular letter from the Provincial, no longer extant, must have been written around mid-July 1667. Cf. *Positio*, p. 98 (intr. B, 1).

³⁸ Father Jacob Wezyrka was the Superior of the Warsaw house from May 1665 until his death on April 23, 1668. The gathering of members of the Warsaw home, where the circular letter from the Provincial was read and discussed, probably took place around July 20, 1667.

³⁹ Father Casimir Papczyński (1641-1711), ordained a priest in October 1666, was a member of the Warsaw house since 1663. Cf. *Positio*, p. 130, n. 17.

Mary,⁴⁰ were of this opinion. The other Nicholas, of the Immaculate Conception,⁴¹ encouraged everybody to have recourse to our Most Reverend Cardinal Protector⁴² with a humble petition and accuse our Superior of this: that they are relaxing the keeping of our holy Rule of religious life. Finally, when the storm quieted, by my initiative, it was decided that we all write a letter to Fr. General, asking for permission to conduct the Provincial Chapter. If this were refused, then, seeing the impending ruin of the Province (which was indeed feared not only because of internal parties,⁴³ but also on account of the Jesuit conspiracy against us,⁴⁴ of which only I and four priests of the Warsaw house were aware and, together with the suspicion of a certain secret betrayal,⁴⁵ I wanted to reveal to the entire Province in the next Chapter), we would have proceeded to the election of new Superiors, having received the Bull and the permission of the General, which instructed all those which this matter concerned. However, we did not intend to do this with insistence, with turbulence, or with deceit, but with holy peace and love, checking to see if there were agreement on this and what the opinions of the other fathers in the Province were [on this matter].

⁴⁰ Father Nicholas Faber (1637-1680), ordained a priest in October 1666, was a member of the Warsaw house since 1663. Cf. *Positio*, p. 130, n. 18.

⁴¹ Father Nicholas Hausenka (1637-1683) had been an associate of Fr. Papczyński in Warsaw since 1664, but moved away from Warsaw before the end of 1665. He probably returned there around April 1667. Cf. *Positio*, p. 130, n. 19.

⁴² At that time the protector of the Piarists was Cardinal Marzio Ginetti (1585-1671). Cf. *Positio*, p. 130, n. 20.

⁴³ It is not known exactly what "parties" are referred to here. Fr. Papczyński is probably referring to the problem of antipathy and sympathy among the Piarists. See below, *HW*, p. 892, n. 6, § 39; also p. 884, n. 6, § 21.

⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, this is about the intention of the Jesuits to open their own college in Warsaw. This college would be a dangerous competition for the corresponding Piarist college operating there. Cf. *Positio*, p. 130, n. 32 is where the evidence is given that this "conspiracy" did exist. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 111-112.

⁴⁵ We do not know what "betrayal" is referred to here. It is possible that it was something connected with the "conspiracy" of the Jesuits. Cf. *Positio*, p. 311.

4. It is possible that Fr. Provincial was informed on this matter,⁴⁶ since immediately he hurriedly came to Warsaw,⁴⁷ and because he possessed the ability to reconcile human opinions, he drew toward his side even those who wanted to reject his yoke, while I, together with the others (namely, Onophrius of St. Philip Neri,⁴⁸ Alexius of St. Joseph,⁴⁹ Anthony of the Most Holy Spirit,⁵⁰ John of St. James⁵¹), was at that time concerned about maintaining the holy Rule of religious life, I firmly insisted on conducting the Chapter in accord with our law.

5. For a few days, they discussed various opinions; at the end, there arrived from Rome the permission to conduct the Chapter.⁵² But because my Superiors possibly feared, lest during the Chapter I would insist upon this matter with all certainty, such that they at least take into account their Superiorship, and lest I reveal certain parties, they decided to obligate me to going to Rome (to where I, as I have already indicated, desired to go not only on account of my attempts to maintain the religious Rule, but primarily out of devotion, although not so soon and not in such an undue moment). Therefore, the Provincial also threatened

⁴⁶ Provincial Opatowski learned about this from the house Superior, Fr. Wezyrka. Cf. *Positio*, p. 131, n. 24.

⁴⁷ Provincial Opatowski came to Warsaw around July 29, 1667. Cf. *Positio*, p. 297.

⁴⁸ Father Onophrius Zawadzki (ca. 1639-1679, a member of the Warsaw house from about 1662, ordained a priest in 1664, was counted by Kraus among those who in 1667 were "confoederati cum patre Stanislaw Varsaviae" (allied with Fr. Stanislaus in Warsaw). Cf. Kr., p. 280, in: *Positio*, p. 131, n. 26 and p. 297.

⁴⁹ Father Alexius Pawlarski (born 1635), a member of the Warsaw house from about 1663, ordained a priest in 1665, was also among the allies of Fr. Stanislaus. Cf. Kr., *ibid.*; cf. *Positio*, p. 31, n. 27.

⁵⁰ Father Anthony Kruszyna (1639-1709), a member of the Warsaw house from about 1664, ordained a priest in 1666, was also among the allies of Fr. Stanislaus. Cf. Kr., *ibid.*; cf. *Positio*, p. 131, n. 28.

⁵¹ There is evidently a mistake in this name, because at that time there was no member found among the Piarists with this name. Perhaps Fr. Papczyński meant to write: "John of the Annunciation of the B.V.M.," who at the end of 1666 was a cleric of minor orders and held the office of treasurer for the Warsaw house. Cf. *Positio*, p. 131, n. 29.

⁵² The authorization was issued on August 20, 1667 by General Chiara, and Provincial Opatowski received it around September 20, 1667. Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 30

me with imprisonment, if I did not listen to the General. I asked: for which matter does he give me the order under obedience to go to Rome, and why, when the local Chapter has been convoked? — [The answer was that] such is the will of the General. I understood perfectly what the purpose was, and although I was warned by very important men, great masters in both mystical and practical theology⁵³ to not expose myself to such clear danger, nor be so naive in obedience, nevertheless, having made before His Divine Majesty this declaration which one can read above, I prepared for my journey to Rome.

4. Letter to Fr. Cosmas Chiara, SP

Superior General of the Order of Pious Schools

Litterae ad P. Cosmum Chiara, S.P.

Krakow — November 22, 1670

Introduction

This is the last request of Fr. Papczyński to be released from the Piarists. His previous three requests (the first around mid-August 1669, the second around mid-October 1669, sent from Warsaw, and the third on December 20, 1669, sent from Krakow) have been lost.⁵⁴ Fr. Papczyński wrote this request, not knowing that his previous requests were considered sufficient. Nor did he know that Fr. Chiara, the Piarist General, had already notified Bishop Trzebicki,⁵⁵ ordinary of Krakow, about the authorization of the Pope (brief of October 18, 1670) for Fr. Papczyński to be released by one of the General's delegates from simple vows and the oath of perseverance in the Piarists,

⁵³ We do not know the names of these "great masters" who advised Fr. Papczyński.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 145-148.

⁵⁵ Bishop Andrzej Trzebicki (1607-1679), ordinary of Krakow from 1658.

moving to the state of diocesan priests⁵⁶ (authorizations for the delegates came to the houses of the Polish Province at the end of November 1670).

I ask for your blessing,
Reverend Father in Christ,
My Most Venerable Father.

Because, as it was brought to my attention, the Holy Father gave Your Reverend Father the authority of releasing from simple vows and the oath of perseverance (although we presume, and we already believed, that these were removed together with the first brief of Alexander VII⁵⁷) of those who did not intend to profess solemn vows;⁵⁸ therefore, I humbly ask Your Fatherly Excellence, that you would grant this release to me, possessing already — in accord with the the apostolic decree — an adequate livelihood.⁵⁹ I again earnestly beseech and entrust myself to Your holy prayers.

Krakow, November 22, 1670.

To Your Fatherly Reverence,
The most humble servant
Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary,
(*handwritten*)

[On the back:]

To the Reverend Father, Fr. Cosmas of Jesus and Mary, my most Venerable Superior General of the Fathers of the Poor of the Order of the Mother of God of Pious Schools.

To Rome

⁵⁶ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 190-191.

⁵⁷ This belief of his and of his two companions, clerics seeking exemption from the Piarists, was probably based on an incorrect interpretation of the declaration given by the Pope on August 5, 1670. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 189-190.

⁵⁸ This power was given to Fr. Cosmas Chiara by Clement X in the brief *Cum felicitis recordationis*, on October 18, 1670.

⁵⁹ Regarding what is meant by this "adequate livelihood," cf. *Positio*, p. 209, no. 3.

5. Self-Offering

Oblatio

Kazimierz (near Krakow) — December 11, 1670

Introduction⁶⁰

The content, composition and function of the *Oblatio* as a formula of profession is an expression of the personal spirituality of our holy Father Stanislaus, including his understanding of religious vows and the nature of the religious life. In order to fully understand the meaning of this text and to grasp its spiritual depth, it is important to define the time of its creation, the circumstances⁶¹ surrounding this event and its importance, both for Fr. Stanislaus and for the religious community that he founded.

The Context of the *Oblatio*

The text of the *Oblatio* was preserved as an integral part of a short work entitled *Foundation of the House of Recollection* (*Fundatio*

⁶⁰ The text of this *Introduction* is a slightly modified article by A. Pakuła, MIC, *The Act of the Oblatio as a charismatic work of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński. The time of the creation, context and the meaning of the first formula of the religious vows of the Congregation of Marian Fathers*, in: *Ad honorem Immaculatae Conceptionis Mariae. Oblatio and consecration. Documents of the 1st Theological Symposium of the Marian Fathers' School of Spirituality*, Ed. Fr. Andrzej Pakuła, MIC, Rome, 2020 — Warsaw 2020, pp. 11-17.

⁶¹ The text of *Oblatio* and most of the related research done before 1973 were presented in the *Positio*, prepared for the purposes of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński's canonization process: *Positio (Sacra Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, Officium Historicum, Poznaniensis Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Stanislai a Iesu Maria Papczyński, Fundatoris Clericorum Regularium Immaculatae Conceptionis BVM († 1701), Positio super Introductione Causibae et super virutibus ex officio concinnata*, Romae 1977; hereinafter: *Positio*). Additional and later papers by various authors generally trust this *Positio* in terms of historical data, yet they significantly differ in the interpretation of the source document itself, the circumstances of its creation and its significance both in the life of St. Stanislaus, as well as in the founding of the Congregation of Marian Fathers, initiated by the act of the *Oblatio*.

Domus Recollectionis, afterwards: *FDR*). This work has an autobiographical character and is written in the first person singular.

The work containing the *Oblatio*, i.e., *FDR*, was given this title by St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński in his subsequently lost manuscript. The original still existed in 1773, and it was submitted to Rome along with other written works for the needs of St. Stanislaus' beatification process. Two years later, i.e., in 1775, it was examined by the Congregation of Rites. The *FDR* text, including the *Oblatio*, was also preserved in a copy of *Protocolum Ordinis Immaculae Conceptionis*, prepared around 1774.⁶²

Although the entire short work was entitled *FDR*, it was not so much about the establishing of the first Marian Fathers' monastery called *Domus Recollectionis* in Puszcza Korabiewska (today's Puszcza Mariańska), but about the very beginnings of the shaping of the new religious institute. Its author, St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, who is also the author of the *Oblatio*, describes his life from a historical perspective and presents the sequence of events and his personal experiences of the faith which led to his undertaking a new mission, i.e., founding the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Most B.V.M. Above all, however, he places them in the context of his own experience of faith. Therefore, the starting point and the foundation on which he sets the story of his life and of the first years of the emergence of the new religious community is God's grace of being chosen to become the father and founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers. In this context, the holy Marian founder includes the *Oblatio* in the *FDR* as yet another expression of his experience both mystical, community-founding, and charismatic: mystical, because he made the act of the *Oblatio* out of a divine inspiration ("Divine Majesty suggested to me, that while I was going to be released from these, in the same act I would bind myself freely to God by other vows, which I did by offering myself"; *FDR* 3); community-founding, because by this act of *Oblatio* he initiated the Congregation; and charismatic,

⁶² *Positio*, p. 354.

because the gift that he received from the Holy Spirit was for the good of the Church.

The Place of the Creation, the Time and the Purpose of the *Oblatio*

We do not know the exact time when St. Stanislaus Papczyński wrote the *Oblatio*. The place of its creation is similarly unknown. The date and place provided at the end of the document (Kazimierz near Krakow, in the residence of the Poor Fathers of Our Lady of the Order of the Pious Schools, [...] on December 11, 1670) refer only to the time and place of the text's [public] reading. One thing is certain: the *Oblatio* was created prior to Fr. Stanislaus' receiving the indult of departure from the Piarists and it was prepared so carefully as to include all of the essential elements of a religious profession. The author himself testifies to this, writing in the *FDR* that he recited the formula [of the vows] at the time of receiving the indult of departure, in the presence of the Piarist Vicar Provincial, Fr. Michael Kraus, and other people who were in attendance.

The *Oblatio* is the profession of religious vows in the new Marian community, used not only by St. Stanislaus on December 11, 1670, but also by candidates who joined the Marian Congregation later. The Founder clearly writes about it in *FDR*, as he reports the religious vows of the first candidate and also provides the same formula of the profession: "as the above form composed and defined by me" (*FDR* 15). Father C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, the leading researcher of St. Stanislaus's life, the author of the *Positio* and many other works, who published the *Oblatio* for the first time, had no doubts in this regard; he thus described the formulas: "It should be noted that in those days, as the candidates' admission to the nascent Marian Fathers' Institute, they used the formula [of the vows] adapted to the *Oblatio* of the Servant of God."⁶³

⁶³ *Positio*, p. 213.

The *Oblatio* and its Controversial Interpretations

Historical-contextual research on the life of St. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, related mainly to his beatification process and the later editions of his writings in the original Latin and in translations into national languages, inevitably caused, in a certain sense, different interpretations of the facts concerning both the life of the saint and the beginnings of the Congregation of Marian Fathers founded by him. The beliefs of C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, had the greatest influence and they are still dominant, to a large extent, today. While doing his scholarly research, he not only found forgotten or unknown source materials and published them, but he also left his personal stamp on them.

One such issue is the matter of the composition of the *Oblatio*, the understanding of its meaning and the creation of the Congregation of Marian Fathers in the context of St. Stanislaus' departure from the Piarists. And so, although C. Krzyżanowski does not consider the text of the *Oblatio* as a canonical formula, but rather, a private matter, yet a bit further in the same introduction to the critical edition of the *Oblatio*, he also writes that "the candidates making their vows used a formula adapted to the *Oblatio* of the Servant of God." Therefore, it had to be a canonical and public act, not a private one.⁶⁴ We know that the formula of the vows was exactly the same as the Founder's *Oblatio*, and the adjustment was only to insert the personal details of the professed.⁶⁵ In this context, the research of F. Smagorowicz, MIC, was important. It was published in two articles: the first in 2003 and the second in 2012. In these articles, he not only reminded us of the oldest tradition of the Congregation, but he also drew attention to the need for a contextual interpretation of the historical source materials.

The second thesis of C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, concerns St. Stanislaus' departure from the Piarists and his founding the

⁶⁴ C. Krzyżanowski thus formulated it: "si vincolava di nuovo non canonicamente, [...], privatamente" [he bound himself again non-canonically, [...] privately], *Positio*, p. 210.

⁶⁵ Cf. *FDR* 15. Also cf. *Positio*, pp. 213, 364.

Congregation of Marian Fathers. Essentially, it expresses the conviction that he proffered in his introduction to the *Oblatio*: "We do not know when this new religious vocation appeared. One thing is certain: it was neither the singular reason nor one of many reasons for his departure from the Piarists. In a word: Fr. Papczyński left the Piarist Order not to found the Marian Order, but he founded the Marian Order because he left the Piarists."⁶⁶

Father Krzyżanowski had offered the same conviction in the *Positio* as the Postulator General, writing that the first biographer of our holy Father Founder, Mansueto Leporini, had wrongly described the reasons for the former's departure from the Piarist Order.⁶⁷ After all, Leporini does not comment on this subject, but he describes the manner in which God led St. Stanislaus to become the founder of a new congregation.⁶⁸

C. Krzyżanowski's convictions are linked to one of St. Stanislaus' works, written probably in 1671 and entitled *Apologia pro egressu e Scholis Pii* [*Apology for the Departure from the Institute of the Pious Schools*]. However, the saint wrote this *Apology* polemically, strictly conforming to the art of rhetoric in regard to apologetic writings (after all, he was a professor of rhetoric) and opposing the erroneous opinions about him that appeared after he left the Piarists. In fact, he gives four motives there, namely:

⁶⁶ C. Krzyżanowski included this sentence in the introduction to *Oblatio* (*Pisma Zebrane*, p. 1258; *Positio*, p. 211).

⁶⁷ Cf. *Positio*, p. 211.

⁶⁸ It is worth quoting here the excerpt from St. Stanislaus' biography, written four years after his death: "§31. Seeing his [Fr. Stanislaus'] patience and work undertaken for the glory of God and His Most Gracious Mother, by applying various stimuli through inspirations and divine revelations that were recognized by confessors and theologians as true and unfailingly known, the merciful Lord called him to establish a new Institute in His Church, in order to increase devotion to the Immaculate Conception, to assist parish priests in pastoral work and to bring succor to the deceased. § 32. Therefore, obedient to the voice of God and his own commendable readiness, he changed his first vocation, and on Wednesday, in the octave of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on December 11, 1670, Fr. Michael of the Visitation released him — with the consent of the Supreme Vicar of Christ, Clement X and the Superior General — from his simple vows and oaths of perseverance. At that time, he offered himself anew in his Institute to God and His Mother, having received the blessing from the aforementioned father 'May God strengthen what He has done in you.'" *Positio*, pp. 630-640.

hostility, the relaxed observance of the old religious Rule, love, and impediments in the use of innate abilities. Already in the first sentence, he states the matter that he refers to, namely: "...I hear various opinions coming from different people, and even from prudent men, about my actual abandonment of my former vocation," (*Apology...*, in: *Historical Writings of Blessed Stanislaus Papczyński*, Stockbridge, MA, 2007, p. 31). Thus, he composes the *Apology* as a defensive speech to refute these opinions, and he contests the specific allegations of his accusers, in accordance with the principles described in his *Prodromus Reginae Artium* [Messenger of the Queen of Arts]: "Defensio bona erit, si innocentia personae delatae ad iudicium ostendetur, si crimen refelletur, aut negabitur, aut alleviabitur," [The defense is only good if it succeeds in proving the innocence of the accused, if it either overturns the allegations of a crime or negates or weakens them"].⁶⁹ It must be understood that he mentions nothing of the departure from the Piarists in the context of his intention to found a new congregation — because there were no such allegations — no matter when the idea of a new institute appeared in his heart.

A completely different point of view is found in *FDR*, into which our holy Father Founder also inserted the *Oblatio*. This work is not polemical. Throughout the narrative, it has the character of a positive presentation of one's spiritual experiences and a chronological description of events. The story is permeated with his firm conviction of faith that God Himself leads him on such a path which included the necessity to abandon his first vocation in order to become the father and founder of a new religious community, should it even go through disputes, tensions and accusations, consequently leading to his departure from the Piarists. In short: to found the Marian Order, he had to leave the Piarist Order. This is the perspective of Divine Providence. As everything indicates, St. Stanislaus Papczyński

⁶⁹ Since this work was not translated into English in its entirety, we provide the original Latin text from: S. Papczyński, *Prodromus Reginae Artium*, critical edition by C. Krzyżanowski, Varsaviae 2001, pp. 107-108

does not mention in any of his petitions for permission to leave the Piarist Order that he intends to establish a new Congregation. It is true that the first three petitions have not survived: the first was written around mid-August 1699, the second, around mid-October 1699, and the third, on December 20, 1699. The reply to the third request has been partially preserved; however, this document does not mention it either. The fourth petition of November 22, 1670, which has survived until today, refers only to the Papal brief, which imparts to the Superior General of the Piarists the privilege of granting an indult of departure to those Piarists who do not wish to make solemn religious vows. In *FDR*, St. Stanislaus Papczyński perceives his story as a spiritual journey and gives the witness of faith to it. In his biography of the saint, written four years after his birth to Heaven, M. Leporini sees these events in the same way. Let there be no error here: he sees it also as a spiritual journey, although he sees it from a slightly different perspective. Moreover, even assuming that the whole crisis was triggered by the causes described in the *Apolo-gy*, yet, thanks to his faith and God's special gifts, St. Stanislaus Papczyński matured to a new vocation and discerned the new path that Divine Providence was leading him on. In the end, he became that "unfit instrument [used by God] for founding the lowest and the smallest Congregation of Fathers of the Blessed Virgin Mary Conceived Immaculate" (*FDR* 1). All this happened over the space of several years and we do not have access to the source documents of this period. Nor do we know when the "Divine vision" of the new community was "imprinted upon his soul" (*FDR* 6, 9). Certainly, it happened during his membership in the Piarists,⁷⁰ as evidenced primarily by the fact that the

⁷⁰ C. Krzyżanowski makes no conjecture about the time of this mystical experience, but only states: "it is not known when God inspired him with this idea" (*Positio*, p. 211). On the other hand, T. Rogalewski, MIC, in his extensive biography of our Founder, based however on the *Positio*, ventures to say that it could have been "during the time of his incarceration in Podoliniec and Prievidza," i.e. in the period from January 28 to March 22, 1669. Cf. T. Rogalewski, MIC, *Stanislaus Papczyński (1631-1701). Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers and Inspirer of the Marian School of Spirituality*, Stockbridge, 2001, p. 193.

formula of vows, in other words — the *Oblatio* — had been written before he received the indult of departure, and he inserted in his *Oblatio* the main features of the new community, that is, its name, purpose, etc.

By researching the oldest source materials, we rediscover, on the one hand, matters and things that have been forgotten or neglected in the past, and on the other hand, we sharpen our awareness of the present and future generations of the Congregation of Marian Fathers. The *Oblatio* is of particular importance here as the point of our Congregation's origin, deliberately planned and carried out by St. Stanislaus Papczyński. This new cognizance, as it were, has found its reflection in the newest Constitutions.

Andrzej Pakuła, MIC

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified. Amen.

1. I, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński, according to the flesh the son of Thomas from Podegrodzie, in the Diocese of Krakow, being forty years of age,⁷¹ offer and consecrate to God the Father Almighty, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, and to the Mother of God the Ever-Virgin Mary conceived without the stain of original sin: my heart, my soul, intellect, memory, will, emotions, whole mind, whole spirit, interior and exterior senses, and my body, leaving absolutely nothing for myself, so that from this moment forward I may be wholly the servant⁷² of this same Almighty God and of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

⁷¹ Father Papczyński, born May 18, 1631, had not yet completed his fortieth year.

⁷² There are some who have commentated on the *Oblatio* and in it, on the word *servus*, who would like to see here an expression of holy slavery to Mary, which was strongly present in Europe and Poland at the time of Saint Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczyński. Especially the word *servus*, which in their opinion should be translated as *slave*, would be proof of this. However, the piety of holy slavery to Mary had other forms and a different spirituality which is absent within the writings of St. Stanislaus. There were three basic expressions of holy slavery to Mary: 1) its own spirituality with a singular formula of consecration to the Mother of God; 2) special terminology, in which the holy slave to Mary was called *mancipium* but not *servus*; 3) a small chain imposed on the wrist as a sign

2. Therefore, I promise that I will serve them chastely and zealously until the end of my life in this Society of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception (which, by God's grace, I intend to found), and that I will adapt my way of life to its laws, statutes, and rules, and that I will never cause or permit, nor will I agree to it, even indirectly, that these things should in any way be removed, or changed, or dispensed with, except in grave and legitimate necessity.

3. Moreover, I promise reasonably understood obedience to His Holiness, the Vicar of Jesus Christ and to his delegated power, as well as to all my mediate and immediate Superiors, and that I shall not possess anything privately, but will consider everything as common property.

4. I confess that I believe everything which the holy Roman Church believes and everything that she will henceforth teach to be believed. Particularly, I confess in truth that Mary, the Most Holy Mother of God, was conceived without the stain of original sin, and I promise that I will promote and defend her honor even at the cost of my life.⁷³ So help me God and this holy Gospel of God.

5. At Kazimierz near Krakow, in the residence of the Clerics Regular of the Poor of the Mother of God of Pious Schools, in the presence of the most venerable Fr. Michael of the Visitation, the Vicar Provincial of the Polish Province,⁷⁴ Fr. Joseph of the Mother of God, President of the above-mentioned residence, and the

of being a holy slave to Mary. Therefore, the translation of the word *servus* into "slave" with the intention that it would be an expression of holy slavery to Mary is unauthorized and seems to be an anachronism, a lack of knowledge of the history of Catholic spirituality. Cf. F. S. Fenicki, SJ, *Mariae mancipium sive modus tradendi se in mancipium Deipare Virgini*, Lublini 1632. A. Pakuła, MIC, *Spirituality of the Religious Life According to Stanislaus Papczyński and the Early Tradition of the Congregation of Marian Fathers*, Marian Heritage, Stockbridge, MA.

⁷³ This is called the "*votum sanguinis*" (vow of blood), practiced for a long time by those who professed belief in the privilege of the Immaculate Conception (which was not made a dogma until 1854).

⁷⁴ Father Michał Kraus (d. 1703) was present at the *Oblatio* because he was authorized to release Fr. Papczyński and the two clerics from the Piarist Congregation. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 278-279.

venerable clerics of lower orders — Casimir of the Angels and Bernard of the Lord's Passion, December 2 [11],⁷⁵ 1670.⁷⁶

6. *Apologia* for His Departure from the Order of Pious Schools

Apologia pro egressu e Scholis Piis

Krakow (?) Lubocza (?) — 1671 (?)

Introduction

Who the author of this *Apologia* is and whom it concerns is not clearly marked at the beginning (or later on), but it is certain that the *Apologia* is an autobiographical writing of Fr. Papczyński. The language of this apology, written to justify his decision to leave the Piarists, is undoubtedly his own. At least twice the narrator's "I" refers to "Fr. Stanislaus,"⁷⁷ and at that time Fr. Papczyński was the only "Fr. Stanislaus" in the Polish Province of the Piarists. Furthermore, the whole tradition of the Marian Congregation is unanimous in recognizing Fr. Papczyński as both the author of the *Apologia* and the one whom it concerns.

It is not known exactly when Fr. Papczyński wrote the *Apologia*. However, its content clearly indicates that he did so after he left the Piarists (December 11, 1670), but not immediately. It is possible that he wrote at least part of it before leaving Krakow in the summer of 1671. It is more likely though, that he wrote (or at least finished) the *Apologia* only — and soon — after moving to the Karski court in Lubocza (the beginning of September 1671).

⁷⁵ It known that Fr. Papczyński made the *Oblatio* on the same day he was dismissed from the Institute of Pious Schools, that is, on December 11, 1670. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 212-213 and the introduction to the critical edition of the *Oblatio* in *SH*, where p. 26 explains how an error (2 instead of 11) arose in dating this document.

⁷⁶ This last paragraph was probably added to the text after the ceremony during which the *Oblatio* was made.

⁷⁷ Cf. §§ 7 and 32.

The reason and purpose for writing this *Apologia*, i.e., to describe the four true reasons for his leaving the Piarists, are explained below in the introductory part of this writing. It is not clear whether Fr. Papczyński used any other source but his own memory to write this *Apologia*.

The *Apologia* is of great value to us, because without it we would not have known about many of the details of Fr. Papczyński's departure from the Piarist Order. Thanks to the *Apologia*, we know for sure that the witnesses of the informative process for the beatification of Fr. Stanislaus were wrong in claiming (in good faith) that he left the Piarists because he wanted to found the Marian Congregation, and that this was the reason he suffered persecution. We find no confirmation of this in the *Apologia*.

It seems that in the manuscript of Fr. Papczyński, this writing has no title. In 1775, the promotor of faith spoke about it as the *Apologia of the Servant of God* and in 1937, Sidry gave such a title to this writing as well. In 1960, Navikevicius shortened this title to *Apologia*. To distinguish this *Apologia* from the other *Apologia* of Fr. Papczyński, namely from the *Apologia pro summa paupertate*,⁷⁸ Fr. C. Krzyżanowski, MIC, extended the title to *Apologia pro egressu ex Scholis Piis*, and it is under this title that the work is presented here. However, due to practical reasons, in the introduction and footnotes it is referred to simply as the *Apologia*.

The author's manuscript of the *Apologia* no longer exists, nor the first copy of it made around 1705 in the *Protocollum of the Marian Order*. Today, the *Apologia* is known to us only from subsequent copies, of which only three independent copies have documentary value. One of them, namely the one that appears to have fewest copying errors (it is an official notarial copy), serves as the basis for the translation found here.

The *Apologia* first appeared in print in 1960 as part of the dissertation of G. Navikevicius, MIC. The first critical edition of the

⁷⁸ Or *Apologia for the Utmost Poverty*. Cf. § 35.

Latin text of the *Apologia* appeared in 1977 in the *Positio*. For a more detailed discussion of the above-mentioned issues relating to the text of the *Apologia*, we refer the reader to either the *Positio*⁷⁹ or the introduction to the Latin critical edition of this text.⁸⁰

Because I hear various opinions of different people, and even of prudent men, on the topic of my actual departure from my first vocation, and at the same time, I consider that it is a very appropriate thing that — for the sake of disclosing or preventing human error, even if the truth itself is given as public news — I present the true exterior reasons for this fact, caused not by any craving for the defense of my honor, which I surely do not possess and which I despise, nor by any attempt to harass or defame anyone, but [only] so that each could know quite well that neither did I depart from the Order of Pious Schools out of recklessness, nor was I expelled on account of any other cause, but only on account of important reasons did I, in fact, ask for being released [from vows].⁸¹

First Cause: Hostility

1. The common opinion of theologians is that it is permitted for a religious to honorably and with dignity abandon his vocation, if through hostility or quite frequent persecution he cannot persevere in it with a peaceful spirit.⁸² The Superiors themselves troubled, bothered, and tormented me so much, that I several times protested [against this, letting them know] that I no longer had strength nor spirit to bear this ceaseless storm. I did not achieve anything through this, but rather I exacerbated even more minds that were already agitated. Finally, I came to the firm

⁷⁹ *Positio*, pp. 247-252.

⁸⁰ Cf. *SH*, pp. 31-36.

⁸¹ Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 862-863 n. 4.

⁸² Father Papczyński does not mention here or elsewhere the names of the theologians who held such an opinion, nor does he indicate the works in which it was expressed. Some theologians and works from which Fr. Papczyński may have taken this opinion are pointed out in critical edition of the *Apologia*. Cf. *SH*, p. 38, n. 27.

conclusion that I ought to give way before such fierce violence, so that I would not have to swim constantly upstream lest I be overwhelmed by the wickedness desired [by those seeking to harm me], and truly many others who supported me always desired the same [good outcome for me].

2. The first attack against me was made by Fr. Cosmas of Jesus and Mary, the Superior General.⁸³ When I heard that he was elected, I immediately predicted that a disaster threatened me on his account.⁸⁴ And this prediction was fulfilled. In the beginning, he indeed propitiated me through kind and quite fatherly letters,⁸⁵ but later, instigated by certain members of the oldest and most experienced Germans of the Polish Province,⁸⁶ he openly declared himself as my enemy and, precisely on this account, but under a different pretext, he ordered me that I must travel to Rome from Poland.⁸⁷ If I did not, he directed me to be enclosed in prison, even if in his letter he sweetly persuaded me to travel there [to Rome] with the promise of honors, rest, as well as his kindness and favors. And indeed in regard to himself, he incensed me even more since I did not see him remaining consistent with himself (he, who as their leader ought to have been the most consistent), for he wrote quite differently to me than he did to the Superiors about me.⁸⁸

⁸³ Fr. Cosmas Chiara (1616-1681), Superior General of the Piarists (1665-1671); cf. *Positio*, p. 254, n. 3.

⁸⁴ We do not know what prompted Fr. Papczyński to make such a prediction. Cf. *Positio*, p. 254, n. 4.

⁸⁵ The letters about which Fr. Papczyński speaks here no longer exist.

⁸⁶ "Germans" refers to Piarists from Moravia, Bohemia and Silesia who came from the German Province to join the newly created German-Polish Province in 1642, and in 1664, only five of them (referred to as "*triarii*") remained in the Polish Province that had been erected in 1662. Father Papczyński was undoubtedly thinking of the Provincial Fr. Wenceslaus Opatowski and his Assistants Fr. Wezyrka and Fr. Michał Kraus. The "instigation" he refers to was probably the letter they sent to General Chiara around August 9, 1667. Cf. *SH*, p. 39, n. 31.

⁸⁷ Father Papczyński was summoned to Rome by letters sent in July and September 1667 to Provincial Opatowski. The other pretext was apparently given to Fr. Papczyński by the General, and was "*provincia docendi nostros in Italia*" ("the task of teaching our [students] in Italy"). Cf. *SH*, p. 40, n. 32.

⁸⁸ The letters which are spoken about here no longer exist, and so we are not able to verify this assertion of Fr. Papczyński.

3. I went to Rome in the most unpleasant season,⁸⁹ enduring many hardships and dangers to my life, armed only with the will to obey my Superiors, “through bullets and through water,” I burst into the Holy City.⁹⁰ I was compelled to remain at the gate, which I remember was the Flaminia [Gate]. I was detained and harassed there for a long time. At dusk, after giving the soldier some money, I was led to the [church of] St. Pantaleon.⁹¹

4. Here was the next stop, because the General, unexpectedly made aware of my arrival, ordered me to remain at the door for almost a quarter of an hour. I suppose that he had intended to consult beforehand with his Assistants as to how to receive such a poor and miserable man, until such time that I, stirred by the unusual nature of this event, magnanimously stated that I would go to some inn, unless at the order of the General himself I was to be received in a different manner.

5. I suppose that this was reported to him. I was thus kindly received, finally shown hospitality with the greatest affection for a few weeks. When I inquired as to the cause for my being summoned [here] from the Province, I heard that I had been denounced before this same General by my Superiors as a fire-brand of the Province. I demanded a trial, as I was willing even to go to the Holy Inquisition, if the precise date and place for it were not given. I presented my case. I was acquitted, and I received the order to return to the Province. Everything seemed to lean toward a happy ending, if a little packet⁹² had not come flying from Poland which ruffled everything and disturbed me, turned the General hostile to me, [such that] instead of proceeding to

⁸⁹ Father Papczyński began his journey to Rome at the end of October 1667.

⁹⁰ Father Papczyński probably reached Rome at the end of December 1667. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 102-103.

⁹¹ This church was given to the Piarists permanently in 1614. The house of the General Curia of the Piarists was annexed to it in 1612, and hence it was called the House of St. Pantaleon. Cf. *SH*, p. 40, n. 35.

⁹² This “little packet” contained the *Acta Capituli Provincialis* sent to Rome from the Provincial Chapter held in Podoliniec (November 7-12, 1667). In them, Fr. Papczyński was formally accused of provoking disturbance in the Warsaw House and of being the “troublemaker of the Province”; for which it was requested that he be punished by the General and his Assistants. Cf. *SH*, p. 41, n. 39.

Poland, this forced me to Germany⁹³ and compelled me to oaths of which I did not know, as will be more extensively manifest — if God permits it — in *The Roman Journey*.⁹⁴

6. Although he promised — in the presence of the Very Reverend Fr. Ruszocki,⁹⁵ canon of Krakow, to send a visitor to Poland and that I could find in Germany the order to return to the Province, he kept neither of these two promises. If it had not been that God Himself arranged that Fr. Charles of St. Mary,⁹⁶ Superior of the German Province, gave me permission to leave, I would have never appeared in Poland,⁹⁷ just as some mockingly stated during the time of my absence. But there exists no power nor any plan against the Lord.

7. What kind of idea was it, to order the Provincial in Poland to incarcerate me⁹⁸ upon returning, and this would have happened, if God had not prevented it. Even more, the dart, which he aimed at me in his letter to the Provincial was not trifling, namely: "I do not respond to Fr. Stanislaus, since he is a firebrand, an instigator, and a betrayer of the Congregation."⁹⁹

⁹³ Father Papczyński went from Rome to Germany, to the Nikolsburg House of the German Province, probably at the end of January 1668.

⁹⁴ Father Papczyński was probably forced to swear an oath subjecting himself to the orders of German Provincial during his stay in Nikolsburg. We are not able to read about this in *The Roman Journey*, and there is no proof that Fr. Papczyński actually wrote such a document as he intended to. If he did, then it has disappeared and its content is unknown.

⁹⁵ It seems that Ruszocki was one of the protectors whom Fr. Papczyński found in Rome at the time. Cf. *SH*, p. 42, n. 42.

⁹⁶ Father Charles Pessau of St. Mary was the German Provincial from 1662 until March 20, 1668. He had to remain in his office until April 1668, when the election of the new Provincial was made more certain. This new Provincial was Fr. Paul of St. Philip Neri Eder. Cf. *Positio*, p. 256, n. 15.

⁹⁷ Father Papczyński arrived in Krakow around May 15, 1668.

⁹⁸ General Chiara sent such an order to Fr. Wenceslaus Opatowski of the Most Blessed Sacrament, who was reelected as the Provincial Superior of the Polish Province on March 20, 1668. He probably sent it at the end of March, 1668. It seems that the General did not foresee that Fr. Papczyński would be given permission to return to his Province by Fr. Pessau. Imprisonment did not occur for the reasons referred to in *SH*, p. 43, n. 47.

⁹⁹ This letter is no longer extant, and there is no mention of it in other documents. It may have been a letter to the Provincial Superior of the Polish or German Province. Cf. *SH*, p. 43, n. 47.

8. Add [to this] a very calumnious letter, responding to the Very Illustrious and Reverend Lord Bishop of Płock, in which he said of me (certainly as a father caring for [his] son's reputation)¹⁰⁰ that "I do not know what sort of disturbances this instigator (accompanied only by four youngsters), made regarding the election of Superiors in the Province."¹⁰¹

9. Add [to this] another letter sent to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Bishop of Krakow, in which he derided me with the gravest calumnies.¹⁰²

10. Add [to this] the slanderous derision, when he sent me two letters with the title of Provincial, so as to reproach me for seeking office.¹⁰³ I call upon God as my witness that I never sought it, as I had professed a public oath, in addition to the customary vow, that I would not accept any office of a Superior, unless I were elected by the Holy Spirit in secret voting.¹⁰⁴ Other [such] matters I retain in silence.

11. Also, resulting from this enmity, I — even though I quite frequently demanded this in the face of such urgent necessity — was not able to request for such a Visitor who could investigate certain failings and who could better repair and strengthen

¹⁰⁰ This is said in an ironic sense.

¹⁰¹ The letter sent to Fr. Chiara by the Bishop of Płock, probably John Gembicki (1655-1673), as well the letter Fr. Chiara sent in response, are no longer extant. Bishop Gembicki probably interceded with the General around April 1668, asking that Fr. Papczyński be given the faculty of returning to Poland from Germany. It is presumed that the response was negative. Cf. *SH*, p. 44, n. 49.

¹⁰² This is probably referring to a letter (no longer extant) which Fr. Chiara sent to Bishop Andrzej Trzebicki, ordinary of Krakow, or Bishop Nicholas Oborski, auxiliary of Krakow. Father Chiara was responding to a letter he had received from one of them (also no longer extant) at the beginning of the year 1670, protesting against his plan to imprison Fr. Papczyński.

¹⁰³ These two letters are no longer extant. Father Chiara probably sent them to Poland during the years 1668-1670. Kraus claims that one of these letters (probably sent in 1669) from the General was addressed as follows: "*Patri Stanislao a Sanctissimo Sacramento provinciali Poloniae*" ("From the Provincial of Poland to Fr. Stanislaus of the Most Blessed Sacrament") Cf. *SH*, p. 44, n. 51.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 855-856, n. 2. This was one of the promises added to the profession of simple vows.

the Province.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, I had to decide to ask to be released [from vows].¹⁰⁶

12. To the enmity of Fr. General was added one even more hideous (as it was even nearer) enmity, namely, that of Fr. Provincial. He was Wenceslaus of the Most Holy Sacrament, the author of my vocation,¹⁰⁷ as well as of my release [from it].¹⁰⁸ I admit that he favored me much until — according to both my conscience and my freedom of spirit — I quite freely reproached certain of his activities, particularly his immoderate occupation with alchemy,¹⁰⁹ his disregard for pontifical laws,¹¹⁰ his style of governing that was undoubtedly unrestrained and not corresponding to correct doctrines and, beyond that, his striving for office.

13. For I was the first professed member among the Poles.¹¹¹ I was not the lowest priest¹¹² in the first Warsaw house as a

¹⁰⁵ Father Papczyński asked "quite frequently" "*saepius*" for a Visitor General for the Polish Province. If he did this by letter, none of these have survived. For further details on this subject, cf: *SH*, p. 45, n. 53.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. § 48.

¹⁰⁷ This is the only information we have concerning the origin of Fr. Stanislaus' vocation to the Piarists, but we do not have any explanation of these words. Wenceslaus Opatowski of the Most Blessed Sacrament professed solemn vows with the Piarists in 1643, and in 1648 began to teach humanities at the Piarist College in Podoliniec, and it was here that he met Fr. Papczyński, who was a student of syntax at the college from 1649-1650. We have no details about their relationship during that time. A hypothesis of why Opatowski may have had such an influence on Papczyński is given in *SH*, p. 45, n. 55.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *SH*, p. 45, n. 56.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *SH*, p. 46, n. 57.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *SH*, p. 46, n. 58, where examples are given to confirm this charge.

¹¹¹ This claim of Fr. Papczyński refers to living Piarists because the first Pole to profess vows (solemn vows, before their abolition in 1646) was Kazimierz Bogatko (d. 1650). Then, before the breve of Alexander VII was promulgated (January 24, 1656), three Poles made their vows as *aggregati*, only one of whom (Fr. Francis Haligowski) lived past 1663. However, he had to repeat his profession (February 24, 1657) according to the brief of Alexander VII. Thus, Fr. Papczyński, because he made his profession on July 22, 1656, could rightly claim that he was the first professed member among the Poles.

¹¹² In the *Elenchus "Familiae Domus Varsaviensis"* which shows 14 members as of December 7, 1666, Fr. Papczyński is placed third, immediately after the Rector and Vice Rector. Cf. *Positio*, p. 259, n. 32.

preacher;¹¹³ I was the most concerned about the improvement both of myself and of others. For at one time, I seemed to run after frivolous behavior¹¹⁴ with others, [yet] I strove to draw them back together with me to the established order of observing the holy Rule of religious life.

14. Because Fr. Wenceslaus bore this with vexation, since already he was reproaching me with malicious letters,¹¹⁵ as he was improperly directing them to Fr. General,¹¹⁶ then [doing the same] before King Casimir,¹¹⁷ the Apostolic Nuncio,¹¹⁸ and obstinately accusing me of I don't know what, he still plotted intrigues against me.¹¹⁹

15. And so first of all, returning from my Roman journey¹²⁰ to the Province, he indeed strove to expel me from it, since — not having shown me any documents confirming his office as Provincial — he ordered [me], while I was resting after my journey from Rome in Warsaw, that I had twenty-four hours to leave the house and just as many days to return to Germany from the Province. O good Jesus! The Germans and Moravians gorged¹²¹ themselves with the goods of the Province that had been provided for by

¹¹³ Father Papczyński functioned as a preacher in the Warsaw house from 1663-1667, and possibly again from 1668-1669. Cf. *SH*, p. 46, n. 61.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *SH*, p. 47, n. 62.

¹¹⁵ These letters are no longer extant. Father Wenceslaus Opatowski was elected to the office of Provincial in 1665, and moved from Warsaw to Podoliniec (from where he may have sent these letters), while Fr. Papczyński remained in Warsaw.

¹¹⁶ These letters are no longer extant. We know only of a letter sent from Fr. Wenceslaus Opatowski to Fr. General in 1667, after the visitation of the Warsaw house, in which Fr. Stanislaus is not spoken well of. Cf. *SH*, p. 47, n. 64.

¹¹⁷ John Casimir, King of Poland (1648-1668).

¹¹⁸ Galeazzo Marescotti, Apostolic Nuncio to Poland (1668-1670). Cf. *Positio*, p. 42, n. 1.

¹¹⁹ Evidently, Fr. Wenceslaus made such accusations in response to the intervention of the king and the nuncio, to whom Fr. Papczyński and his associates had gone for help against the Superiors. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 105, 118, 142, 306.

¹²⁰ Father Papczyński returned from his "Roman journey" (1667-1668) (cf. §§ 3-6) to the Polish Province in May of 1668.

¹²¹ Cf. *SH*, p. 48, n. 69.

many of my works, and I, her son, continually dripping with almost bloody sweat out of love for her,¹²² was sent into exile.¹²³

16. I was, however, ready to go out of love for peace and out of respect for the Superior's order, even though it was unlawful,¹²⁴ if the dear hearts of the Polish priests of the Warsaw house had not prevented me almost by force, as they were intending to leave together [with me]. So I remained in Warsaw, while the one who had attacked me (the Provincial Opatowski) was overcome by a sickness, [forced to remain] even in bed.

17. For when Wenceslaus noticed that I was defended from his attacks,¹²⁵ in a fit of rage and madness (unless my goodwill toward him recommend something else as its cause), he was overcome by a sudden sickness. He asserted that I was its cause, whereas I, as much as I hated his striving after office, had foretold him of this sickness, regarding which one of the Polish priests, in whose presence I stated this, can testify as to what happened.

18. He then dispersed priests favorable to me and placed them in various houses¹²⁶ so that he could more easily attack me, being left alone, either personally or through others. But these are things of small importance; the most important was that he made an agreement with me under the condition that I accept him as Provincial, even though I considered him to be unlawful; nor would he move me from Warsaw lest I render an account of his illegality. Later, however, he wanted me, sick, to be carried out of the bed from the house and transported me in an enclosed cart, so that his wickedness toward me would remain completely hidden.

¹²² Father Papczyński describes, in this manner, his efforts in fulfilling various duties and offices in the Polish Province during the years 1658-1670. Cf. *SH*, p. 48, n. 70.

¹²³ Cf. *SH*, p. 48, n. 71.

¹²⁴ Father Papczyński considered Fr. Wenceslaus Opatowski to be an illegitimate Provincial, because of his transgression of pontifical decrees in the case of Br. Augustine of St. Adalbert. Cf. p. 48, n. 72.

¹²⁵ Father Papczyński was defended by members of the Warsaw House. Cf. *SH*, p. 49, n. 73.

¹²⁶ Cf. *SH*, p. 49, n. 74.

19. I was finally moved to Krakow under the pretext of a reprinting of a book,¹²⁷ and when the Congregation was already transformed into an Order,¹²⁸ I placed myself under the jurisdiction of the Most Illustrious and Reverend local Ordinary.¹²⁹ Therefore, I did not consider that I could remain in the Order in peace. He came from Podoliniec to Krakow and seized me in the most cruel manner with the help of two Ruthenians he brought with himself. Although I wanted to travel by foot, he enclosed me in a covered cart, and half naked, he transported me in the most severe winter for about twenty Gallic miles.¹³⁰ On the road, he nearly killed me with the pole of the cart that was lowered and pushing into my neck. In Podoliniec, while still ill, he imprisoned me in a locked room and forbade the Sacrament of Extreme Unction to be given to me (as I had asked for it). He ordered that no one come near to me, even as I was already almost dying. He did not permit me to write a letter to the General and to the [Cardinal] Protector,¹³¹ and he oppressed me with such violence, that one would find this with difficulty even among tyrants.¹³²

20. Finally, when my Protector, my Most Illustrious diocesan Bishop of Krakow, demanded from him that he bring me back to Krakow,¹³³ he attempted rather for me to be transported to

¹²⁷ Father Papczyński went from Warsaw to Krakow in mid-September 1669, because he needed to supervise the fourth edition of *Prodromus Reginae Artium* there, but later the Provincial prohibited him from returning to Warsaw, and after completing his work with the book, he was to move to Rzeszów. Cf. *SH*, p. 50, n. 77.

¹²⁸ Clement IX, by his breve *Ex iniuncto nobis* of October 23, 1669, brought the Piarists back to the status of an Order with solemn vows. Cf. *BullRom* 17 (1882), 827a-830b.

¹²⁹ Father Papczyński submitted himself to the jurisdiction of the Ordinary of Krakow towards the end of December 1669. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 151-153.

¹³⁰ About 106 kilometers.

¹³¹ Cardinal M. Ginetti, protector of the Piarists that this time.

¹³² For further discussion of these events, cf. *Positio*, pp. 154-156 (Doc. VI, B. intr. 2)

¹³³ The Ordinary of Krakow, Bishop Andrzej Trzebiecki, "*arbitratus auctoritatem suam laesam*" ("being convinced that his authority had been violated"), since Fr. Papczyński was under his jurisdiction, wrote a letter "*vindicans innocentem Patrem Stanislaum*" ("defending the innocent Fr. Stanislaus") to Fr. Opatowski on January 16, 1670. Cf. *SH*, p. 50, n. 83.

Hungary, again under the guard of two soldiers. He ordered that I be held and imprisoned there,¹³⁴ until I be freed by a letter from Fr. General, who already wanted to release me from the Congregation.¹³⁵ He finally denounced me among all the houses, such that among the fathers of the Province who were favorable to me, he excited horrible enmity [toward me].

21. At the end, I came to the Rector of the Warsaw house, Fr. Francis, who more than others was quite hostile toward me, as he was the author of the entire tragedy.¹³⁶ This good father, made by force the Rector of the members of the Warsaw house,¹³⁷ at the beginning appeared to love me,¹³⁸ but when he ascertained that I was against some of his ideas,¹³⁹ he began to manifest enmity toward me. He then did not permit me to join in the council meetings.¹⁴⁰ He deceived, through deceptions, a priest, whose name I will not mention, and who — after harsh words — wanted

¹³⁴ Father Opatowski, by sending Fr. Papczyński to Prievidza in Hungary (about 180 kilometers from Podoliniec), sought to move him to a house outside the jurisdiction of the Ordinary of Krakow. Father Papczyński was held there in the house prison from January 28 to March 22, 1670. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 159, 179-180.

¹³⁵ It is possible that the General, in response to Fr. Papczyński's second request for dismissal from the Congregation (around October 15, 1669) in mid-November 1669, expressed his readiness to grant him release, but informed him at the same time about the negative result of the attempt to gain authorization from the Holy See. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 145-148.

¹³⁶ Father Francis Haligowski of Jesus and Mary, Pole belonging to the Polish Province, was the Superior of Fr. Papczyński for the first time in 1665 and again in 1668-1669, and it seems that then their relationship deteriorated to such an extent that Fr. Papczyński had to recognize him as "the author of the entire tragedy" of his leaving the Piarists. In 1696, in his conversation with General Foci, "he pointed to Fr. Francis of Jesus and Mary as the reason for his withdrawal from the Order." Cf. *Positio*, p. 244; Kr., p. 322; *Positio*, p. 326.

¹³⁷ Such an affirmation should probably be understood in the sense that the election of Fr. Haligowski to the office of Rector of the Warsaw house (May 15, 1668) was not pleasing to the members of the house. Cf. *Positio*, p. 262, n. 57.

¹³⁸ This refers to the period when Fr. Papczyński returned to Warsaw in May 1668 from his "Roman journey" and from Nikolsburg, and Haligowski arrived a week later as the new Rector of the Warsaw house.

¹³⁹ Cf. §§ 22 and 47.

¹⁴⁰ Evidently these were meetings that the Rector held according to his discretion with certain priests of the house, to discuss certain matters that were of great importance to the house. Cf. *Positio*, p. 262, n. 60.

to slap my cheek. He was so unfavorable to me that even though he was the last and most insignificant of priests, he chose him for his confessions, or should I say, his plotting.¹⁴¹ For, each of them — for a quite a while — spent time in mutual confessions, such that those remaining, upon noticing this, openly criticized it.

22. It happened that, against our statutes, he permitted a certain youth to dwell in our house.¹⁴² I opposed his acceptance, prompted by a deep zeal. In certain sharp words, I also stated that he stubbornly opposed our statutes. As the elder priest of the house, I began to condemn his deed, for which no one ought to receive permission. Shortly afterward, there appeared a letter forbidding his acceptance to the house, issued — through my own insistence — by the Fr. General himself.¹⁴³ He took my condemnation and zeal with such an angry and furious temper that he forcibly removed me from the room with his own hands.

23. I am not dwelling at all on other matters. No doubt, it is sad and despicable that he wanted to burn the *Panegyric* — presented by me in writing at his recommendation to His Majesty, King Michael, immediately after his election and sent to press after due investigation by the censor. For this reason, he did not want my name to be read by the King.¹⁴⁴

24. Next, having devised for himself a commission for visiting the Krakow, Podoliniec, and Rzeszów houses, he denounced me there, turning away the hearts of those who yet wished me well.¹⁴⁵ This matter stirred me up greatly — not because he made libel against me, although according to the Apostle's admonition,

¹⁴¹ We are not able to identify this priest, because the *Elenchus* of the members of the Warsaw House during the years 1667-1669 is no longer extant.

¹⁴² Regarding what is meant by "against our statutes," cf. *SH*, p. 52, n. 92.

¹⁴³ Letters from Fr. Papczyński to the General on this subject, as well as the letter of the General that forbid such things (*Litterae inhibitoriae convictorum*), are no longer extant. It is possible that Opatowski had in mind this letter of the General when in 1669 (after the visitation of Podoliniec House) he decreed that: "*Nulla ratione acceptentur Convictores sine licentia Patris Generalis.*" Cf. *SH*, p. 52, n. 93.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. § 53.

¹⁴⁵ Father Francis Haligowski made this journey in the second part of January and the first part of February of the year 1669. Cf. *Kr.*, p. 296 (1669 A.D., § 1)

I ensured as much as possible my good name¹⁴⁶ — but because this good father, sinning quite often against love, was so blind, that he never ceased to persecute me, until he threw me out entirely from the Warsaw house.¹⁴⁷

25. Besides this, one must remember the horrible request made of those who remained on my side and demanded that I be removed from prison. [It was asked] not only that they draw back from me, but also that they condemn the means that they, moved by love, had made use of in my cause. Oh, how abominable and nearly diabolical it is to compel another to condemn love! Let everyone think [for himself] whether there be a spark of love in the heart of the one who so detested such love in others, that he did not desire to be reconciled with them unless they would first strip themselves and me of all the gifts [of true charity].

26. I am not mentioning the libel which overwhelmed me. I firmly declare that he did not defend me from it, me, already abducted from Krakow and unwilling to profess solemn vows¹⁴⁸ — even before those God-fearing men, upon whose counsels I relied.¹⁴⁹

27. In addition, [I must mention] a frightfully slanderous letter written to Fr. Paul, the Rector of the Prievidza house, where I was imprisoned.¹⁵⁰ In this letter, he asked him, having faulted me for entirely false crimes, not to permit me to profess [solemn] vows, even if I so desired. Although he was a thoroughly cunning and insidious man, I believe that a different poison was hidden

¹⁴⁶ Such an “admonition” of St. Paul can be read in Rom 12:17 or in Phil 4:8. Cf. *TDM*, Ch. 18.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. above § 19 and n. 123. Cf. *Positio*, p. 147.

¹⁴⁸ In his third request for release from the Piarists (December 20, 1669?), Fr. Papczyński wrote that he did not want to make solemn vows. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 148, 150, 186, § 2.

¹⁴⁹ Father Papczyński relied on the advice of certain Jesuits, Dominicans and Discalced Carmelites. There were also other religious from whom he sought counsel concerning his proposal of submitting himself to the jurisdiction of the local Ordinary. Cf. Kr., pp. 310-311; *Positio*, p. 316.

¹⁵⁰ This letter from Fr. Haligowski to Fr. Paweł Frankovič of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Rector of the house in Prievidza (1666-1671), is no longer extant. Cf. *Positio*, p. 160, n. 7.

underneath such rage: without a doubt, he desired to prove that not only did he not force me — though I was forced — to profess solemn vows,¹⁵¹ but as a wicked man, he forbade my entrance to the Order. Or — surely suspecting that I would oppose him and would profess vows in this manner — he wanted to deceive me through such cunning. Whatever, therefore, he desired to attain by this letter, it was indeed abominable, whether he strove to take me away from professing vows or impel me to do so.¹⁵²

28. By what an entirely astonishing and practically infernal manner or deceit did he deal with me in bringing the visitor to the Province! For he came to Krakow with his First Assistant, Fr. Adalbert of St. Teresa, to win over to the Provincial His Excellency, the Most Reverend Lord Bishop and inform him as to the cause of my imprisonment. I refused to cooperate until the promised General visitor should arrive. He openly and publicly declared that no visitor would come to the Province, but that he himself came with full authority to decide my case and that of the others who were my companions.

29. I therefore agreed and went where I was being led, although not against my will, having obtained men of great wisdom and of the highest virtue and authority to hear me, delegated by my particular protector and defender, His Excellency the Bishop. But what then happened? What crime was brought forth, on account of which I was more than cruelly abducted? Indeed, there was no fault at all. Francis opened only one letter and he did not want to even read it in its entirety, if he had not been asked to do so by me. This letter was, I admit, full of zeal proper to a servant of God, capable of bringing oneself and others along the path of life according to the Rule. Beyond this, there was nothing. However, because I withdrew from my simple vows, which I had professed on the authority of the brief of Alexander VII (which had lost its validity),¹⁵³ I proved that I was free from the jurisdiction of

¹⁵¹ Cf. *SH*, p. 54, n. 102.

¹⁵² This letter is no longer extant. For further commentary on this incident, cf. *Positio*, p. 160 (Doc. VI, B, intr. 3).

¹⁵³ Cf. above, p. 855, *HW*, n. 2: *Profession of Simple Vows* (July 22, 1656).

the religious Superiors with solemn vows, as one professed in the secular Congregation that had ceased to exist, or rather, was transformed into an Order with solemn vows.¹⁵⁴ I irrefutably demonstrated that Fr. Provincial was cruelly carried away by anger towards me only on account of hypocritical enmity that made use of the pretext of the law.

30. However, in order for the reverend delegates not to seem to be acting contrary to the Apostolic Decrees, they decided that the entire matter ought to be sent to the Sacred Congregation. At the same time, Fr. Francis, in the name of the Provincial and of the entire Province, with his hand upon his heart, promised that on their side, there would be no assaults against me and my companions, until such time that they receive a judgment favorable to me.¹⁵⁵

31. But let the world meditate upon the promise of the religious priest, Rector of the most important house, the Assistant of the Province¹⁵⁶ — a promise, I stated, given not to me, but to the Bishop, illustrious in the entire region! He did not yet depart from Krakow and — notice — Fr. Charles of St. Mary, with the authority of a visitor, entered the residence in Kazimierz.¹⁵⁷ He thus involved himself in the matter that had already been sent to a higher instance [of authority]. Of course, before he listened to me, he already condemned me at the table of a certain distinguished man.¹⁵⁸ In fact, having inquired throughout the entire Province, in all the houses he made an investigation regarding me at the time when I had lived a full six years in the Warsaw

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 151-153 (Doc. VI, B, intr. 1).

¹⁵⁵ Thus concluded, at the beginning of June 1670, the fourth and last session of the trial against the Piarist Superiors in Poland, conducted by the diocesan tribunal in Krakow. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 170-171 (Doc. VI, C, intr. 4).

¹⁵⁶ This is Fr. Francis Haligowski, who was ordained in 1657 and was the Rector of the Warsaw house and Assistant Provincial (*Assistens Provincialis*) during the years 1668-1671. Cf. *Positio*, p. 261, n. 56; p. 265, n. 77.

¹⁵⁷ Father Charles of St. Mary, former Superior of the German Province (1662-1668), appointed as visitor of the Polish Province on February 22, 1670. He came from Germany to the Piarist residence in Kazimierz, presumably around June 10, 1670. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 62-163 (Doc. VI, B, 1; D, intr. 1).

¹⁵⁸ We do not know who this "distinguished man" was.

house;¹⁵⁹ in Podoliniec, not quite ten years;¹⁶⁰ in Rzeszów, six years;¹⁶¹ in Chełm, not at all.

32. However, in all of the houses, under the direction of the Provincial, he launched legal proceedings regarding my conduct, as if the members of the Podoliniec house or others knew how Stanislaus behaved in Warsaw. Yet, it is stipulated by the Constitutions of the Congregation of Pious Schools that one ought not be curious to hear what is occurring in other houses.¹⁶² I myself would have gladly gone with the visitator to all the houses, so as to show what in them needs correction. But he had such an attitude toward me that in Kazimierz, departing to Warsaw, he addressed me in three words, having promised to be of service to me.

33. Indeed, he was of admirable service to me, since he gave me triple summons with slander, and transferred me from Krakow to Podoliniec, so it would be easier to oppress me. Nevertheless, I would have gone, if His Excellency, the Lord Bishop, my Lord,¹⁶³ who painfully bore with the Assistants of the Province who mocked his authority and was astounded that the promise given had not been fulfilled, forbade me to depart from his protection until the Sacred Congregation decide in our case.¹⁶⁴ And so it came to pass. For not only for our case, but on the petition of many Italians, on October 18, the Congregation issued an Apostolic brief [stating that] those who do not want to profess solemn vows were made aware that they were free from their simple vows and from the oath of perseverance in the Congregation.¹⁶⁵ By the power of this brief, this has already been done for me.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ From about mid-May 1663 to about mid-September 1669.

¹⁶⁰ Father Papczyński lived in Podoliniec for the last time from 1658-1660.

¹⁶¹ Father Papczyński lived in Rzeszów for the last time from 1660-1663.

¹⁶² Cf. *SH*, p. 58, n. 115.

¹⁶³ Bishop Andrzej Trzebiecki, Ordinary of Krakow (1658-1679).

¹⁶⁴ Cf. § 30. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 170-171 (Doc. VI, C, intr. 4).

¹⁶⁵ This was the brief *Cum felicitis recordationis* of Clement X, given on October 18, 1670. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 201-202.

¹⁶⁶ This release from simple vows and from the oath of perseverance with the Piarists was granted to Fr. Papczyński on December 11, 1670, at the Piarist residence in Kazimierz near Krakow. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 190-194, 201-204.

Having presented, therefore, such enmity (although not in full) and having finely described my persecutions, which even the very teaching of Christ our Lord at times commands us to avoid,¹⁶⁷ and about such violations I complained for two years to the General,¹⁶⁸ let us proceed to other matters.

Second Cause: The Relaxation of the Observance of the Old Rule of Religious Life

34. Theologians also forbid one from remaining in an Order which has begun to be lax [in its observance of the Rule]. They permit one to leave it if there be a danger to salvation.¹⁶⁹ I, however, not wanting in the least to make charges as to the general observance of the Rule in the Order of Pious Schools, humbly and gently mention only this: namely, what brought ruin to me and to others, without accusing the Congregation, but rather, only those inclined to relaxing [the style of life], whether these be Superiors or subjects.

35. And so firstly, as to how much the Congregation of Pious Schools differed as regards the utmost poverty, know both those who came to this Province and attentively looked at it, as well as those who read my *Apologia for the Utmost Poverty*, which was written while I was still in this Congregation.¹⁷⁰ Although the poverty of the Institute of Pious Schools is just as strict as that of

¹⁶⁷ Probably a reference to Mt 10:23.

¹⁶⁸ These letters, probably written during the years 1668-1670, are no longer extant.

¹⁶⁹ In cases of dispensation from vows in general and from religious vows, as well as permission to transfer to another religious Institute (especially one less strict), the relaxation of the observance of the Rule was considered by the moral theologians of that time as a sufficient reason to receive such a dispensation or permission. Cf. *SH*, p. 59, n. 123. For further details regarding the positions of certain moral theologians of that time regarding such situations, cf. *Positio* p. 267, n. 1

¹⁷⁰ The *Apologia for the Utmost Poverty* (*Apologia pro summa paupertate*) is no longer extant and its content remains unknown. It probably called for a return to the original poverty of the Piarists to which they were obligated by their *Constitu-*

the Capuchins, with the exception of this: that the members may stock food products [that last] for a year.¹⁷¹ But it certainly was not permitted for the Institute of Pious Schools to accept any real estate neither by a title of inheritance nor by a title of donation;¹⁷² indeed, they were not permitted to accept annual rentals.¹⁷³ If Alexander VII did not permit this nor did ecclesiastical accessories, in accord with the utmost poverty, then one cannot permit anything of silk, nothing of gold or silver, except the cup of the chalice.¹⁷⁴ And yet, what happened to the contrary? Let those declare [the truth] who, with pious curiosity, compare these latest things with the Institute of Pious Schools, known for its piety.¹⁷⁵

36. To preserve chastity, certain forms of abstinence were enjoined in the Constitutions by our Blessed Founder [Joseph Calasanz], which now waver and are being slowly dispensed with.¹⁷⁶ It belongs to obedience that Superiors too be obedient to the laws, just as the subjects are obedient to them and to the Superiors. I nevertheless observed that something else occurs, since it was heard how certain members cried out: "You can go to Hell; just be obedient."¹⁷⁷ And I endured immense agitations [from others] for no other reason than this: that I spoke out to the Superiors, who, not only openly but even with violence, trampled the papal and domestic laws, which I am ready to prove through the clearest testimonies.¹⁷⁸

tions before 1656 (which Fr. Papczyński learned as a novice from 1654-1656). Cf. *SH*, p. 59, n. 124

¹⁷¹ Cf. *SH*, p. 60, n. 125.

¹⁷² Cf. *SH*, p. 60, n. 126.

¹⁷³ This was the case according to the Piarist Constitution (cf. *ConstSP*, Part II, Ch. V, n. IV). After 1656 though, this was allowed under the brief *Dudum felicitis recordationis* of Alexander VII.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. *SH*, p. 61, n. 128.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. *SH*, p. 61, n. 129.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. *ConstSP*, Part II, Ch. IV, nos. I-VI, where these "fasts" (*ieiunia*) are described. Here they are referred to as "abstinences" (*abstinentiae*). In regards to the dispensation from, cf. *ibid.* n. 83, 87-90.

¹⁷⁷ Evidently, this was the response given to certain Superiors by some members of the community, who objected that a command given them was contrary to ecclesiastical law, and thus it would be a grave sin to carry it out.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. §§ 2-33.

37. Silence — the guardian of all virtues — was already rather feebly kept. So that there might be greater possibility for rebellion, it was declared that speaking softly does not break silence.¹⁷⁹ Yet, nevertheless, these quiet conversations quite often caused murmuring, complaints, gossip, enmity, cunning activities, etc., which — if everybody could clearly speak aloud — would never have been heard. Therefore, for this reason, I was reprimanded, because of this lack of silence, because I wanted to be heard by all as this quiet talking displeased me. Let it be known that what is in the heart is made known by what is on the lips. I never fear shouts, [but] I do hate whispers.

38. Love, which makes of an Order a unique paradise: O how cold [such love] was! I suppose that this line of the Apostle applies to it: “Bear one another’s burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2). In truth, it was not so; burdens were not born. Rather, faults were made up against one’s neighbor to harass him.

39. Antipathy and sympathy were prohibited to the utmost degree.¹⁸⁰ Yet, these insinuated themselves very much into the Congregation of Pious Schools, such that it was quite often heard: “I am of Peter, and I of Paul.” Cases were not judged according to justice, but according to one’s own goodwill, to such a degree that the most deserving of men were honored by persecutions for this reason, that by their own properly serious conduct, they did not foster fickleness — and one may even say — the insolence of others.

40. [As regards] the elections of the Superiors granted to the Provinces through the first brief of Alexander VII,¹⁸¹ I do not

¹⁷⁹ Cf. *SH*, p. 62, n. 134.

¹⁸⁰ Father Papczyński compares the divisions caused among the Piarists as a result of “antipathy and sympathy” to those that arose among the Corinthians and were rebuked by St. Paul. Cf. 1 Cor 1:12.

¹⁸¹ Cf. the brief *Dudum felicitis recordationis*, where we read: “*facultatem eligendi Praepositos Provinciales in qualibet Provincia supradictae Congregationis, et Rectores illius Domorum Clericis ipsius Congregationis impertimur.*” (*Bull-Rom* 16 [1869] f. 120). Cf. *SH*, p. 63, n. 138.

know in what manner they returned to the General alone,¹⁸² as if the General, living in Rome, could really know who in Poland is suitable for the office of Provincial or of Rector. For I do not consider him suitable who delights in banquets both outside and inside the house. Rather, [I consider him suitable] who is commended by the remarkable qualities of virtue and knowledge, as well as by solid work; one who zealously bears the yoke that is to be placed upon others, being the first to do what he intends to command; in a word, one who has the habit of riding on four wheels — of zeal, of gentleness, of prudence, and of learning (as St. Francis de Sales advised somewhere).

41. I respect the Superiors of the Congregation of Pious Schools, but not all of them. I respect those who deserve it, but not those who were imposed [as Superiors] and achieved the dignities of the highest offices through trampling the laws of nature and of the Church, [walking upon] the backs of their subjects.¹⁸³

42. Neither can I consider as proper, nor can I bear with this: that for certain faults, there were no specified rules for chastisement.¹⁸⁴ Rather, such punishment was left to the opinion of the Superiors, who were indulgent to those whom they favored, while they heavily punished others for the smallest faults out of personal hatred. I would give examples, but those who had their own experiences [of this] know of them.

43. Next, it seemed [to me to be] an entirely intolerable tyranny that the Superiors constantly remained the same. For even though they changed places, they did not change their position. Hence, having forgotten about obedience, they were nourished by their authority, often becoming worse, as is typical among men [with power].

¹⁸² In the brief *Cum sicut accepimus* of Alexander VII given on April 28th, 1660, it was said that the appointment of Superiors in the Provinces belongs to the General and his Assistants. Cf. *Positio*, p. 93.

¹⁸³ Perhaps in saying this Fr. Papczyński had in mind Provincial Wenceslaus Opatowski. Cf. *SH*, p. 64, n. 140.

¹⁸⁴ It was not until the General Chapter in 1671 that the *Canones Poenitentiales* were prescribed *ad experimentum*. They gained legal force only at the Chapter in 1686. Cf. *SH*, p. 64, n. 141.

44. Finally, during all the years that the name and Order of the Pious Schools existed in Poland, a visitation was never conducted.¹⁸⁵ For although the local Superiors were visited by the Provincials, I never was capable of noticing whether any of their faults were corrected. Rather, their cruelty toward their subjects was commended — or at least ignored. Such a visitation was thus either courteous or friendly, but not canonical; it served to plunder the poor treasury [of the house], but [it did not serve] to restore or strengthen observance of the Rule.¹⁸⁶

45. And so, except Fr. Charles of the Mother of God, recently sent from Moravia primarily for the sake of acquainting himself with my case and that of my companions¹⁸⁷ rather than for correcting Superiors, [no] General visitor during this entire time [even once] appeared in this Province.¹⁸⁸ And, because he was the friend and compatriot of the Provincial, he used his power against me who was bearing [the persecutions] rather than against the persecutors. When, however, he had to investigate the reasons for my incarceration and the enmity of the Province toward me, he preferred to oppress the innocent one even more, so as to expel him as quickly as possible from the Institute of Pious Schools rather than help him.

46. The one who correctly understood and knew me and observed my external behavior, would not such a one be astounded, [seeing] that I was seized most severely by the Provincial, precisely when I should not have been subject to him on

¹⁸⁵ This refers to the canonical visitation, which the Provincial should have made every year. Cf. *ConstSP*, Part III, Ch. V, n. I: *ibid.* Ch. II, n. VI.

¹⁸⁶ It is difficult to verify this claim of Fr. Papczyński, because from this period (1642-1670), the decrees of the Provincial visitation of only one house have been preserved (in Podoliniec), and only from 1657, 1664, 1665, 1667 and 1669. It seems that of these five visits, only the one from 1657 can be considered truly canonical. In general, there were very few decrees to “restore or strengthen observance of the Rule” and it can be assumed that the visitor did little to correct the shortcomings of house Superiors.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. § 31.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. §§ 6 and 11. However, the Piarist *Constitutions* did not require that the General or his delegate regularly visit individual Provinces, but only “how often it seemed right to the General.” Cf. *SH*, p. 65, n. 145.

account of the many reasons presented [above] — and that the cruelty of the Provincial was praised, while my innocence was condemned. Oh God, who judges justly, witness this and forgive nonetheless.

Third Cause: Love

47. The teachers of natural law are of the opinion that it belongs to love to even sacrifice one's life for the common good if there is no other way to protect or preserve it.¹⁸⁹ What was I to do when I was proclaimed as a firebrand, an instigator, a betrayer of the Congregation,¹⁹⁰ to preserve my peace of conscience? I still declare, that [in no way] do I admit that I stirred up any turmoil in the Congregation of Pious Schools, and even more so, that any [accusation of] betrayal be brought against me. Inspired by proper zeal, in every way possible, I opposed the relaxation [introduced] into our Province. I also firmly and loudly protested when I saw something illegal, against the Statutes of the Congregation, the papal decrees, as well as the holy Councils, just as the Provincial himself admits — although he used therein the double-meaning of the word — in the testimony given to me by a decree of the Most Distinguished and Most Reverend Apostolic Nuncio, that he finally acknowledged that I was innocent.¹⁹¹ Indeed, that I plotted some machinations with fellow members of the house or with those outside, no one — with a peaceful conscience — can either accuse [me of] or prove.

48. Although I considered that I am neither a firebrand nor an instigator nor a betrayer, nevertheless — surmising that on my account such disturbances arose — whereas those ill-disposed [toward me] arose and conspired my destruction and

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *SH*, p. 66, n. 147.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. *SH*, p. 67, n. 148.

¹⁹¹ Father Papczyński apparently describes the words of testimony issued to him July 20 by Provincial Opatowski: "*Zeli potius cuiusdam, quam turbationem fuisse animadverti*" ("I noticed there to have been a certain zeal, rather than incitement"). *Positio*, p. 143.

ruin, those favorable [toward me] defended and protected me. From this arose among them numerous conflicts and arguments; so I decided finally to depart from the Congregation of Pious Schools, for the good of peace and for the tranquility of the Province. Thus, after beseeching God's graciousness and protection, I wrote a solemn letter from Warsaw to the General,¹⁹² earnestly asking him that, since on my account this tempest had arisen — he would cast me to sea; as by God's grace I was to be saved in Peter's boat.¹⁹³ Likewise, I humbly requested the Most Distinguished and Most Reverend Lord Galeazzo Marescotti, at that time Nuncio of the holy Apostolic See in Poland, that he would use his authority with Fr. General to obtain my release.¹⁹⁴

49. When the Poles, particularly the fathers in the Rzeszów house, found out about this, they begged me — through the most ardent letters,¹⁹⁵ which I am ready to show — that I remain in the Congregation, promising even that they could protect the integrity of my good name even at the cost of their own bodies. But of what use were their testimonies or their letters? Their testimonies were intercepted by the German-Polish Rector;¹⁹⁶ the letters were rejected by Fr. General; and I was overpowered by even greater persecutions and enmity. The favor and love of the Poles made the Germans even more hostile toward me, as the General, a Sicilian,¹⁹⁷ notably supported and defended them. I remember that, for the second time in this manner, I asked for my release,

¹⁹² This letter of Fr. Papczyński to the General has not survived and there is not mention of it in another source. All that is known is that this was his first request for dismissal from the Institute of Pious Schools, probably written around mid-August, 1669. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 145-147 (Doc. VI, intr. A, 1).

¹⁹³ An analogy to the prophet Jonah thrown into the rough sea to make them calm down. Cf. Jonah 1:11-15.

¹⁹⁴ We have no proof that Galeazzo Marescotti, the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland (1668-1670), used his influence with the General to help Fr. Papczyński in obtaining release from the Piarists.

¹⁹⁵ These letters are no longer extant.

¹⁹⁶ This refers to Fr. Michał Kraus, the Rector of the house in Rzeszów. In the *Elenchus* of the Piarists of the Polish Province, Fr. Kraus is usually denoted as a "German." Concerning the reason why Fr. Papczyński calls him "German-Polish," cf. *Positio* pp. 273-274, n. 7.

¹⁹⁷ That is, Fr. Cosmas Chiara, who was originally from Sicily.

since the Germans¹⁹⁸ ruling over us were dearer to him than the Poles who bore the burden of the day and its heat [cf. Mt 20:12]; having detained them, he permitted me, the displeasing one, to depart with holy love.¹⁹⁹ What did I accomplish? Yet again the order was given to incarcerate me.²⁰⁰ Therefore, considering minds so greatly agitated on my account, should I not have — persuaded by true love, for the sake of restoring tranquility, [and] of calming the sea²⁰¹ — departed from the Congregation of Pious Schools?

Fourth Cause: Impediments in Utilizing Natural Talents

50. May I be allowed at the end to quite unassumingly add what brought about or [at least] caused a quite annoying displeasure to many distinguished men. I entered the most holy Institute of Pious Schools, and I so accepted and fulfilled the works entrusted to me that, even in future times and for future generations, they would be desirable and useful. Thus, directed to teach rhetoric and exerting myself greatly in these rhetorical exercises for nearly nine or ten years,²⁰² not without pain did I write many things. I also began to write a book, such that these matters would be of profit not only to students of rhetoric, but also to teachers.

51. With great effort and diligence, I wrote six volumes on the art of rhetoric, under the [common] title of *The Queen of the Arts*, employing excerpts both from older as well as newer masters of

¹⁹⁸ Father Papczyński says this in reference to three Superiors: the Provincial Fr. Wenceslaus Opatowski (1665-1671), the Rector of the house in Rzeszów, Fr. Michał Kraus (1666-1671) and the Rector of the house in Podoliniec, Fr. Glicerius Neumann (1664-1673).

¹⁹⁹ This was the second request of Fr. Papczyński for release from Piarists, sent to General Chiara probably around October 15, 1669. This letter is no longer extant, and its contents are not known. Cf. *Positio*, p. 147 (Doc. VI, intr. A, 2).

²⁰⁰ We have no documentary confirmation of this incarceration of Fr. Papczyński, or of an attempt made to incarcerate him.

²⁰¹ This refers again to the analogy of Jonah 1:11-15.

²⁰² Father Papczyński was a teacher of rhetoric ("*magister rhetorices*") in Piarist colleges: Podoliniec (1658-1660), Rzeszów (1660-1662) and Warsaw (1663-1667; 1668-1669). Cf. *Positio*, pp. 58-62 (Doc. IV, intr. A, 1.), where his teaching activities are discussed in greater detail.

rhetoric accommodating it all for the use of the present time, and particularly, for the Polish nation, and clarifying this illustrious and queenly method of rhetoric through the use of my own examples and those of others.²⁰³ In addition, [I wrote] *The Scholastic-Civil Orator, The Student of Rhetoric*, a comprehensive volume of speeches and epigrams, eulogies, odes, departing in nothing from the rules presented to me in writing. I am not mentioning the other [writings]. Although they perhaps do not please everybody (for who has ever attained or will attain this?), they will nevertheless be useful to many.²⁰⁴

52. I sent the *Messenger of the Queen of the Arts*,²⁰⁵ taken from the greater whole [from *The Queen of the Arts*,] to print before the other [writings]. When I prepared it for publication, how many obstacles I faced, how many difficulties I had to overcome! How many insults I had to bear! I pass over in silence the thunderbolts thrown at me as soon as it appeared [in print], perhaps by the instigators who lived in that same house.²⁰⁶ In proper order, *Messenger* ought to have followed *The Queen*.²⁰⁷ But was even an hour given to me to work on it? Was any promised copyist given to me? Neither goodwill nor help [were given to me] in publishing [the book]. Indeed, those who like owls or bats who fear the light, refusing [light] to others, in all manners ensured that [the book] would never appear in the light. Having the intention to give *The Crucified Orator* for common use, I asked Fr. General three times

²⁰³ The manuscript of *The Queen of the Arts* (*Regina Artium*) is no longer extant. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 58-59 (Doc. IV, intr. A, 1, a); p. 582 (Doc. XV, art. II, B, a, II, 4).

²⁰⁴ None of the manuscripts of the rhetorical works listed here are extant today. Cf. *SH*, p. 69, n. 163.

²⁰⁵ This work, written in Latin under the title *Prodromus Reginae Artium*, was first published in 1663; three more editions followed shortly thereafter. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 576-577 (Doc. XV, art. II, A, a, I, 1); pp. 591-592 (*ibid.*, art. III, 1).

²⁰⁶ It is not known why this work, in which Fr. Papczyński taught "*artem tam bene dicendi, quam bene vivendi*" ("the art both of speaking well and of living well"), was met with such strong opposition. Perhaps it was what he said in one of his orations against *liberum veto*. Cf. *SH*, p. 70, n. 165.

²⁰⁷ Father Papczyński hoped that soon after the publication of *Messenger*, he would be able to publish *The Queen of the Arts* as well. The word itself expressed hope, since a messenger/herald (*prodromus*) is a person that precedes another. Cf. *Prodromus*, wyd. I, "*Candido Lectori*"; ed. IV, "*Amice Lector.*"

for permission, but I never received any response.²⁰⁸ Why did they behave like this towards me? He will become famous (they say) through his printed books, he will have protectors; and then, how will we defeat him?

53. For this same reason, they forbade me from placing my name [as the author] — although the Constitutions command this²⁰⁹ — upon the *Panegyric* offered to His Venerable Majesty, the King of Poland, in the name of the Warsaw College — if I remember correctly — on the fifth day, shortly after his most fortunate election.²¹⁰ And if I had put my name, they wanted to burn the *Panegyric*, clearly lest [I become] known in some way to someone in higher authority,²¹¹ by whom I would be later protected and saved most graciously from the tempest which they had prepared for me.²¹²

54. I do not state this, most beloved, for their shame (because I do not wish that anybody be ashamed) on account of this enmity toward me, on account of this great opposition to the laws, or on account of the many and quite serious reasons (for they are many, and even more serious, which I pass over in silence) given for my departure from your Community. But I pray that they feel contrition. I certainly suffer rightly for my sins. So what awaits you? On my side, there is true love, in which I desire to remain;²¹³ however, there is judgment on the side of God, who knows intimately the most secret thoughts and the heart. I, however, most humbly bend the knee before His goodness for your love. Do the same for me,

²⁰⁸ These petitions are no longer extant. *The Crucified Orator* was probably ready for publication in 1668, but it was printed in 1670, when Fr. Papczyński, being under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary of Krakow, no longer had to ask the Piarist General for permission to print.

²⁰⁹ Cf. *ConstSP*, Part II, Ch. VII, n. VI. Cf. *SH*, p. 71, n. 170.

²¹⁰ Michael Korybut Wiśniowiecki, elected king in Warsaw, on June 19, 1669.

²¹¹ Cf. § 23.

²¹² This “storm” was probably the imprisonment of Fr. Papczyński ordered by the Provincial Fr. Opatowski at the beginning of the year 1670. Cf. above, §§ 19–20.

²¹³ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 233–246 (Doc. VII, B), where we find evidence that Fr. Papczyński, after leaving the Piarists, always demonstrated a great love for this Order in both word and deed.

so that at least mutually beseeching Him for forgiveness, or that here [on earth] rather than elsewhere, He may punish us because He is truly just.

7. The Foundation of the House of Recollection

Fundatio Domus Recollectionis

Puszcza Korabiewska [The Korabiew Forest] — 1675 (?)

Introduction

The title *Domus Recollectionis* — *The Foundation of the House of Recollection* (*FDR*) is given here in its abbreviated version. The full title is: *Fundatio Domus Recollectionis Clericorum B.M.V. sine macula conceptae*. This is the title given to this writing by Fr. Papczyński himself in a manuscript which has not survived to our times, but which was sent to Rome in connection with his beatification process. In the *Protocollum Ordinis*, in which *FDR* was entered, the writing was divided into three chapters, each with its own title. The first chapter was entitled: *Origo Fundationis Congregationis* ("The Origin of the Foundation of the Congregation"), and this title was later used to refer to *FDR* in its entirety, since in reality *FDR* treats, much more widely, the founding or establishment of the Congregation rather than simply the founding of its first house in the Korabiew Forest, called "*Domus Recollectionis*," which was distinct from the neighboring Krajewski hermitage, although it was sometimes called by the same name.²¹⁴

It seems that Fr. Papczyński wrote *FDR* at the end of 1675. Although he is not explicitly indicated as the author, it is easy to prove that he wrote *FDR*.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Cf. *SH*, pp. 73-74: "*Titulus*"; *Positio*, pp. 341-345.

²¹⁵ Cf. *SH*, pp. 74-75: "*Auctor*" and "*Tempus compositionis*."

The title *Fundatio Domus Recollectionis* should not be translated as the “The Foundation of a Retreat House,” because such a house would be available for the faithful to come and make retreats, but this house was intended only for true hermits dedicated to a life of interior recollection. It was therefore called a “house of recollection” and not a “retreat house.”²¹⁶

Two independent copies of *FDR* exist, and the introduction to the Latin critical edition explains which of them was chosen for the critical edition and why it was chosen.²¹⁷

1. The Divine Goodness and Wisdom — despite innumerable difficulties that stand in the way — begin and complete what they desire, even when the means — according to human judgment — are inadequate. For there is nothing impossible for the Omnipotent. This [truth] manifested itself most clearly in me, the most wretched sinner, the most worthy of disdain, most miserable, the most unfit instrument [used by God] for founding the least, the smallest Congregation of Fathers of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Conceived Immaculate. Within me, I had an unbecoming spirit, no virtue, little prudence; everything was far too small, proper more for dreaming rather than for undertaking a matter of such great difficulty. But just as God Himself (to whom be everlasting, endless glory and thanksgiving) lovingly, mercifully, wisely, and miraculously inspired me to this work of His Providence, so also He Himself has brought it about — and He will bring it to completion, forever and ever.

2. Many know that I was in the Congregation of Pious Schools — more dear to me than my life — in that sweetest Society of the Poor of the Mother of God.²¹⁸ It is quite difficult to explain how much I valued my vocation, roused by God Himself. Even more, I remained in this holiest company, bound not only by the bonds of love, but also by the solemn obligation of the oath to persevere in

²¹⁶ Cf. § 25.

²¹⁷ Cf. *SH*, pp. 76-78: “*textus*”

²¹⁸ Father Papczyński was a member of the Piarists from 1654-1670.

it forever.²¹⁹ I desired the first to be indissoluble, while the second was dissolved by the one to whom has been given the authority of binding and loosing, the Vicar of the Most Holy Jesus Christ, the legitimate successor of St. Peter, Pope Clement X.²²⁰ Yet, ah! How it came to this! What a way of the cross!²²¹

3. Furthermore, unimaginable confusions, scruples, doubts, anguish, and fears tormented and tortured me. For who could have such a lax conscience that, without these, he could pass from the state of religious vows (even if they were simple) to a merely secular [state of life]?²²² Yet, that [same] Divine Majesty suggested to me, immediately before being released — such that, when I be released from them — that I freely bind, in the very same act, myself to God by other [vows], which I performed through the offering of myself [*Oblatio*], which I recited from my heart in public, although it was made in a rather quiet voice. The contents of this [*Oblatio*] are as follows...²²³

4. That same father, who granted me the release [from vows] in the name of the General,²²⁴ confirmed [this *Oblatio*] with the acclamation: May God confirm what He has wrought in you!

5. Indeed, He did confirm it, for after I asked and [then] received from the Most Reverend Lord Vicar (the bishop of Kra-

²¹⁹ Cf. above, *HW*, p. 855, n. 2, “*I promise that I will persevere in the same Congregation until the end of my life.*”

²²⁰ Fr. Papczyński was released from simple vows and the oath of perseverance by the brief of Clement X *Cum felicitis recordationis* (October 18, 1670). Cf. *Positio*, p. 204 (Doc. VI, E, 2, §§ 1 and 3).

²²¹ Father Papczyński refers here to the persecutions he experienced in the Piarists. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 86-207: Doc. V-VI.

²²² It seems that Fr. Papczyński is referring to his own inner state after being released from his vows in the Piarists (December 11, 1670). To help resolve such doubts and to be more certain about the will of God for him, he applied (under certain conditions) for readmission to the Piarists towards the end of 1670. Cf. *Positio*, p. 219 (Doc. VII, A, 2, intr.)

²²³ This self-offering (*Oblatio*) took place in Kazimierz near Krakow, December 11, 1670 (right after the ceremony of release from the Piarists). Both in the critical edition and in the present translation, the *Oblatio* is omitted and placed separately in chronological order. Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 864-872, n. 5.

²²⁴ This was Fr. Michael Kraus, Vicar Provincial of the Polish Province from August 1670. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 190-193.

kow, Nicholas Oborski,²²⁵ a quite prudent man, who was already quite inclined to granting me help in the foundation of a new Congregation, but who later changed his opinion, for which reason I do not know) permission to wear the white habit. I already was to be dressed in it by a certain domestic episcopal prelate in the palace of this same bishop, where I was, at that time, protected for reasons of security²²⁶ during the very Octave of the Immaculate Conception.²²⁷

6. But by divine dispensation, it happened that this matter was brought to nothing.²²⁸ I was summoned to Warsaw by my special protector, the Most Distinguished Lord, John Gembicki, at that time, bishop of Płock (later, of Krakow).²²⁹ Now he offered me the dignity of being a canon in the Płock Cathedral. I did not accept this on account of love for God and for promoting the glory of His Mother. Although — by doing this — I caused my protector to be gravely offended, for he greatly desired to have me — distinguished by this dignity — be joined to his closest associates.²³⁰ Nor was there a lack of venerable religious orders who invited me to their company.²³¹ Of course, I was unwilling, as I desired greater

²²⁵ Bishop Nicholas Oborski (d. 1689), suffragan of Krakow from 1658-1689.

²²⁶ Father Papczyński took refuge in the Bishop's Palace to protect himself from being imprisoned again in Podoliniec. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 184-186 (Doc. VI, D, intr.; Doc. VI, D, 1).

²²⁷ In the Latin text the word *solemnia* is used, which should not be understood here in the sense of the day of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception itself (December 8). This term here means the octave of this feast (December 8-15). With the consent of the Holy See, this feast was celebrated with an octave in many places at that time. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 192-193, n. 6.

²²⁸ It is not known what the obstacle to wearing the white habit was. Cf. *Positio*, p. 217 (Doc. VII, A, 1).

²²⁹ This information is partially incorrect: Bishop John Gembicki, the ordinary in Płock since 1655, was in 1674 appointed an ordinary not in Krakow but in Kujawy (Włocławek). Cf. *Positio*, pp. 194-201 (Doc. VI, E, 1); cf. *Pisma Zebrane* p. 1198, n. 1.

²³⁰ Cf. *Positio*, p. 494 (Doc. XII, 5); p. 640 (Doc. XVII, § 34).

²³¹ We do not have any documentary evidence of such invitations, and they were probably made orally. However, in light of Fr. Papczyński's words here, there is no reason to believe claims (all of which lack documentary evidence) that have been made saying that Fr. Papczyński sought admission to other religious communities after leaving the Piarists. Cf. *SH*, p. 82, n. 37.

perfection. For having disdained everything else and being prevented from returning to the Institute of Pious Schools,²³² that divine vision, which had been engraved upon my soul regarding the foundation of this Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Most B.V.M.,²³³ impelled me to this goal.

7. And so, once again, I approached the Most Distinguished Lord, Stephen Wierzbowski, Bishop of Poznań,²³⁴ in whose diocese I dwelled,²³⁵ and I easily obtained from him permission to wear a new habit. For he is an upright and virtuous man, quite zealous in promoting the glory of God. Wherefore, having given up the position [offered by] the Bishop of Płock, upon the council and recommendation of my confessors,²³⁶ I went — upon a request — to the court of a certain nobleman, James Karski, an excellent man.²³⁷ After finally settling matters with the Institute of the Pious Schools, though this was not without a certain injustice against me,²³⁸ with the knowledge of the holy Apostolic Nunciature, during the Octave of the Birth of the Most Blessed Virgin

²³² Father Papczyński is probably referring here to the negative answer given to his own request to be readmitted to the Piarists. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 219, 329-330.

²³³ Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 871-872, n. 5 (*Oblatio*), § 2.

²³⁴ Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski was the Ordinary of Poznań from 1663-1687.

²³⁵ This meeting with Bishop Wierzbowski probably took place in Warsaw, where Bishop Wierzbowski had his permanent residence (Warsaw belonged to the Poznań diocese at the time." Father Papczyński says "once again" because he had already had a meeting with Bishop Wierzbowski, during which he probably received a promise of help in establishing a new Congregation. It seems that this promise is what motivated him to move from the Krakow diocese (where he could not count on such help) to the Poznań diocese.

²³⁶ We do not know who these confessors were.

²³⁷ The Karski estate was located in Luboczy, a village about eighty kilometers from Warsaw. It is not known exactly when Fr. Papczyński moved there from Warsaw, but it was probably around mid-September 1671. In Luboczy, he received the function of court chaplain.

²³⁸ Father Papczyński is referring to the testimony he asked for from his Superiors of his good conduct in the Piarists. He was denied such testimony, and this case was even brought to the court of the Apostolic Nuncio, because Fr. Papczyński refused to take off his Piarist habit until he received this testimony (or received responses to his requests for readmission to the Piarists). It can be assumed that he finally received such testimony (which is no longer extant) in early September 1671, although with a "certain injustice" against himself, that is, an incorrect assessment of his life and work with the Piarists. Cf. *SH*, p. 83, n. 43.

Mary, I offered myself, already dressed in white, in perpetual service as a new candidate to this Mother.²³⁹ Immediately, I went to the Most Distinguished Lord [Archbishop] Angelo Ranucci, the Nuncio in Warsaw, to manifest my obedience [to him] as well as to ask his blessing and to explain my desires.²⁴⁰

8. All these matters turned out favorably for me at that time. For although surprise overcame many who saw that I went from being [dressed in] black to white, some of them sang with the Poet: "So suddenly has the crow become a swan!"²⁴¹ However, the Divine Majesty disposed them in such a way that they even showed joy on account of this change. They lauded my plan and wished me the most blessed success. Among them were the Apostolic Nuncio, a certain bishop, and well-known religious. Nevertheless, there were some who looked upon me as a crazy man.²⁴² Others persecuted me, because the beginnings [of this work] must be founded upon suffering. Passing over all other matters, I come to this: relating how this tiny Congregation indeed had its beginning.

9. I lived at the house of a certain Karski nobleman for nearly two years.²⁴³ I searched for ways to found the Society of the Immaculate Conception, which the Divine Spirit had already formed in my mind. However, companions — such as would be required to begin this work — were lacking. And although some people, both lay and religious, came, I feared joining them to

²³⁹ Father Papczyński's ceremony of donning the white habit took place in the chapel in Luboczy, in front of the miraculous image of the Immaculate Virgin Mary (cf. *Positio*, p. 673: Doc. XVIII, § 32), probably on September 15th, 1671. In the Latin text there is a play on words that cannot be translated into English: "*me in Candido iam colore, novum Eius Matris candidatum ad perpetua obsequie devovi...*"

²⁴⁰ Cf. *SH*, p. 83, n. 45

²⁴¹ The poet Martial says the reverse: "*Tam subito corvus, qui modo cygnus eras*" ("You are] so suddenly a crow, [you who] were just a swan!"). Father Papczyński says this because the Piarist habit was black while the Marian habit was white (cf. *Positio*, p. 471), but the cut was the same. Cf. *SH*, p. 83, n. 46.

²⁴² Cf. *SH*, p. 84, n. 48.

²⁴³ Father Papczyński came to the Karski manor probably a few days before the octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (September 15, 1671) and left it on September 30, 1673.

myself on account of their untested virtue as well as on account of the lack of a sufficient place [for the foundation].

10. The Bishop of Poznań²⁴⁴ as well, although he had been favorable to me, because he was informed incorrectly by another, firmly opposed the erection of a new Congregation in his diocese, particularly one that did not yet have the permission of the Holy Apostolic See. I unceasingly endeavored to obtain this permission for two years,²⁴⁵ and this matter cost me many difficulties, exposing me to certain expenses. But just as the Procurator²⁴⁶ — treacherous and cunning — fed me with promises while not making any effort to resolve this matter;²⁴⁷ so I was pleased to undertake this matter in a different manner, according to the counsel of a certain exceptional man, the Most Reverend in Christ Fr. Francis Wilga of the Camaldolese Order, Superior in the Kingdom of Poland, a religious filled with the spirit of St. Paul.²⁴⁸ After the example of the founder saints, it is necessary first to receive someone as a companion, and then, already having a place [to reside], bring the matter for authorization from Rome.

11. The idea came to my mind that a certain hermit lived at a distance of about four miles from my dwelling place at the time.²⁴⁹ I decided to test him, as to whether he wanted to be a companion according to my plan. When I presented it to him clearly

²⁴⁴ Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski, who was mentioned earlier. Cf. above, § 7.

²⁴⁵ It seems that “for two years” should be understood as “in 1671 and in 1672,” and not the duration of two years. Cf. *Positio*, p. 361, n. 26.

²⁴⁶ It is not known who this “Procurator” was.

²⁴⁷ In the register of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious of 1671-1673, there is no evidence of any attempt to obtain this approval from the Holy See.

²⁴⁸ Father Francis Wilga entered the Camaldolese Order in 1643. He was five times the Vicar General for Poland. In 1667, he was named “Prior Eremi in Monte Regio,” near Warsaw. Father Papczyński probably met him there at the beginning of August 1667, when he made a retreat there (cf. *Positio*, p. 298: Doc. IX, 6, § 6). He also obtained from him a letter of recommendation “*Litteras Commendatorias*” on October 6 of the same year for his “Roman Journey” (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 124-126: Doc. V, 1, d). It seems that Fr. Papczyński visited Fr. Wilga in the autumn of 1672, and obtained the counsel he speaks about here. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 362, n. 30.

²⁴⁹ This was Stanislaus Krajewski, who for about twelve years led an eremitical life in the Korabiew Forest, about forty kilometers from Luboczy, where Fr. Papczyński was staying.

and simply (when I went to his hermitage),²⁵⁰ he wholeheartedly agreed to the plan, offered me both his place and himself. He also convinced a second man, his companion, to [join in] this plan. So much did he seem to zealously desire to put it into action, that he invited me quite frequently by letters to his hermitage and often came, asking and insisting me to agree to be their Superiors.²⁵¹ He desired to found this new Society in that place, declaring his readiness to embrace all of its laws, even the strictest, which I offered to him to look over.²⁵²

12. I, of course, from the beginning, was greatly inclined to make use of this occasion for realizing my plan, but many things prevented me, among them, the independence of this man, who was unaccustomed to obedience, his underhanded attempts to attribute to himself the title of founder, his unstable spirit, his fickle fame, his passionate nature, his uncouth [speech], his cunning, his stubbornness, his incompetence for anything — let these things be stated without defamation.

13. What was I to do? I beseeched God; I did as much as my sins permitted. But in prayer, I received answers to the contrary, and I was firmly prevented from forming companionship with this man. Was I to consult experienced and learned men? They were unavailable. One was found from the Order of St. Francis, and he did not dissuade against it entirely. Another, whom I once asked in Krakow regarding the foundation of a new Society, even commanded it, answering that this is the will of God, that I undertake this work.²⁵³ Having gone to Studzianna for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, during confession itself he

²⁵⁰ The context shows that Fr. Papczyński went to the Krajewski hermitage in the fall of 1672.

²⁵¹ These letters are no longer extant today.

²⁵² This was the *Rule of Life (Norma Vitae)* in its first edition (probably composed in 1672). Cf. *Positio*, p. 452 (Doc. XII, I, intr., b).

²⁵³ Father Papczyński could have received this advice in Krakow in the last months of 1670, or the first months of 1671. It is impossible to identify these Franciscans who advised Fr. Papczyński about the founding of the Marian Congregation.

advised me to go to the hermitage and, with God's help, begin something. God will do the rest.²⁵⁴

14. I, therefore, permitted that same hermit to wear the habit after my example (which I had accepted by divine inspiration), and I presented him at the holy Nunciature as my companion. Before that, however, I received from him his *Oblatio* for the Society of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M., with the promise of living according to its Rule and of persevering [in it] under his personal oath which he professed in my presence in Lubocza, as will be seen below [§ 15]. Having to go myself to the hermitage, I first obtained from the bishop permission to remain there for a spiritual retreat.²⁵⁵ I could not obtain, at that time, permission for celebrating Mass in the private chapel. Hence, I had to ask this of the Apostolic Nuncio, the most Distinguished Lord [Archbishop] Bonvisi, who had at that time recently assumed his office. He willingly granted [that permission].²⁵⁶

15. Now, the *Oblatio* of the hermit in question was as follows: I, John of the Immaculate Conception, having the secular name of Stanislaus Krajewski, according to the body the son of Bartholomew Krajewski and Regina Krasnopolski, belonging to the Diocese of Przemyśl, thirty-nine years old, offer and dedicate myself to God the Almighty Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as well as to the Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, conceived without original sin: my heart, my soul, my intellect, memory, will, emotions, my mind, my entire spirit, external and internal senses, and my body, leaving absolutely nothing for

²⁵⁴ Judging from the context, Fr. Papczyński made this confession in Studzianna (about ten kilometers from Luboczy) on December 8, 1672, when he made a pilgrimage to the miraculous image of the Mother of God in the church of the Oratorians. Cf. *Positio*, p. 679 (Doc. XVIII, § 48).

²⁵⁵ If this permission was given in writing, it is no longer extant today.

²⁵⁶ Bonvisi (or Bounvisi) was appointed Nuncio to Poland on July 15, 1673, but it is not known when he actually began to hold this office (possibly in early September 1673). It is not known exactly when Fr. Papczyński received such consent from the Nuncio, because it is not included in the "*liber gratiarum*" given by the Nuncio. Cf. *Positio*, p. 363, n. 40.

myself (and so forth, according to the formula composed and copied by me above).²⁵⁷ In Lubocza, July 4, 1673.

16. The Korabiew Forest — truly quite a vast one — is located between four towns: Bolimów, Mszczonów, Skierniewice, and Wiskitki. I went there from Lubocza, late on a Sunday — if I remember well, the eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost²⁵⁸ — in a cart filled with food and a few of my possessions in 1673. I did not find Krajewski, but only a certain Simon, a tertiary of St. Francis, and another — an organist with a domestic servant. That Simon, a diligent man, came here from Italy, where, for about four years, he led an eremitic life near Subiaco, above the holy Grotto. Being at that time a guest in the hermitage, he had different goals and, through his eremitic way of life, rejoiced in the hope of entering the Society, which he nevertheless abandoned, having experienced the stricter observance of the Rule.²⁵⁹

17. And so, having greeted according to my custom the holy patrons and protectors of [certain] persons and places, commending myself to our good God, I went to the cottage recently constructed by a certain Lithuanian soldier named John Nowosielski. For two years, he lived in [the cottage] on account of penance and was entrusted to me. I strongly and most humbly entrusted him to the heavenly Virgin and to St. Jerome, whose annual memorial it was.

18. Very early in the morning, I arose from sleep and awoke those hermits to come for prayer. But on the second and third days, they complained to Krajewski, who had just returned, that I was forcing them to pray, when in fact they had come to work with him. I noticed, therefore, that these men were not inclined to any kind of prayer. They were willful, living in the Forest not

²⁵⁷ Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 864-872, n. 5 (*Oblatio*).

²⁵⁸ Father Papczyński's memory was incorrect here, because he actually came to the Korabiew Forest on September 30, 1673, on the Feast of St. Jerome (as he points out in the next section), which, in 1673, fell on the Saturday before the 19th Sunday after Pentecost.

²⁵⁹ Simon probably left the Korabiew Forest shortly after the visit by Bishop Świąćicki (cf. below, § 21), who at that time prescribed a "stricter observance of the Rule" for those living there. Cf. below, § 20.

out of a desire for penance or for striving after perfection, but to be supported sumptuously by the alms that people gave them, considering them to be saints. [They] received [these alms] in abundance through Krajewski, who went around to the courts of noblemen. For this reason, I decided to return, having made a spiritual retreat of at least a month. In the meantime, however, I expounded my plans to Krajewski, [asking] whether he would grant to me and to the Society, with all the accompanying rights, his parcel of land which he had on another meadow, endowed with privileges, while he himself would be the Procurator of the Society. He reflected on this for some days, and at the end, he agreed [to it]. He wrote, by his own hand, the cessation [of his land], which he desired to join to the suitable acts to legalize it.²⁶⁰ Having obtained this, I was already thinking about other, even more zealous companions, with whom I could begin the [common] life and found, in this place, the Congregation, beginning with the House of Recollection.

19. My undertaking did not lack heavenly help. As the Divine Majesty sent me the necessary intermediary for help, a man — I state — who is dignified, pious, and learned; the Most Reverend Lord Stanislaus Hyacinth Świącicki, Bishop of Spigaceń, Archdeacon and official of Warsaw,²⁶¹ who had received the order of the Bishop of Poznań, that while visiting his Archdeanery, he ought to go to the hermitage and either bind the hermits he finds under certain laws or remove them from there, since the Apostolic See had declared that no other hermits were to be admitted except those that had already been approved.²⁶² And indeed the very devout Bishop showed me the interdict which he had written for this place. Nevertheless, on my counsel, he decided first to find out through his visitor as to whether the hermits truthfully belonged, in spirit, to the Society or whether they even were

²⁶⁰ This document was issued on October 7, 1673. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 336-339.

²⁶¹ Bishop Stanislaus Świącicki was named Archdeacon in 1663, and soon after official of Warsaw. He held these offices until 1677. Cf. *Positio*, p. 366, n. 47.

²⁶² Cf. *Norma Vitae, Praefatio Informatoria*, § 2, in: *Positio*, pp. 460-461 (Doc. XII, 1).

favorably disposed to it. If this were confirmed (among them presently), he would decree that they ought to be tolerated.

20. And so, for that reason, the visitor, when he came, burned with anger when he did not find Krajewski in the house. Indignant, he already wanted to exclude him from the hermitage along with the others, but in the end, he decided to place these men under the test through the touchstone of his laws. Therefore, he wrote certain Statutes, namely, Ordinances regarding spiritual exercises, penances, as well as recollection.²⁶³ All of the hermits, both those present and any others to that may desire to come, he decided to bind by an oath of obedience to the ordinary of the episcopal see. He compelled them to keeping these Ordinances by his authority. He decided that I — who had gone elsewhere after the completion of my spiritual retreat — should be their Superior, having granted to me all his authority in regard to them.

21. They were astounded and did not accept the laws. Rather, they left the hermitage. Only Krajewski himself remained, and sometimes he complained about me before the laypeople. He even simulated zeal in keeping the Rule, but in reality — both at home and outside — he lived as he wanted: unrestrained, disobedient, not observing the laws and rebellious, both toward me and the bishop. He slandered my activity everywhere and finally, through his confidants, he accused me, before that same visitor, of being too severe and of vagrancy. Yet, I, not without due permission, had to leave [the hermitage] and go to Krakow and to another place.²⁶⁴ He indeed relied upon the patronage of undignified men and of his close relative, an otherwise dignified man, the canon of Gniezno.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ These Statutes or Ordinances can be found in the Acts of the said visitation which titled thus: *1673 die 24 Octobris Decanatus Mszczonoviensis. Oratorium Beatae Virginis Mariae sine macula conceptae in Eremo Korabieviensi et Domus Recollectionis Clericorum eiusdem tituli*. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 341-345 (Doc. X, 3).

²⁶⁴ The probably refers to Fr. Papczyński's journey to Krakow in 1674, when he went there to prepare his book *Templum Dei Mysticum* for printing (it appeared in print there in 1775). When he says "another place," it should probably be understood as Podegrodzie (he went there as the executor of the will of Jan Papczyński). Cf. *Positio*, p. 367, n. 51; pp. 558-562.

²⁶⁵ This "canon of Gniezno" (since 1666) had the same name: Stanislaus Krajewski. Cf. *Positio*, p. 367, n. 52.

22. I, however, trusting in God's help, summoned that deceitful and hypocritical man to appear before the judgment of the visitorator;²⁶⁶ compelling him to make an oath of living according to the laws given [by the visitorator]. He was already on his way, having the intention of honoring the Cross and making his oath in the present of the visitorator. I, however, foreseeing the inconstancy of that man, called aloud to him, that he was soon to commit perjury and so ought not to do it. Rather, he should take the oath only after having his constancy for three weeks.

23. O good God! It is a shame to relate how he observed the *Rule* at this time. Without a doubt, I am sad and I sigh when I write these things. I do not know whether I am worthy of grace or hatred; however, I fear to be implicated, if I were to openly defend or justify what he has poorly done in the open. May the Lord forgive and enlighten us in the further path of His commands.

24. Without a doubt, the visitorator's coming was in accord with my heart's desires, and I gladly accepted and intend to keep the laws given by him (although I already had the *Norma Vitae* written for me and approved by [my] spiritual fathers).²⁶⁷ Although, in a certain respect, they seemed to be quite strict, I will not strive for anything else beyond the salvation of my soul, which everybody certainly ought to place before all other matters and do everything — even what might be quite difficult — for its sake. May the Divine Goodness give us constant zeal in this matter and perseverance in it for His glory, so that not one of those redeemed by His Blood may perish. Amen.

25. When I understood that the Most Reverend Lord Bishop Visitorator desires — with no small zeal — that life in this hermitage be led in the manner of hermits, I made every effort to fulfill his

²⁶⁶ This probably took place during the canonical visitation of Bishop Świąćicki in 1674.

²⁶⁷ It not known who these "spiritual fathers" were who approved *Norma Vitae* in its original version of 1672. This version remains unknown, since it is assumed that it underwent some changes before being printed in 1687. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 452-453 (Doc. XII, 1, intr., b).

desire. I decided to construct here a “House of Recollection” with a chapel of the Immaculate Conception and of St. Michael the Archangel, so that I may adjust my laws to his Ordinances, since it indeed befits a Superior of hermits to behave properly, according to the Rule prescribed for them, so that everything among the hermits be adapted to my ideas regarding the House of Recollection, with the exception of certain matters, which seemed to me to surpass the limits of prudence.

26. I went, therefore, to Warsaw,²⁶⁸ and I first presented my request for the approbation of the cessation of Krajewski’s land. Next, I requested that the document, the so called *Cride*,²⁶⁹ be released, inasmuch as according to the law, I might enter into possession of this land properly — not through the window, but through the door — so that I might not bypass the laws of the Church, which are often observed regarding such buildings. If I wanted, on the other hand, to not observe those things which ought to be observed while acting to found the Congregation, I would already — in these two years²⁷⁰ — have both a few houses and many companions. But above all in my desires, although they were pious and salvific, I took precaution lest I consciously and freely undertake something against the accepted custom or prescription of the Church. Hence the Divine Majesty Himself will bless these matters begun by me: for easily I received the decree permitting the construction of the House of Recollection, while God Himself removed the difficulties, which otherwise pressed upon me.²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ Father Papczyński went to Warsaw shortly after the visit of Bishop Święcki (which took place in the Korabiew Hermitage on October 24, 1673).

²⁶⁹ The cessation of Krajewski’s land was legalized not on October 7 (as has been erroneously noted at the end of the copy of withdrawal document in the *Protocollum Ordinis*. Cf. *Positio*, p. 336, n. 2). The *Cride* document mentioned here is no longer extant, and we possess no copy of it.

²⁷⁰ The words “in these two years” refer to the years 1674–1675. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 351–352 (Doc. X, 5, intr., 3).

²⁷¹ The editor of the *Protocollum Ordinis* attached to it two documents: a document stating the cessation of Krajewski’s land and the decree of the Warsaw Consistory authorizing the construction of the House of Recollection.

8. Letter to Fr. Alexander Armini, SP

Superior General of the Order of Pious Schools

Litterae ad P. Alexium Armini, S.P.

New Jerusalem — March 23, 1688

Introduction

Father Papczyński wrote this letter to resolve his doubt: whether he was to continue in the Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception that he had founded, or seek to return to the Piarists. Such a doubt arose in him because of two external factors: on the one hand, after the death of Bishop Wierzbowski (March 6, 1687), the great protector of the Marian Congregation, there was no one who would defend this Congregation against the attacks of those seeking to annihilate it (in fact, Bishop Witwicki,²⁷² successor to Bishop Wierzbowski, allowed himself to be convinced that the Congregation had no legal basis for its existence and it seemed ready to be eliminated). On the other hand, more and more Marians were leaving the Congregation, for it was easy to find confessors who would release them from simple vows, as, at that time, they were often considered simply promises. So, Fr. Papczyński wondered if all of this was a sign that God did not want the Congregation he was founding to continue to exist? If Fr. Armini told him he should remain in the Congregation despite all threats to its existence, he would. But if Fr. Armini advised him to leave the sinking boat of his Congregation and return to the Piarists, he would take that as a sign that God Himself was behind all that was seeming to lead to the destruction of the Marian Congregation. We do not know for certain how this letter was responded to, but it seems that Fr. Armini advised him to stay in his place and do everything possible to lead the Congregation out of the

²⁷² John Stanislaus Witwicki (ca. 1630-1698), successively the bishop of Kiev, Lutsk, and the Ordinary of Poznań (1687-1698). Cf. *Pisma Zebrane*, p. 1273, n. 4.

crisis. It is certain that Fr. Papczyński did not seek to return to the Piarists and undertook steps to save his Congregation.

I request your blessing,
Most Reverend Father in Christ,
My most Venerable Father.

1. Although I was compelled to depart externally from the Order of Pious Schools,²⁷³ nevertheless, I internally love it as the one who spiritually formed me, and internally I most humbly recognize, with sentiments of veneration, you as my Father and Superior. Therefore, by this letter, I most humbly ask you, Father, for the sake of the tranquility of my soul and my salvation, regarding this matter which I present and manifest to Your Fatherly Reverence, for the sake of finding out what is the internal will of Your Fatherly Reverence, to decide and prescribe for me what in the Lord seems to Your Fatherly Reverence to be more perfect and more pleasing to the Divine Majesty.

2. About sixteen years ago (inasmuch as I can remember), I was compelled by Fr. Francis of Jesus Mary, at that time Rector of the Warsaw house and governing the Polish Province during the absence of the Provincial, who had left for the General Chapter, to remove the habit [of the Congregation] of the Poor of the Mother of God [of Pious Schools]²⁷⁴ (which I retained for some time after being externally released [from vows], until I received the response to my letter transmitted to the above-mentioned Chapter).²⁷⁵

3. Then, having consulted theologians and pious men as to my canonical status, after having refused the lucrative and emi-

²⁷³ The reasons why Fr. Papczyński felt "compelled" to leave the Piarists are given in the *Apology* (above, *HW*, pp. 873-899, n. 6). He was released from simple vows and the oath of perseverance with the Piarists on December 11, 1670. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 144-214 (Doc. VI).

²⁷⁴ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 219, 227-229, 230-231.

²⁷⁵ The letter in which Fr. Papczyński asked to be readmitted to the Piarists (under certain conditions) was sent at the end of 1670. Cf. *Positio*, p. 219 (Doc. VII, A, 2, intr.).

nent prelatures²⁷⁶ offered to me, I assumed the white habit²⁷⁷ with the permission of the local Ordinary and with the blessing of the Apostolic Nuncio. After some time, I retired to a vast wilderness,²⁷⁸ where I erected a small church under the title of the Immaculate Conception of the B.V.M. and of St. Michael. I also admitted some companions with the permission of the Ordinary, which I had obtained in the form of a decree.

4. Having lived there for a few years in rather severe conditions,²⁷⁹ I was then called to New Jerusalem, commonly called Góra [Kalwaria], by the pious, now deceased, Bishop of Poznań.²⁸⁰ I quite willingly did this, seeing that a house of the Order of Pious Schools had been founded there,²⁸¹ whose spiritual counsel I could use, and so be helped.

5. Afterwards, it pleased the Bishop to unite our house in Góra with the hermitage house and unite them in one tiny Congregation, protecting it by law.²⁸² He appointed me, unworthy as I am, to be its Superior for life.²⁸³ The Congregation was founded on the legal status of hermits of the first class, described quite clearly and very precisely by the extremely learned man, Prosper Fagnani and also by Lauretto de Franchis,²⁸⁴ for the sake of aiding the souls of the faithful departed who are deprived of help, particularly those of soldiers and victims of pestilence, which will be more evident

²⁷⁶ Cf. *Positio*, p. 359, 494. Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 903-904, n. 7, § 6.

²⁷⁷ Cf. above, *HW*, p. 904, n. 7, § 7.

²⁷⁸ This "vast wilderness" was the Korabiew Forest, where Krajewski — his first companion — had his hermitage. Fr. Papczyński came there from Luboczyn on September 30, 1673. Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 906-907, 909, n. 7, §§ 11 and 16.

²⁷⁹ Father Papczyński stayed in the Korabiew Forest from 1673-1677. He speaks about its "severe conditions," because Bishop Święcicki prescribed for the residents there very strict "Statutes or Ordinances." Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 911, 912, n. 7, §§ 20 and 24.

²⁸⁰ Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski, who died on March 7. He transferred Fr. Papczyński from the Korabiew Hermitage to New Jerusalem (Góra) in 1677, where the Marians took over a small monastery called the Lord's Cenacle. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 378-382, 422-423, 427.

²⁸¹ The Piarists received a foundation in New Jerusalem from Bishop Wierzbowski in 1675.

²⁸² Cf. *Positio*, p. 396 (Doc. XI, 4 § 5); p. 397 (ibid., § 7).

²⁸³ Cf. *Positio*, p. 424 (Doc. XI, 10, § 7).

²⁸⁴ Cf. *Positio*, p. 424 (Doc. XI, 10, § 7); p. 461 (Doc. XII, 1, *Praef. Informat.*, § 2)

in the booklet *Norma Vitae*, which I sent to Your Fatherly Reverence, if in your commitment and charity you should desire to read it.²⁸⁵ In this tiny Congregation I professed my vows, according to the formula adjoined at the end of the first Chapter.²⁸⁶

6. And indeed, I did all of this as was foretold in a vision of our venerable Father, Joseph Calasanz of the Mother of God,²⁸⁷ who, at that time, restored me suddenly to good health when I was gravely ill. Such was it that from the house of my sister,²⁸⁸ about four hours after that vision, I set out on a very long journey and traversed about forty German miles from my father's house to the hermitage²⁸⁹ — both healthy and sound. I already revealed this to certain of my spiritual fathers, as well as those from the Institute of the Society of Jesus, and now I manifest it to Your Fatherly Reverence at the command of my confessor, such that I not hide this grace I received under a bushel basket.

7. The goal of this, my letter, is the following: that Your Fatherly Reverence, for my interior tranquility, stability, and salvation of my soul, having read (which I humbly ask you to do) this booklet of our *Norma Vitae*, would deign, as soon as possible, to clearly present to me your conviction, opinion, and will. Should I, as I swore, remain in this canonical status until the end of my life, as I belong to this [Congregation] now through this profession of mine (having already been released externally from the Institute of Pious Schools on the authority of the papal brief and having attained external release from the oath, etc.), for the glory of God, for the honor of the Virgin conceived without sin, for aid-

²⁸⁵ This purpose of the Marian Congregation is clearly expressed in the document of erection (cf. *Positio*, p. 395: Doc. XI, 4, § 2) and in the first chapter of *Norma Vitae: De fine et admissione*, § 2. Cf. *Positio*, p. 463, Fr. Papczyński sent Fr. Armini a copy of *Norma Vitae*, which was first printed in 1687.

²⁸⁶ Cf. *SH*, p. 101, n. 27

²⁸⁷ The founder of the Piarist Order, who died in 1648.

²⁸⁸ The vision of St. Joseph Calasanz probably took place in Podegrodzie in 1674, because in that year, Fr. Papczyński went to Krakow for the printing of *Templum Dei Mysticum*, but he also went to Podegrodzie to execute the will of John Papczyński.

²⁸⁹ About a distance of 300 kilometers traveled on foot from Podegrodzie to the Korabiew Forest.

ing the deceased deprived of the help of prayers and reparatory acts, or should I return to my first Institute of the Mother of God, which I particularly cherished, and which I [still] love and honor. What do some of our members of the Institute of Pious Schools advise me [to do]?

8. My Reverend Father, I did not maliciously or heedlessly depart from the Institute of Pious Schools; rather, compelled by the most severe persecutions, I consented to the apostolic indult.²⁹⁰ I departed and retired to a wilderness, and, by divine dispensation, I entered my present canonical status. I am ready to persevere in it, as I swore, and I am ready to return to the order of Pious Schools, if that appears to Your Fatherly Reverence to be more expedient, more perfect, and more profitable for me. For this reason, I have presented the entire matter such that, before the tribunal of my conscience, I would not have done differently. Your concern, Reverend Father, is to recommend what you decide in the Lord; my [concern] is to most humbly execute [that decision] for the Lord Jesus.

9. In the meantime, I kiss your hands that have always been friendly to me, and I embrace your kind feet. From my small eremitic cloister of the Lord's Cenacle in New Jerusalem, March 23, 1688.

The most submissive servant
of your Fatherly Reverence
Stanislaus of J[esus] Mary

The unworthy Superior of the Fathers Recollect
of the I[mmaculate] C[onception]
(*handwritten*)

[*A marginal note follows:*]

²⁹⁰ Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 875-889, n. 6, §§ 1-33; *Positio*, pp. 86-143, 151-188, 252-276. Father Papczyński is probably talking here about the brief *Cum felicitis recordationis* of Clement X from October 18, 1670.

10. I humbly ask you to direct your response to the Rector of the Warsaw house, obliging him not to open it, but to deliver it faithfully to my hand.

11. It serves the good name and the maintenance of many in the Order of Pious Schools that Fr. Joachim, once the first professor of theology in the Polish Province be preserved, lest he hastily transfer to the Camaldolese Order of Hermits.²⁹¹ This arises from my sincerity and love toward the Order.

9. A Letter to the Marians in the Korabiew Hermitage

Litterae ad Marianos in Eremo Corabieveinsi

New Jerusalem — April 19, 1690

Introduction

The Congregation of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception had only two houses in 1690: one was the Korabiew Hermitage, located in the Korabiew Forest, and the other was the Lord's Cenacle in New Jerusalem, where Fr. Papczyński had his residence since 1677. As the Superior of the entire Congregation, he was also responsible for the Korabiew Hermitage, but, due to the distance, was unable to monitor the lives of the Marians who were there. For this reason, he designates in this letter Subdeacon Joachim of St. Anne as an instructor who will watch over the religious life of all members, and take charge of the studies of the younger members. Fr. Papczyński also includes in this letter some ascetic and disciplinary ordinances for the community life of this house.

²⁹¹ Father Joachim Goralewicz of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom Fr. Papczyński must have met at the Piarist house in Góra (New Jerusalem), where Fr. Joachim stayed from 1686 until the fall of 1688 (when he went to Rome). Cf. *SH*, p. 103, n. 32.

1. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, unworthy Superior of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Marian Fathers Aiding the Deceased. To the Brothers in the Hermitage,²⁹² my greetings and blessing.

2. There are two adornments by which holy institutes [of religious life] greatly shine: virtue and learning. Keeping the Rule of religious life manifests virtue, and the benefit of others recommends learning. Wherefore, guided by the divine disposition²⁹³ in governing and serving our small Congregation, we strive with all zeal to apply ourselves to this, such that we might see and recognize all our Brothers in the Lord as distinguishing themselves by the perfect discipline of religious life and the adornment of competent knowledge.²⁹⁴

3. And although until now we have not been able to fully realize our desires, nevertheless, we do not have any doubts that, with the help of the Lord our God, we will attain this in [due] time. Such that nothing would be lacking in what concerns our duty and office, we appoint and designate — for two years as an instructor in the true and solid spirit and in religious perfection, as well as in humanistic studies and exercises in moral theology and philosophy — our dearest brother in the Lord, Joachim of St. Anne, subdeacon of our Congregation,²⁹⁵ trusting, in the mercies of God, that he shall honor this office with excellence, which fell as his lot and was entrusted to him for the merit of obedience and love.

4. Consequently, just as we solemnly oblige and enjoin him, that he continuously and quite diligently be attentive, with the

²⁹² The Korabiew Hermitage, the “cradle” of the Marian Congregation. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 332-404.

²⁹³ By the words “divine disposition,” Fr. Papczyński refers to the document of erection from 1679, in which Bishop Wierzbowski appointed him Superior of the Congregation “*ad vitae suae tempora*,” that is, for life. Cf. *Positio*, p. 399 (Doc. XI, 4, § 11); p. 424 (Doc. XI, 10, § 7).

²⁹⁴ This desire is also set forth in *Norma Vitae*. Cf. NV, Part I, Ch. VI, §§ 2-3, 5-6; Ch. VII, § 5; Ch. VIII, §§ 2-3.

²⁹⁵ The Subdeacon Joachim bore the surname Kozłowski. It is not known when he joined the Marian Congregation, but it is known that he was one of the first companions of Fr. Papczyński. Cf. *Positio*, p. 698 (Doc. XVIII, n. 83). It is not known when he was ordained a subdeacon. Cf. *Positio*, p. 435 (Doc. XI, 12, § 3).

greatest rigor, to the keeping of our laws and to the exercises connected with studies, so we also exhort and, by all that is holy, we entreat all of you who are dear to me and each individually, that you be immediately, promptly, cheerfully, faithfully, humbly, continuously, and perfectly obedient to him in both of these areas.

5. And so, in the future, none of you, under the pain of excommunication, without our explicit permission, may depart from the Hermitage, even to the nearby villages or benefactors, with the exception of our Vicar²⁹⁶ and the Procurator of alms and of the house, for which office we declare, by this letter, our dearest brother in Christ, Andrew the Younger.²⁹⁷

6. Let no one withdraw himself from prayer — whether mental or verbal — or from our other common and customary practices and studies (unless he be impeded by some justified activity, with the knowledge of the Vicar or instructor). At meals during the week (with the single exception of the Vicar), let them read religious books.²⁹⁸ After the meals, immediately after completing one part of the Rosary, you are to dedicate time to the study of moral theology, which — according to the direction of the instructor — will be either dictated to you for being written down or read aloud from approved authors, always having examined how much progress one has made.²⁹⁹

7. Each Saturday, in due order, let them have short sermons about striving for virtue or about uprooting or avoiding vices, as well as about other salutary topics, which later (if this seems proper to the Vicar and instructor), on the following Sunday in the small church, standing by the altar and not by the ambo, they will fruitfully repeat to the people, if they be present.

²⁹⁶ Cf. *Positio*, p. 398 (Doc. XI, 4, n. 10), where, in the document of erection, it is said that the Superior of the whole Congregation is to have his Vicars in each house. This office was almost identical to that of local Superior. In 1687, Fr. Joseph Nowakowicz of All Saints held the office of Vicar in the Korabiew Hermitage. Cf. *Positio*, p. 485, n. 6.

²⁹⁷ The said "Procurator" is probably Andrew Deszpott of St. Matthew (d. 1750). No other companion of Fr. Papczyński had the name Andrew. Nothing is known about his life as a Marian before the death of Fr. Papczyński.

²⁹⁸ Cf. NV, Part I, Ch. VI, §§ 2 and 6.

²⁹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, § 3, where the Rosary and the study of moral theology are prescribed, but in a different order.

8. On each Sunday and feast, after the midday meal, let them read the rubrics of the Missal and Roman Breviary. Daily,³⁰⁰ while all preserve the silence from which the Vicar ought never to grant dispensation, let them read clearly during the midday and afternoon meal, for the edification of spirit and progress in virtue: *Norma Vitae*, Sacred Scripture, *The Little Mirror for Religious*,³⁰¹ *The Book of Examples* and *The Book of the Pious Brother Helpers*,³⁰² as well as *The Imitation of Christ*.³⁰³

9. On Sundays and feasts, let them sing Mass according to our custom. Let them all recite the Litany of Loreto or the Litany of the Name of Jesus on ordinary days during the read Mass for our Congregation.

10. The common flagellation, commonly called the discipline, is to take place on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, in common, for the duration of the Psalm *Miserere* [Ps 51] and *De Profundis* [Ps 130]. In the spirit of devotion, we recommend the daily private use of the discipline upon awaking and upon laying down to sleep.³⁰⁴ Manual labor, although quite brief, ought never to be neglected.

11. At the end, we ardently recommend, to all of you, love for God, devotion to the most elect Virgin and to the holy Patrons, mutual love, peace, harmony, the observance of the holy vows, love for zealous prayer and solid mortification, humility, patience, gratitude and perseverance with the help of God in this holy vocation. We also greatly entreat you that you not cease to continually commend me, a poor old man, in your prayers to the Lord God.

Given in the Lord's Cenacle, in New Jerusalem, on April 19, 1690.

[Place of the Seal]

Your Unworthy Servant in the Lord
Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary
(*handwritten*)

³⁰⁰ This reading of the rubrics of the Missal and Roman Breviary as prescribed by NV took place "*nonnullis diebus*" (on some days). Cf. *ibid*.

³⁰¹ This book, with the Latin title *Speculum parvum Religiosorum*, was published in Krakow by F. Ferdinand Ohm (or Januszowski), O.P. Cf. *Positio*, p. 485, n. 12.

³⁰² There is no known bibliographical note relating to these books.

³⁰³ Cf. NV, Part I, Ch. VI, §§ 2 and 5.

³⁰⁴ Common and private use of the discipline was prescribed in *Norma Vitae*, but without specifying its duration. Cf. *ibid*, Ch. IV, § 6.

10. Letter to the Order of Friars Minor

Litterae ad Ordinem Fratrum Minorum

Rome — March/April? 1691

Introduction

This letter is related to the efforts made by Fr. Papczyński to obtain papal approval for his Congregation, which would have a double benefit: first, the Marians, as members of an institute directly dependent on the Holy See, would be excluded from the Bishop's jurisdiction, which would protect the Congregation from being dissolved by him (there was such a threat from Bishop Witwicki).³⁰⁵ Second, papal approval would give the Marians the right to take solemn vows and this would prevent the desertion of members who were being dismissed from simple vows (regarded as mere promises) by confessors.

Father Papczyński went to Rome³⁰⁶ to work on obtaining such approval personally. He arrived in Rome in February 1691, hoping that solemn vows could be taken on the basis of his *Rule of Life* (*Norma Vitae*). However, in Rome he was told that, because of the decree of the 4th Lateran Council (1215), which forbade the founding of Orders with a Rule other than those already approved by the Holy See, it was impossible to receive papal approval based on his *Rule of Life*. Father Papczyński was, therefore, forced to adopt for the Marians a rule that was already approved. The Rule chosen was that of the Nuns of the Immaculate Conception,³⁰⁷ which Fr. Papczyński decided would be suitable for the Marians. However, since this Order

³⁰⁵ Cf. above, pp. 914-915, *HW*, n. 8, Introduction; *Positio*, pp. 504-505 (Doc. XIII, intr.)

³⁰⁶ Father Papczyński probably set out for Rome from New Jerusalem in November of 1690. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 433-436.

³⁰⁷ This order was founded in 1484, in Toledo, Spain, by St. Beatrice of Silva (d. 1492) and based on the Cistercian Rule, later replaced by the Rule of St. Clare. In 1511, these nuns (wearing a white habit) received a Rule of their own, better taking into account their special devotion to Mary Immaculate, but with the sub-

came under the jurisdiction of the Franciscan Order, he had to ask them to agree to the incorporation of the Marians into the Order of the Immaculate Conception. With that goal in mind, he wrote this letter to the Order of Friars Minor in the name and on behalf of all members of the Marian Fathers. The text of this letter is known to us today from the *Protocollum Ordinis*, from which the letter also gained its title, as assigned by the editor.

[A Letter of Entreaty to the Order of Friars Minor]

Most Reverend Fathers in Christ,
Most Venerable Lord Patrons,

1. Because the holy Order of Nuns of the Immaculate Conception, approved by Pope Julius II and generously endowed by Roman Pontiffs with many privileges, graces, and indults, and remaining under the jurisdiction and direction of Your Seraphic Order, shining with great renown for its sanctity and perfection,³⁰⁸ so, too, our small Congregation of the Immaculate Conception canonically erected in the Kingdom of Poland by the Bishop of Poznań, Stephen Wierzbowski, Archbishop-elect of Gniezno, for the sake of aiding the faithful departed deprived of aid,³⁰⁹ accepted under the perpetual protection³¹⁰ of the Most Eminent King and the Republic, endowed with certain indulgences and a Confraternity through Innocent XI of holy memory,³¹¹ roused by zeal for greater perfection and perpetual stability,

2. resorts to the bosom of Your Clemency and Holiness, most humbly beseeching [you] that you would deign to incorporate it to the aforementioned Order of the Immaculate Conception,

mission of their Order to the jurisdiction of the Order of Friars Minor. Cf. *Positio*, p. 506, n. 3, where more information about this Order is given.

³⁰⁸ Cf. *Positio*, p. 508, n. 1.

³⁰⁹ The first canonical erection of the Congregation of Marian Fathers by Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski took place on April 21, 1679. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 392-400 (Doc. XI, 4). The purpose of aiding the faithful departed is mentioned in the document from this occasion.

³¹⁰ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 376-378 (Doc. X, 7)

³¹¹ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 404-409 (Doc. XI, 6).

receive it under the protection and immediate direction of Your Most Reverend Father General of the Order or his Vicar, adorning and imparting to it such privileges, indults, and indulgences as you might desire and are capable of doing in a more enduring manner.

3. In addition, our Congregation desires and earnestly requests that you would appoint from among your greatly God-fearing Congregation, a few men burning with zealous devotion to the Immaculate Conception, endowed with extraordinary wisdom, who could better examine, correct, and adapt our *Rule of Life*³¹² to the holy Order of the Immaculate Conception, as a few details have already been corrected by your previous Reverend Father's Vicar,³¹³ while retaining the habit, our goal of rescuing the souls of the deceased, and the free choice of our Superior, whom the Reverend Father General of your Seraphic Order or his Vicar would approve.

4. If all this were to be granted to us, we will endeavor with attentive zeal to obtain its gracious approval by the Most Holy Apostolic See.³¹⁴

The most humble servants
of your Most Reverend Fatherly Lords,
The Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, Poles

³¹² Cf. This was *Norma Vitae*. Since no Marians were ever incorporated into the Order of the Immaculate Conception, this proposal was never carried out. It is important to note that this attempt to be incorporated into the Order of the Immaculate Conception is entirely distinct from the Marian's later incorporation into the Franciscans under the *Rule of the Ten Virtues*.

³¹³ This refers to Fr. Julian Chumillas, who was the Commissioner General of the Order of Friars Minor from June 9, 1685, to June 5, 1688. It is not known what corrections he made to the copy of *Norma Vitae* sent to him. Cf. *Positio*, p. 508, n. 7.

³¹⁴ Because the Marians were not granted incorporation into the Order of the Immaculate Conception, Fr. Papczyński did not make efforts to have it approved by the Holy See. The major obstacle to incorporation appears to have been the difficulty of adapting the Rule of the nuns to a community of men. *SH*, p. 112, n. 14.

11. The First Testament

Testamentum Primum

New Jerusalem — December 9, 1692

Introduction

According to the information provided by Fr. Wyszyński,³¹⁵ Fr. Papczyński, after returning from Rome in 1692, fell ill so seriously that he was convinced the sickness would lead to his death. He, therefore, wrote this spiritual testament, intended mainly for the members of his Congregation. His conviction was not fulfilled because he recovered his health (it is not known exactly when). So, he sealed the testament and wrote that it should not be opened until his death. This testament is called the “first” because later (1699/1701), Fr. Papczyński wrote another testament.³¹⁶

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

1. I, an unworthy priest and the greatest of sinners, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, daily awaiting the day of my death, which is for all uncertain as to its timing, am ready to accept, with humble thanksgiving, [the day of death] as appointed by the Lord of life and death. Because I am deprived of my own will through the vow of obedience, I cannot arrange a will,³¹⁷ so I will proceed by making this public declaration before the most Gracious and Most Holy Trinity, the Most Elect Virgin, and the entire Heavenly Court, as well as all of creation.

³¹⁵ Cf. *VW*, § 85.

³¹⁶ Cf. below, *HW*, pp. 929-931, n. 12.

³¹⁷ Father Papczyński means a will in the ordinary sense of the word, i.e., which disposed of the material things he had. He could not make such a will since he had no possession of any material things, being an “*Eremita primi generis*” (hermit of the first class), according to the document of the *Second Erection*. Cf. *Positio*, p. 424, § 7; p. 487, n. 1.

2. As I was born and was educated in the Roman Catholic faith, so I die in [that same faith], believing all that Mother Church believes and enjoins to be believed, as well as what (for the merit of faith) she will enjoin for belief. If at some point I thought, stated, or wrote something, without consideration, against this faith, I revoke it, and I even desire, that it be unthought, unsaid, and unwritten.

3. I give thanks to the Divine Majesty for the graces, the proofs of kindness, the gifts, the benefits which have been most generously lavished upon me. But I regret, from the depth of my heart, and desire to grieve as perfectly as possible out of love for Him, all of my sins, all of which I immerse in the salvific wounds of my Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

4. I place myself at the feet of Mary, the Most Elect Virgin, the Mother of God, together with our entire small Congregation of her Immaculate Conception for all eternity, beseeching her clemency, intercession, direction, most efficacious protection, and in the face of death, through [her] most loving and powerful defense, freedom from all the traps of the enemy, from all temporal and eternal evil, particularly that due to me as punishment, beseeching forgiveness, mercy, grace, and a plenary indulgence, and — through the most cruel death of her Son and through His and her own most painful suffering — eternal life and the abounding joy of the communion of saints in heaven.

5. As I dealt with many people and so could have offended, irritated, or exasperated many, I therefore beseech all and each person in particular, especially those whom I once scandalized, burdened, or disturbed unfairly, to forgive me. In the same way, I forgive all, as well as those who after my death will assail me, and I desire for them, and beseech the God of all goodness, that He would be most gracious to them.

6. I do not provide for any disposal of material things, as I am voluntarily poor and possess nothing as my property, just as I have had everything in common and received everything from the common [fund].³¹⁸ I also leave everything to the community,

³¹⁸ Cf. *NV*, Ch. III, § 2

desiring though for my writings to be burned³¹⁹ (as they are not worthy to be read and are entirely unfruitful). I do not, however, dare to command anyone to [do this], as I am both internally and externally emptied [of such a right].

7. For the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lord, my Bishop,³²⁰ because he has endured me in his diocese: may God be propitious and recompense and glorify [him], just as [He did] his predecessor,³²¹ who did so much good to me. Indeed, to all who have supported and protected this tiny Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, inspired by God for aiding the faithful departed, I promise a double portion of great [goods] from the hand of God. For my persecutors, just as they already have experienced it, punishment is prepared — as it is dangerous to touch those protected by the Blessed Virgin Mary.³²²

8. To my most beloved Brothers in Christ, I recommend, most urgently and most eagerly, the love of God and neighbor, unity in mind, humility, patience, sobriety, modesty, faithful fulfillment of their vocation and firm perseverance in it, due honor for the Virgin conceived without stain, aid [marked by] full zeal for the deceased, observance of the religious Rule, discipline and religious perfection and an ever more fervent spirit. Let them remember that what they have vowed to God and the Most Elect Virgin is stored up for them as a most certain and reliable reward.

9. Above all, I desire, my most beloved [ones], that among you would flourish peace, concord, and mutual love. “Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ” [cf. Gal 6:2]. May the God of peace and love guard you, direct you, defend and save you forever. To Him, in the one Trinity, be eternal glory, honor, praise, and in Himself, and in

³¹⁹ In the Second (and last) Testament of 1699/1701, Fr. Papczyński does not renew this wish.

³²⁰ This was Bishop John Stanislaus Witwicki, the ordinary of Poznań (1687-1698). Cf. *Pisma Zebrane*, p. 1273, n. 4.

³²¹ This refers to Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski, the predecessor of Bishop Witwicki, who died in 1687. Cf. *Pisma Zebrane*, p. 1458, n. 242.

³²² This is confirmed by Fr. Wyszyński in *VW* (cf. *VW*, §§ 80-82: *Positio*, pp. 696-698).

the Incarnate Word, and in all the elect, the sweetest delight, and particularly, in His Most Elect Virgin Mother, the Mother of mercies, the only hope and refuge of all sinners — and of me. Amen.

10. O God, O Goodness, O infinite Power, as You can, as You know, as You desire, have mercy upon me, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, the most unworthy priest, worthless servant, the greatest sinner (*handwritten*).³²³

11. I have written this by my own hand, in the little cell granted to me by the Most Gracious God, belonging to the Cenacle of the Lord. On December 9, 1692 A.D., in New Jerusalem.

12. I do not have any debts, except one, which — I confess — I owe to all, especially to those particularly devout persons of this city and to the priests [of the Institute of Priests] living together,³²⁴ to the inhabitants, benefactors, friends and enemies, a debt of gratitude, which I repay, by humble thanksgiving, to them, to whose holy prayers and propitiatory deeds I commend myself, and to whose favor and protection [I commend] my³²⁵ [confreres].

12. Letter to Marian Confreres

Litterae ad Marianos

New Jerusalem — April 16, 1695

Introduction

The content of this letter shows that Fr. Papczyński wrote it mainly to encourage the Marians in both houses to obey his recently elected Vicar and successor, Joachim of St. Ann, while defining the limits of his authority. At the end, he takes the

³²³ Father Papczyński probably initially intended to finish his will here (hence the note: *handwritten*), but then added two more paragraphs.

³²⁴ This certainly refers to the Bartolomite Congregation that was founded in 1640 by Bartholomew Holzhauser under the name of “*Instituto księży świeckich żyjących wspólnie*” (Institute of Secular Priests Living in Common). In 1683, the Bartolomites settled in New Jerusalem. Cf. *Positio*, p. 439, n. 6.

³²⁵ In the Latin we read simply “*meos*,” which refers to the Marians, his spiritual sons and confreres, especially those residing in the Lord’s Cenacle.

opportunity to give the confreres spiritual encouragement and admonition. Therefore, it can be deduced that a General Chapter was held shortly beforehand, where the aforementioned election took place. However, we have no documentary confirmation of this Chapter of the election, because no documents related to it have survived.

1. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, unworthy Superior of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception of the Marian Fathers Assisting the Deceased. Greetings to the Brothers in the [Korabiew] Forest and in the Cenacle of the Lord.

2. Unceasingly concerned about your salvation and the good of the Congregation, both for increasing its good as well as for attaining this salvation by divine grace, we seek and make use of those means, by which we might — by the mercy of God — obtain both for ourselves merit before God and for you a just remuneration for [your] good works.

3. Therefore, that we might more fervently and assiduously hasten along the path of the Lord's commands, foreseeing that, in addition to heavenly help, the impulses coming from our minds are also necessary, because we cannot be everywhere and always serve you by both good and salvific instruction (although we are among you the most worthless and the least suitable) to inspire each of you to perfection, therefore, in regard to this care and this task we receive the brother, dearly beloved to us in Christ, Joachim of St. Ann,³²⁶ elected by you as our Vicar and successor. From all and each of you, we require and implore you in the Lord, that you be candidly and honestly obedient in all things, to his devout exhortations and just decrees, as well as whatever sort of ordinances that do not oppose our own, which first of all

³²⁶ In 1690, Joachim of St. Ann Kozłowski (born 1658), subdeacon, was appointed "instructor" for his confreres in the Korabiew Forest (Cf. above, *HW*, p. 919, n. 9: Letter to the Marians in the Korabiew Hermitage, § 3). In 1691, Kozłowski, still a subdeacon, accompanied Fr. Stanislaus on his journey to Rome. After returning to Poland in 1691, he was ordained a deacon and priest. Cf. *Positio*, p. 617, n. 2.

concern the glory of God, next the salvation of your souls and progress in virtues, as well as the good of the Congregation, as to the one, who had the delegated authority granted by us (with the exception of promoting [someone] to holy orders, the expelling of the incorrigible, as well as the appointment of local Superiors).

4. In conclusion, we admonish both the priests as well as the brothers, each individually and all together, that they be mindful of their religious vows [made] to God; let them particularly, however, avoid the crime of [possessing] property;³²⁷ detest discord, revolts, and murmuring against the Superiors; abstain from hurtful conversation; zealously promote the common good; be most devoted to modesty, patience, humility, obedience, sobriety, diligence, and prayer, so that dead to the world and its vices, they may live in Christ Jesus, our Lord, forever.

In the Cenacle of the Lord, April 16, 1695.

[place of the seal]

Stanislaus, Superior [General]
(*handwritten*)

13. Letter to Fr. John Foci, SP

Superior General of the Order of Pious Schools

Litterae ad P. Ioannem Foci, S.P.

New Jerusalem — February 17, 1696

Introduction

Father John Foci, the Superior General of the Order of Pious Schools (1692-1699), came to Poland in November 1695 to carry out a General visitation of the houses of the Order. On February 8, 1696, he came to Góra (New Jerusalem) and began the visitation of the Piarist house there. On February 16, he visited Fr. Papczyński in the Cenacle of the Lord and on that occasion he was asked to affiliate the Marian Congregation to

³²⁷ Cf. below, *HW*, p. 945, n. 16 (Ordinances for the Korabiew Hermitage), § 7.

the Piarist Order, which would give them a participation in the spiritual goods of the Order.³²⁸ The request was granted, and the present letter is Fr. Papczyński's thanksgiving for this affiliation.

It should be noted that Fr. Papczyński, on the occasion of his visit to Rome, obtained a similar affiliation to the Order of Pious Schools on May 27, 1691, from Fr. Alexander Armini, who was the Piarist General at the time.³²⁹ However, since such an affiliation used to be a personal act of the Superior General, the one obtained from Fr. Armini lost its validity at the end of his term in 1692; hence, Fr. Papczyński had to ask his successor to the office to renew it.

Most Reverend Father in Christ,
My most venerable Father and Lord³³⁰

1. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude; however, as best I can, I meagerly express my thanksgiving to Your Fatherly Reverence, in my own name and that of my companions, for your remarkable beneficence, surpassing all temporal goods, by which you admitted us all to the enormous merits of your holy order³³¹ and incorporated us, as your own, to all of the most excellent deeds [performed by] all your [religious members] before the Divine Majesty.

2. We shall make every effort so that we might repay such an admirable love; we shall endeavor, such that our tiny Congregation would always have one heart and one soul with your holy Order.³³² And yet, that I may not seem to be exaggerated in my sentiments, let us be permitted to be your perpetual subjects and

³²⁸ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 243-245.

³²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 447-448.

³³⁰ The letter does not indicate to whom it was written. However, it is easy to prove that the recipient of this letter was Fr. John Franciszek Foci of St. Peter, the Superior General of the Order of Pious Schools. Cf. *SH*, p. 123.

³³¹ That is, the Piarist Order.

³³² Cf. Acts 4:32.

servants. I declare that such will I be always, together with my most beloved confreres.

3. In the Cenacle of New Jerusalem, February 17, 1696.

The most submissive and most devoted [servant]
of Your Most Reverend Father and Lord,
Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary
Not the Founder, but the unworthy servant,
Of the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception
(*handwritten*)

14. Second Testament

Testamentum Alterum

New Jerusalem — 1701

Introduction

Because another sickness seemed to threaten his life again (concerning which we have no information), Fr. Papczyński wrote a new spiritual testament, apparently intended to replace the previous one from 1692.³³³ It consists of two parts. The second, supplementary part has two sections and was written in 1701 (the first section is dated April 10, 1701), but the main, first part of this testament was probably written in the first half of 1699.³³⁴ The manuscript of this testament is no longer extant. Its content is known only from the *Protocollum Ordinis* into which it was entered. The title of this document, assigned by the editor of *Protocollum*, was borrowed from that source.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

³³³ Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 926-929, n. 11.

³³⁴ Cf. *SH*, pp. 127-128.

1. I, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, formerly a member of the Congregation of Pious Schools,³³⁵ now by the mercy of God a religious — though unworthy — of the Order³³⁶ of the Immaculate Conception, out of love for God fulfilling the divine decree, according to which all men must die once, publicly declare that I depart from this earthly life in the Roman Catholic faith, for which I was ready to shed my blood during the Swedish War.³³⁷ When I was going from the [Old] City³³⁸ with my companion³³⁹ near [the church of] the Dominican Fathers,³⁴⁰ a heretical soldier attacked me with an unsheathed sword. Meanwhile, my companion (although he was German)³⁴¹ fled, [as] I, having knelt down, presented my neck to be cut off; but by Divine Providence, it so happened that I was not wounded at all, even though I was quite strongly struck three times. However, for about an hour and a half, I experienced enormous pain.³⁴²

2. Now, I give thanks to the Divine Goodness, that He preserved me for an even longer martyrdom. For I suffered very grievous persecutions in the Congregation of Pious Schools. I was even nearly killed on account of enmity, and finally, I was

³³⁵ Father Papczyński was a member of the Piarists from 1654-1670.

³³⁶ Originally in 1699 this was probably "Congregation," but in 1701 the Marian Congregation became an Order (with solemn vows), and therefore Fr. Papczyński replaced the word *Congregation* with *Order* to reflect the current ecclesial status of his Institute.

³³⁷ This was the war of 1655-1660, during which the Protestant Swedes invaded Poland and attempted to crush Polish culture and the Catholic religion. Warsaw was seized by the Swedes, and an eyewitness wrote that in Warsaw "Swedes kill whoever they want in the streets with impunity."

³³⁸ This was the Old City of Warsaw (inside the walls). The Piarists had a house on Długa Street, outside the Old City but only a short distance from its walls.

³³⁹ This was, undoubtedly, Joseph Starck of St. Catharine, who was sent together with Stanislaus for theological studies in Warsaw. Cf. *Positio*, p. 286 (Doc. IX, 1: A.D. 1655).

³⁴⁰ The Dominican church of St. Jacek was located outside the Old City, but only a few steps from the city gate.

³⁴¹ Starck is denoted as "Germanus Podoliniensis" in the *Elenchus of Students* from Podoliniec. Cf. *Positio*, p. 494, n. 8.

³⁴² We do not know the date of this incident, but it must have occurred after September 8, 1655, when the Swedes occupied Warsaw, but before May 6, 1656, when the Piarists moved from Długa Street to a safer location.

most unfairly deprived of my first vocation. Before God, I forgive all those who have caused this.

3. Having been dispensed from the oath of perseverance in the Congregation of Pious Schools by the authority of the brief of Clement X,³⁴³ having rejected the ecclesiastical benefices and prelatures which were offered me by two of my patron bishops (Trzebicki of Krakow³⁴⁴ and Gembicki of Płock), by divine inspiration, on the counsel of the most distinguished theologians and with the consent of the episcopal sees of Krakow and Poznań, I assumed the white habit in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Most B.V.M., and, [dressed] in it, presented myself to express my obedience and submission without delay to the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lord Archbishop Ranucci, the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland. I received [his] blessing as well as [his] praise and approval for my proposal of founding this tiny Congregation.

4. I pass over other matters in silence, because they are adequately expressed in the authentic documents regarding the erection [of the Congregation]. Rather, I most humbly turn with the publican to beseech the Divine Majesty to deign, by His mercy, on account of the merits of my Lord, Jesus Christ and of the most Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the Saints, to forgive me all of my sins and the punishment due to them.

5. As its unworthy Superior, I most devoutly entrust this tiny Congregation forever to my Lord, Jesus Christ, and to the Most elect Virgin, His Mother Mary, as the true and only Founders, Directors, Protectors and Patrons of this tiny Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, Helper of the Deceased.

6. To my companions and — if it is proper to say, to my sons — I greatly recommend love of God and neighbor, zeal in [living] the Catholic faith, honor, respect and obedience to the most holy

³⁴³ The was the brief *Cum felicis recordationis* from October 18, 1670.

³⁴⁴ Father Papczyński probably at the beginning of 1671, received from Bishop Trzebicki the benefice (*beneficium*) of the chaplain of the Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. However, he renounced this function, moving to the Diocese of Poznań, as he saw no possibility of implementing his plan to establish the Marian Congregation in the Diocese of Krakow.

Apostolic See, the observance of the vows, humility, patience, aiding the deceased and peace with all.

7. I beg pardon of all, both members of the Congregation as well as persons outside [the Congregation], if I have offended or scandalized any of them, imploring them to forgive my weakness out of love for Jesus Christ.

8. To the most dignified Wierzbowski family, I offer immortal thanksgiving for the benefits I have received [from them], hoping that they will always be most favorable to our tiny Congregation.³⁴⁵ I obtained many graces from His Eminence, the Most Reverend Prince Cardinal Radziejowski,³⁴⁶ for which God will reward His Eminence with eternal life. Humbly I beseech the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lord Bishops of Poznań, that they would deign to support, preserve, and protect this tiny Congregation that has been legally and canonically founded in their diocese. May the Lord be the reward for the religious dwelling in Góra [Kalwaria], for their love, kindness, and tolerance of my person, as well as for the most reverend priests [from the Institute of Priests] living in common,³⁴⁷ as well as for its citizens.

9. I depart without return; pray for me as I will [pray for] you, whose prayers and propitiatory deeds will attain the mercy of God [for me]. I leave the portrait of my person to be seen by those who are curious;³⁴⁸ whereas the life of my Lord Jesus Christ to be imitated.

10. Now, as the unworthy Superior, I come to the [matter of] making provisions. I leave and resign the maintenance of the

³⁴⁵ These were the relatives of the deceased Bishop Stephen Wierzbowski. There are no documents confirming these benefits and it is not known if after the death of Fr. Papczyński the Wierzbowski family still acted as protectors of the Marians, as they promised in 1688, and as Fr. Papczyński expected when he wrote this testament. Cf. *SH*, p. 132, n. 27.

³⁴⁶ It is not known what graces were obtained from Cardinal Radziejowski (d. 1705), whose village of Zator bordered the Marians' property in the Korabiew Forest.

³⁴⁷ Cf. above, *HW*, p. 929, n. 11 (First Testament), § 12.

³⁴⁸ This probably refers to the portrait of Fr. Papczyński painted by an unknown artist, which today can be found in the Marian house in Skórzec (Poland). Cf. *Positio*, p. 496, n. 24.

[Korabiew] Hermitage³⁴⁹ and the Cenacle of the Lord³⁵⁰ to those fathers and brothers who bound themselves in their consciences to never leave these houses until death.³⁵¹ Father Joachim of St. Ann, elected as my coadjutor,³⁵² by permission of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lord [Bishop] Administrator,³⁵³ I declare to be [my] successor as well,³⁵⁴ obliging his conscience, by the severe judgment of God, to be as strict as possible in ensuring that the religious Rule imprinted by God be observed. But as he is now abroad, I therefore entrust the direction of this tiny Congregation to my Assistants: to Fr. Joseph of All Saints and to Fr. Cipriano of St. Stanislaus. I also command, in the Name of God, that all the fathers and brothers be obedient to them in the Lord and for the Lord.

11. Mindful of the vow of poverty, I ought not to command anything as regards the other matters, because while many things often do not turn out as they ought, so by the divine will I distribute unspecified sums [of money] in the Decree of the Warsaw Consistory in this manner: a thousand florins inscribed for me in the Czersk acts as a simple debt by the Distinguished Lady Theophila from Windiki Lasocka, wife of the Łomża cupbearer, and also the one thousand, five hundred [florins deposited] with the Distinguished Lord Constantine Lasocki, I inscribed to the Cenacle of the Lord and to my [confreres] here, serving God (and not anyone else), particularly to Frs. Joseph and Cyprian, under the condition, that on account of the annual interest, they and

³⁴⁹ This was the first Marian foundation (1673) in the Korabiew Forest.

³⁵⁰ This was the second Marian foundation (1677) in New Jerusalem (Góra).

³⁵¹ Evidently the Marians assumed such an obligation, because on March 8, 1697, Bishop Nicholas Popławski, an official from Warsaw, ordered them to do so. "*Qui perpetuam stabilitatem loci iurare debebunt*" (cf. *Positio*, p. 442: Doc. XI, 13, §13). Cf. *Positio*, p. 496, n. 27.

³⁵² Fr. Joachim of St. Ann was elected coadjutor of Fr. Papczyński at the General Chapter of the Marians in 1698 (sometime after March 11, 1698, and before going to Rome that fall).

³⁵³ This was Bishop Jerome Wierzbowski, the suffragan of Poznań (1682-1712), who, after the death of the Ordinary Bishop John Stanislaus Witwicki, was the administrator of the Poznań diocese from March 11, 1698, to May 18, 1699.

³⁵⁴ It should be noted that as early as 1695, Kozłowski was referred to as the successor of Fr. Papczyński. Cf. above, *HW*, p. 927, n. 12, § 3.

their successors celebrate each week two Masses, one for the deceased deprived of help and the other for sinners.³⁵⁵

12. All the documents concerning the properties both of the [Korabiew] Hermitage as well as the Cenacle of the Lord, the authentic *Norma Vitae*³⁵⁶ with all the writings and the seal of the Congregation: I trust to the care of Fr. Cyprian of St. Stanislaus, Superior of the Cenacle of the Lord. One hundred florins [deposited] with the Noble Lord Bogatek, and the same amount deposited in the common fund, I assign for the repair of the Cenacle of the Lord. The remaining matters I orally commissioned to this same Fr. Cyprian. To all my present and to each of my future brothers and companions, I allocate the most magnificent foundation: the Providence of our most gracious Father.

13. The blessing of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the participation in the Holy Spirit, the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy, the care of all the heavenly saints always be with you all. Amen.³⁵⁷

14. In 1701 A.D., on April 10, I confirm all that is written above, although our tiny Congregation already is an Order with solemn vows under the *Rule of the Imitation of the Ten Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary*,³⁵⁸ which I most humbly receive and according to which I desire to again make my solemn profession;³⁵⁹ with the caveat, that if I should live, there be a better ordinance regarding the houses.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁵ Cf. *Positio*, p. 497, n. 37.

³⁵⁶ This evidently refers to the manuscript of *Norma Vitae*, which was corrected by Cardinal Colloredo in 1694 and approved by Bishop Popławski in 1698. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 455-458 (Doc. XII, 1, intr. G).

³⁵⁷ Here ends the first and main part of the testament, written by Fr. Papczyński in 1699.

³⁵⁸ The Marians were incorporated into the Franciscans under this Rule on September 21, 1699. For information concerning the origin of this Rule, cf: *Positio*, pp. 540-541 (Doc. XIII, 7, § 3).

³⁵⁹ Fr. Papczyński made his solemn profession according to this Rule on June 6, 1701. Cf. below, *HW*, pp. 941-943, n. 15.

³⁶⁰ Fr. Papczyński had already made a certain "ordinance" regarding the houses in the first part of this second testament written in 1699. He seeks to give a "better" ordinance below in § 17.

15. If Fr. Joachim, by consent of the fathers, be again confirmed as coadjutor, then I oblige him, by the awful judgment of God, that he would not innovate anything in regard to the habit I have prescribed, or to the name of the Order; nor may he dare to impiously abolish the veneration of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary which we — quite unworthy — offer to Her Majesty through the recitation of the small Office of the Immaculate Conception and the entirety of the Rosary. Similarly, as to introducing the use of “burning alcohol” [vodka], let him be aware that this [drink] is forbidden to him and to all, because that drink, by the hidden mercy of God, is foreign to our Congregation.³⁶¹

16. Although I can barely sign with my gravely ill hand, I nevertheless [do so] with a most healthy mind possessed by God

Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, unworthy Superior
Of the Order of the Immaculate Conception
(*handwritten*)

17. The [Korabiew] Forest I bequeath to Fr. Joseph,³⁶² to John,³⁶³ and to all the others presently residing there³⁶⁴ and to their successors; the Cenacle of the Lord and the Goźliń house of the Most Holy and Sorrowful Mother,³⁶⁵ I entrust to Frs. Cyprian of St. Stanislaus and James of St. Ann, Paul of the Nativity of the Lord, Constantine of St. Casimir, and to the three currently living there, as well as to their successors, who nevertheless will be obedient to my successor elected in accord with the law. But, if they [my successors] should desire to introduce something new,

³⁶¹ This is evident from *NV* (Ch. IV, § 2) and from the Ordinances for the Korabiew Hermitage (cf. below, *HW*, p. 945, n. 16, § 5).

³⁶² Fr. Joseph Nowakowicz of All Saints was, at that time, the Superior of the Korabiew Hermitage. Cf. *Positio*, p. 552 (Doc. XIII, 10, *subscriptiones in fine*).

³⁶³ This was probably Fr. John of St. James, who later left the Order or was removed from it.

³⁶⁴ It is impossible to identify these “other” Marians then residing at the Korabiew Hermitage.

³⁶⁵ This was the third house of the Marian Fathers in Poland, established in 1698/1699. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 331-332.

may they [the other members] oppose it with the help of God and of the Nunciature.

18. Moreover, in the name of obedience due to God, I recommend that all the priests endorse this by signing their name, and if somebody should refuse, let him be considered as not being my son and a faithful servant of the most holy Mother of God, as [stated] above.

19. I was present at this matter, and I wrote at his command everything that was dictated by our Father, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, and what remains was signed by his own hand. Under oath, I bear witness to this.

[place of the seal] Cyprian of St. Stanislaus,
Superior of the Cenacle

I was present and, by command, I sign
James of St. Ann
Procurator of the Cenacle of the Lord
(*Handwritten*)

By command, Fr. Joachim of St. Ann
Procurator General of the Order of the Immaculate Conception
of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary
of the Polish Congregation
(*Handwritten*)

By command, Paul of the Nativity of the Lord
President of the Gozliń residence; I was present.

15. Profession of Solemn Vows

Professio Votorum Solemnium

Warsaw — June 6, 1701

Introduction

On April 14, 1701, the Marians agreed to accept the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary*,³⁶⁶ and they were therefore obliged to make solemn vows under this Rule. According to the brief *Exponi nobis nuper* of November 24, 1699, given by Innocent XII to the Nuncio in Poland,³⁶⁷ the first person obliged to make this profession — in the hands of the Apostolic Nuncio — was to be the Superior of the Order of the Immaculate Conception, Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński. Then the other members of the Order were to make their profession in his hands. The ill Fr. Papczyński regained enough strength to report to the Nuncio in Warsaw and on June 6, 1701, he professed solemn vows in his hands. It is known that Fr. Papczyński received the profession of Fr. Joseph of All Saints on July 5, 1701, in the Cenacle. Later, he received the professions of the other confreres, but it is not known exactly when, as there is no documentary evidence of these professions.³⁶⁸ The text of Fr. Papczyński's profession, which he probably composed himself, is included in the document confirming it.³⁶⁹ For this reason, the text is presented here in the context of the certificate issued by the Nuncio.

Francis Pignatelli, by the grace of God and the Apostolic See, Archbishop of Tarent, by His Holiness, our Lord Clement, by Divine Providence Pope, Eleventh of this name, Household Prelate and Assistant, Apostolic Nuncio of this same and holy Apostolic See

³⁶⁶ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 550-552.

³⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 543-546.

³⁶⁸ Cf. *VW*, § 100, n. 207: *Positio*, p. 705.

³⁶⁹ Cf. *Positio*, pp. 553-557.

and with full authority Legate *de Latere* for his Most Excellent and Most Powerful King of Poland, August II, as well as for the entire Kingdom of Poland and for the Great Duchy of Lithuania.³⁷⁰

To all together, as well as to each in particular, whom it concerns or whom in any way it might concern, we declare and bring to the indubitable notice of all, that we personally received from the Reverend Fr. Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, Superior of the Order of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Polish Congregation, Helper of the Deceased and of Pastors, while kneeling, [his] religious profession, that is, his solemn religious vows, in the following manner, namely:

In the name of the Most Holy Trinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as well as of the Most Worthy Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

I, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, unworthy Superior of the Order of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, a Polish Congregation, Helper of the Deceased and of Pastors, I promise and vow to God and to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and to all the Saints, and to You, most Illustrious and Reverend Lord, Francis Pignatelli, by the grace of God and the Apostolic See, Archbishop of Tarent, in the Kingdom of Poland Nuncio of His Holiness, our Lord Clement, by Divine Providence the Eleventh Pope of this name, that during the entirety of my life I will observe the *Rule of the Imitation of the Virtues of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary*, in that which is not contrary to our religious Institute, living in chastity, obedience, and holy poverty, adjusting my life to this *Rule* by this kind of obligation, by which in or through it are bound those who profess vows upon it;

We accepted in our hands this profession and the professed vows on June 6, 1701, in the presence of witnesses of the facts given above: Reverend Fr. Cajetan Bellavita, a priest of the

³⁷⁰ Francis Pignatelli was named the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland on May 12, 1700 (effective July 20, 1700). He remained as such until the end of 1703. Cf. *Positio*, p. 553, n. 1.

Theatine religious house in Warsaw, and Lord Charles Vander, our chamberlain.

Francis, Archbishop of Tarent, Apostolic Nuncio

[place of the seal]

Séptimos Palutius, General Auditor

Adalbert Skwarczyński, Chancellor

Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary

Unworthy Superior

(*handwritten*)

16. Ordinances for the Korabiew Hermitage

Praecepta Pro Eremo Corabieviensi

Korabiew Forest? — 1701?

Introduction

This document is not dated, but there are some indications that it was written in 1701, perhaps in June of that year, because we know that it was around this time when Fr. Papczyński regained his strength and was able to go to Warsaw to make his profession of solemn vows before the Apostolic Nuncio.³⁷¹ Therefore, it is possible that about that time he was able to go also to the Korabiew Hermitage for a visitation and that these Ordinances were made and written while he was still there, at the end of the visitation. Further evidence to support the proposed dating of this document is given in the introduction of the critical Latin edition of this text.³⁷²

The text of these Ordinances is known to us from the *Protocollum Ordinis*, from whence comes also the title, given by the editor of the *Protocollum*.

³⁷¹ Cf. above, *HW*, pp.941-943, n. 15.

³⁷² Cf. *SH*, p. 142.

1. The novices ought to be surrounded by diligent care; therefore, they are never to be sent out from the Hermitage, even to the village.³⁷³ Let them not have conversations with the professed; let them remain in their own novitiate. It is not permitted for them to have conversations with outsiders. In a word, they are to be educated according to the Constitution of Clement VIII on the reformation of religious.³⁷⁴

2. Let Br. Alexander³⁷⁵ teach Latin to our Brothers Jerome,³⁷⁶ Peter,³⁷⁷ and Andrew,³⁷⁸ and they should use [Latin] when they are together for two hours in the morning and two hours after lunch, as determined by the President. Let Brothers Gabriel³⁷⁹ and Paul,³⁸⁰ during this time in the novitiate, read to themselves cases of conscience.³⁸¹ Let them not neglect, however, manual labor — for at least two hours daily, and this for the sake of preserving health.

3. It is never permitted to dispense from silence at the common meals, and except during recreation, let there be uninterrupted reading of holy books and papal decrees, which are [to be] read daily (since for us they take the place of Constitutions).³⁸²

³⁷³ Father Papczyński refers here to neighboring village of Korabiewice.

³⁷⁴ This was the constitution *Cum ad regularem* of March 19, 1603.

³⁷⁵ Probably Br. Alexander of St. Mark, who was ordained a priest around 1703/1704. He left the Marian Order before 1715. Cf. *Positio*, p. 501, n. 4 ad textum.

³⁷⁶ Probably Br. Jerome of St. Valentine (d. 1735). Cf. *Positio*, p. 501, n. 5 ad textum.

³⁷⁷ Probably Br. Peter of St. James, who left the Marian Order around 1716. Cf. *ibid.*, n. 6 ad textum.

³⁷⁸ Probably Br. Andrew Deszpott of St. Matthew (d. 1750), ordained around 1710. Cf. *ibid.*, n. 7 ad textum.

³⁷⁹ Gabriel of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (d. 1728). He joined the Marian Fathers around 1700. Cf. *Positio*, p. 502, n. 8.

³⁸⁰ Paul Juskiewicz of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (d. 1757). He joined the Marians before the death of Fr. Papczyński and was ordained a priest around 1703. Cf. *ibid.*, n. 9.

³⁸¹ These are examples of applying moral principles to specific cases. In the 17th century, a popular work containing such examples was the *Summa casuum* of St. Raymond of Penyafort (d. 1275).

³⁸² The Marians did not have a *Constitution* then, because on November 24, 1699, they had received the *Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, but had not received papal approval of *Norma Vitae*, which after necessary adaptation would eventually be approved and serve as their *Constitution*. This approval of NV,

4. It is forbidden for all to keep food or drink in their rooms. Nor are they to eat or drink anything outside of common meals without the permission of the Superior.

5. Drinking of "burning vodka" [*crematum*] is forbidden both outside as well as inside the house under threat of losing the divine blessing, so as to honor Christ our Lord and Savior, [who was] thirsty upon the Cross.

6. The Superior ought not dare to depart from the house, except on rare occasion and for a serious reason. During the time of his lawful absence, let him appoint another to his place, to whom all should be obedient in the Lord.

7. Let nothing from the house, the church, or the library be given into the hands of nonmembers. It is also forbidden without our knowledge to give away any significant amount of money (with the exception of expenditures for our food and clothing). If, however, some would dare to retain money on his person or somewhere else (may God prevent them from doing so), then let them be declared as guilty of the crime of [possessing] property.

8. The Chapter of Faults ought to take place every Friday³⁸³ (in addition, those daily coming to the table for meals ought to candidly confess their faults, too).³⁸⁴ Common use of the discipline ought to take place on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.³⁸⁵

9. It is not permitted for women to [enter] the house or the arcades. In the place of the *Directory*, the old *Rule of Life* ought to be observed.³⁸⁶

Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary
Unworthy Superior
(*handwritten*)

in a revised and supplemented edition under the title *Statuta Patrum Marianorum Ordinis B.M.V. sub. Tit. Immaculae Conceptionis* was obtained only in 1723.

³⁸³ Cf. NV, Part I, Ch. IX, § 3.

³⁸⁴ It seems that Fr. Papczyński borrowed this custom of confessing faults in the refectory from the Piarists. Cf. *SH*, p. 145, n. 18

³⁸⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, Ch. IV, § 6.

³⁸⁶ This *Rule of Life* is designated as "old" or "vetus", because evidently Fr. Papczyński in this way distinguished the "old" *Rule of Life* published in 1687 from the "new" *Rule of Life*, which was corrected by Card. Colloredo in 1694, but never published. Cf. *Positio*, Doc. XII, 1. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 455-456.

APPENDIX

Translated and Edited by
Patrick Lynch, MIC

1. First Petition to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious (June 20, 1692)

*Resumé: Rome, June 20, 1692*¹

INTRODUCTION

Certain moralists considered the simple vows that the Marian Fathers were making in a Congregation of diocesan right to be ordinary promises, and therefore not as binding as solemn vows, which meant that they could be exempted from these vows by any confessor. The Marians had a religious rule (NV) that was more rigorous in comparison to the rules of other institutes. For this reason, some of them, having experienced a harsh life, succumbed to the temptation to leave the Congregation, despite having been previously sworn to persevere in it, and they obtained exemption from their vows from confessors. Such incidents greatly weakened the growing Congregation and prompted Fr. Papczyński — who had to temporarily stop his efforts to obtain papal approval for the Congregation of Marians, which would entail the profession of solemn vows — to petition the Holy See to grant the means to counter this crisis affecting his Community.

Neither the original nor any copy of this *Petition* has survived to this day, and the date of its writing is also unknown. Its content is known only from the *resumé*, i.e., the summary made in Rome to be presented at the session of the Committee of Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Religious, which took place on June 20, 1692 (which also

¹ Original: New Jerusalem (?) 1692.

dates the *Petition*). Before making any decision on this matter, the Committee resolved to send this request to the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland *pro informatione et voto* (for obtaining information and opinion).

This *Petition* was not included in the critical edition of Fr. Papczyński's historical writings (*SH*), because its version available today cannot be, strictly speaking, considered as Fr. Papczyński's own letter since it is a document written or edited in Rome for the purpose of submitting the petition contained in the original letter, and as such it does not quote the said letter literally and wholly. However, some parts of the original letter — as well as of the two following letters — give the impression of citing the petitioner's words (having changed, however, the first person to the third: instead of "I," it reads "he"). This document contains neither the place nor date of its creation.

The translation of the Latin text of this *Petition* (as a resumé) appearing here was taken from *Positio*,² while the introduction was translated from the Polish edition of St. Stanislaus' *Pisma Zebrane* [*Collected Works*].

Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC³

[*Outside:*]

**To the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious,
on behalf of Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary,
Superior of the Congregation of Marian Clerics of the
[Immaculate] Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
in the Kingdom of Poland.**

[June 20, 1692]

[*Inside:*]

² Cf. *Positio* pp. 514-515.

³ All the subsequent introductions in *Appendix* were also prepared by Fr. Casimir Krzyżanowski, MIC.

Most eminent and reverend Lords,

The most humble petitioner, Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, the unworthy Superior of the Religious Congregation of Marian Clerics of the [Immaculate] Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who assist the dead, informs your Eminences:

- i. That the Congregation was canonically erected in the Kingdom of Poland by the blessed Bishop of Poznań, Stefan Wierzbowski, to support the souls of the faithful departed who are deprived of help and to help parish priests in their pastoral care.⁴
- ii. That it was accepted by the present most distinguished King of Poland and the entire Republic of Poland under perpetual protection.⁵
- iii. That it was endowed with certain indulgences and a confraternity of the laity, also assisting the dead, by the late Pope Innocent XI.⁶
- iv. That the aforementioned clerics [of this Congregation], after a year of trial, make, for a greater perfection, three essential vows with the irrevocable pledge of enduring forever in the Congregation, from which one can be released only by the Holy See in some particularly justifiable cause of passing to an Order with a stricter rule at the request of the Superior of the Congregation.⁷

⁴ The Congregation of Marian Fathers was canonically erected on the 21st of April 1679 (cf. *Positio*, pp. 392-400). In fact, in the document of the first erection, there is no mention of helping parish priests in their pastoral care being a goal of the Congregation. In the document of the second erection from 1687, it was written that the bishop who erected the Congregation approved the *Rule of Life* that was printed in the same, and it was in this document that it was mentioned that the Marians would not be forbidden from helping parish priests. Cf. *Norma Vitae*, Part I, Ch. I, § 3.

⁵ It was a privilege approved by the parliament of the Commonwealth of Poland on April 27, 1677. Cf. *Positio*, p. 378.

⁶ Cf. Breve *Cum sicut accepimus*, given on March 20, 1681. Cf. *Positio*, pp. 406-409.

⁷ This was defined in the document of the second erection of the Congregation. Cf. *Positio*, p. 426.

Nevertheless, there are found some confessors so audacious that they have absolved some of the priests and clerics of this Congregation not only from the irrevocable oath spoken of, but also from vows, [resulting in] notable ruin for the same Congregation and the scandal of [their] neighbors and [even] the heretics living in those parts.

Therefore, the aforementioned Superior humbly asks that your Eminences would deign to declare:

- i. That the vows of the same Congregation are not dispensable, except by the Holy See in a most grave case and at the request of the Superior of the same Congregation.
- ii. That those who have been dispensed from the aforementioned vows by some theologians⁸ have a duty to return to the said Congregation; otherwise they are to be dealt with as apostates.
- iii. That under the penalty of excommunication *latae sententiae*, even the Superiors themselves of the said Congregation, during their time [of office], are prevented from dispensing or absolving anyone from such vows.

Which...etc.

⁸ According to some moral theologians, confessors had the ability to dispense from vows.

2. Second Petition to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious (August 22, 1692)

Resumé: Rome, August 22, 1692⁹

INTRODUCTION

By sending the second petition, Fr. Papczyński resumed his efforts to obtain papal approval for his Congregation through its legal incorporation into the Order of Nuns of the Immaculate Conception (as a result of accepting its Rule). He initiated these efforts during his stay in Rome in 1691.¹⁰

Neither the original of this *Petition* nor any copy survived to this day; the date of its creation is also unknown. Its contents are known only from a resumé, i.e., a summary prepared in Rome for submission at the session of the Committee of Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Religious, which took place on August 22, 1692, (and which also dates the *Petition*). Unexpectedly, the Committee did not submit the matter along with its opinion to the Pope — as was customary — stopping only at making the following decision: *Supplicet Sanctissimo*, in other words, that Fr. Papczyński had to submit this petition directly to the Holy Father,¹¹ apparently without realizing that Fr. Papczyński had already done so in the meantime — we do not know exactly when and for what reason — as can be seen from the next document (see below, No. 3). The above decision had been probably sent to Fr. Papczyński at once, but we have no documentary proof of that.

⁹ Original: New Jerusalem (?) 1692.

¹⁰ Cf. *SH*, n. 10.

¹¹ Cf. *Positio* p. 515, which provides a possible explanation of this fact.

This second *Petition* (in its resumé) is taken from *Positio*,¹² while the introductory note was translated from the Polish edition of St. Stanislaus' *Pisma Zebrane* [*Collected Works*].

[*Outside:*]

**To the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious
on behalf of Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary,
Superior of the Congregation under the title of
the Marian Clerics of the Immaculate Conception of
the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of Poland.**

[August 22, 1692]

[*Inside:*]

Your Eminences were recently presented with a letter of petition on behalf of the petitioner Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, the unworthy Superior of the religious Congregation under the title of the Marian Clerics of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who assist the dead, and [who were] canonically founded in the Kingdom of Poland. He asked for the following things, namely:

- i. That the vows of the same Congregation are not dispensable, except by the Holy See in a most grave case and at the request of the Superior of the same Congregation.
- ii. That those who have been dispensed from the aforementioned vows by some theologians have a duty to return to the said Congregation, otherwise they are to be dealt with as apostates.
- iii. That under the penalty of excommunication *latae sententiae*, even the Superiors themselves of the said Congregation, during their time [of office], are prevented from dispensing or absolving anyone from such vows, as was more

¹² Cf. *Positio*, pp. 516-517.

extensively contained in the aforementioned letter of petition.¹³

The Sacred Congregation sent back the aforementioned letter of petition to the Nuncio of Poland for information.¹⁴

Now once again the aforementioned Superior [and] petitioner humbly begs your Eminences to confirm and approve by Apostolic authority the said Congregation, and also to unite, incorporate, and aggregate it to the Order or Institute of the Nuns of the [Immaculate] Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary approved by Julius the Second, with the communication of every and each privilege, indult, grace and indulgence conceded by the Apostolic See to the said Order or Institute, and of whatever shall be conceded in the future,¹⁵ and allow:

- i. That the said Congregation would be able to own movable and immovable goods, confirming the ownership of land and foundations that its members currently possess, namely Góra Kalwaria,¹⁶ Puszcza Korabiewska,¹⁷ and Woraszceń¹⁸ and others existing at [that] time.
- ii. That [this Congregation] would be under the direct jurisdiction of the Most Reverend Father, the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance of St. Francis, yet preserved and remaining free in the election, authority, and government of the Superior of the same Congregation, to be freely elected by the aforementioned clerics every six

¹³ Cf. *Annex*, n. 1

¹⁴ Cf. *Positio*, p. 516, footnote 2.

¹⁵ Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 924-925, n. 10, §§ 1-2.

¹⁶ This refers to the foundation of the Marian Fathers at the Lord's Cenacle in New Jerusalem, which was called previously "Góra" and later "Góra Kalwaria." Cf. Doc. X, 8.

¹⁷ Cf. This is the first foundation of the Marians in the Korabiew Forest (1673).

¹⁸ We do not have any other information about this foundation. Maybe it relates to one of the two foundations in "Russia" or in Lithuania, that the Marians, after some time, left due to some difficulties. Cf. *Positio*, p. 535, footnote 1.

years and to be confirmed by the aforementioned Minister General.¹⁹

- iii. That it would remain under the protection of the most eminent Cardinal Protector of the said Order of the Observance of St. Francis, and that the clerics of that Congregation deemed fit may be ordained priests by any Catholic bishop in communion with the Holy Roman Church.

[*Outside:*]

[*He makes petition to the Holy Father*].

3. Petition to the Holy Father Pope Innocent (September 13, 1692)

*Resumé: Rome, September 13, 1692*²⁰

INTRODUCTION

This *Petition* was to obtain papal approval for the Marian Congregation. It was submitted to Pope Innocent XII on September 13, 1692, and it was customarily delivered on the same day to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Religious *pro voto*, i.e., to acquire its opinion on the subject.

However, before forming its own opinion, the Congregation had to wait for the opinions and information which were requested from the Apostolic Nuncio in Poland by a letter of September 5, 1692. We know from Fr. Papczyński that — firstly — the examination of this matter and the preparation of the relevant information took the nunciature nearly a year; secondly — the case based on the received information was deliberated “for a long time” in Rome, probably by an appro-

¹⁹ Cf. above, *HW*, p. 925, n. 10, § 3.

²⁰ Original: New Jerusalem (?) 1692.

pritate Congregation's committee. It is not known if the result of this deliberation was ultimately sent to the Pope. We only know that in 1694, Cardinal Colloredo sent a negative answer to Fr. Papczyński. This answer did not mention anything — as we must assume — about the papal approval for his Congregation, but merely stated that the approval of the Local Ordinary was a sufficient basis for his community's legal existence in the Church.²¹ We do not know the exact reason why Fr. Papczyński did not obtain what he petitioned for.

Also, in this case, the original of this *Petition* did not survive to our times and its date is unknown. Its content is known only from the resumé, i.e., the summary, in which form the Congregation presented the *Petition* to the Pope. It gives neither the date nor the place where it was written.

The text of this *Petition* (in its resumé) was taken from *Positio*,²² while the introductory note was translated from the Polish edition of St. Stanislaus' *Pisma Zebrane* [*Collected Works*].

[*Outside:*]

To our Holy Father, Pope Innocent XII.

[On September 13, 1692

To the Congregation of Bishops and Religious *pro voto* that is, to be voted on].

**On behalf of
Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary,
the present Superior of the Congregation of Marian Clerics
under the title of the [Immaculate] Conception of
the Blessed Virgin Mary, who assist the dead.**

[On September 5, 1692 — [Sent] to the Apostolic Nuncio for information and a vote]

²¹ Cf. *Norma vitae* [*The Rule of Life*], *Prefatio informatoria*, § 4.

²² Cf. *Positio*, pp. 518-519.

[*Inside:*]

Most blessed Father,

It is humbly announced to Your Holiness on behalf of the petitioner Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary, the present Superior of the Congregation of Marian Clerics under the title of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who assist the dead:

- i. That the Congregation was canonically erected in the Kingdom of Poland by the late Stefan Wierzbowski, then the Bishop of Poznań, to assist the souls of the faithful departed who are deprived of help and to assist parish priests in their pastoral care;
- ii. That it was taken under eternal protection by the most serene King of Poland and the entire Republic of the Kingdom of Poland.
- iii. That the aforementioned clerics [of this Congregation], after a year of trial, make, for a greater perfection, three essential vows with the irrevocable pledge of enduring forever in the Congregation, from which one can be released only by the Holy See in some particularly justifiable cause of passing to an Order with a stricter rule at the request of the Superior of the Congregation.

Now the aforementioned Superior [and] petitioner humbly begs Your Holiness to confirm and approve by Apostolic authority the said Congregation, and also to unite, incorporate, and aggregate it to the Order or Institute of the Nuns of the [Immaculate] Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary approved by Julius the Second, with the communication of every and each privilege, indult, grace and indulgence conceded by the Apostolic See to the said Order or Institute, and of whatever shall be conceded in the future,²³ and allow:

²³ Cf. above, *HW*, pp. 924-925, n. 10, §§ 1-2.

- i. That the said Congregation would be able to own movable and immovable goods, confirming the ownership of land and foundations that its members currently possess, namely Góra Kalwaria, Puszcza Korabiewska, and Woraszceń and others existing at [that] time.
- ii. That [this Congregation] would be under the direct jurisdiction of the Most Reverend Father, the Minister General²⁴ of the Order of Friars Minor of the Observance of St. Francis, yet preserved and remaining free in the election, authority, and government of the Superior of the same Congregation, to be freely elected by the aforementioned clerics every six years and to be confirmed by the aforementioned Minister General.
- iii. That it would remain under the protection of the most eminent Cardinal Protector of the said Order of the Observance of St. Francis, and that the clerics of that Congregation deemed fit may be ordained priests by any Catholic bishop in communion with the Holy Roman Church.
- iv. That the vows of this Congregation are not able to be released by anyone, except the Holy See, in a very serious case [and] at the request of the Superior of the same Congregation, and that those who have been released from said vows by some theologians are bound to the return to the said Congregation; otherwise, they must be dealt with as apostates.
- v. And that [Your Holiness] would deign to forbid from now on, under the penalty of excommunication *latae sententiae*, that even the Superiors of the said Congregation, during their time [of office], should release anyone from such vows.

²⁴ Cf. above, *HW*, p. 925, n. 10, § 3.

About the Marians

The Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception is a worldwide community of about 500 priests and brothers who have been serving Christ and the Church for more than 350 years.

Founded in Poland in 1670 by St. Stanislaus Papczyński, the Marians were the first Catholic men's order still in existence to give witness to Mary's Immaculate Conception by bearing her title.

As the years passed, the Marians continued to spread beyond the borders of Poland. However, during the 19th century, the Marian Congregation's very existence was being challenged by a flood of political oppression. By 1909, the Congregation was reduced to a single elderly priest, Fr. Vincent Sękowski. At the moment of extinction, God sent Fr. George Matulaitis-Matulewicz who, as a child, was spiritually formed and educated by the Marians. He undertook renewing the religious order.

As an educator and social reformer, Fr. George — now Blessed George — renovated the Congregation of Marians in 1910, calling on its members “to serve where the need is greatest.” It was a period of restoration and great renewal for the Marians. Known as the Renovator of the Congregation, Blessed George served the Church as bishop of Vilnius, archbishop and apostolic delegate, and founder of two religious congregations of women. He challenged his fellow brothers in Christ to “Respond to the signs of your times ...” and “see how the gospel is touching humanity.”

The principal apostolic goals of the Marians are to promote and foster devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception, to aid the Holy Souls detained in Purgatory with God's abundant grace and merciful love, and to assist diocesan priests in their pastoral ministry and catechetical formation offered to the faithful. Faithful to Christ and His Church, and attentive to the spiritual needs of God's people, the Marians have been spreading the salutary message and devotion to the Divine Mercy since 1941.

