

THE ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER of The Dominican Laity

An Introduction to the Formation Program

Q. Why did God make you?

A. God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.

There is no more fundamental question than *why?*, and there is no more basic concern to each of us than our own existence. Why do we exist? What is the purpose of our lives?

This most important question is perfectly answered in the classic formulation of the *Baltimore Catechism* given above. The definitive and permanent goal of our lives is eternal life with God in heaven. But eternal life does not begin when we enter heaven; it begins the moment that grace is first infused into our souls at baptism. “Grace is nothing else than the beginning of glory in us,” as St. Thomas Aquinas says.¹ The life of grace that we live here on earth—including both love of God and love of neighbor—is the beginning of the eternal that finds its perfection in heaven. We may speak of “this life” and “the next life,” but the life of grace before death is one and the same life as the life of glory.

Eternal life, on earth and in heaven, is the end and purpose of every man. Our Savior instituted the sacraments and founded the Church as the means by which all men can receive grace and be lead to glory. All the other elements of our spiritual lives—the sacramentals, prayer, mortification, etc.—flow from and lead back to the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

The Dominican way of life can only be understood with reference to the end and means common to all Christians. For what makes someone a Dominican is not something separate and different from the means available to all Christians. It is not as if we first engage in the practices common to all Christians and then add extra practices (prayers, good works, etc.) that are unique to Dominicans.

Instead, the Dominican way of life is a special form of Christian life. Dominicans do what all Christians do, but they do them in a Dominican way. All Christians pray; Dominicans pray in a special way (for example, praying especially the Liturgy of the Hours and the Rosary). All Christians are invited by our Lord to live the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience according to their states in life; Dominicans live these counsels after the model of St. Dominic. All Christians have a devotion to the Mother of God; Dominicans give a special emphasis to Marian devotion in their lives. And so on.

The formation program you are about to begin will introduce you to the Dominican way of living the Christian life. The program consists in fourteen units, each of which is to be covered in a single meeting. Our chapter meets to study seven times a year (in September, October, November, January, February, March, and April), so the program can be completed in two years. If you miss one of the study meetings, you should meet individually with the Formation Director to discuss the content of the unit that was covered in that meeting. Over the course of these two years, you will be introduced to all the major elements of the Dominican way of life.²

¹ *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 24, a. 3, ad 2.

² Sometimes we speak of the “Dominican charism” or the “charism of St. Dominic.” Most often these expressions are equivalent to “the Dominican way of life.” *Charism* comes from the Greek word meaning

Because St. Dominic is the model for us all and the means by which the Holy Spirit gave us our form of life, we begin each year with a study of St. Dominic's life. In his life we see all the elements that we will single out and study separately in the other units. After studying the life of our founder, we consider the end of Christian life in this world: holiness or the perfection of charity. This includes a consideration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which play an ever more prominent role in our lives as we grow in holiness.

Having studied eternal life—both in heaven and on earth—we also study the means that lead to eternal life. Prayer is a principal means of growing in holiness, and we study both liturgical prayer (the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours) and private prayer. We consider how vocal prayer should mature into mental prayer and ultimately into contemplative prayer.³ The Rosary is one form of prayer especially dear to Dominicans, and we have units both on the Rosary and on Marian devotion in general.

Dominicans embrace the evangelical counsels and give a special emphasis to poverty. (The Dominicans were one of the original “mendicant” or “begging” orders.) Penance has been a prominent part of the Dominican Third Order since the time of its founding. Dominicans also study assiduously: first of all the Word of God, then theology, and whatever else serves to deepen our understanding of scripture and theology. Dominicans are not hermits or solitaries, but live a vibrant community life. And, of course, Dominicans are preachers, hence the official Latin title of our order: *Ordo praedicatorum* (Order of Preachers). The remaining units of the formation program consider how all these elements are part of the Dominican way of life.⁴

Although the most important elements of the Dominican way of life are covered in the fourteen units of the formation program as outlined, it is also important to see how these different elements are put into practice in our lives in a concrete way. The specific practices of our way of life are to be found in two places. One is the Rule of the Third Order, the other is the Particular Directory of the Western Province. The Rule is valid for all Third Order members throughout the world. by necessity, therefore, the Rule is very general, so that it can be adapted to different cultures and situations. The Particular Directory adapts the Rule to the culture and context of the Western United States at this time. Each unit of the formation program contains a short passage from the Rule or Particular Directory.

The fourteen units are as follows:

- A1. St. Dominic and the Psalms
- A2. Perfection of Charity
- A3. *Veritas*: Preaching
- A4. Devotion to the Blessed Mother
- A5. Liturgical Prayer: the Mass
- A6. Growth in Prayer
- A7. Penance

- B1. St. Dominic
- B2. Perfection of Charity/Contemplation
- B3. *Veritas*: Study

“gift,” and the Dominican way of living the Christian life is a gift given by the Holy Spirit to the Church through St. Dominic.

³ A traditional teaching of Dominican theologians is that not only are all Christians are called to holiness but also that all Christians are called to contemplative prayer.

⁴ Naturally, there are differences between how the friars, sisters, and members of the Third Order live the Dominican way of life. Our focus is always on the way members of our chapter embrace St. Dominic's charism.

- B4. Rosary
- B5. Liturgical Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours
- B6. Community/Apostolic Life
- B7. Evangelical Counsels & Poverty

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR A, UNIT I**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: THE LIFE OF ST. DOMINIC

Seven centuries ago battlemented parapets raised their bold turrets around the town of Calarùega, standing by the Roman road some thirty miles northward from Osma, the episcopal see of Old Castile. These medieval walls guarded the castle of the Guzmans, a family of Visigothic knights whose chivalry was famously jealous of its Christian faith as well as of its family honor.

Within this ancient town and of this blue-blooded Guzman stock Saint Dominic was born, about 1170. His father, Felix, seems to have been happily blessed with the qualities of Chaucer's "perfect, gentle knight," although we know but little more about him. His mother, Joanna d'Aza, had strains of Europe's noblest blood, and so renowned was her sanctity that she was beatified by Pope Leo XII. Besides Dominic, two other children of this union lived saintly lives, one, Mannes, having also been beatified.

Marvels accompanied Dominic's birth. Before her delivery, his mother "imagined," says Jordan of Saxony, the Saint's first biographer, "that she bore in her womb a dog, and that it escaped from her, holding in its mouth a burning torch, with which it set fire to the world." "On the day of his baptism the godmother of the Saint had a vision" relates Thierry of Apoldia, "in which the blessed child appeared to her marked on the forehead with a radiant star, the splendor of which illuminated the entire earth." Were not these fitting auguries of the infant's life-work? Christian art has deemed them such, for they are always associated with Saint Dominic's statues and pictures. The font used on the occasion of Dominic's baptism, it is not without interest to note, was later taken to Madrid, and even now the royal children of Spain are christened in it.

Dominic's infancy was passed amid ordinary circumstances. At the age of seven his parents placed him under the tutelage of his maternal uncle, a parish priest at the collegiate church of Gumiel d'Izan, not far distant from Calarùega. Here the young lad received his primary instructions, which, according to the medieval custom, consisted mainly in reading from the Latin Fathers. His biographers hint that even now his piety was intense. He would wander into the church to listen to the choral chant; or, when his mood so disposed, he would sit a long while gazing at the paintings in the church, which made their appeal to his religious instincts.

When fourteen, Dominic left his uncle's care and entered the schools of Palencia, then the best in Spain. Even at this youthful age he probably had a canon's title, as Guiraud suggests, which defrayed the expenses of his long education. His course at Palencia lasted about ten years. The first five or six were given to the medieval arts course, including logic; the rest of his time was devoted to the study of theology. A serious student, Dominic is said to have shown rather the mature gravity of an old man than the boisterous vivacity of a university student. Always he blended his studies with pious devotions. His charity was revealed at this period, during one of those terrible plagues which were the frequent scourge of medieval towns. In order to relieve the distress and misery of the poor of Palencia, he sold his books. Those were precious possessions before the invention of printing and were "annotated by his own band," as Brother Stephen reported at his canonization process.

The date of Dominic's ordination is not certain, but was probably 1194. Soon after this event he undertook his duties as canon at the Osma Cathedral. The canons of this church were living a regular life under the rule of Saint Augustine, with Didacus d'Azevedo as prior. The new priest's reputation for holiness and prudence must have preceded him, for the regular life of these canons was a reform measure, and Dominic was made sub-prior immediately. Two years later, when d'Azevedo became bishop of Osma, he appointed Dominic prior of the canons. The nine years of hidden life at the cathedral were given up to the holy practices of conventual life.

"At once," says Jordan of Saxony, "he began to appear among his brother canons as a burning torch, the first in sanctity, the lowest of all in humility, shedding around him an odor of quickening life, a perfume like incense on a summer's day. Like an olive tree which throws out its branches, like a growing cypress, he grew in holiness. He remained day and night in the church. One special demand he constantly addressed to God, that there might be bestowed on him a true charity, a love which should count nothing too dear for the salvation of men. He was accustomed to read the Gospel of Saint Matthew, the Epistles of Saint Paul, and *The Conferences of the Fathers*, by Cassian. These books, assisted by divine grace, raised him to a purity of conscience, to abundant illumination in contemplation, and to an eminent degree of perfection."

At length this quiet, contemplative life was intruded upon. In 1203 Dominic's bishop, Didacus d'Azevedo, took him on a diplomatic journey to Denmark, there to arrange a marriage for the son of Alfonso IX of Castile. This journey brought them through southern France, and thus occasioned the directive inspiration of Dominic's life. It appears that one night, while lodging in an inn at Toulouse, Dominic discovered his host was an Albigensian, an adherent of the pernicious heresy then demoralizing Languedoc. With a newborn apostolic fervor he ingeniously threw himself, heart and mind, into the work of rooting out his host's errors and of implanting again the true faith in the misguided soul. He argued all night, we are told, with a sweet and kindly charity; and won his host over to the truth of the Catholic faith. "From that time," Bernard Guidonis observes, "he cherished in his heart the project of spending himself for the salvation of misbelievers, and of instituting to that end a preaching Order, to be devoted to the evangelization of the nations."

With this fresh inspiration hot in his heart, Dominic's interest in his bishop's mission must have flagged. Nevertheless, he journeyed to Denmark, made the necessary negotiations, then returned to Spain and with a large retinue began the second trip to the north to fetch the young betrothed. When they reached Denmark the second time he and his bishop attended the obsequies of the fair lady for whom they had come. Then the retinue was dispatched to Spain with the sad news. But Dominic and his bishop went to Rome, presumably because of a mutual desire for missionary work among the heathen Cumans who inhabited the steppes of Russia. For this pious project they sought the papal sanction. Innocent III heard the apostolic desires of the two holy men, but saw a greater need for their preaching among the Albigensian heretics. He instructed d'Azevedo to retain his bishopric and to preach in southern France before returning to Spain. Dominic, likewise, was to preach with his bishop. Leaving Rome with the Pope's blessing, the commissioned preachers went to Languedoc.

Early in 1205, Didacus and Dominic arrived at Montpellier, just as the Cistercian missionaries were holding a conference to discuss whether or not they should discontinue their preaching on account of their meager success.

On becoming aware of the presence in the town of the Bishop of Osma and his companion, the Cistercians asked their counsel on the gloomy outlook of the mission. The Bishop perceived that the rich equipages of the missionaries, while befitting their dignity as papal legates, were a source of scandal and were quite in contrast with the show of poverty practiced by the Albigensian itinerant preachers. With keen insight into the situation,

Didacus and Dominic reminded the Cistercians of the importance of example in affecting the simple Midi folk. By pretentious holiness and by evangelical poverty, the heretics predisposed the people for the acceptance of their false teachings. Then Bishop d'Azevedo, speaking also for Dominic, said: "The missionaries of Christ must drive out one nail by another; must put to flight the show of holiness by the practices of sincere religion." He made it clear that the success of their preaching would be proportionate to the intensity with which they imitated the primitive apostolic spirit. This apostolic spirit could be had only by extreme sacrifices. This, in substance, was the Bishop's counsel. Hard indeed it was, but it was received in the spirit in which it was offered. By his encouragement and inspiration, Didacus created a new zeal in the preachers. After the conference was finished the Cistercians sent away their magnificent retinues and, following the example of Didacus and Dominic, went about on foot to preach in any place they could win a hearing.

Besides the feature of evangelical poverty, a systematic method of conducting the instruction of the heretics was now adopted. A series of public debates was arranged, in which the Catholic missionaries matched their arguments with those of the most skilful heretics. This mode of missionary activity, more modern than medieval, seems remarkable. Another striking practice is even more interesting. This was the practice of balloting at the end of each discussion, by which the auditors signified which side they thought victorious. One of the liveliest of these religious debates was held at the town of Servian, in which Saint Dominic had a notable victory. The discussion lasted seven days. Each day the most acute and adroit of the Albigensian teachers hurled at him their most terrific blows. But after the week's debate there was a popular acclamation of Dominic's victory. So pleased were the people that they followed him and his companions for three miles out of the town.

Such success as attended the preaching at Servian was not always achieved. For instance, at Verfeil, Dominic became angry over the obstinacy of its inhabitants and launched his anathema upon them: "Cursed be ye, unmannerly heretics; I should have credited you with better sense!"

Dominic's earnest efforts for the dissemination of Catholic truth continued with varying success—now more, now less. He visited every town and village in the Midi, instructing where and how he could sometimes on the public square, sometimes in the most spacious room of a castle, sometimes in a church. His headquarters were at Fanjeaux, where the Bishop of Toulouse granted him a chaplaincy. He had six companions. They were all priests, mature scholars and generally well equipped to render the greatest assistance to him in his preaching, which at this time was still under the direction and authority of the Bishop of Osma.

Probably the most consoling incident during this period was the conversion in 1206 of nine female heretics. They came to Dominic, confessing that their hearts had been drawn to him by the beauty of the doctrine he expounded in a recent open-air sermon. They declared that heretofore their minds had been deceived by the heretic leaders, for they truly thought these false teachers were good men. Dominic graciously received these nine women back to the faith, but was not content with this. He threw about them the protection of the cloister. They became the first community of Our Lady of Prouille, the mother house of all Dominican sisters. In this work he was aided by Bishop Foulques of Toulouse, who granted to the community the revenue of the Church of Our Lady. This prelate also donated a neighboring house, in which the little community lived and grew in fervor under the saintly founder's spiritual guidance. Dominic's joy over this first foundation was counteracted in 1206 by the sorrow of the departure of the Bishop of Osma, who, in accordance with the Pope's orders, returned to Spain.

Shortly after the nuns were established at Saint Mary's, Prouille, a neighboring house was opened for the associates of Dominic. Besides the preachers, he had a couple of helpers, who later on became lay-brothers. These lay helpers attended to all the business concerns of

the nuns. Not until 1215 did the Preachers receive definite organization. This was by the recognition of Bishop Foulques, who approved them as a diocesan congregation.

But this local character was not in keeping with the universal apostolate of which Dominic dreamed. Consequently, when he went to Rome in 1215, as consultor to Bishop Foulques, at the Fourth Lateran Council, he requested Pope Innocent III to give papal sanction to his Preaching Order. Grave difficulties were in the way of such a confirmation, because the council, then in session, expressly laid down restrictions against the multiplication of religious orders, with provision that all future communities must adopt one of the existing rules.

Dauntless characters like Saint Dominic are not distressed by difficulties such as this. He saw a way to the execution of his project and without hesitation followed it. With an eager heart he walked again across Europe, back to Toulouse, and, much to his joy, he found his community increased from six to sixteen members. His first concern was to put the matter of a suitable rule before his religious family. A solemn discussion followed, with the result that the Rule of Saint Augustine was adopted, probably for two reasons: First, it embodied the fundamental features of the new order in its general, broad and free insistence on the essential virtues of the religious life, and, secondly, it was flexible enough to be adapted to the varying conditions incident to a world-wide order, which even then these sixteen Preachers must have had a dim consciousness of providing for. Then, too, it was the rule Dominic had lived under at Osma for nine years and he could vouch for its admirable fitness to the needs of his institute.

The noble deference of Dominic toward the wishes of his community on this occasion indicates the singular beauty of his character. Here also is displayed in a most exceptional degree the practical political wisdom which Cardinal Newman called Saint Dominic's "imperial genius for government." In a letter written about this time. Pope Innocent III gave the name to Dominic's Order which later became its official title. He bade his secretary address the letter "To Master Dominic and the Brothers Preachers."

After the decision about the rule and before setting out for the third time to Rome, Master Dominic was given the Church of Saint Romain at Toulouse, and for the time being his community used this as headquarters. He left Toulouse in August, 1216, and could not have gone far before he got the news of Pope Innocent's death, in July, 1216. This news must have been especially distressing.

Innocent III was his friend and he sympathized with his ideas. What might he expect from a stranger? Sustained by a supernatural courage, he proceeded to Rome, arriving there in October, 1216. The new Pope, Honorius III, received him kindly and promised to carry out the policy of his predecessor. Two months elapsed, however, before the formal approval of the Order of Preachers was given. And some one has made the ingenious hypothesis that this delay was due to the embarrassment of the papal chancery officials, who could find in previous approvals no technical forms adequate to cover the privileges of Master Dominic's institute. Heretofore only single foundations or federations of existing monasteries were approved, but now it was a question of bestowing on a central power faculties for universal expansion.

The Bull of approval was signed on December 22, 1216. It read as follows:

Honorius, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, to our dear Son, Dominic, prior of Saint Romain of Toulouse, and to your brethren who have made or will make profession of regular life, health, and Apostolic benediction.

We, considering that the brethren of your Order will be the champions of the faith and true light of the world, do confirm the Order in all its lands and possessions, present and to come, and we take the Order itself, with all its goods and rights, under our protection and government.

Given at Santa Sabina at Rome, on the 11th of the kalends of January, this first year of our Pontificate.

Honorius.

On that memorable day of December, 1216, Dominic's heart must have been by far the most joyous in Christendom, as he stood amidst the cypress trees on the Aventine, in the shadow of the Papal Palace of Santa Sabina, and dreamed of the possibilities for good to the Church which were enshrined in the single parchment page of that Pontifical Bull. How his eyes must have glistened as he fingered the precious "Bill of Rights," and how his buoyant, delicately strung soul must have harmonized the sentiments of the *Te Deum* and the *Magnificat*, as it lifted its prayer and was transfigured beyond human proportions in the presence of God! And we can hardly help dwelling for a moment on his outer appearance, since it was the shrine and expression of the inner soul.

In the words of Father McNabb, O. P.: "Everything about Saint Dominic betokened the finest fabric of a human existence; the figure more than medium; the long, gracefully molded fingers; the shoulders slightly bent, as if in hourly deference to all; the noble head nobly crowned with a corona of auburn, flashing golden in the sun; the sweet smile, so homely on his cheeks; the tender, resolute, pathetic, sympathetic eye—a very lamp of light set in a brow of amber ivory; and then that mystic nebula (frequently alluded to by Sister Cecelia and Blessed Jordan) that glowed from his forehead, filling the dark souls of the despairing with peace and bringing thoughts of God and of the angel-trod cloisters of the Great City nearer to the hearts of men."

After receiving the Bull of Approval, Dominic spent all that winter in Rome. During this sojourn he preached incessantly. His lectures on the Epistles of Saint Paul to the servants, whom he saw idling their time in the corridors of the Papal Palace, gained for him a great reputation, which occasioned his being named "Master of the Sacred Palace." Later on, this title was given to the official known as the "Pope's Theologian," and in memory of Saint Dominic a Dominican always holds this position.

Cardinal Ugolino, who became Gregory IX, befriended Saint Dominic during this winter at Rome. Frequently the Saint discussed with him his ideas for the preaching of the faith, and there is no doubt that the encouragement and counsel of this Prince of the Church were of the greatest importance in shaping the destinies of the Order of Preachers.

At the cardinal's house Dominic met Francis of Assisi; this was the second meeting of the Saints, for they met before, on an earlier visit of Dominic in Rome. The two Saints became the warmest friends. Both had similar aims; both were burning with divine charity for the salvation of souls and, although by diverse means and with distinct spirits and geniuses, both worked harmoniously together. Perhaps no sainted friendship has received such a happy perpetuation. For the last seven hundred years the respective orders which claim these Saints as their fathers and founders have given tokens of a mutual esteem, especially by the beautiful tradition kept up on the feasts of these medieval patriarchs. On the feast of Saint Francis Dominicans celebrate the Mass and are honored guests at the Franciscan friaries, and on the feast of Saint Dominic the compliment is returned by the Franciscans.

After preaching the Lent of 1217 at Rome, Dominic went back again to Languedoc. He spent the summer at Prouille. In the modest convent adjoining the monastery of the nuns he frequently gathered together his sixteen brethren to instruct them in his spirit, and we may reasonably suppose that free discussions were had about the future of the Order.

On August 15 Dominic received the profession of his first sixteen friars. Then he made known to them his intention of dispersing them throughout Europe. It was a bold decision, and nobody but himself, apparently, saw any wisdom in the idea. Saint Dominic acted with the prudence which is of the Holy Ghost. At the time a resumption of crusading

hostilities threatened the country about Toulouse. As this not only would have prevented any further development there for some time, but also might have meant destruction, Saint Dominic saw that it was expedient, under the circumstances, to scatter his men, like seeds among the fertile fields, at the centers of civilization.

It is interesting to note the already cosmopolitan character of the first sixteen Preaching Friars. Among them were Castellans, Navarese, Normans, French, Languedocians, and even English and Germans. They were distributed in this way: Four went to Spain; seven went to Paris; two remained at Toulouse; two kept the direction of the sisters at Prouille; lastly, Dominic and Stephen of Metz were to go to Rome.

No incident in Saint Dominic's life represents the great-hearted zeal of his soul quite as strikingly as does this dispersion of the Brethren. He clearly grasped the situation, perfectly gauged his opportunities, and confidently judged the successes ahead. The results afterward proved the remarkableness of his courageous broad-mindedness. By a single stroke of genius, Dominic transformed his diocesan preaching band into a universal order.

In connection with the dispersion of the Brethren an interesting bit of history has come down to us:

It is recorded that when the Brethren quitted Prouille to spread all over the world, the Saint bade them set out without money or resources of any kind. One of their number complained of this privation, in vain did Saint Dominic implore him to take his courage in his hands; in vain did he assure him that he should want nothing. John of Navarre refused to give in. Compassionating his weakness, Dominic gave him twelve small coins, and so allowed him to set out. At a later period John of Navarre, reflecting on a kindness and condescension which had perhaps saved him from throwing up all in a fit of discouragement, was humble enough to tell the story of his own weakness (Quetif—Echard, *Scriptores Ord. Praed.*, Vol. 1, p. 50).

Tradition assigns to this period of Saint Dominic's career the institution of the Holy Rosary of Our Blessed Mother, as a combination of vocal and mental prayers grouped about the fifteen mysteries of Catholic faith. In the Catholic mind, Saint Dominic's name is inseparably associated with the Rosary and many Popes have eulogized the piety of the Saint which left such a devotional treasure to the Church. Certainly no other form of prayer is so clearly stamped with Saint Dominic's spirit. His unique blending of contemplation and action is the essential character of the Rosary. It is pre-eminently a simple spiritual exercise in meditation accompanied by the vocal recitation of the sublimest prayers of Catholic piety.

Shortly after sending forth the Brethren, Dominic received four novices at Prouille, and to train them through his own personal influence he deferred his departure. Some business about revenues had to be settled with his devoted friend, Simon de Montfort, and with Bishop Foulques. When all this was attended to, he was free to set out for the fourth time to Rome.

He and Brother Stephen made the trip in the fall of 1217. Many legends tell us of numerous convents founded on this journey, but the best sources report nothing marvelous. He stopped with the Canons Regular of San Nazzario at Milan; thence he journeyed to Bologna, and at the end of January, 1218, he reached Rome with four new recruits, Brothers Otho, Henry, Albert, and Gregory.

Although Pope Honorius was extremely prodigal of spiritual privileges and temporal protection to Saint Dominic for his Friar Preachers, it is a very significant fact that the primitive foundations were characterized by a charming simplicity and a rigorous poverty. The beginnings of the Order in Rome were unpretentious. The friars had only a tentative abode at San Sisto, which had been deeded to the Gilbertines of England.

Preaching and charitable works consumed their energies. The day was given to the ministry of the Word, the night to spiritual refreshment in vigils and penances; and in all this Saint Dominic was, of course, the dominant inspiration. "He exercised with fervor, devotion,

and humility the office for which he had been chosen by God and to which the Holy See had appointed him, and this upon the chief theater of apostolic authority. Divine grace was on his lips, and by his mouth the Lord spoke. People were eager to hear him.” Thierry of Apoldia makes mention of the sermons given by him. He also went about consoling and directing the numerous recluses who immured themselves in cells adjoining the churches, thus to have opportunity for continual prayer and mortification.

The magnificent successes of the first year’s labors at Rome must have increased the confidence of the Pope in the worth of the new Order; for in 1218 he entrusted to Saint Dominic a task requiring great prudence and tact. This was the reform of the convents of women in Rome. Innocent III had made plans for this work by assigning to the Gilbertines of England the Church and Convent of San Sisto for one of their double monasteries, composed of separate communities of priests and nuns. Six years after San Sisto had been granted to the Gilbertines and they had failed to take up their work, Honorius revoked the deed of his predecessor and signed over the church and convent to Saint Dominic and his associates. The Friar Preachers took formal possession of this ancient church on December 3, 1218.

The following incident gives us an insight into the poverty of this first community at San Sisto:

When the Brethren were at San Sisto [relates Constantine of Orvieto], the Order being still unknown in the town, they often had to suffer from hunger. On a certain day it even chanced that the procurator, Giacomo del Mielo, had no bread wherewith to serve the community. In the morning several friars had been sent out to beg, but having given to some poor persons, who appealed to them, the few loaves they received, they had returned to the convent empty-handed. The hour for the meal approaching, the procurator presented himself to the servant of God and unfolded to him the case. Dominic, trembling with joy, blessed the Lord with transport, and, as if penetrated by a confidence which came from on high, commanded that the usual signal for the meal should be sounded. Now there were in the convent about forty persons. The signal being given, the friars came to the refectory and in joyous accents recited the prayers of the grace. Whilst each one, seated in order, awaited the meal, two young men of comely aspect entered the refectory with white cloths hung from their necks, in which they carried bread sent by the Celestial Breadmaker. In silence the two messengers placed loaves first at the lowest table, and so on up to the place occupied by the Blessed Dominic, and then They disappeared without any one having attained to the knowledge of whence they came and whither they were gone.

In commemoration of this miracle, it is customary in Dominican convents to begin serving the meal to the lay-brothers, and so on from the youngest up to the prior.

When the regular observance was well established at San Sisto, Saint Dominic turned his attention to the work of restoring the contemplative spirit among the nuns of the city. He secured an apostolic commission and addressed himself to several communities, but without result. Their indifference could not be overcome, so he patiently waited for their hearts to be changed by divine grace. Not until some sixteen months later did the sisters give heed to his exhortations. Meanwhile important events occurred, which brought him into a broader field of activity.

Saint Dominic’s heart was in the universities. No fact verifies this better than his sending three friars to Bologna in 1218, hardly after settling himself at Rome. He seems to have had a clear idea of the ripeness of the harvest at this intellectual center, and could not, therefore, desist from sending his laborers into the fields to gather in the golden grain, that was soon to give the Bread of the Incarnate Word, the Staff of Eternal Life, to all Europe. “That year,” says a Bolognese chronicler, “three friars of the Order of Friar Preachers came to Bologna for the first time, saying they had been sent by a certain Master Dominic, a

Spaniard. As they seemed to be holy men, the church of Santa Maria della Mascarella was given them." Poverty marked the beginnings at Bologna, as it had at Rome. "The friars," says Jordan of Saxony, "suffered all the misery of extreme poverty."

A most providential acquisition to the Order occurred early in 1218, in the person of Reginald of Orleans, a Doctor of Laws, who had taught with great brilliance at Paris. His reception into the Friar Preachers happened in this way: While stopping at Rome, on his way to the Holy Land, he revealed to a cardinal friend his ardent desire to associate preaching with his life as a canon of Orleans. The cardinal then told him of the great work of Dominic de Guzman, a canon of Osma, who was then in Rome.

Reginald was captivated by Dominic's ideals, and shortly afterward met him to arrange about joining his Order. Before he could receive the habit, however Reginald fell seriously ill with a high fever. During this illness the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, and with her own hands gave him Extreme Unction, after which she gave him a white scapular with the admonition, "Receive the habit of thy Order." Then the Blessed Mother disappeared, and Reginald felt himself completely cured. The following day he received the habit with the Blessed Virgin's white scapular from the bands of Saint Dominic at San Sisto. From that date this white scapular became the essential part of the habit of the Dominicans, which up to this event had consisted of a linen rochet worn over a white tunic.

Saint Dominic permitted Reginald to visit Palestine, but gave him instructions to assume the priorship at Bologna after his return, which appointment indicates the Saint's shrewd prudence, for no place could have given a better theater for Reginald's genius. His brilliant career as a canonist at Paris would immediately give him and the Friar Preachers prestige at the preeminent university of law.

On Pentecost, 1218, Saint Dominic, with several of his disciples, attended the General Chapter of the Franciscans at Portiuncula. These annual gatherings were most impressive scenes. The sons of Saint Francis came in thousands and encamped on the fields under brushwood tents, like the Jews of old at the Feast of Tabernacle. Like the flowerings of the primitive Christian spirit, their simple charity, apostolic poverty, and ardent devotion burst forth on this verdant Umbrian plain bordering Mount Subasio. They gathered in the open air for an essentially religious purpose: to gain in mutual communion new strength from the joys, the example, and the sufferings of the other brethren. At the Chapter Saint Dominic and his friars could not but have been inspired by the religious enthusiasm and generosity displayed on all sides. The incident must have given the Friar Preachers new hopes, new visions of the future.

In the fall of that year, 1218, probably about the middle of October, Saint Dominic set out with his namesake, Brother Dominic of Segovia, to foster with his own presence the Order of Preachers in Spain. The Segovian friar had gone to Spain at the time of the dispersion from Prouille, but becoming discouraged he gave up his work and returned to Rome. To recommence this abandoned apostolate, the Saint decided on accompanying the Segovian to his beloved native land.

The two travelers arrived at Bologna for the Feast of All Saints, 1218. Here the three pioneer friars were zealously struggling against many hardships. Saint Dominic cheered them with the news of Reginald's entrance into the Order, and reassured them that all would be well when Reginald should come to direct the destinies of their foundation. After celebrating the feast with them, he and Brother Dominic set out on the well-known road to Milan, and thence to France.

These journeys of Saint Dominic did not distract his mind from contemplation. His cloister was the world; for he had, as Saint Catherine of Siena afterwards said of herself, "a cell" in his heart. His biographers narrate his speaking continually of God to his companion. His face beamed with a bright radiance. When the road was especially rough or when rain fell, he would begin to sing in a loud voice the *Veni Creator* or the *Ave Maris Stella*. At

other times he would instruct his companion, or he might say, "Go on before, and let us each think a little of our Divine Lord," which would be a sign for meditation.

When Saint Dominic and his companion arrived at Toulouse they found the community flourishing. They visited the sisters at Prouille, who were refreshed by Saint Dominic's instructions, encouragement, and consolation.

But he did not delay long in Languedoc, for we find him at Segovia, in Spain, before Christmas. This city was not far from Osma. The revisiting of the familiar scenes of his early life must have been a delight to the Saint, after an absence of nearly fifteen years. For about a month he preached incessantly in the environs of Segovia, and soon attracted a number of vocations, which enabled him in February, 1219, to lay the foundations for the first Spanish convent, with Friar Corbolan as prior. Tradition says that he founded a convent of nuns at Osma, but this is not certain.

Probably in the same month that saw the Order's establishment at Segovia, Dominic journeyed to Madrid. The Order was already flourishing here, and this was a great consolation for him. Friar Peter of Medina had gathered a number of vocations and had founded a convent for nuns, after the model of Our Lady of Prouille.

One of the Saint's letters to these nuns has come down to us. In it was laid down the rule of the sisters, which prescribed a strict contemplative life. The letter has been preserved by the Cardinal of Aragon and it is now in the Archives of the Dominican Order at Rome.

At Palencia, his alma mater, Saint Dominic made plans for a convent, which was realized shortly after his departure from Spain. late in March, 1219, he crossed the Pyrenees and arrived at Toulouse for Easter Sunday. Some business transactions, a few sermons, a few conferences to his "Elder Daughters" of Prouille, made up his program in Languedoc. From Languedoc he set out for Paris, taking with him Friar Bertrand.

Pious incidents have been recorded of this journey. At the shrine of Our Lady of Rocamadour the friars spent a whole night in prayer. Shortly after daybreak on the morrow, when the cool, bracing air invited a resumption of their journey, they started out northward. As noon drew near they fell in with some German pilgrims, who generously shared with them their provisions that noon and for four following days. Because he could not repay by spiritual food the material benefits offered by these pilgrims, Saint Dominic was grieved. Accordingly he suggested to Bertrand that they both pray for the gift of tongues, so as to be able to speak German to their friends. The prayer was answered, and we read that Saint Dominic and Bertrand instructed these pilgrims in good German for four days. At Orleans the party broke up, the Germans taking the road toward Chartres and the friars the one to Paris. Then Saint Dominic bade Bertrand not to mention the miracle until after his death.

From Orleans the journey was short to Paris. Saint Dominic and Brother Bertrand quickened their pace as the great city loomed up in the distance. It was now the beginning of June. The beautiful country scenes along the road found a perfect response in the bright spirits of the traveling friars. Soon they were at the Convent of Saint James, where, much to the Saint's joy, he found a community of thirty exemplary friars. The new recruits were mostly young students, attracted by the fervor and simplicity of the founders of the convent. After he had taken a little rest, Saint Dominic began a series of conferences. At these not only the community, but many of the students of the university, were present. During one of these talks he described the conversion of Reginald of Orleans. Jordan of Saxony was inspired by the story to imitate Reginald's example. He received the habit the next Lent.

By Saint Dominic's order the friars of Saint James' convent were dispersed and convents were founded by them at Limoges, Rheims, Metz, Poitiers, and Orleans. Several weeks were spent by Saint Dominic at Paris, and then he started out for Rome in July, 1219.

Meanwhile great results had been accomplished at Bologna. Reginald had arrived at the university, after his pilgrimage to Palestine, on December 22, 1218. He began at once to preach. "His words burn," wrote Jordan of Saxony; "his eloquence, like a flaming torch, gets

the hearts of his hearers on fire. Bologna is in flames. It is as though a second Elias had arisen.” And this very enthusiastic praise seems to have been fully justified by the facts, for Reginald drew into the Order of Preachers the best of the professorial staff of the university. So phenomenal was the increase in the community that early in 1219 the first convent was altogether too crowded and a new house was obtained in a providential way. It happened that at this time Reginald gave the Preachers’ habit to the rector of the Church of San Nicola, a learned man and a doctor of laws, who requested his bishop to give the church of which he had been rector to the Dominicans. The bishop granted the request; and, by another generous gift of lands adjoining the church, Reginald was able to begin the foundations of the present convent, which houses the precious tomb of Saint Dominic.

Toward the end of July Reginald and his community at Bologna welcomed Saint Dominic, who remained with them for four months—that is, until the latter part of November. The Saint must have beguiled many an hour with tales of his journey and of the wonderful work accomplished at Paris. But, although he was pleased to entertain his brethren, Saint Dominic’s primary purpose in staying so long at Bologna was to train the novices in his spirit.

In the Acts of Bologna we read: “If in the refectory [which he regularly attended] the friars had two dishes on their table, he ate but one, and though exhausted by severe vigils he took little food or drink. He was assiduous at choir office and was at times so plunged in his devotions that no sound could distract him from them.” Having trained his disciples after the manner of his example, he sent them forth in every direction.

Christmas, 1219, Saint Dominic celebrated at Rome. After the festivities were over, two matters called for his immediate attention: the transfer of his brethren to new quarters and the establishment of the nuns at the San Sisto Convent. Toward the end of January the friars, numbering about a hundred, moved to Santa Sabina. This convent became the Roman novitiate and was the headquarters of the Masters General up to 1273.

The second task, that of uniting the nuns of the city at San Sisto, was a difficult one. Saint Dominic presented himself before several communities and expressed to them the earnest desire of the Pope that they should be united, under his direction, at San Sisto. Finally, at the Convent of Santa Maria del Trastevere, he obtained a sympathetic response. All the sisters of this community except one promised to go to San Sisto. When the news of the co-operation of this community with Saint Dominic became known to the other sisters, interest in the project spread. The members of the Convent of Santa Bibiana yielded. Accordingly, on Ash Wednesday, 1220, Saint Dominic, in the presence of Cardinals Ugolino, Orsini, and the Cardinal Bishop of Tusculum, received the professions of the sisters in the chapel at San Sisto. Then, on the first Sunday of Lent, at night, the sisters carried in procession the picture of the Blessed Virgin by Saint Luke from Santa Maria Trastevere to San Sisto, unnoticed by the people, who would have protested against its removal during the day.

The community of San Sisto observed the strictest cloister. Its spiritual direction was given by Saint Dominic and his brethren, while lay-brothers attended to the material provisions. Toward the end of February Mother Blanche of Prouille, with seven companions, arrived at San Sisto. She became prioress, and under her tactful guidance the community grew in contemplative spirit. Early documents tell of Saint Dominic’s solicitude for his daughters; how he would give them a conference every night he was in Rome; how he would frequently cheer them by his anecdotes and pleasantries; how after one of his absences from Rome he brought back to each nun a pewter spoon as a token of remembrance.

During the installation of the sisters at San Sisto a great miracle was performed by Saint Dominic. Cardinal Orsini’s nephew, named Napoleone, was killed by falling from his horse, on the morning the sisters made their obedience to the Saint in the presence of the three cardinals above mentioned. The messengers broke into the chapel and informed the

cardinal-uncle of the youth's misfortune. In extreme grief Orsini whispered the news to Saint Dominic, who with characteristic charity gave orders to have the corpse brought to the convent. The body, having been brought in, was laid on the chapel floor. Before it Saint Dominic said Mass for the youth. Then, standing by the mangled body, he cried in a loud voice, "Young man, Napoleone, I say to thee, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, arise." In the sight of the cardinals, nuns, and friars, the young man arose alive and without a sign of the least injury. Thus the most distinguished witnesses attested to the greatest of Saint Dominic's miracles.

The next event of importance in the Saint's life was the General Chapter of the Friar Preachers, which assembled at Bologna (1220) on Pentecost. Delegates came from all the convents of the order. "Hardly had the first meeting convened, when Saint Dominic said to them: 'I am an unworthy and useless friar. I deserve to be deposed.' But the brethren, touched beyond description by the humility of their father, would not hear of his resignation." When Saint Dominic insisted, they granted him the concession of laying down the burden of the Master Generalship during the sessions of the chapter, when definitors were to rule the Order. When the definitors were chosen, "as long as the meeting lasted he was merely one of the friars. If he took the first place, it was only in abstinence, vigils, fasting, and maceration, setting himself above none, except in holiness and humility."

Bernard Guidonis informs us it was during this first chapter that most of the rules of the Dominican constitutions were decided upon. Humbert of the Romans relates the following incident of the meeting: "The Blessed Saint Dominic, in the chapter-house of Bologna, declared for the comfort of the weaker brethren, that even the rules do not bind under pain of sin, and that if he could think otherwise he would hack every cloister to pieces with his knife." At this first chapter, too, the Order of Preachers formally adopted poverty as a means to personal sanctification. Up to this time this had not been definitely laid down.

On May 30, 1221, Saint Dominic presided over the Second General Chapter of his Order at Bologna. His strongest plea on this occasion was for fidelity to study and especially to the study of Sacred Scriptures, the God-given storehouse of preaching material. At this chapter the Order was divided into eight provinces, determined mainly by national distinctions. Two of these were at yet only planned, those of Hungary and England, but friars were assigned to undertake the establishment of the Order in these two countries. The provinces already established were those of Spain, Provence, France, Lombardy, Rome, and Germany.

Some time in June, after the chapter was over, Saint Dominic journeyed to Venice to see his old friend, Cardinal Ugolino. Along the way he preached. And it was on his return journey that he was taken sick with a high fever, just outside Bologna. He made his way to the convent there, and in spite of his illness prayed in the church until midnight, and then assisted at the choral recitation of Matins. No longer, however, could he rally his energies; so after Matins he went to bed and never arose again. For three weeks the fever consumed his energies, and on August 6, 1221, he died, surrounded by his brethren, whom he consoled by the promise that he would be more powerful to help them in heaven than he had been on earth.

Bernard Guidonis observes: "He died in Brother Moneta's bed, because he had none of his own; and he died in Brother Moneta's tunic, because he had not another with which to replace the one he had long been wearing."

Thirteen years after his death Saint Dominic was canonized by his friend, Cardinal Ugolino, who had become Pope Gregory IX. The ceremonies were held on July 13, 1234.

In the Bull of Canonization Pope Gregory said: "Bound to us by ties of close friendship when we were in a humbler state, he gave us by the testimony of his life certain proofs of holiness, afterwards confirmed by the truth of his miracles, reported to us by faithful witnesses."

Saint Dominic's chief glory among men lies in the broad and free spirit bequeathed to the threefold religious family of friars, nuns and tertiaries which perpetuates in our own times the apostolate of Truth inaugurated by him in the thirteenth century. What, then, was this spirit which he gave to his followers and which is the special mark of his genius? Briefly, we may say the essence of this spirit is embodied in his intellectual ideal, which distinguished Saint Dominic among the great leaders who, by several fashions of religious life, have founded in the Church institutes to lead souls Godward.

By no mere accident the motto of his religious family is "Truth," for this word touches the magic appeal of Saint Dominic's heart. Were we to choose a text to express the peculiar mold of his genius, we could find none better than the Savior's words: "The truth shall make you free" (John 8: 32). He aimed at truth and attained freedom of soul. His long student life at Palencia, his years of contemplation at Osma, his apostolic preaching in Languedoc, his dispersion of the brethren to the university centers scarcely a decade of years after his Order was founded, and, finally, the astounding influence which his friars straightway exercised at these power-houses of learning—all these facts bring out strikingly clear the intellectual mission of Saint Dominic. And, moreover, was it not this mark of his genius that, in the thirteenth century, charmed the most virile intellect of Europe, Saint Thomas Aquinas, and, in the nineteenth century, attracted to the Order of Preachers our great modern champion, Père Lacordaire?

The secret of Saint Dominic's holiness, then, was his fast-knit friendship with Christ, who is the Truth, the model of perfect freedom, the only source of life's full happiness.

II. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: THE PSALMS

Commentary on the Psalms of David

Prologue

*With his every deed he offered thanks to God Most High,
in words of praise, (Sirach 47:8)*

The words of this text speak of David. It is quite appropriate that they be taken as showing the reason for this particular work. They show its four causes: its subject matter, its literary form or genre, its end or purpose, and its author.

The subject matter is universal, for while the individual books of the canonical scriptures may have their particular matters to discuss, this book has as a general topic the whole of theology. This is what [Pseudo-]Dionysius says in the third book of the *Celestial Hierarchy*: "To meditate on the sacred writing of the Divine Odes, that is, the psalms, is to sing of all the sacred and divine activities." And so when the text says, *With his every deed*,⁵ the subject matter of this book is indicated, since it treats of every work of God. Now the activity of God is fourfold: creation (Genesis 2:2, *God rested on the seventh day from all the work*); government (John 5:17, *My Father is at work until now*); restoration (John 4:34, *My food is to do the will of him who sent me, to bring his work to completion*); and glorification (Sirach 42:16, *God's work is full of his glory*).

All of these holy works of God are fully treated in the teaching of this book. First, with regard to the work of creation, Psalm 8:4 says, *I will behold your heavens, the work of your fingers*. Second, regarding government, all the historical parts of the Old Testament are

⁵ The Latin is ambiguous and "his" can refer not to David's but to God's deeds.

touched upon in this book (Psalm 78:2 says, *I will open my mouth in story*). Third, restoration, both with regard to the head, who is Christ, and with regard to all the effects of grace (Psalm 3:6 says, *Whenever I lay down and slept, the Lord preserved me to rise again*). Everything which pertains to faith in the incarnation is so clearly treated in this work that it almost seems to be a gospel, rather than prophecy. Fourth, there is the work of glorification (Psalm 149:5 says, *The saints will exult in glory*).

The reason why the Church makes such great use of the psalter is that it contains all of scripture, or as the *Gloss* says, it gives us hope for the divine mercy since, even though David sinned, he was restored through repentance. The subject matter of the psalms is therefore truly universal, since it treats of every work of God. It thus looks toward Christ in whom *all the fullness of divinity was pleased to dwell* (Col 1:19). And so the matter of this book is Christ and his members.

There are many different types of literary genre or form to be found in sacred scripture. *Narrative*: Sirach 42:17, *Has not God made his saints tell of all his wonderful deeds?* which is to be found in the historical books; *admonition, exhortation, commands*: Titus 2:15, *Say these things, exhort, and correct with authority*, 2 Timothy 2:14, *Remind people of these things and charge them before God to stop disputing about words*, a genre found in the law, the prophets, and the books of Solomon; *disputation*, as in Job and the Apostle Paul: Job 13:3, *I wish to reason with God*; and the *deprecatory or laudatory* genre, and this is what is found in this book.

Whatever is found in the other books in the genres already mentioned is found here by way of praise and prayer (as Psalm 9:2 says, *I will praise you, Lord with all my heart, I will declare all your wondrous deeds*). This text, Sirach 47:8, reads in words of praise, because the psalmist speaks in the laudatory genre. This explains the inscription of this book:⁶ *Here begins the book of hymns or soliloquies of the prophet David concerning Christ*. A hymn is praise of God in song, and song is an exultation of mind about everlasting things which breaks forth in vocal expression. Thus, David teaches us to praise God with exultation, sometimes in a soliloquy, that is, a conversation of an individual person with God or only with himself, as would be appropriate in praising or praying.

The end or purpose of this part of scripture is prayer, the lifting up of the mind to God. According to John Damascene in his *The Orthodox Faith III*, “Prayer is the ascent of the intellect to God.” Psalm 141:2 says, *Let my prayer be incense before you, my uplifted hands an evening sacrifice*, and there are four ways in which the soul is lifted up to God. First, by admiring the loftiness of his power (Isaiah 40:26, *Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these things*; Psalm 104:24, *How wonderful are your works, O Lord*), a lifting up in faith. Second, the mind is lifted up when it looks toward the excellence of eternal happiness (Job 11:15-17, *Surely then you may lift up your face in innocence, you may stand firm and unafraid. For then you shall forget your misery, or recall it like waters that have ebbed away*), a lifting up that comes from hope. Third, the mind is lifted up when it clings to the divine goodness and holiness (Isaiah 51:17, *Awake, awake! Arise O Jerusalem, You who once drank at the Lord’s hand the cup of his wrath*), the lifting up that comes from love. Fourth, the mind is lifted up when it imitates the divine justice at work (Lamentations 3:41, *Let us search and examine our ways that we may return to the Lord! Let us reach out our hearts toward God in heaven!*), a lifting up that comes from justice.

These four ways are implied in the text when it says, *to God Most High*. The latter two pertain to the word *God*, the Holy One; the first two to the word *Most High*. That this is the purpose of this book of the Bible is to be found in the psalms themselves. First, with regard to the words *Most High*, we read in Psalm 113:3-4, *From the rising of the sun to its setting, let the name of the Lord be praised. High above the heavens is the Lord, above the heavens,*

⁶ In the medieval editions.

God's glory. Then, with regard to the word *God* we read in Psalm 99:3, *Let them praise your great and awesome name, holy is God!*

Thus, Gregory the Great says in his *Homilies on Ezekiel*, n. 1, that when psalmody is carried out with the attention of the heart it prepares a way to the heart for almighty God. He can then infuse into the attentive soul either the mysteries of prophecy or the grace of compunction. The purpose of the Book of Psalms, therefore, is that the soul be joined to God as the All Holy and Most High.

The author of this work is indicated by the text in the phrase in *words of praise*. Note that authorship of sacred scripture is different from authorship of works on other subjects. Other forms of knowledge are works of human reason, but the scriptures are a work of divine inspiration (2 Peter 1:20-21 says, *Know this first of all, that there is no prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation, for no prophecy ever came through human will, but rather human beings moved by the Holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God*). Thus, in sacred scripture, the tongue of the human being functions like the tongue of a boy who says words which someone else furnishes (Psalm 45:2 says, *My tongue is the pen of a nimble scribe*, and in 2 Samuel 23:2 David says, *The spirit of the Lord spoke through me, his word was on my tongue*).

And so the text says in *words of praise*, which are said by means of revelation (1 Kings 20:35 relates how a guild prophet was compelled by the Lord to demand his own punishment by saying, *Strike me!* that is, by divine revelation). This biblical Book of Psalms can be called a *word of praise* in four ways, because it is related to glory in four ways. First, it is related as to the cause from which it flows, because this teaching arises from the praise or glory which God himself bestows (2 Peter 1:17-18 says, *For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory, "This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain*). Second, this book is related to praise as containing it, because this book contains the glory and praise of God which it proclaims (as Psalm 96:3 says, *Tell God's glory among the nations*). Third, it is related to glory or praise with regard to the way it shines forth from God. Glory is the same thing as splendor, and the revelation of this prophecy was glorious because it took place in a splendid manner.

There are, indeed, three modes of prophecy: through sensible things (Daniel 5:5 relates how at the feast of Belshazzar, *Suddenly, opposite the lampstand, the fingers of a human hand appeared, writing on the plaster of the wall in the king's palace. When the king saw the hand that wrote, his face blanched*); or through imaginary likenesses (such as is evident in Genesis 41 in the dream of Pharaoh and Joseph's interpretation of it, and also in Isaiah 6:1, *I saw the Lord sitting upon a high and lofty throne*); or through a manifestation of the truth itself. This last mode of prophecy was characteristic of David; he set forth his prophecy without any exterior support and under the impulse of the Holy Spirit alone. For the other prophets, as Augustine says, prophesied deeds and sayings by means of certain images of things and a clothing of words, that is, by means of dreams and visions; but this prophet was taught the truth openly.

When David said in 2 Samuel 23:2, *The spirit spoke through me, his word was on my tongue*, he immediately added in verse 4 that *God is like the morning light in sunrise on a cloudless morning*. The sun is the Holy Spirit illuminating the hearts of the prophets. Sometimes he appears behind clouds, as when he shines upon the prophets in the two modes previously mentioned; but sometimes there are no clouds, as is the case here in the psalms. In this regard, one can make reference to the scornful words of Michal to David when he danced, girt only with a linen apron, *leaping and dancing before the Lord*, that is, before the Ark (2 Samuel 6:16, *How the King of Israel has honored himself today, exposing himself to the view of the slave girls of his followers, as a commoner might do!*)

Finally, the psalms are *words of praise* because they invite us to the glory of the heavenly choir praising God (as it says in Psalm 149:5, *Let the faithful rejoice in their glory, cry out for joy at their banquet*, and in verse 9, *Such is the glory of the saints*).

Thus it is clear what the four causes of this work are: its matter concerns all the works of God; its genre is deprecatory or laudatory; its purpose is to join those who have been exalted to union with the Most High and Holy One; the author is the Holy Spirit himself revealing all these things.

Yet, before we get to the actual text of the psalms, we need to consider how they should be interpreted. In reading the psalter, as well as the other prophets, we need above all to avoid one error which was condemned by the Fifth Ecumenical Council of the Church in 553. Theodore of Mopsuestia said that in sacred scripture and the prophets nothing is said explicitly about Christ; rather, these books really speak of certain other matters, which statements have only been accommodated to refer to Christ, for example, Psalm 22:19, *They divided my garments among them*, refers only to David and is not about Christ. But this manner of interpretation was condemned at that council, so that whoever asserts that the scriptures are to be interpreted in that way is a heretic.

Therefore, in writing about Ezekiel, Blessed Jerome handed on to us a rule that we will observe in the psalms: The things related are to be interpreted as prefiguring something about Christ or the Church. As 1 Corinthians 10:11 says, *These things happened as examples for us*. Prophecies were, of course, sometimes pronounced about things of that time, but they were not said principally about them, except insofar as they were a prefigurement of future things. The Holy Spirit ordained that when such things were spoken of, certain things were included that surpassed the condition of the event; that way the soul would be lifted up to what was being prefigured.

Thus, in the Book of Daniel many things are said of King Antiochus IV Epiphanes as a figure of the Antichrist. We read there of certain things which were not fulfilled in Antiochus but will be fulfilled in the Antichrist. So also we read certain things about the reign of David and Solomon which were not to be fulfilled in the reigns of such kings but were to be fulfilled in the reign of Christ. These things were said as a figure of Christ (although Psalm 72, for example, has in its title *of Solomon*), since the Holy Spirit also puts in that psalm certain things which exceed the capability even of such a king; for example, in verse 5:7, *May he live as long as the sun endures, like the moon, through all generations . . . that abundance may flourish in his days, till the moon be no more*, and in verse 8, *May he rule from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth*. Thus, Psalm 72 is to be interpreted as being about the reign of Solomon insofar as it is a figure of the reign of Christ; in that reign all the things that the psalm says will be fulfilled.

III. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

Each unit of the formation program, in addition to including a section on study, also contains a part of the Rule or the Particular Directory. The Rule is valid for all members of the Third Order throughout the world. By necessity, therefore, it must be somewhat general. Nevertheless, it is an important statement about what the Dominican way of life is. This portion of the Rule, in particular, describes our identity as members of the Third Order.

The Rule of the Lay Chapters of Saint Dominic

I. The Fundamental Constitution of the Dominican Laity

1. (Laity in the Church) Among the Christian faithful, men and women living in the world by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, have been made partakers in the prophetic, priestly and royal mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are called to make the presence of Christ

alive in the midst of the people *so that the divine message of redemption may be heard and welcomed by all everywhere.*⁷

2. (Dominican Laity) Some of these Christian faithful, moved by the Holy Spirit to live according to the spirit and charism of Saint Dominic, are incorporated into the Dominican Order through a special commitment according to their appropriate statutes.
3. (Dominican Family) Gathered together in their communities, with the other groupings of the Order, they constitute one Dominican Family.⁸
4. (Distinctive Character of Dominican Laity) Within the Church they have a distinctive character in both their spirituality and service to God and neighbor. As members of the Order, they participate in its apostolic mission through prayer, study, and preaching according to the state of the laity.
5. (Apostolic Mission) Supported by their mutual communion, in the example of Saint Dominic, Saint Catherine of Siena and our predecessors, who have enlightened the life of the Order and the Church, they witness their own Faith, attentive to the needs of people of their time and serving Truth.
6. Zealously attending to the particular goals of the contemporary Church, they strive in a special way to evidence authentic mercy toward all suffering, to defend freedom and to promote peace and justice.
7. Animated by the special charism of the Order, they are conscious that their apostolic activity has as its source an abundance of contemplation.

⁷ Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People, #3, paragraph 3. Vatican II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (November 18, 1965). (In the Austin Flannery, O.P. translation it reads: *to bring all men (sic) throughout the whole world to hear and accept the divine message of salvation.*)

⁸ Constitutions of the Order of Friars Preachers, [Hereinafter LCO] # 141.

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR A, UNIT II**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: THE PERFECTION OF CHARITY

Fr. Reginal Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., “The Full Perfection of Christian Life” in *Christian Perfection and Contemplation*, pp. 114–46.

Christian Perfection, or the Beginning of Eternal Life

Can Christian perfection, its nature and conditions, be discussed without in any way lessening its essential sublimity? Is it possible to reach an understanding of the Master’s words: “Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5: 48)? If we ask the Apostle St. John this question, he will answer us in Christ’s very words, that Christian life, particularly Christian perfection, is the beginning of eternal life.

In the Fourth Gospel, the Savior says on several occasions: “He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting.”⁹ In other words, not only will he have eternal life later on if he perseveres; but he who believes has it already in a sense, because the life of grace, even on earth, is the beginning of eternal life, as St. Thomas states repeatedly.¹⁰ As a seed is defined only by the plant that springs from it, or the aurora by the day that it heralds, so we can conceive the life of grace only by considering, first of all, the life of glory, of which it is the seed. For the same reason, we cannot determine what Christian perfection is without speaking first of eternal life, of which it is the prelude.

We will consider eternal life in the first part of this article; in the second part we shall see how the life of grace on earth is essentially the same as the life of heaven; the same also through charity, which will never cease. We shall also see how the life of grace differs from that of heaven through faith and hope, which must disappear in order to give way to the positive possession of God by vision.

In the following articles, with St. Thomas as our teacher, we will study what in this life principally constitutes Christian perfection, properly so called; what its relations are with the gifts and the virtues, and with the precepts and counsels. Thus we shall see all that Christian perfection requires.

Eternal Life in its Complete Development

“Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17: 3). St. John explains this passage by saying: “Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him: because we shall see Him as He is” (I John 3: 2). St. Paul says: “We see now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face

⁹ John 3: 36; 5: 24, 39; 6: 40, 47. Cf. 6: 55 ff., and the Commentary of St. Thomas on the Gospel of St. John dealing with these passages.

¹⁰ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 3 ad 2um. “Grace is nothing else but the beginning of glory in us.” Cf. Ia IIae, q.68, a.2; De veritate q. 14. a. 2.

to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known” (I Cor. 13: 12). We shall see face to face, that is, immediately, such as He is in Himself, God “who inhabiteth light inaccessible” (I Tim. 6: 16) to all natural, created and creatable knowledge.

The Church teaches us expressly that “the souls of the blessed in heaven have an intuitive and direct vision of the divine essence without the intermediary of any previously known creature. The divine essence manifests itself directly and openly in perfect clarity. The souls of the blessed enjoy it continually and will enjoy it forever. Such is eternal life,¹¹ to which the “light of glory”¹² must raise us.

We are therefore called to see God not merely by the reflection of His perfections in material creatures, or by His marvelous radiation in the world of pure spirits, but to see Him without any intermediary, more clearly indeed than we see here on earth the persons with whom we speak; for God, being entirely spiritual, will be intimately present in our intellect, which He will illumine at the same time that He gives it the power to endure His dazzling splendor.¹³

Between Him and us there will not be even the intermediary of an idea, for no created idea can represent being as it is in itself, pure, infinitely perfect act, uncreated, eternally subsistent thought, light of life, and source of all truth.¹⁴ And we shall not be able to express our contemplation by any word, even by any interior word. This contemplation, superior to every finite idea, will absorb us in God, and will remain ineffable, just as in this life we lose the gift of speech when the sublime ravishes us. The Deity, such as it is in itself, can be expressed only by the consubstantial Word, which is the uncreated Word, “the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God’s majesty, and image of His goodness” (Wis. 7: 26).

By reason of its object, this face to face vision of God infinitely excels the most sublime philosophy, and also the loftiest natural knowledge of the angels. We are called to see all the divine perfections together, identified in their common source, the Deity; to grasp how the tenderest mercy and the most inflexible justice proceed from one and the same infinitely generous and infinitely holy love, love of the supreme good. This good, wishing to communicate itself as much as possible and possessing an incontestable right to be loved above all, thus wonderfully unites justice and mercy in all the works of God.¹⁵ We are called to see how this love, even in its freest good pleasure, is identical with pure wisdom; how in this love there is nothing that is not wise, and in this wisdom nothing that is not converted into love. And we are called to see how this love is identical with the supreme good, loved from all eternity; how divine wisdom is identical with the first truth always known; how all these perfections harmonize and are but one in the very essence of Him who is.

We are called to contemplate the intimate life of God, the Deity itself, absolute purity and sanctity; to lose our gaze in its infinite fecundity, blossoming into the three divine Persons; to see the eternal generation of the Word, “splendor of the Father and figure of His substance”; to gaze in endless rapture upon the ineffable procession of the Holy Ghost, that torrent of spiritual flame, term of the common love of the Father and of the Son, the bond uniting Them eternally in the most absolute diffusion of Themselves.

Who can tell the love and joy that will be born in us of this vision? If we are delighted here below by the reflection of the divine perfections shared by creatures, by the fairy magic of the material world, by the harmony of sounds and colors, by the azure of a cloudless sky above a sunlit sea, which makes us think of the tranquil ocean of being and of the infinite light of divine wisdom; if we are lost in wonderment at the splendors of the world

¹¹ Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, no. 530.

¹² *Ibid.*, no. 475.

¹³ St. Thomas Ia, q. 12. a. 5.

¹⁴ Cf. Ia, q. 12, a. 2.

¹⁵ See Ia, q. 21, a. 4.

of souls revealed to us by the lives of the saints; what will we feel when we see God, the eternally subsistent flash of wisdom and of love, whence proceeds all the life of creation? We speak of a flash of genius to designate a sudden illumination of the mind. What shall we say of the uncreated light of God? For us it remains hidden only because of its excessive splendor, as too strong a ray of sunlight seems like darkness to the weak eye of an owl.

The joy born of such a vision will be that of so strong and absolute a love of God that nothing will ever destroy it or even diminish it. This love, necessarily following the beatific vision of God, the sovereign good, will be absolutely spontaneous, but will no longer be free. The infinite Good, by presenting Himself to us in this way, will quench our insatiable thirst for happiness, and will fill and satisfy the capacity of our power to love, “which will necessarily adhere to Him.”¹⁶ Our will, by reason of its nature, will turn toward Him with all its inclination and strength. It will no longer have any energy to suspend its act, which will be ravished from it, in a way, by the infinite attraction of God seen face to face. In regard to all finite good, our will remains free; it can even yield or not yield to the attraction and to the law of God as long as we do not see His infinite goodness directly. But when His glory appears to us, our desires will then be gratified and we will no longer be able not to correspond to His love. “I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear” (Ps. 16: 15).

This love will be composed of admiration, respect, gratitude, and especially friendship, with a simplicity and a depth of intimacy that no human affection can have. It will be a love by which we will rejoice especially that God is God, infinitely holy, just, and merciful; a love by which we will adore all the decrees of His providence in view of His glory, which will radiate in us and through us.

Such must eternal life be in union with all those who died in charity, and particularly with those whom we have loved in the Lord.

Eternal life, therefore, consists in knowing God as He knows Himself, and in loving Him as He loves Himself. But, if we penetrate more deeply into this matter, we see that this divine knowledge and love are possible only if God, so to speak, deifies us in our very soul. In the natural order, man is capable of intellectual knowledge and of an enlightened love superior to sensible love only because he has a spiritual soul. In like manner we will be capable of a divine knowledge and of a supernatural love only if we have received a participation in the very nature of God, of the Deity; only if our soul, the principle of our intellect and will, has been, in a sense, deified or transformed into God, as iron plunged into the fire is transformed, so to speak, into fire, without ceasing to be iron. The blessed in heaven can share in the essentially divine operations only because they participate in the divine nature, the principle of these operations; only because they have received this nature from God, somewhat as a son on earth receives his nature from his father.

From all eternity God the Father necessarily engenders a Son equal to Himself, the Word. To Him He communicates all His nature, without dividing or multiplying it; He gives Him to be “God of God, light of light.” Out of pure goodness, He has willed to have in time other sons, adopted sons, according to a sonship not only moral and figurative, but very real, which makes us truly participate in the divine nature, in its intimate life. “This sonship by adoption,” says St. Thomas, “is thus really a participated likeness of the eternal sonship of the Word.”¹⁷ St. John exclaims: “Behold what manner of charity the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God” (I John 3: 1). We are “born of God” (John 1: 13); and St. Peter says that we are “partakers of the divine nature” (II Pet. 1: 4). “Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren” (Rom 8: 29).

¹⁶ See Ia, q. 82, a. 2.

¹⁷ See IIIa, q. 3, a. 8; in *In Ep. ad Rom.*, 8: 29.

Such is the essence of the glory that God reserves for His children: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him” (I Cor. 2: 9). The elect truly belong to the family of God; they enter heaven in the cycle of the Blessed Trinity who dwells in them. The Father engenders His Word in them; the Father and the Son breathe forth love in them. Charity likens them to the Holy Ghost; the beatific vision makes them like the Word, who renders them like the Father of whom He is the image. In each of them the Trinity, known and loved, dwells as in a living tabernacle; and furthermore, they are in the Trinity, at the summit of being, of thought, and of love.

Such is the goal of all Christian life, of all spiritual progress. In it there is no concern for earthly interests, or for the development of our personalities (a poor formula, foolishly repeated by many Christians who forget the true grandeur of their vocation). Revelation tells us we must tend infinitely higher. God has predestined His elect to become conformable to the image of His Son. The world, in its wisdom, rejects this doctrine; its philosophers refuse to listen to it. Then the Lord calls the humble, the poor, the infirm,¹⁸ to share in the riches of His glory: “I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones” (Mt. 11: 25).

Beginning of Eternal Life

How can we attain so lofty an end as eternal life? Spiritual progress can tend to this end only because it presupposes in us the seed of glory, that is, a supernatural life identical in its essence with eternal life. The seed contained in the acorn could not become an oak unless it had the same nature as the oak, unless it contained the same life in a latent state. A child could not become a man unless he had a rational soul, unless reason were slumbering in him. Similarly a Christian on earth could not become one of the blessed in heaven unless he had already received divine life.

If we wish to understand the nature of the seed contained in the acorn, we must consider this nature in its perfect state in the fully developed oak. In the same way, if we wish to know the life of grace, we must contemplate it in its supreme development; in glory which is its consummation.

Fundamentally the life of grace and the life of glory are the same supernatural life, the same charity, with two differences. Here on earth, God is known only in the obscurity of faith, not in the clarity of vision. In addition, we hope to possess God in an inamissible¹⁹ manner; but as long as we are on earth, we can lose Him through our own fault.

In spite of these two differences, it is the same life. Our Lord said to the Samaritan woman: “If thou didst know the gift of God. . . . Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever. But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting” (Jon 4: 10,13f.) In the Temple on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood and cried in a loud voice: “If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7: 37). As St. John adds, He said this of the Spirit, which they should receive who believe in Him. On several occasions Jesus repeats: “He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting” (John 3: 36; 6: 40,47). “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day” (John 6: 55). “The kingdom of God

¹⁸ Luke 14: 21. “Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city. and bring in hither the poor and the feeble and the blind and the lame.”

¹⁹ I.e., unable to be lost.

cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say: Behold here, or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17: 20f.). It is hidden in you as the grain of mustard seed; as the leaven that causes the loaf to rise; as the treasure buried in the field.

And how are we to know that we have already received this life which should last forever? St. John expounds the matter for us at length. “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself” (I John 3: 14f.). “These things I write to you, that you may know that you have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God” (I John 5: 13).

And in truth, Christ said in His sacerdotal prayer: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17: 3). Through supernatural faith this knowledge has its beginning; and through living faith, or faith vivified by charity, Christ “dwells in us and we in Him,” (John 15: 4; 17: 26) a statement that St. John himself explains by saying: “God hath given to us eternal life. And this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son, hath life. He that hath not the Son, hath not life” (I John 5: 11f.).

Since this is true, what does death become for the true Christian? A passage from the supernatural life which is as yet imperfect to the plenitude of this life. In this sense we must understand our Lord’s words: “Amen, amen I say to you: If any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever.” In amazement the Jews answered: “Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and Thou sayest: If any man keep My word, he shall not taste death forever. . . . Whom dost Thou make Thyself?” (John 8: 51–3) At the tomb of Lazarus, Christ said: “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live. And everyone that liveth and believeth in Me, shall not die forever.”²⁰ And again to the Jews: “Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the bread that came down from heaven. . . . He that eateth this bread shall live forever” (John 6: 49, 59).

The liturgy expresses the same thought in the mass for the dead: “For Thy faithful, O Lord, life is changed, not lost.”²¹

Sanctifying grace, received in the essence of the soul, is, therefore, by its nature imperishable. It should last forever and blossom into eternal life.²² Moreover, among the theological virtues is one, charity, which ought not to disappear. “Charity never falleth away,” says St. Paul. . . . And now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.”²³ Indeed some saints on earth have a far greater degree of charity than certain of the blessed in heaven, but without having as much continuity in the act of love. St. John while on earth had a degree of charity superior to that possessed by the soul of a little child who died immediately after baptism.²⁴ The gifts of the Holy Ghost also subsist in heaven.²⁵ The life of grace is therefore the same as that of the blessed in heaven.

²⁰ John 11: 25 f. See also John 4: 14; 8: 51; 10: 28; 13: 8.

²¹ Preface of the mass for the dead.

²² Cf. the Carmelites of the Salamanca School, *De gratia*, disp. IV, dub. 6. nos. 107, 109; dub. 7, no. 141; Sanctifying grace is the same *habitus*, which, having received its final perfection, is called glory or grace consummated.

²³ See I Cor. 13: 8, 13; and St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q.67, a. 6. Charity differs from faith and hope in that it does not imply any imperfection, and that it can love God either in the obscurity of faith or in the clarity of vision.

²⁴ As the Carmelites of Salamanca show (*De caritate*, disp. VII, dub. 4, no. 66), theologians commonly admit that the charity of a just man living on earth can equal that of one of the blessed in heaven. The reason for this is that the charity of each of the blessed in heaven has a determined degree beyond which it will never progress. But this degree can be attained and even surpassed by a just soul here on earth. It is certain that the Blessed Virgin, while still on earth, had a charity which far surpassed that of every soul in heaven and that of the angels. But the charity which an adult possesses on earth is always inferior to that which he will have in heaven, where nothing will hinder the impulse of his love. Cf. Ia, q. 117, a. 2 ad 3um.

²⁵ Cf. Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 6.

True, we do not attain God in the clarity of vision, yet it is He that our faith attains. The grace of faith makes us adhere to the uncreated, revealing Truth. We believe in God's word, not in that of St. Peter or of St. Paul (I Thess. 2: 13), and this word reveals to us "the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2: 10). Our faith is thus "the substance (or the principle, the seed) of things to be hoped for," (Heb. 11: 1) which we shall contemplate in heaven. This faith, in spite of its obscurity, infinitely surpasses the keenest natural intuitions and even the most sublime natural knowledge of the loftiest angel. St. Paul declares: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you, besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1: 8).

So long as hope has not given place to the definitive possession of God, the supernatural life of grace and charity can be lost, but solely because we can grow weak and fail to co-operate. Sanctifying grace, considered in itself, and the charity which is in us are of themselves incorruptible, like living water that would always remain pure, unless the vase containing it should happen to break. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts. . . . But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us" (II Cor. 4: 6f.). We can, alas, lose charity, because of the fickleness of our free will; but, be our weakness what it may, the love of charity, considered in itself "is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell, the lamps thereof are fire and flames. Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it" (Cant. 8: 6 f.). It is this love which daily snatches souls from the demon, from the seductions of the world; it is this love which has triumphed over persecutions and the most frightful torments. If we allow ourselves to be penetrated by it, we are invincible.

This love of charity is the same as that which subsists in heaven. It presupposes that we are born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1: 13). that we are not only the servants of God, but His children and friends according to an adopted sonship, which is as real as grace. But the reality of grace differs from that of the flesh, since grace is given to us to last forever.

We now see clearly why revelation teaches us that the Blessed Trinity dwells in every soul in the state of grace as in a temple where it is known and loved. In heaven the Trinity dwells in the souls of the blessed as in a living tabernacle where it never ceases to be glorified. But since the life of grace and of charity is the same in its essence as that of heaven, we must admit, as revelation teaches us, that even on this earth the Blessed Trinity dwells in just souls: "If anyone love Me," says Christ, "he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him" (John 14: 23). "And he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him" (I John 4: 16). "But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth" (John 16: 13). "Know you not," says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. 3: 16) "Or know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God; and you are not your own?" (I Cor 16: 19) "For you are the temple of the living God" (II Cor. 6: 16).

This indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in us is attributed to the Holy Ghost because charity, which will remain in heaven, likens us more particularly to the Spirit of love; whereas faith, which will be replaced by vision, likens us as yet only imperfectly to the Word, the figure of the Father and splendor of His substance. The Blessed Trinity is none the less entirely in us as the life of our life, the soul of our soul; occasionally it makes itself felt by us especially by the gift of wisdom, and thus prepares us in the obscurity of faith for the life of heaven.

"Eternal life begun," says Bossuet, "consists in knowing by faith (a tender and affectionate knowledge which inclines the soul to love); and eternal life consummated consists in seeing openly and face to face. Jesus Christ gives us both the one and the

other because He merits this life for us, and is its principle in all the members whom He animates.”

Such is the life of grace and of charity; it is infinitely superior to genius, to the gift of miracles, to the knowledge of the angels.²⁶ In particular such should be Christian perfection, the true nature and conditions of which we can now more easily determine without lessening them. We have already seen the nature of conformity to the only Son of God, a progressive conformity that should render us like Christ Jesus in His hidden, apostolic, and suffering life, before making us share in His glorious life, the seed of which we already possess: “He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting” (John 3: 36).

We shall now note two important consequences of this doctrine.

1) Since sanctifying grace is the beginning of eternal life, and since every just soul enjoys habitual union with the Blessed Trinity dwelling in it, the mystical union, or the actual, intimate, and almost continual union with God, such as is found here on earth in holy souls, appears as the culminating point on earth of the development of the grace of the virtues and of the gifts, and as the normal, even though rather infrequent, prelude to the life of heaven.²⁷ This mystical union belongs, in fact, to the order of sanctifying grace; it proceeds essentially from “the grace of the virtues and of the gifts” and not from graces *gratis datae*,²⁸ which are transitory and in a sense exterior (as miracles and prophecy) and which may accompany it. The mystical life is Christian life, which has, so to speak, become conscious of itself. It does not give us the absolute certainty that we are in the state of grace, a certitude which, according to the Council of Trent, would presuppose a special revelation, but as St. Paul says: “The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God” (Rom 8: 16). He makes us know this, observes St. Thomas, “by the filial love which He produces in us.”²⁹

2) As the life of grace is essentially ordained to that of glory, the normal, although in fact quite rare, summit of its development should be a very perfect disposition to receive the light of glory immediately after death without passing through purgatory; for it is only through our own fault that we will be detained in that place of expiation, where the soul can no longer merit. Now this very perfect disposition to immediate glorification can be nothing other than an intense charity coupled with the ardent desire of the beatific vision, such as we find them particularly in the transforming union, after the painful passive purifications which have delivered the soul from its blemishes. Since nothing unclean can enter heaven, in principle a soul must undergo these passive purifications at least in a measure before death while meriting and progressing, or after death without meriting or progressing.³⁰

²⁶ See I Cor. 13: 1 ff.

²⁷ Cf. St. John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. III, chap. 5: “The greater love is, the more intimate is union; and this means that the conformity of the will with God’s will is more perfect. The will, wholly conformed, realizes in its totality union and the supernatural transformation in God. -This doctrine makes it clear that if the soul is occupied with creatures or with its faculties, either by attraction or by habitual dispositions, it thereby lacks preparation for such a union. The reason for this is that the soul does not offer itself entirely to God, who wishes its supernatural transformation. It must, therefore, concern itself solely with the rejection of obstacles, natural dissimilarities, in order that God, who already communicated Himself naturally, according to nature, may communicate Himself supernaturally by grace.” This teaching confirms the doctrine which we defended earlier in this work on the relations between ascetical and mystical theology.

²⁸ [Literally, “graces freely given,” also called the charismatic graces. They are freely given in the sense that they are not given to all, even to all the saints. Other examples include the stigmata or speaking in tongues. They are distinguished from *gratia gratum faciens*, “grace that makes one pleasing” to God, or sanctifying grace.

²⁹ In *Ep. ad Rom.*, 8: 16, and *Ia IIae*, q. 112, a.5.

³⁰ This does not mean that in fact the transforming union must be reached before death in order to avoid purgatory. Certainly some souls—for example, the souls of children who have died immediately after baptism—go directly to heaven without having attained on earth this degree of intimate union. But here,

These consequences, to which we will return, disclose the grandeur of the Christian perfection which can be realized on earth, and they contain the loftiest and most practical teaching.

Christian Perfection Consists Especially in Charity

In our treatment of Christian perfection, we have considered the end toward which it is essentially ordained, and from this point of view we have defined it as the beginning of eternal life in our souls, or eternal life begun in the obscurity of faith. Perfection in this life is the development of grace, which has been defined as the seed of glory. Of the three theological virtues that we possess, one, charity, should endure forever.

With St. Thomas Aquinas as our guide,³¹ we must now consider in what Christian perfection especially and chiefly consists here on earth; what its relations are with the virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost, and with the precepts and the counsels.

We shall see that Christian perfection consists especially in charity: primarily in charity toward God; and secondarily in charity toward our neighbor. We will then study the charity of the perfect in contrast with that of beginners and of proficient, and shall see what are the degrees of perfect charity, even to heroism and sanctity. This will lead us to a consideration of the relations of the charity of the perfect with the other virtues, with the passive purifications of the soul, and with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are the principles of contemplation. By this method we shall clearly see the difficulty and grandeur of evangelical perfection considered in all its loftiness, as it is proposed to us by our Lord in the eight beatitudes at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount.

In the second place, we will treat of the relations of perfection thus defined with the precept of love and with the counsels; and lastly, we shall see in what varying degrees the obligation to tend to perfection binds all Christians, whether clerics, religious, or seculars. This is, with several additions, the order followed by St. Thomas in his exposition of the subject.³²

Erroneous Or Incomplete Doctrines On The Essence Of Perfection

To solve the question as to what especially constitutes Christian perfection, St. Thomas asks, by way of objection, whether it consists mainly in wisdom, or in fortitude, or in patience, or in the aggregate of the virtues. Such different conceptions do, in fact, present themselves more or less explicitly to the mind.

The Greek thinkers considered that perfection lay especially in wisdom, so much esteemed by the philosopher; in that higher view of all things viewed in their first cause and last end, a view which perceives the harmony of the universe and should direct our whole life.

considering a question of principle rather than of fact, what we mean and will explain farther on, is that the transforming union is the normal prelude of the beatific vision; it is a normal summit. The first of these two words should not make us forget the second; nor the second, the first. Many of those who die immediately after baptism or religious profession are far from being perfect. If they had continued to live, they would have committed faults, which would have required the purification of which we are speaking.

³¹ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 184. We will follow the order of the articles of this question, supplementing them by such articles of the treatise on charity as bear directly on this subject.

³² *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 184.

Today theosophists make perfection consist in a “consciousness of our divine identity,” in the intuition of our divinity. Theosophy presupposes pantheism; it is the radical negation of the supernatural order and of all Christian dogmas, although it often preserves the terms of Christianity while giving them an entirely different meaning. It is a very perfidious imitation and corruption of our asceticism and mysticism.

Some Christians would be inclined to say that perfection consists principally in contemplation, which has its origin in the gift of wisdom. To prove their contention they would cite St. Paul’s text: “In malice be children, and in sense be perfect” (I Cor 14: 20). “We speak wisdom among the perfect . . . The spiritual man judgeth all things. . . . We have the mind of Christ” (I Cor. 2: 6, 15ff.). Reading these inspired texts in too natural and too hasty a manner, some will perhaps expect to reach perfection rapidly by the assiduous perusal of the great mystics without, however, sufficiently concerning themselves with the practice of the virtues which these authors recommend, and also without keeping clearly in mind the fact that true contemplation must be entirely penetrated by supernatural charity and forgetfulness of self.³³

From a lower point of view, some might even think that the study of theology and of its related sciences is the most important thing in the life of the priest, of the apostle, because he must fight against error and illumine minds. One might thus be led to consider practically as secondary in a sacerdotal and apostolic life the celebration of mass and union with God; yet this union is the very soul of the apostolate. Without being actually aware of it, how many make perfection consist in what they call the full development of their personality. They seek it chiefly in a broad, nicely balanced human culture that is “well informed” on actual problems and careful to grasp those phases of Christianity which are most attractive to a lofty nature. But they have only a superficial knowledge of it, and they are given up to a practical naturalism devoid of any vivifying influence on souls. Those among them who, in the course of time, are deeply touched by the grace of God, perceive their peculiar mistake and understand that to build on the intellect alone is to build on sand, as St. Thomas says when commenting on our Lord’s expression, “like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand” (Matt. 7: 6). Unless vivified by the love of God, “knowledge puffeth up,” says St. Paul, “but charity edifieth” (I Cor 8: 1). This it does because it makes us live not for ourselves, as he does who seeks only the full development of his own personality, but for God: “Charity, properly speaking, makes us tend to God, by uniting our affections to Him, so that we live, not for ourselves, but for God.”³⁴

Another equally imperfect tendency is opposed to this ultra-intellectualism. Natures inclined to action are by this very tendency led to make perfection consist chiefly in outward activity, in fortitude, or the courage that must be shown in such activity, or in patience when circumstances are unfavorable. For the heroes of antiquity, the perfect man is first and foremost the strong, the brave man. If this conception is transposed into the supernatural order, St. James’ words will be quoted: “Patience hath a perfect work” (Jas. 1: 4). This is, in fact, the great virtue which demonstrates the sanctity of the martyr. But this patience is inspired and controlled by a higher virtue.

According to an analogous tendency, some might be led to make perfection consist especially in austerity, fasting, penitential practices; from this point of view, the most austere religious orders would be the most perfect. A certain love of austerity, not unmixed with pride, such as we find in the Jansenists, might thus be developed, which would then be come

³³ Perfection does not consist especially in contemplation, which is an intellectual act, as we shall see farther on. Perfection consists in charity. However, the loving contemplation of God is here below the most efficacious means to attain the perfection of charity; and it is a means united to the end.

³⁴ St. Thomas, IIa IIae, q. 17, a. 6 ad 3um

false zeal and bitterness. Charity would be sacrificed to it,³⁵ and virtue would be made to consist in what is hard rather than in what is good and in the order willed by God. This error would confound the means with the end, or even invert the order of the means to the end, which is union with God. Austerity ought to be proportioned to this end; it is not the end. The same must be said of humility, which prostrates us before God that we may with docility receive His influence, which should lift us up to Him.

Others might be led to make perfection consist especially in the interior and exterior worship due to God, in acts of the virtue of religion, in the faithful accomplishment of exercises of piety, and in the devotion which animates them. This opinion approaches the truth; yet this view does not sufficiently discern the superiority of the theological virtues which, more than the others, unite us to God because they are immediately specified by Him. The virtue of religion is inferior to them because it is immediately concerned not with God Himself but with the worship due Him. From this point of view, one might perhaps be more attentive to worship and to the liturgy than to God Himself; to the figures than to the reality; to the manner of reciting an Our Father or a Gloria than to the sublime meaning of these prayers. The service of God would take precedence over the love of God.

Others, although few in number, might be tempted to see perfection in the solitary life, especially if the soul is there favored with visions and revelations. Aristotle says in the first book of his *Politics*: “He who lives in solitude and no longer communicates with men, is either a beast or a god.” And the Holy Ghost Himself, by the mouth of the prophet Osee, says of the chosen people, the figure of the interior soul: “I will allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart” (Osee 2: 14). But does it follow that love of solitude is the essence of perfection? If this were true, how could fervent Christians who are detained in the world by their duties attain perfection? What of the apostles and priests consecrated to the ministry, who cannot withdraw to a Thebaid? St. Thomas believes that, “solitude, like poverty, is not the essence of perfection, but a means thereto.”³⁶

St. Francis de Sales says: “Everyone paints devotion according to his own passion and fancy. He that is addicted to fasting, thinks himself very devout if he fasts, though his heart be at the same time full of rancor. . . . Another accounts himself devout for reciting daily a multiplicity of prayers, though he immediately afterwards utters the most disagreeable, arrogant, and injurious words amongst his domestics and neighbors. Another cheerfully draws an alms out of his purse to relieve the poor, but cannot draw meekness out of his heart to forgive his enemies. Another readily forgives his enemies, but never satisfies his creditors, but by constraint. These, by some, are esteemed devout, when, in reality, they are by no means so.”³⁷ Each one is inclined to judge according to his individual aptitude and tastes, and then to seek a justification of his views.

To avoid this fault, some make perfection consist in the ensemble of the Christian virtues, and they invoke St. Paul’s words: “Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil . . . that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect” (Eph. 6: 11, 13). It is certain that all the Christian virtues are necessary for evangelical perfection: faith, hope, charity, and the moral virtues, among which the most important is the virtue of religion, which is justice in regard to God. But all these virtues are regulated like the functions of an organism. Is there not one among them which dominates all the others, which inspires them, commands them, animates or informs them, and makes their efforts converge toward one supreme end? And is it not in this

³⁵ It can aptly be said: “The best thing that one can do with the best of things is to sacrifice it,” on condition, however, that we safeguarded the hierarchy of the gifts of God and of the virtues, and that we do not sacrifice something superior to what is inferior.

³⁶ Summa, IIa IIae, q. 188, a. 8.

³⁷ Introduction to a *Devout Life*, chap. 1.

directing virtue that perfection especially consists? Therefore, must not the other virtues be subordinated to this directing virtue?

True Solution: Perfection Consists Chiefly in Charity

To solve the question thus proposed, we will consider the teaching of Scripture, and then that of theology.

St. Paul teaches, and all Christian tradition follows him: “Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: bearing with one another. . . . But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body” (Col. 3: 12–15). It is this virtue of charity which corresponds to the two greatest precepts, which are the end of all the others and of the counsels: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself” (Luke 10: 27).

St. Paul is so firmly convinced of this superiority of charity over all the other virtues, over the gifts, and over graces gratuitously bestowed, that he writes: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (I Cor. 13: 1ff.). I do not fulfill the first commandment of God; I do not conform my will to His; I remain turned away from Him.

Moreover, charity in a way implies all the virtues which are subordinated to it, and which appear as so many modalities or aspects of the love of God. This is what St. Paul says in the same epistle: “Charity is patient; is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (I Cor. 13: 4–7). To this we must add with the great Apostle: “Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. . . . We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity” (I Cor. 13: 8–13). It will subsist eternally, when faith and hope shall have disappeared in order to give way to the vision and the definitive possession of God. In addition, according to St. Paul, in the measure with which we love God, we know Him with that sweet knowledge, which is divine wisdom: “Being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth: to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God” (Eph. 3: 17–19). Finally, St. Paul says, on several occasions, that by charity we become the temples of the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle St. John teaches the same doctrine: “God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him” (I John 4: 16). “He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is charity” (I John 4: 8). “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death” (I John 3: 14).

St. Peter expresses the same thought: “But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins” (I Pet. 4: 8). Our Lord Himself said of Magdalen: “Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much.”

The full value of this teaching of Holy Scripture, commented on by the fathers, is brought home to us through the clarifying light of theology. St. Thomas proves that Christian perfection consists especially in charity: “A thing is said to be perfect in so far as it attains its proper end, which is the ultimate perfection thereof.”³⁸ Take for example, the soldier who knows how to fight, the physician who knows how to heal, the learned teacher who has the art of communicating his knowledge. We must not, however, confound these particular ends of the soldier, the doctor, and the teacher with the universal end of man and of the Christian. “Now,” continues St. Thomas, “it is charity that unites us to God, who is the last end of the human mind, since he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him (I John 4: 16). Therefore the perfection of the Christian life consists chiefly in charity.”³⁹

Farther on, the holy doctor adds: “Perfection is said to consist in a thing in two ways: in one way, primarily and essentially; in another, secondarily and accidentally. Primarily and essentially the perfection of the Christian life consists in charity; principally as to the love of God, secondarily as to the love of our neighbor, both of which are the matter of the chief commandments of the divine law. . . . Now the love of God and of our neighbor is not commanded according to a measure, so that what is in excess of the measure be a matter of counsel.”⁴⁰ We shall return later to the question of the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, but it is clear even now that they are subordinated to charity. No less certainly the first object of this theological virtue is God Himself. Our neighbor is the secondary object of it, and he must be loved for the sake of God, whom he is to glorify eternally with us by participating in His beatitude.

Charity thus conceived is truly “the bond of perfection,” as St. Paul says, because if man is rendered perfect by all the virtues, charity unites them all, inspires them, rules them, animates them, or informs them, and assures their perseverance by making their acts converge toward the last end, toward God loved above all. Charity not only binds us to God, but, in a sense, it also binds all the virtues, and makes them all one.⁴¹

In addition, because charity thus unites us to our last end, it cannot co-exist with mortal sin, which turns us away from that end. Therefore charity is inseparable from the state of grace, or of divine life, while faith and hope can be found in a sinful soul in a state of mortal sin. This is the explanation of St. Paul’s statement: “If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (I Cor. 13: 2). Without charity we abide in death, says St. John. This also explains St. Peter’s words: “Charity covers a multitude of sins.”

Lastly, since charity has none of the imperfections of faith and of hope, it will subsist eternally; even here on earth charity attains God directly, and that is why it makes us the temples of the Holy Ghost.⁴² Hence perfection consists especially in charity. Not only does it assemble all our powers, inspire our patience and perseverance, but it also unites souls and leads them to unity in truth.

The Objection of Intellectuals: Why is Charity Superior to our Knowledge of God?

³⁸ Summa, IIa IIae, q. 184, a. 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Summa, IIa IIae, q. 184, a. 3.

⁴¹ Cf. St. Thomas, in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians*, 3: 14; *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 23, a.6–8.

⁴² Summa, IIa IIae, q. 27, a. 4; Ia, q. 43, a.3.

Some people, especially intellectuals, will offer an objection to this great traditional doctrine. Is not the intellect, they will say, man's first faculty, the one that directs all the others, that primarily distinguishes us from animals? Must we not conclude that the perfection of man lies especially in the intellectual knowledge he can have of all things considered in their beginning and their end; and therefore, that the perfection of man lies in the knowledge of God, the supreme rule of human life?

St. Thomas has certainly not failed to recognize this aspect of the problem of perfection. He himself admits that the intellect is superior to the will which it directs. The intellect has, in fact, a simpler, more absolute, more universal object, being in all its universality and consequently all being; the will, on the other hand, has a more restricted object, the good, which is a modality of being, and which in everything is the perfection that renders it desirable. As good supposes being, the will presupposes the intellect and is directed by it. It is, then, by the intellect, the highest of his faculties,⁴³ that man differs specifically from animals.

St. Thomas also admits that in heaven our blessedness will consist essentially in the beatific vision, in the intellectual and immediate vision of the divine essence; for it is chiefly by this vision that we will take possession of God for eternity. Beatific love will be only the necessary consequence of this immediate knowledge of the sovereign good. As the properties of an object spring from its essence, our immutable love of God and the joy of possessing Him will necessarily follow the beatific vision, which will thus be the essence of our beatitude.⁴⁴

The Angelic Doctor could not better affirm the superiority of the intellect over the will, in principle, and in the perfect light of heaven. Why does he now tell us that Christian perfection in this life consists especially in charity, which is a virtue of the will, and not in faith, or in the gift of wisdom, or in contemplation, all of which belong to the intellect?

He himself has given us a profound answer to this question, and an answer of prime importance in ascetical and mystical theology. He tells us in substance⁴⁵ that although one faculty may by its very nature be superior to another, as sight is to hearing, it is possible that an act of the second may be superior to an act of the first, as the hearing of a sublime and very rare symphony is of a higher order than the sight of an ordinary color. Thus, although the intellect by its very nature (*simpliciter*) may be superior to the will which it directs, because it has a simpler, more absolute, more universal object, yet in certain circumstances (*secundum quid*) and with relation to God, the intellect in this life remains inferior to the will; in other words, here on earth the love of God is more perfect than the knowledge of God; while it is better to know inferior things than to love them. A profound observation on which one cannot meditate too much.

And whence comes this superiority of the love of God over the knowledge we have of Him on earth? "The action of the intellect consists in this," says St. Thomas,⁴⁶ "that the idea of the thing understood is in the one who understands; while the act of the will consists in this—that the will is inclined to the thing itself as existing in itself. And therefore the Philosopher says (*Metaph.* VI) that good and evil, which are objects of the will, are in things, but truth and error, which are objects of the intellect, are in the mind." It follows that in this life our knowledge of God is inferior to the love of God, since, as the Angelic Doctor

⁴³ See Ia, q. 82, a. 3.

⁴⁴ And so it is with an intelligible end. For at first we desire to attain an intelligible end. We attain it (God) through His being made present to us by an act of the intellect; and then the delighted will rests in the end when attained. So, therefore, the essence of happiness consists in an act of the intellect: but the delight that results from happiness pertains to the will. In this sense St. Augustine says (*Conf.*, X, 23) that happiness is joy in truth, because, to wit, joy itself is the consummation of happiness."

⁴⁵ See Ia, q. 82, a. 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

says,⁴⁷ in order to know God we, in a way, draw Him to us, and in order to represent Him to ourselves we impose on Him the bounds of our limited ideas. On the other hand, when we love Him, we raise ourselves toward Him, such as He is in Himself.

It is better, therefore, to love God than to know Him, although love always presupposes a certain knowledge and is directed by it. On the other hand, it is better to know inferior things than to love them. By knowing them we raise them, in a way, to our intelligence; whereas by loving them, we stoop toward them, and we might become subservient to them as the miser is to his treasure. It is better to know the properties of gold than to love it. This is one of the principal doctrines of the tract on man left us by St. Thomas.

The holy doctor repeats this teaching in the tract on charity⁴⁸ when he asks: “Whether God can be loved immediately in this life?” He answers: “Knowledge of God, through being mediate, is said to be enigmatic, and falls away in heaven. . . . But charity does not fall away. . . . Therefore the charity of the way adheres to God immediately. The reason for this is that the act of a cognitive power is completed by the thing known being in the knower, whereas the act of an appetitive power consists in the appetite being inclined toward the thing itself. . . . We must assert that to love, which is an act of the appetitive power, even in this state of life, tends to God first, and flows on from Him to other things, and in this sense charity love God immediately, and other things through God.” This love should extend to our neighbor, who should be loved for the love of our common Father. “For knowledge begins from creatures, tends to God, and love begins with God as the last end, and passes on to creatures.”⁴⁹

By this we see the superiority of charity as compared with faith and hope. “But faith and hope attain God indeed in so far as we derive from Him the knowledge of truth or the acquisition of good, whereas charity attains God Himself that it may rest in Him, but not that something may accrue to us from Him. Hence charity is more excellent than faith or hope, and consequently, than all the other virtues, which have not God directly for their object.”⁵⁰ In this way it is explained that charity, unlike faith and hope, is inseparable from the state of grace and from the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in us: “He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him” (I John 4: 16).

In virtue of the same principle enunciated by St. Thomas, we see again that charity is superior to all knowledge in this life, even to contemplation, which proceeds from the gift of wisdom. This quasi-experimental knowledge of God also imposes on Him, in fact, the limits of our ideas, and it draws its savor from the very love which inspires it. It is charity that establishes in us a sympathy with divine things, which are thereby rendered desirable.⁵¹ The gifts of the Holy Ghost thus find their remote rule in the theological virtues; they are ruled immediately by divine inspirations according to a superhuman mode, and from this point of view they add a new perfection to the theological virtues. Nevertheless they remain subordinated to them by nature,⁵² and their fruits are the very fruits of charity—joy and peace.

All this shows us the profound meaning of St. Paul’s expression, “Charity is the bond of perfection.” Not only does charity unite us to God more than do the other virtues, but it unites them all by inspiring them and by ordering all their acts to a final end which is its own object, to God loved above all. Therefore it is called the mother of all the virtues. With this

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ See IIa IIae, q. 27, a. 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, ad 2um.

⁵⁰ See IIa IIae, q. 23, a. 6.

⁵¹ See IIa IIae, q. 45, a. 2, 4.

⁵² “The theological virtues are more excellent than the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and regulate them. Hence . . . the seven gifts never attain perfection . . . unless all that they do be done in faith, hope, and charity” (Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 8).

interpretation in mind, St. Augustine could say: “Love, and do what you will.” And indeed you may, provided you love the Lord in very truth, more than yourself and above all things. How can we love Him thus unless we observe His commandments, the first of which, that of love, is the beginning and end of all the others?

We must conclude with all theologians that the perfection of Christian life consists especially in charity, in an active charity, which actually unites us to God, and is fruitful in every type of good work. This virtue should, without a doubt, hold the first place in our souls.

Perfection is a Plenitude

From what we have just said, must we conclude that the other virtues, important as they are, such as faith, hope, the virtue of religion, prudence, justice, fortitude, patience, temperance, mildness, and humility, do not contribute toward the essence of perfection, and belong to it only accidentally as instruments, or secondary means? Some theologians have thought so. We believe, however, with Father Passerini, O.P., who among Thomists has most profoundly commented on the article of St. Thomas which we are now explaining, that such is not the thought of the holy doctor. St. Thomas himself says: “Primarily and essentially the perfection of the Christian life consists in charity, principally as to the love of God, secondarily as to the love of our neighbor, both of which are the matter of the chief commandments of the divine law. . . . Secondarily and instrumentally, however, perfection consists in the observance of the counsels. . . . For the commandments, other than the precepts of charity, are directed to the removal of things contrary to charity, with which, namely, charity is incompatible, whereas the counsels are directed to the removal of things that hinder the act of charity, and yet are not contrary to charity.”⁵³ It follows, as Passerini shows, that perfection consists essentially not in charity alone, but also in the acts of the other virtues which are of precept and which are ordered by charity.” Thus the acts of faith, hope, religion, and prayer, attendance at mass, and reception of holy communion, belong to the very essence of perfection, which is a plenitude. To use St. Paul’s word, charity is the bond of this plenitude. We can, therefore, truthfully say with St. Thomas, that perfection consists particularly in charity, and principally in the love of God. Just so, the body and soul constitute the very essence of man, although this essence is chiefly constituted by the rational soul, which distinguishes man from animals. Such is the place of charity in the Christian life. St. Thomas rightly says: “Christian life consists chiefly in charity, which unites the soul to God.” Unlike faith and hope, charity absolutely excludes mortal sin, and requires the state of grace or of life.

Does it follow that every soul in the state of grace is perfect? As yet it has perfection only in the broad sense of the term (*perfectio substantialis*), which excludes mortal sin; but not for that reason alone has it perfection, properly so called (*perfectio simpliciter*), which ascetical and mystical theology speak of and which interior souls, especially those consecrated to God in the religious state, aspire to.

In the following article we shall see in what this perfection, properly so called, consists—the perfection of charity, or the charity of the perfect, in contradistinction to that of beginners and to that of proficients. But already we catch a glimpse of the inexpressible grandeur of charity even in the soul that has just been snatched from mortal sin, and that is beginning to walk in the way of perfection. This soul has truly passed from death to life, to the life which ought never to end.

⁵³ See IIa IIae, q. 184, a. 3.

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

The Rule attempts to give concrete form to the charism of St. Dominic as lived by members of the Third Order. It helps us to understand what imitating St. Dominic means in a more particular way, while still leaving ample room for discernment—by the chapter and the individual member—about what this means in our daily lives.

The Rule of the Lay Chapters of Saint Dominic

II. Life of the Chapters

8. (Life of the Chapters) Let them strive, to the best of their ability, to live in authentic communion in accord with the spirit of the Beatitudes. This is done in all circumstances, performing works of mercy, sharing in good works with members of the Chapter, especially toward the poor and the sick, and praying for the dead. In this way they will be *of one heart and one mind in the Lord*.⁵⁴

9. Collaborating with all their sisters and brothers [Latin original: *cum fratribus et sororibus*] in the Order, the laity should participate actively in the life of the Church, ready always to work with other apostolic groups.

10. To advance in their vocation, a union of action and contemplation, the Dominican Laity have as their principal sources:

- a. listening to the Word of God and reading the Sacred Scriptures, especially the New Testament;
- b. daily participation, if possible, in the celebration of the liturgy and the Eucharist;
- c. frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation;
- d. celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours with all the Dominican Family and private prayer, such as meditation and the Rosary;
- e. conversion of heart through spirit and practice of evangelical asceticism [Latin original: *paenitentiae*];
- f. assiduous study of revealed truth and reflection on contemporary problems, in the light of Faith;
- g. devotion to the Virgin Mary, according to the tradition of the Order, to our Father Saint Dominic and Saint Catherine of Siena;
- h. periodic spiritual retreats.

⁵⁴ Acts of the Apostles 4:32.

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR A, UNIT III**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: VERITAS: PREACHING

It goes without saying that preaching was central in the life of St. Dominic. But what role is preaching to play in the lives of the followers of St. Dominic, especially for the laity who are members of the Third Order? Canon Law (canon 767, n. 1) tells us that “Among the various forms of preaching, the homily is preeminent; it is part of the liturgy itself and is reserved to a priest or a deacon.” But if laity cannot preach a homily, there are other means of proclaiming Christian teaching, such as “catechetical formation, . . . exposition of doctrine in schools, academies, conferences and meetings of every type,” (canon 761) in which the laity may participate: “In virtue of their baptism and confirmation lay members of the Christian faithful are witnesses to the gospel message by word and by example of a Christian life; they can also be called upon to cooperate with the bishops and presbyters in the exercise of the ministry of the word” (canon 759). Insofar as these other forms of preaching are to some degree like the homily, it will be useful for us to consider the homily. The homily seems to be what Humbert of Romans, fifth master-general of the Dominican Third Order, has principally in mind in his Treatise on Preaching. The first chapter of this work is given below.

But there is another way in which members of the Dominican Third Order are concerned with preaching that goes to the very reason why St. Dominic founded the Third Order: we support the preaching of the Dominican friars with our prayers and penances. Humbert reminds us that preaching is an art taught by the Holy Spirit, and for that reason the preacher must pray in order to be successful. He illustrates this by the example of Esther, who before approaching the Persian king Ahasuerus first fasted and prayed to God: “Put eloquent speech in my mouth.” But we should remember that even before this Mordecai and all the Jews fasted and prayed for Esther. The Dominican friars are called to preach in many ways, but especially in the preeminent way of giving homilies. We can support them, and show our unity as Dominicans, by offering our penance and prayers for the success of their preaching.

A. Book of Esther (RSV—4:1-17, 14:1-19)

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai rent his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; he went up to the entrance of the king’s gate, for no one might enter the king’s gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, wherever the king’s command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

When Esther’s maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what this was and why it was. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of

money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people. "Remembering the days of your lowliness, when you were cared for by me, because Haman, who is next to the king, spoke against us for our destruction. Beseech the Lord and speak to the king concerning us and deliver us from death." And Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, "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 are to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter that he may live. And I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days." And they told Mordecai what Esther had said. Then Mordecai told them to return answer to Esther, "Think not that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish." Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

And Esther the queen, seized with deathly anxiety, fled to the Lord; she took off her splendid apparel and put on the garments of distress and mourning, and instead of costly perfumes she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she utterly humbled her body, and every part that she loved to adorn she covered with her tangled hair. And she prayed to the Lord God of Israel, and said:

"O my Lord, thou only art our King; help me, who am alone and have no helper but thee, for my danger is in my hand. Ever since I was born I have heard in the tribe of my family that thou, O Lord, didst take Israel out of all the nations, and our fathers from among all their ancestors, for an everlasting inheritance, and that thou didst do for them all that thou didst promise. And now we have sinned before thee, and thou hast given us into the hands of our enemies, because we glorified their gods. Thou art righteous, O Lord! And now they are not satisfied that we are in bitter slavery, but they have covenanted with their idols to abolish what thy mouth has ordained and to destroy thy inheritance, to stop the mouths of those who praise thee and to quench thy altar and the glory of thy house, to open the mouths of the nations for the praise of vain idols, and to magnify for ever a mortal king. O Lord, do not surrender thy scepter to what has no being; and do not let them mock at our downfall; but turn their plan against themselves, and make an example of the man who began this against us. Remember, O Lord; make thyself known in this time of our affliction, and give me courage, O King of the gods and Master of all dominion! Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate the man who is fighting against us, so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. But save us by thy hand, and help me, who am alone and have no helper but thee, O Lord. Thou hast knowledge of all things; and thou knowest that I hate the splendor of the wicked and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any alien. Thou knowest my necessity that I abhor the sign of my proud position, which is upon my head on the days when I appear in public. I abhor it like a menstruous rag, and I do not wear it on the days when I am at leisure. And thy servant has not eaten at Haman's table, and I have not honored the king's feast or drunk the wine of the libations. Thy servant has had no joy since the day that I was brought here until now, except in thee, O Lord God of Abraham. O God, whose might is over all, hear the voice of the despairing, and save us from the hands of evildoers. And save me from my fear!"

B. Humbert of Romans, *Treatise on Preaching*, chapter 1

THE QUALITIES OF PREACHING

First of all it should be noted that the office of preaching is excellent, necessary, and agreeable to God; and that it is profitable to the preacher himself, and useful to souls; and lastly, that it is very difficult to reach perfection in preaching.

I. *Its Excellence*

To understand its excellence we should consider those who have the mission to preach. First their office is apostolic, for in order to fulfill this ministry, Our Lord chose the twelve Apostles and attached them to Himself so that He might send them, at His will, to preach everywhere.

It is also an angelic office as the Apocalypse teaches us, where St. John saw “a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice” (Apoc. 5:2) before the throne of the Lamb. Was it not also an angel who preached to the shepherds of Bethlehem and said to them: “Behold I bring you good news of great joy” (Luke 2:10)? It is little wonder, then, that the angels are similar to preachers, seeing that God “sent (them) for service, for the sake of those who shall inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14) just as He sends preachers to labor for the salvation of men.

Finally this ministry is divine; for the Son of God became man precisely to hold it: “Let us go,” said He, “into the neighboring villages and towns, that there also I may preach, for this is why I have come” (Mark 1:38).

If among the Saints there are none more excellent than the Apostles; if among creatures there is nothing more excellent than the Angels; and if in the universe there is nothing comparable to God, how excellent, then, must that office be which is at the same time apostolic, angelic, and divine?

Further, let us note that Holy Writ which is the foundation of preaching excels other sciences in a threefold way: because of its author, its matter, and the end which it has in view.

1. Its author: human genius, not however without the help of God, discovered for us the other sciences; but this science is directly revealed to us by God Himself, for “holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (II Pet. 1:21).

2. Its object: the other sciences treat only of those things which relate to reason, or nature, or to free will; this science, on the other hand, elevates itself to the things of God which infinitely surpass everything else. Also the Divine Wisdom tells us: “Hear, for I speak of great things” (Prov. 8:6). Great things indeed, are the mysteries of the Trinity of God, His Unity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and other subjects which nothing can surpass in dignity.

3. Its end: the other sciences have only in view either the government of temporal things, as the science of law; or the service of the body, as the science of medicine; or the instruction of the intellect imperfect and enveloped in ignorance, as the speculative sciences; while this science ought to gain for us eternal life. Jesus Christ assured it when he said to the Samaritan woman: “He who drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto life everlasting” (John 4:13-14). This signifies that the water of Divine Wisdom flows in order to lead us to eternal life, which is no other than God. And this is why we can say that God Himself is the end of this science. Holy Scripture is called Theology (from the two Greek words *theos*, God, and *logos*, word), for this reason, that all its words come from God, speak

of God and lead to God. Now it is precisely from these words and not from those taken from other sciences that all good preaching ought principally to come. And since we appreciate a thing by the excellence of its composition, valuing a gold vase more than a lead one, think how much we should value preaching which contains such rare and sublime matter! Also, man is, according to the philosophers, the highest creature, and composed of body and soul. The soul being by far the more noble, everything which relates to its salvation must be esteemed above that which is of little or no use to man. And it is precisely to the rational man that the preacher addresses himself, for it is thus, says St. Gregory, that we should interpret the words of Jesus Christ to His Apostles: "Preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). By "every creature" is understood man, and man considered according to the soul and not according to the body.

Also when St. Peter preached for the first time he gained close to three thousand souls (Acts 2:41), directing his preaching to the souls of his hearers and thinking only of their eternal salvation. For this reason also, it is written about the great preacher St. John the Baptist: "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give to His people knowledge of salvation" (Luke 1:76). And so we see that the excellence of every occupation is in proportion to the excellence of the one for whom we work; thus the service of a king is more excellent than the service of his horses, and the care of his palace is more excellent than the care of his stables. We cannot value preaching too much, for Preaching is for man's benefit, the king of creation; for the salvation of the soul, the more perfect part of man, which is of supreme interest. It can be seen, then, that it surpasses in dignity all other occupations.

And so, as we have said, whether we consider the excellence of preachers, or the elements which make up their preaching, or the great concerns for which they labor, we shall find everywhere the greatness of their ministry.

II. *Its Necessity*

To know how much preaching is necessary to the world, we should remember that the souls of the Saints in heaven lift their voices before the Lord in never-ending complaint of "those who dwell on the earth" (Apoc. 6:11). This cry, according to the commentators, is directed against those unrepentant men who put off the fullness of the joy of the elect. The elect will enjoy a marvelous supplementary glory when they at last see the ruins caused by the fall of the wicked angels fully repaired, and all the empty places in heaven filled. But there is nothing that will hasten this hour of perfect reparation quicker than the voice of preachers; for they continue what Jesus their model began when He said: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). It is evident that it depends on the preachers to assure the elect the consummation of their heavenly joy.

And just as preaching gains entry for souls into heaven more quickly and more surely, so too it prevents their fall into hell. For thus says the prophet Isaias: "therefore is my people led away captive, because they have not knowledge . . . therefore hath hell enlarged her mouth without any bounds" (Isai. 5:13-14).

Hence it is that through ignorance so many throw themselves into the abyss; and it is this which keeps preachers from filling the earth with their knowledge; for it is of them, according to the gloss, that we should understand the words of Proverbs: "The lips of the wise shall disperse knowledge" (Prov. 12:7). And so preachers prevent souls from throwing themselves into the abyss, and they deliver "them that are led to death" (Prov. 24:11), on which the gloss adds "by preaching."

Without preaching, which scatters the word of God like seed, the world would be sterile and produce no fruit. "Except the Lord of hosts," the prophet Isaias tells us, "had left us seed," and he understands by this the word of God, "we had been as Sodom" (Isai.1:9), a land absolutely barren producing no fruit.

On the other hand the demons from the beginning of time have devoted an unbelievable tenacity to the subjection of the whole world, and they have unfortunately subjugated too large a part of it. They would have conquered much more but for the power which God communicated to the preachers and of which it is written: "He gave them power over unclean spirits" (Matt. 10:1), and again, He commanded them to "cast out devils" (Matt. 10:8); this they have done re-enacting, according to the interpreters, the exploits of Gideon (Judg. 7) and his soldiers when they put their enemies to flight by means of their trumpets, the beautiful symbols of preachers. Were there no preachers, men would not think of heavenly truths and soon their hearts would become as parched land: "If you withhold the waters, all things shall be dried up" (Job 12:15). St. Gregory explains this as follows: "If someone should suppress the teaching of preachers, the hearts of those in whom eternal hope germinates would quickly dry up."

Preaching is also indispensable to the infidels; for without it they could not arrive at faith, a necessary condition for salvation. It is for this reason that the Macedonian appeared to St. Paul during the night entreating him to save his people and to come and visit him (Acts 16:9). For he would not have arrived at the faith, if it had not been revealed to him by preaching. "How," said St. Paul, "are they to believe him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear if no one preaches?" (Rom. 10:14.) Our Lord gave the gift of tongues to His Disciples so that they would be understood by all, and that they might lead to the faith many nations who evidently would not have been converted to Christ without their preaching.

Preaching is the foundation of the Church: "Where wast thou," said Job, "when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:4.) These foundations are the Apostles. According to Scripture, God sent them to preach, in order to establish His Church, and on them He erected the edifice that will last until the end of time. The Church, founded without preaching, would not have grown. It is written of Solomon "that he commanded large blocks of choice and precious stones to be placed as the foundation of the temple of Jerusalem" (III Kings 5:17). The gloss explains that those layers of rock and wood which were placed on the foundations are the doctors who came after the Apostles and whose word has brought about the growth of the Church and enriched it with virtues.

The Church, without preaching, would not continue, and the gloss, interpreting the words of Isaias: "I shall glorify the place of my feet" (Isai. 60:13), says that preachers are the feet of the Lord. They carry the weight of the whole Church, which remains erect, thanks to their support, just as the body is supported by the feet.

We can conclude that preaching is truly necessary, for without it the glory of heaven would never be realized, hell would be filled up all too soon, and the world would remain sterile; demons would rule, hearts would have neither hope nor joy in their salvation, nations would not know the Christian faith, and God's Church would have no foundation, growth, or stability.

For this reason St. Paul said: "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8); in fact, in former times deprived of the light which preaching diffuses, men lived in the darkness of ignorance. And just as at the moment of creation, as it is written, "the face of the abyss was covered with darkness" (Gen. 1:2), and then everything was illumined, as soon as light was created, so too men have received by preaching the light which illuminates them. Isaias tells us: "The light has appeared to the eyes of those who dwell in darkness" (Isai. 60:2), and this light, according to the gloss, is the light of preaching. To illuminate the world, then, is the duty of preachers. Our Lord also said of preachers: "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). "Cursing, lying, homicide, theft and adultery have overflowed the world," says Osee (Osee 4:2), and this deluge would have completely submerged it like that which covered the earth at the time of Noah had not preaching checked its progress. In support of this let us cite an example. Certain clerics alleged to a famous

Archbishop that the preaching of the religious who had recently come into the country seemed quite useless to them, since it was obvious that as much usury, fornication, and all kinds of sin continued. But the prelate answered them: “Unfortunately, it is true that many of these crimes are committed; however, these honest men prevent a great many more by their preaching; what would have happened if they had not come to preach? Undoubtedly, all these evils would have increased even to the deluge of the world.” It is justly said that preaching restrains the kingdom of evil. Just as “God made a wind blow which dried the land and made the waters diminish” (Gen. 8:1) after the deluge, so also did the Holy Spirit by the breath of the mouth of preachers diminish the floods of sin.

Along the same lines, how many plagues were spared the world through the action of preachers! Often famine has desolated the land, but spiritual famine would be a result more inevitable and fatal were preachers to keep silent. About these words: “There came a grievous famine over that country” (Luke 15:14); “Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4), the gloss says: famine rages mercilessly when the word of life fails. In this word the sick find a universal remedy, for “the multitude of wise men is the health of the world” (Wisd. 6:26), and the gloss adds that this health is due to the care of preachers. Does it not sometimes happen that cities are abandoned by their inhabitants when a wise government becomes corrupt? “When a people no longer hears the voice of a prophet, it is soon corrupted” (Prov. 29:18); thus, when the preacher is silent, wise men disappear and the majority of men become like animals. On the other hand, the wisdom of those who preach virtue repairs these ruins and leads the people back into the city, as the book of Ecclesiasticus says: “Cities shall be inhabited through the prudence of the rulers” (Ecclus. 10:3), who are, the gloss tells us, the preachers. When the rains of heaven fail, a terrible plague rages, but to be deprived of good doctrine is also a misfortune for humanity; “the needy and the poor seek for waters and there are none, their tongue hath been dry with thirst” (Isai. 41:17). According to the gloss, the devil strives to suppress the sources of doctrine, as “Holofernes commanded that the aqueduct which conducted water to the city of Bethulie be cut” (Judith 7:6), while the Lord sends preachers to distribute these salutary waters, as he had promised: “I will open rivers in the high hills and fountains in the midst of the plains” (Isai. 41:18); that is, according to the gloss, preachers will go and preach the truth alike to the proud and the humble. Finally, if there were no preachers, the world would be like a desert without any roads, where no one could find his way; but they are there, and they point out the way to be followed. For this reason it was said of the famous preacher, John the Baptist, who spoke in the midst of the desert, “Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways” (Luke 1:76), and again: “To shine on those who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to direct our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:79).

In conclusion, let us admire the usefulness and the necessity of such an office, since without it the whole world would have remained plunged in the darkness of error; increasing sin would choke out virtue; the most dangerous famine, the famine of the bread of sound doctrine, would ravage the world; sin would deliver up to death innumerable victims; the privation of the saving waters of wisdom would cause an intolerable drought and a desolating dearth of all good; and, lastly, we would not find the way to salvation.

For all these reasons, God, seeing how necessary preaching is, has not ceased since the beginning of the world and will not cease until the end of time, to send preachers. St. Gregory commenting on the Gospel of St. Matthew tells us: the householder who sends workers into his vineyard at the third, sixth and ninth hours, is a figure of God Who, from the beginning of the world until the end, does not cease to supply preachers for the faithful.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ S. Greg., *Hom. 19 in S. Matt.*, Cap. 20.

III. *Its Agreeableness in the Eyes of God*

To understand how much the office of preachers is pleasing to God, it is necessary to note that their discourses are like hymns. Nehemias reports that “the singers entered upon the possession of their cities” (II Esd. 7:73) on their return from the Babylonian captivity, and the gloss explains that these singers were those who preached with harmonious and persuasive voices the sweetness of the celestial home. This singing is as pleasing to God as is the playing of musicians to the ears of princes who summon them to their palaces to entertain. And it is to His subject and spouse, the Church, that the Sacred Spouse addresses this invitation: “Let thy voice sound in my ears, for thy voice is sweet” (Cant. 11:14), or in other words as the gloss says: “I wish to hear you preach, for that is very pleasing to me.”

Again, it can be said of preachers that they are the hunters whom Jeremias had in mind when he said: “I shall send them many hunters and they shall hunt them from every mountain and from every hill and out of the holes of rocks” (Jer. 16:16). And rightly do the commentators interpret the words of the sacred text; for preachers, like keen huntsmen, seek sinners of all kinds, souls yet untamed which they wish to offer as a banquet to the Lord. He is as pleased to see this prize on His table as the noblemen of the earth are with a tasty venison. Do we not read in Genesis that Isaac ate with pleasure the kill of Esau? (Gen. 25:28.)

The pleasure that God takes in this hunt for souls is such that He prompts preachers to devote themselves to it, speaking to them as Isaac spoke to his son: “Take thy weapons, thy quiver and bow, and go abroad; and when thou hast taken something by hunting, make me savory meat thereof, that I may eat: and my soul may bless thee before God” (Gen. 27:3-4).

Notice again that it is precisely from zeal for souls that preaching comes; that is why St. Paul, that great preacher, declared to the Corinthians that for the welfare of their souls he felt himself “urged with a divine emulation” (II Cor. 11:3-4), that is, with a vehement zeal. St. Augustine teaches that no sacrifice is accepted by God as much as zeal for the salvation of souls. If, then, the sacrifice of animals was so pleasing to Him in ancient times, as is written of Noah’s sacrifice: “He breathed its odor as that of the sweetest of perfumes” (Gen. 8:21), how much more pleasing should be the offering of souls presented to Him by preachers!

Preachers are also called soldiers of Christ, as St. Paul wrote to Timothy: “Conduct thyself in work as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 2:3), and the gloss adds “by preaching.” For them, to preach is to fight, for they make war on the errors against faith and morals, which are opposed to the rule of their Sovereign. In this “they are prefigured,” says the gloss, by Dositheus and Sosipater who with Machabaeus were leaders of the army of God’s people (II Mach. 7:19). In fact, their zeal, like that of the Machabees, transforms them into valiant soldiers, capable of doing battle with the agents of error, and worthy of having applied to them the words of the Psalms: “The Lord is strong and powerful in battle” (Ps. 23:8). By them is extended the domain of the divine King to whom they subject the people, even those who rebel against His yoke. “The Arabs being overcome besought Judas for peace” (II Mach. 12:11), which means, according to the gloss, that the infidel nations which were vanquished by the truth and the steadfastness of the holy preachers, consented to forswear their errors and embrace the Catholic faith, joining those who confess Christ. It is at the command of Christ that preachers, like faithful warriors, come and go according as they are commanded; and these words of Zachary can justly be applied to them: “I will encompass my house with them that serve me in war, going and returning” (Zach. 9:8), that is, as the gloss says, with those who, according to my precept, traverse the world in every direction. It is this, indeed, that preachers do, men truly worthy of being loved and who surely will be loved by their King. Faithful soldiers, they fight His enemies, subject the nations to Him and obey Him generously in all things! If an earthly monarch highly valued such a soldier as David, of whom it is written, that he made a good impression on Achis

because he fought successfully in his army (I Kings 29), how much more will the King of heaven esteem the preachers who struggle so valiantly and so fruitfully for His glory?

Those who would please the mighty offer them, on certain anniversary days, whatever they know they like, such as the first fruits of their orchard, delicate fish, and such. But the Lord of all things loves souls above all: "O Lord who lovest souls" (Wisd. 11:27). This is the unique present which preachers offer to Him, and He receives with delight. That is why it is said in the psalms: "After her shall virgins be brought to the king"; these young girls represent the souls made innocent by repentance. After this the Psalmist adds: "Her neighbors shall be brought to thee." This is, says the gloss, what preachers do, who, preaching in season and out of season, bring back souls to God "with gladness and rejoicing" (Ps. 44:15-16); for it is with the greatest joy in the Church and in heaven that this offering of souls is received.

Furthermore, according to St. Paul, the preacher is a legate sent by God to attend to sacred matters. "For Him I am an ambassador" (Eph. 6:20), says St. Paul. And as an ambassador who has faithfully acquitted himself of his commission earns the favor of his prince, so also the preacher who fills honorably his mission gives pleasure to God. And like a cold rain which comes at harvest time relieving the oppressive heat and refreshing the tired workers, so the faithful legate assures repose to the Prince who sent him.

Preachers are also compared to carpenters, stonecutters, masons and other workers of this kind, for they are charged with constructing in the hearts of men a house exceedingly pleasing to God Who said Himself: "My delights were to be with the children of men" (Prov. 8:31). Workers capable of erecting beautiful palaces are so much desired by princes that they are sought in the most distant countries. Thus in the legend about St. Thomas the Apostle it is recounted that for a similar reason the king of the Indies had him summoned from a very distant place by his prime minister. Who can doubt that God Himself, seeing preachers eagerly preparing a pleasing abode for Him, takes great pleasure in viewing their activity?

Listen to the text of Job which the gloss applies to preachers. "The children of merchants," said he, "have not trodden this unexplored land" (Job 28:8). Preachers are happier and more fearless than these merchants; they carry on their spiritual trade throughout the land, exchanging their wisdom for precious acts of faith and numerous good works. In this manner they win souls for God according to the example of St. Paul who, as he says himself, worked unceasingly "to win a greater number of them" (I Cor. 9:21) "by preaching," adds the gloss. The Lord in His turn exhorts preachers when He says: "Trade till I come" (Luke 19:15). If material gain, of which the parable speaks, was worthy of this high praise of the master to his servant: "Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many; enter into the joy of thy master" (Matt. 25:21), how much dearer to God ought to be that business in which He wins spiritual treasures which are souls?

Finally, preachers are the best ministers of God. That is why the Apostles wanted to reserve preaching to themselves. They said, "We will devote ourselves to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). For, of all the offices whose object is the service of God, none requires so elevated a spirit as that of preaching; preachers ought "to announce His works" (Ps. 63:10) and consequently must have a knowledge of them. To do any job well there is nothing more necessary than intelligence. "A wise servant," say Proverbs, "is acceptable to the king" (Prov. 14:35), and from this we can conclude how pleasing the office of preaching is to God.

By summing up the preceding we shall understand the pleasure that God takes from holy preaching, which is a most beautiful song, a fruitful hunt, a very agreeable sacrifice, a courageous militia in the service of the prince, an offering which pleases the taste of the great, the faithful execution of a command confided to an ambassador, the construction of a royal palace, a business which increases a householder's goods, and the wise service of a minister in behalf of his master. And this pleasure is enjoyed not only by the Divine Master,

but also by all the inhabitants of the heavenly court who, in union with Him, address to the preachers the invitation of the Canticle: “Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the friends hearken: make me hear thy voice” (Cant. 8:13). These friends are, according to the gloss, the angels and the just who reign in heaven with God.

IV. The Benefits which it Brings to the Preacher; the Office of Preaching

Let us now see what the office of preaching does for the preacher himself.

Note, first of all, that he ought to be supplied with the necessities of this life, as St. Paul has stated, giving many reasons and ending by saying: “So also the Lord directed that those who preach the gospel should have their living from the gospel” (I Cor. 9:14). Also they should be held in reverence by the people. In other professions man is solicitous for those things necessary for his life; but of preachers it is said: “Therefore do not be anxious saying ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What are we to put on?’; for your Father knows that you need all these things” (Matt. 6:31-32). And while a universal law is imposed on all men “that they eat their bread by the sweat of their brow” (Gen. 3:19), the Lord says to preachers more than to the rest of men, “Look at the birds of the air: they do not sow or reap, or gather into barns. . . . See how the lilies of the field grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet, I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these” (Matt. 6:26, 28-29). As if to say, “Since God gives the birds their food, and the lilies their white array and yet they do not work, do not doubt that He will do as much and more for you, who, in His eyes are worth much is more.

It often happens to men overwhelmed with cares and burdened with labor that for the sake of worldly necessities they suffer many vicissitudes. From these words of St. Luke, “carry neither purse, nor wallet” (Luke 10:4), St. Gregory⁵⁶ explains that preachers are justified in putting such a trust in God alone, that, without thinking about providing for themselves, they are assured that nothing will be wanting to them; otherwise, their minds, too preoccupied with temporal things, would be less free to attend to the things of eternal life. Since this truth, that God is charged with providing preachers with temporal necessities (without working for them or being preoccupied about getting them), will not perhaps be readily admitted, our Lord wishing to establish it on the testimony of deeds, before leaving the earth, asked His Apostles this question publicly: “When I sent you forth (the gloss adds, ‘to preach’), “without purse, or wallet, or sandals, did you lack anything?” And they answered, “Nothing” (Luke 22:35-36). This confirms most conclusively the truth under question.

The merit of preachers assures them of innumerable spiritual graces: “He that inebriateth shall be inebriated also himself” (Prov. 11:25), the Book of Proverbs tells us, and the gloss explains it: “Whoever intoxicates his hearers with the wine of divine words, will drink fully of the wine of the divine grace.” We read, in the same chapter of Proverbs: “The soul which blesseth shall be made fat” (Prov. 11:25), that is, he who spreads divine grace without, receives within himself an increase of strength. If during the course of his earthly life, he should become stained, he will be cleansed. “Sometimes I purify my feet in milk” (job 39:6), said the holy Job; which signifies, says the gloss, that the feet of preachers are not always free from stains, but are purified in milk; or, in other words, that the dust which they have gathered in the midst of the world will be taken away by the good works which fill them with merit.

God also gives these preachers understanding, for, according to the gloss, they resemble the bird of whom it is written in the book of Job: “Who gave the cock understanding?” (Job 38:36). Who, if not God, has given it a kind of understanding? For if a

⁵⁶ S. Greg. *Hom. sup. Luc.*

cock by reason of its instinct is able to announce the hour of dawn, it is still more fitting that a preacher receive the understanding necessary to announce the hour of salvation.

It is the same with regard to the gift of eloquence. When Moses refused the mission which God wanted to entrust to him, because he was very slow of speech, the Lord answered him: “Who made man’s mouth? Did not I? Go, therefore, and I will open thy mouth,” (Exod. 4:11-12); whence it clearly follows that it is God’s duty to open the mouth of the preacher. Not only does He open his mouth, but He makes the words flow freely: “Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it” (Ps. 80:11). And the significance of this is: I will put there such an abundance of words that you will only have to let them flow out. We have an example of this in St. Sebastian who was in the service of Nicostrate, the husband of Zoe. Sebastian saw a young man descend from heaven and present him with a book from which he had only to read his discourse.

In addition, God gives these words an efficacious power; David said, “The Lord will give to his voice the voice of power” (Ps. 67:34), and since the preacher is the mouth of God, He will not fail to give power to those words which are preached in His name.

The Holy Spirit, the author of all good, distributes to each preacher many other graces, generously to some, less generously to others. That is the reason why it is written: “The Lord will give the word to them that preach good tidings with great power” (Ps. 68:12).

Preachers are likened to “the heavens” because, just as the heavens are adorned with many stars, so are they enriched with many virtues. Job, using the same comparison, says, “His spirit hath adorned the heavens” (Job 26:13) ; for these ornaments, according to St. Gregory, are the gifts which He gives to the ministers of the gospel and which St. Paul enumerates in these terms: “To one through the Spirit is given the utterance of wisdom; to another, the utterance of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same spirit; to another, the gift of healing in the one Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the distinguishing of spirits; to another various kinds of tongues; to another, interpretation of tongues” (I Cor. 12:8–10). But it is fitting that these graces be dispensed more abundantly to those preachers who labor especially for the welfare of the Church; for God distributes His graces to each one, not only for his own personal needs, but also for the advantage of others. Thus it is that the Apostle says: “Now the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit” (I Cor. 7:7). Upon which the gloss justly remarks that if the gifts of grace are granted to increase the personal merit of certain individuals, then they are also given with a view to the common good of the Church. This being the case, with how much greater abundance will not these spiritual gifts be bestowed by God upon holy preaching? Sometimes, as a matter of fact, the pious exposition of the truths of God rouses the fervor of the people and actually causes them to burst forth into words of praise and blessing, much in the manner spoken of in Proverbs: “He that hideth up corn (i.e., according to the gloss apostolic preaching), shall be cursed among the people; but a blessing upon the head of them that sell” (Prov. 11:26). We find a vivid example of what we mean in the woman in the Gospel account who, hearing the words of Christ, cried out: “Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts that nursed Thee” (Luke 11:27).

In other instances this inspired exclamation of which we speak may take the form of a prayer. For example, the story is told about a certain nobleman who, for many years, was preoccupied with the distracting and empty pursuits of the world but, by listening to a preacher, was eventually brought to consider the things of God, to probe into the workings of his soul, and to occupy himself now with his eternal salvation. And when it came his time to die, this thankful man, thinking of how much he owed his director for his conversion, raised his heart to God and prayed: “I beseech You, oh my Savior, be kind to him who has taught me to know You.” There is no doubt that many other listeners devoutly pray in a like manner for those who preach to them, especially when the harbingers of God’s Kingdom are in the habit of beseeching this prayerful remembrance either at the beginning or at the end of their

sermons; a custom which St. Paul rarely failed to observe.⁵⁷ They can reasonably expect tremendous graces from such prayers, especially when many are united in the same intention, for Christ Himself said that no prayer uttered by several of the Faithful joined in a common plea would go unanswered (Matt. 18:19).

Often, moreover, the devotion which a preacher inspires causes the people to follow him in order to hear him propound the teachings of Christ, a fact which we ourselves have sometimes witnessed. Again one can turn to the Gospels for confirmation of this; for when Jesus preached, the people, assembling from various sectors, followed Him closely, even into the desert. And not only did the anxious hearers accompany Him; they also ministered to Him, as St. Mark notes.⁵⁸ This respect, and this keen interest extended, after His departure, to His Apostles and disciples: “You did not reject or despise me; but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus” (Gal. 4:14), wrote the zealous St. Paul to the Galatians. There is nothing astonishing about this love for God’s preachers: “Let the presbyters who rule be held worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching” (I Tim. 5:17). Their renown steadily increases and, like Judas Machabee, whose fame spread even to the ends of the world (I Mach. 3:9), their names, too, gradually become universally known. In short, “their sound hath gone forth into all the earth” (Ps. 18:5); their preaching gains for them the admiration of mankind.

All those who put into practice the instructions they receive from the ministers of the Gospel cannot fail to recognize that they thereby become the children in Jesus Christ of these same preachers. “For in Christ Jesus, through the gospel, did I beget you” (I Cor. 4:15) was the way the Apostle expressed it to the Corinthians. This feeling of filial piety ought to be most precious in the eyes of the preacher; for it is meet that he be frequently blessed, served, honored, and esteemed by so many worthy sons in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is assured to the sincere preacher, then, a threefold benefit. He is provided with whatever is necessary for his earthly existence; he acquires numerous spiritual benefits; and he gains the devotion of the people.

But over and above these blessings which provide only for the present life there are many other more valuable benefits which concern the future happiness of the preacher: Firstly, he has the firmest certitude about his salvation, for the Savior shows mercy to men according as they themselves have shown compassion to others, as is explained by St. Luke’s words: “Forgive and you shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given to you” (Luke 6:37-38). It is no vain hope to expect that one who has saved others by his words will himself likewise be received into heaven, for we have the evidence of Jeremias in this matter.⁵⁹ Secondly, he shall receive a very great reward. In fact, it is more than likely that the charity which he practices, not only to advance in virtue himself but also to lead others, increases more and more in him by its very exercise; and everyone knows that upon this progress depends the degree of eternal reward that awaits every soul. With this thought the Bridegroom of the Canticle concerns Himself when He promises: “Two hundred pieces of gold for them that keep the fruit of the vine” (Cant. 8:12), which is interpreted by the gloss as referring to the teachers of the people. Hence, a double recompense belongs to these leaders, for they have worked doubly in saving themselves and in leading others to Christ. Thirdly, besides rejoicing in that which is common to every eternal reward, the preacher shall have an accidental increase in glory from the joy found in those he has saved. “So that you may know,” wrote St. Paul to the Ephesians, “what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards us” (Eph. 1:19)—words which show, observes the gloss, that the most renowned teachers shall receive a special glory added to that which is promised to all. And this glory,

⁵⁷ Eph. 7; Col. 4; Thess. 3.

⁵⁸ “Sequebantur eum et ministrabant ei” (Mark 15:41).

⁵⁹ “Si converteris convertam te” (Jer. 15:19).

according to the interpretation of leading scholars, is an accidental glory added to the substantial glory. But if such be the case for the great doctors because they are teachers, then one is forced to admit a like reward for others who also have been, in every sense of the word, teachers, and who shall receive an increase in glory which will be measured by their individual merit. Consequently, every preacher shall be entitled, in a certain degree, to this increase. There are several reasons for saying this, among which are the following: the gloss says of the text cited above, that the Apostles shall be clothed with a particular brilliance and that this supernatural glory shall clearly correspond to the splendor which surrounded them when they were the lights of the world. Now, since every worthy preacher is a light, for it is of such that we read: "Thy lightnings enlightened the world" (Ps. 66:19), there is no doubt that they will shine with the same brilliance in their eternal home: "They who instruct many to justice, shall shine as stars for all eternity" (Dan. 12:3). Add to these persuasions the assurance of the Gospel that it is better to do and to teach than merely to do, and it becomes increasingly clear that, if each one is to be rewarded according to his merits, justice demands that there be a double compensation on judgment day for those who have performed the double task of doing and teaching. Our Lord indicated this in the words which St. Matthew has recorded: "Whoever carries them [commandments] out and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:9). Just as one notes different ranks of honor at the court of an earthly prince, some being in nobler places than others, so we shall see preachers assigned, not to the lowest, but to the highest places in the heavenly kingdom.

St. John, speaking of this matter of reward, notes: "When He appears we shall be like to Him" (I John 3:2). The glory of the elect, therefore, shall depend on the glory of God and, the more perfect is their resemblance to the Creator, the more brilliant shall their glory be. Applying this norm to preachers we see that they resemble Christ by the perfect use of their rational faculties; and in addition, in the opinion of many writers, the ministers of God are worthy of the glory which Exodus (Exod. 25:25) and the gloss attribute to martyrs and to virgins; for they resemble virgins by the perfect use of their concupiscible faculty and martyrs in the exercise of their irascible faculty. These three points of resemblance are for preachers so many pledges of their future elevation to singular honor in the company of the Blessed.

Another dignity for preachers is the fact that they engage in battle the serpent of old: "Michael and his angels battled with the dragon" (Apoc. 12:7). Preachers form part of the militia of angels, who, under the command of St. Michael, wage war against Satan and the legions of Hell. And if David, for fighting against Goliath, rose so high in glory that the people sang his praises upon his return from the remarkable conquest of the giant,⁶⁰ what glory must await the preacher when he enters Paradise, having battled with such courage against enemies so much more formidable.

In the eyes of men, another source of additional glory is to be elevated above all others in a large assembly, either by precedence or in any other way. "Thou shalt have authority over ten towns," Christ said to the good and faithful servant (Luke 19:17). By "towns," according to the gloss, is meant the souls that have been converted with the aid of the preaching of the Divine Word as contained in the Gospels; and God shall justly raise in glory him who has worthily implanted in the hearts of others the treasures of His Divine Word.

Glory and honor are equally assured to anyone who presents himself at the court of a king with a large and dignified retinue, and the good preacher assuredly has this advantage because he does not present himself alone and unescorted to the King of Heaven; rather, he is accompanied by all whom he has saved. With this very thought in mind the learned St. Gregory declared: "Then Peter shall appear with converted Judea, which he leads; then Paul

⁶⁰ I Kings 18:7.

leading, so to speak, the whole world which he converted; then Andrew with Achaia, John with Asia, Thomas with India; in short, there shall be all the shepherds of the flocks of Christ like rams who bring behind them the docile flock.”⁶¹

Finally, to be presented and crowned with a diadem before princes and people is, undeniably, a rare honor; yet, this is what awaits the preacher who has worthily performed his duties: “Come,” it is written, “you shall be crowned from the top of Amana, from the top of Sanir and Hermon. . . .” (Cant. 4:8). The meaning of these words, according to the gloss, is: whenever preachers make outstanding conversions, their future crown is further embellished because of the many struggles they have endured in carrying on their work. This explains what St. Paul meant when he wrote to the Thessalonians: “What is our crown of glory, if not you before our Lord Jesus Christ . . . ?” (I Thess. 2:19.)

From all that has been said, it is clear that a particular glory belongs to the preacher. And this results from the fullness of his charity, from the sublimity of his office, from his likeness to Christ Himself, from his resistance to the devil, and from the brilliance of the diadem with which he shall be crowned.

This includes the reward for his labors in the present as well as that which awaits him in the future. In order to confirm this conclusion, recall the significance of these words from the Book of Ecclesiasticus: “The lips of many shall bless him that is liberal in his bread” (Ecclus. 31:28). That is to say, according to the gloss: the faithful dispenser of the bread, which is the word of God, shall be blessed in the present life and in the life to come: hence, the spreading of spiritual benefits is a precious assurance of Divine blessings.

V. Benefits of Preaching for Mankind

We shall now consider the benefits that preaching brings to all men. Having already shown how necessary preaching is in general for the whole world, we now feel that it is worth while to explain its advantages to the individual—a task that embraces as many diverse forms as the varied instructions offered to us by God’s preachers.

For some, the soul only resides in the body as the dead in the tombs and, just as God shall cause the resurrection of the body on the last day by the power of His word, so at the present time the soul is restored to life by the power of preaching. St. John himself wrote: “The hour is coming, and now is here, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live” (John 5:25).

Moreover, there are many who, of themselves, are not able to preserve their spiritual life and must rely on the efficacy of the word of God to sustain them: “Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Like the poverty-stricken, deprived of the means of life and managing to live only by begging, these spiritually poor must seek out preachers in order to hear the tidings of Christ which, if humbly received, will vivify them.

Some avidly desire choice foods; but there is nothing sweeter, provided one has not a depraved taste, than the words of the Master. Listen to the Psalmist: “How sweet are thy words to my palate, more than honey to my mouth” (Ps. 68:103).

Again, there are many who complain about their ignorance of numerous things. Preaching enlightens them and reveals all that God has taught by His Word. To refer to the Psalms once more, “The declaration of thy words giveth light; and giveth understanding to little ones” (Ps. 118:130).

Preaching can likewise be said to exert a powerful influence upon those who, because of their simplicity, do not understand anything of the spiritual order and who lead a purely animal existence. Our Lord intended His words so to act upon men when He said: “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (John 6:64).

⁶¹ S. Greg., iii Homilia “Designavit.”

To yet another group, which remains groping in the dark and is incapable of following the road that leads to salvation, the penetrating character of preaching serves as a light, whose brilliance shines forth in the middle of the night and points out the way for the searchers of Truth. 'Me saintly King David recognized such enlightenment when he exclaimed: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths" (Ps. 118:105).

There are some who are physically sick and who need certain remedies. But it is an evident fact that human remedies, though undoubtedly effective in certain diseases, have no power whatsoever when used for other diseases. The same cannot be said about the word of God, since its healing power extends to all maladies as the Book of Wisdom observes: "Your Word, oh Lord, is all powerful, which heals all things" (Wisd. 16:12).

Neither is the Divine Word repelled by, nor helpless against, those whose hearts have become hard and rocklike. Inspired preaching can shatter them with the sureness of a hammer: "Are not my words as the force of a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29.)

Then there are others who feel depressed because they have neither piety, nor compunction, nor devotion, such as the Psalmist portrayed when he lamented: "My soul is as earth without water unto thee" (Ps. 142:6). They need not despair, for through the diffusion of the heavenly word they are softened and refreshed, and can truthfully say with the Psalmist: "He shall send forth his word and shall melt them" (Ps. 147:18).

Among a large number of the Faithful, charity has become weak and ineffective, but, when brought into closer contact with the doctrine of Christ, strong love flames up anew. "Are not my words as fire, saith the Lord?" (Jer. 23:29.)

To the weak-hearted who, like a sterile woman, can never conceive a good resolution, preaching serves as an inspiration and succeeds in making them spiritually fruitful: "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Moreover, such a seed performs a double task; it conceives and it actually produces fruit. This is what Isaias meant when he said: "And as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and return no more thither, but soak the earth, and water it, and make it to spring, and give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall be my word which shall go forth from my mouth" (Isai. 55:10-11).

In much the same way, this word can be compared to a rich wine, and very different from a light wine which is incapable of causing intoxication. One need only recall the example of the saints. They drank deeply of God's word and were overcome by it to the extent that they forgot the things of this world and became insensible to the blows showered upon them. To quote the Prophet Jeremias: "I am become as a drunken man, and as a man full of wine, at the presence of the Lord, and at the presence of his holy words" (Jer. 23:9).

Consider, further, the many unfortunates whose spirit is so dominated by the flesh that they are really slaves of their passions. Detachment is the precious boon that God's minister of the word brings to these enslaved souls—a detachment about which St. Paul writes: "For the word of God is living and efficient, and keener than any two-edged sword, and extending even to the division of soul and spirit" (Heb. 4:12), which is to say that the flesh and spirit in man are separated by the power of preaching.

For souls afflicted by temptations and in need of a strong defense, the word of God offers a sure means of protection. The Savior Himself proved this when He put His tempter to flight by recalling phrases taken from the Holy Book. It is also attested by St. Paul: "And the sword of the spirit is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17).

Or, one can regard the word of God as a potent cleansing agent whose function is to remove all stains and at the same time to purify. Jesus told His Apostles: "You are already clean because of the word that I have spoken to you" (John 15:3). An example taken from the lives of the Fathers of the Desert deals with this point. They had a soiled basket which was plunged several times into water, becoming cleaner and cleaner, and yet did not retain one drop of the water.

How far from sanctity have been so many men! And now they are sanctified by the inspiration of preaching, just as the Savior wished when He prayed: “Sanctify them in Truth. Thy word is Truth” (John 17:17).

As in the time of the early Church, the Divine Word today communicates grace, for without grace man could not survive the trials of the present life. And that preaching does diffuse grace is shown from the Book of Proverbs: “Good doctrine shall give grace” (Prov. 13:15).

Finally, recall how many souls, weakened by serious sin, have been in danger of death and have been saved by the power of God! “He sent his word and healed them; and delivered them from their destruction” (Ps. 106.20) is the acknowledgment of the Psalmist. As the word of a doctor saves the body, the word of God saves the soul. St. James advises: “With meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jas. 1:21).

The above-mentioned benefits are by no means a complete list of the useful effects of preaching on the individual. And, since we cannot enumerate all the advantages in this work, we shall sum up with the phrase: “The word of God abounds in power” (Eccles. 8:4). Indeed, that word, with its countless good effects, should be cherished as a precious gem of unsurpassed value.

VI. *Difficulties of the Office of Preacher*

We shall now consider the peculiar difficulties of preaching, and we shall show, by three proofs, that it is not an easy task to proclaim the word of God successfully.

The first proof is found in the rarity of good preachers. In the early days of the Church a small number of Apostles, trained for their particular mission, was enough to convert the entire world; but present-day preachers, in spite of their numbers, make only mediocre gains. *Why!* Because the first preachers were equal to their mission, whereas those following in their footsteps are not. For, to judge the difficulty of an art, one need only count the number of workers engaged in it and then note how few there are who really attain perfection in it.

Secondly, the inefficiency of many in carrying out the ministry. All have seen, and, indeed, still frequently see, very learned priests who, in spite of serious application to the task, have never been able to attain success in preaching. But this, too, bears out our conviction that preaching is not easy, since another proof of the difficulty of an art is the inability of those to master it who are evidently skilled in other fields.

The last proof is the necessity of external help which is required for worth-while preaching. It is a fact that, by possessing one habit, which results from the repetition of an act, we, at the same time, acquire a certain ease in other arts, according to the popular maxim: “It is by forging that one becomes a blacksmiths,” or, to use another, it is by repeated playing on his instrument that a harpist becomes master of it. But the gift of a preacher is quite different. His virtue is a special gift which only God can grant: “The power of the earth is in the hand of God” (Ecclus. 10:4), by which is meant, according to the gloss, the power of the preacher. This is a sound observation because the power of God alone can communicate to man the ability to preach the Divine Mysteries fruitfully. And this is a further confirmation of our original statement, for that which cannot be acquired by one’s own work, but must be received from another, is definitely the rarest and the most difficult of possessions.

What, then, are some of the reasons why this phase of the ministry is so hard to master?

In the first place, one can easily find teachers for any other subject, but for preaching there is only one, the Holy Spirit, Whose grace very few receive abundantly. That is the reason why Christ did not want the Apostles, who were to become excellent preachers, to begin the conversion of the world before the Holy Ghost descended upon them and taught

them all things. Having received this gift, however, they “. . . began to speak in foreign tongues, even as the Holy Ghost prompted them to speak” (Acts 2:4).

Another reason has to do with the instrument of the ministry, i.e., language, which can easily lead one astray (even in the simple Christian life), when God does not direct it. The Book of Proverbs wisely informs us: “It is the part of the Lord to govern the tongue” (Prov. 16:1). Just as it is more awkward to help ourselves with the left hand, which easily entangles us, than with the more competent right hand, so the language used in the arduous task of preaching is more liable to failure than when the same speech is employed for our ordinary duties.

The third reason takes up the conditions needed for good preaching. They are numerous and will be seen more dearly in the following chapter. It is evident that any work is more arduous according as it demands the concurrence of many conditions. For example, a painter has more trouble in producing a sketch that requires a great variety of colors than in painting one that needs just a few shades. Thus, by this principle, we find many difficulties in preaching because of the great number of qualifications it demands.

Notice, also, that we praise a person who does something only on the condition that he do it well: “learn to do well” (Isai. 1:17), urges Isaias. This is not easy when it is a question of preaching.

Hence, the preacher must strive with all his might to do justice to such a difficult and perfect ministry. Three things will contribute to his success: application to his work; a knowledge of the method used by other preachers; prayer addressed to God.

About the first point, observe that, granted the grace of preaching well is a special gift of God, nevertheless it demands from the preacher full application to the study of whatever is needed for the proper execution of his office. That is why the gloss insists that every preacher, in imitation of the Apostles, should realize what was meant in Heaven when the seven angels, who had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound the trumpet” (Apoc. 8:6). And in another place the gloss declares that the words of Christ to His Apostles: “. . . be not anxious how or what you are to speak” (Matt. 10:19) refer only to these chosen ones, in virtue of the privilege of their special vocation so that those who are not so privileged must prepare themselves. Moreover, St. Jerome, while explaining the text of the Prophet, Ezechiel, “Eat this book” (Ezech. 3:1), points out that the preacher must nourish his heart with the words of God and must meditate attentively on them before delivering them to the people.

Some preachers use too many subtleties in their discourses for the sake of elegance. At one time they seek those novelties which the Athenians delighted in; at another time they produce arguments drawn from philosophy which, they imagine, improve their speech. On the contrary, good preachers study principally what is useful and, building their sermons on this, they exclude what is less profitable. St. Paul did that, and so he could say, “You know from the first day that I came into Asia how I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you” (Acts 20:18, 20).

Many preachers have a predilection for words, repeating beyond measure, now the parts of the sermon, again the distinctions or the authorities; giving reasons or examples, or words that express one and the same thing, repeating continually; at all times being far too prolix. These are some of the defects which vitiate a discourse, and they must be avoided. For if a moderate rain makes crops grow well, an extremely heavy rain will flood the field; and, as in the Divine Office, brevity fosters devotion, while a long Office engenders sleepiness, so too, preaching, when it is succinct, is useful when prolonged to excess it becomes useless and tiresome. Also, a good preacher, if he is prudent, will see to it that he does not say many things, and will say them in few words; and if he observes that he has prepared too much matter, he will lay aside whatever is irrelevant, and give to his starved audience bread, a necessary and substantial food, which will be beneficial to them. He also

imitates the wise steward whom St. Luke (Luke 12:42) represents to us, and who prudently sees to it that he does not use up at one time all the wheat that he can dispose of.

Other preachers, to support their teaching, use exclusively examples or arguments, or authority; but to combine the three is far better, for, where one fails, another will succeed. The combination will form “a threefold cord,” with a fishhook attached, and which “is not easily broken by the fish” (Eccles. 4:12).

In conclusion we shall say that every good preacher, in the composition of a sermon, should first be practical, like a host who prepares food of good quality for his guests. Secondly, he should use moderation, even in practical things; for everything found in a grocery store cannot be used by a host. And thirdly, he should use words which are convincing, just as at a banquet guests are served not only food of good quality, but also food that is well prepared and pleasing to the palate.

There are other kinds of preachers who diligently look for arguments irrelevant to their subject, like the one who preaches on the Apostles Peter and Paul, and borrows from the Book of Numbers the text, “The sons of Merari; Moholi and Musi” (Num. 3:20). One can scarcely adapt to this subject such incongruous references, for in trying to reconcile them, the preacher runs the risk of exciting derision rather than producing edification.

Some give too much attention to the feast of the day, so that, in order to adapt their discourse to it, they become unpractical and quickly lose the interest of their audience. They deserve the name of choristers of the church rather than preachers of Jesus Christ. The choristers often seek only what is proper to the occasion or feast being celebrated, without considering whether the words they are singing are profitable to those present or not.

Others choose a subject which contains only one idea; they are like those hosts who serve only one dish at table.

It is true, however, that there are preachers who have abundant matter, but they are afraid to omit the least detail, useful or not, dragging out their sermons indefinitely. They are like the host who serves his guests generously with beef, excluding all other dishes; serving for the first course the horns; for the second, the hide; for the third, the hoofs, and so on. That certainly is not the technique of a good cook or host; on the contrary, he removes the less suitable parts, carefully preparing and serving the best.

There are other preachers who start with a subject that is really suitable but they become so attached to the first or second point that they do not develop the others. They are like rustic hosts who serve so much in the first course that the appetite is lost for the following courses, even though the latter are better. Such is not the practice of the cultured, who prepare a sufficient number of dishes and serve a little of each. This is more pleasing to the guests.

Let preachers avoid, then, these abuses in the choice of a subject, and let them be very careful to treat it in such a way that it will be most profitable to those who hear it; they should not limit themselves to one idea, nor choose too extensive a topic, nor dwell too long on the less important points, which should be passed over lightly.

Let them watch lest they fall into the mistake of those preachers who, although they are incapable of composing good sermons themselves, are yet unwilling to study those composed by others, and preach only those that they have laboriously written out themselves. They are like those who serve their guests only bread made by themselves even though they cannot bake. Our Lord told the Apostles to serve the crowd which followed Him into the desert, not the bread that they had made, but that which others had made (Matt. 15). On this subject they tell of a remarkable characteristic of Pope Innocent III, a man of great merit, under whom the Lateran Council was held. While preaching on the feast of St. Madeleine, he had someone read the homily of St. Gregory on the feast while he explained it in the vulgar tongue; and when his memory failed he followed the text of the one reading the book. After the sermon they asked him why he acted thus, when he was so capable of saying

original things; he answered that he wanted to confound and instruct those who despise using the works of other people.

There are some who depend on their own knowledge, relying only on themselves and neglecting to consult the interpretations of the Sacred Scriptures made by the Saints. St. Jerome speaks of these when writing to St. Pauline: "They have no desire to find out what the Prophets and Apostles meant, but adapt inapplicable texts to their ideas, applying the words of Scripture to statements that are opposed. Their own words to them have the authority of God."

Others there are who are more interested in the form of their discourses than in the matter. They are like a host who is more concerned with the beauty of a dish in which food is served than in the food itself. They ought to meditate on what St. Augustine said in his Confessions, "I know that wisdom and folly resemble food, some of which is wholesome and some harmful. And just as they can be served in worthless or precious plates, so also good can be presented as evil in flowery discourses or in discourses lacking all elegance."

A preacher who wishes to avoid the three errors that we have just pointed out, will take great care to study what others have taught about the Scriptures, in order to find his inspiration in the holy Doctors rather than in himself, and in his discourse he will prefer practical thoughts to beautiful words.

In regard to the second point, note that the arts are taught much more efficiently by example than by oral teaching. For one does not learn to play the hand-organ so well by verbal instruction as by seeing and hearing another play. Likewise it is very important in learning to preach well, to study not only the different methods used by great preachers, but also those adopted by others; in order to avoid the errors of the latter and to imitate as far as possible the excellences of the former. That is why Gideon, who was the prefigurement of a good preacher, said to his soldiers, "What you shall see me do, do you the same" (Judg. 7:17).

As to the third point we must observe that every effort of man is worthless without the assistance of God: a preacher, therefore, who wishes to benefit his listeners, ought to have recourse above all to prayer. This is what St. Augustine says, "If Queen Esther, before setting out to Assurians to implore salvation for the Hebrew people, begged God to inspire her with words capable of obtaining this favor, how much more ought that one to pray, who wishes to procure eternal salvation for men by his doctrine and his discourses!"⁶²

To sum up, the preceding considerations point out three difficulties which are met in preaching; three reasons that explain why we meet with these difficulties; and three ways of overcoming them and of acquiring the qualities indispensable to preaching.

Furthermore, the office of preaching is very different from a considerable number of other offices and greatly excels them. Some of these worldly offices are contemptible, while preaching is an excellent and noble work; their usefulness is slight, while preaching is necessary for the whole world; they displease God and in His eyes have little worth, while preaching is eminently pleasing to Him; they return but little profit to the business-man, while preaching brings to the minister of God considerable benefits; they benefit the rest of men but little, while preaching has the greatest utility for all men; finally, some of these secular offices can be undertaken without great difficulty, while preaching is such a noble art that one cannot fulfill it in an honorable and fruitful manner, without overcoming the most serious difficulties. But how success is to be envied and praised!

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

⁶² S. Aug., *De doctrina Christiana*, lib. iv.

Reading and rereading the Rule can remind us of our Dominican identity. It can even serve as an examination of conscience or a measure of how we are growing as sons and daughters of St. Dominic. Note especially in the section given below that what we promise in our profession is to live according to the Rule. We should know the Rule well and be animated by its Spirit.

The Rule of the Lay Chapters of Saint Dominic

II. Life of the Chapters

11. (Formation) The object of Dominican formation is to form adults in the Faith, capable of accepting, celebrating, and proclaiming the Word of God. Each Province is to establish a program of:

- a. formation in stages for new members:
- b. ongoing formation for all, even for members without direct access to a Chapter.

12. Every Dominican must be prepared to preach the Word of God. This preaching is the exercise of the prophetic mission of the baptized, strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the present world, the preaching of the Word of God involves the defense of the dignity of human life, the family and the person. The promotion of Christian unity and dialogue with non-Christians and non-believers are part of the Dominican vocation.

13. The [Latin text: *praecipui*, i.e. principal] sources of Dominican formation are:

- a. the Word of God and theological reflection,
- b. liturgical prayer,
- c. the history and tradition of the Order,
- d. contemporary documents of the Church and Order,
- e. awareness of the signs of our times.

14. (Profession) To be incorporated into the Order, members must make profession which consists of a formal promise by which they propose to live according to the spirit of Saint Dominic and according to the way of life prescribed by The Rule. This profession is either temporary or perpetual. The following or a substantially similar formula is to be used for making profession:

To the honor of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of Saint Dominic, I (name), before you (name), the Moderator of this Chapter and (name) the religious promoter, representing the Master of the Order of Friars Preachers, promise to live according to The Rule of the Dominican Laity for (three years or my whole life).

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR A, UNIT IV**

I. Elements of Dominican Life: Devotion to the Mother of God

A. ST. LOUIS DE MONTFORT, *TRUE DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY*⁶³

Marks of authentic devotion to our Lady

105. After having explained and condemned false devotions to the Blessed Virgin we shall now briefly describe what true devotion is. It is interior, trustful, holy, constant and disinterested.

106. First, true devotion to our Lady is interior, that is, it comes from within the mind and the heart and follows from the esteem in which we hold her, the high regard we have for her greatness, and the love we bear her.

107. Second, it is trustful, that is to say, it fills us with confidence in the Blessed Virgin, the confidence that a child has for its loving Mother. It prompts us to go to her in every need of body and soul with great simplicity, trust and affection. We implore our Mother's help always, everywhere, and for everything. We pray to her to be enlightened in our doubts, to be put back on the right path when we go astray, to be protected when we are tempted, to be strengthened when we are weakening, to be lifted up when we fall into sin, to be encouraged when we are losing heart, to be rid of our scruples, to be consoled in the trials, crosses and disappointments of life. Finally, in all our afflictions of body and soul, we naturally turn to Mary for help, with never a fear of importuning her or displeasing our Lord.

108. Third, true devotion to our Lady is holy, that is, it leads us to avoid sin and to imitate the virtues of Mary. Her ten principal virtues are: deep humility, lively faith, blind obedience, unceasing prayer, constant self-denial, surpassing purity, ardent love, heroic patience, angelic kindness, and heavenly wisdom.

109. Fourth, true devotion to our Lady is constant. It strengthens us in our desire to do good and prevents us from giving up our devotional practices too easily. It gives us the courage to oppose the fashions and maxims of the world, the vexations and unruly inclinations of the flesh and the temptations of the devil. Thus a person truly devoted to our Blessed Lady is not changeable, fretful, scrupulous or timid. We do not say however that such a person never sins or that his sensible feelings of devotion never change. When he has fallen, he stretches out his hand to his Blessed Mother and rises again. If he loses all taste and feeling for devotion, he is not at all upset because a good and faithful servant of Mary is guided in his life by faith in Jesus and Mary, and not by feelings.

110. Fifth, true devotion to Mary is disinterested. It inspires us to seek God alone in his Blessed Mother and not ourselves. The true subject of Mary does not serve his illustrious Queen for selfish gain. He does not serve her for temporal or eternal well-being but simply and solely because she has the right to be served and God alone in her. He loves her not so

⁶³ Part 1, Chapter 3, Article 2: "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin"

much because she is good to him or because he expects something from her, but simply because she is lovable. That is why he loves and serves her just as faithfully in weariness and dryness of soul as in sweet and sensible fervour. He loves her as much on Calvary as at Cana. How pleasing and precious in the sight of God and his holy Mother must these servants of Mary be, who serve her without any self-seeking. How rare they are nowadays! It is to increase their number that I have taken up my pen to write down what I have been teaching with success both publicly and in private in my missions for many years.

111. I have already said many things about the Blessed Virgin and, as I am trying to fashion a true servant of Mary and a true disciple of Jesus, I have still a great deal to say, although through ignorance, inability, and lack of time, I shall leave infinitely more unsaid.

112. But my labour will be well rewarded if this little book falls into the hands of a noble soul, a child of God and of Mary, born not of blood nor the will of the flesh nor of the will of man. My time will be well spent if, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, after having read this book he is convinced of the supreme value of the solid devotion to Mary I am about to describe. If I thought that my guilty blood could help the reader to accept in his heart the truths that I set down in honour of my dear Mother and Queen, I, her most unworthy child and slave, would use it instead of ink to write these words. I would hope to find faithful souls who, by their perseverance in the devotion I teach, will repay her for the loss she has suffered through my ingratitude and infidelity.

113. I feel more than ever inspired to believe and expect the complete fulfillment of the desire that is deeply engraved on my heart and what I have prayed to God for over many years, namely, that in the near or distant future the Blessed Virgin will have more children, servants and slaves of love than ever before, and that through them Jesus, my dear Lord, will reign more than ever in the hearts of men.

114. I clearly foresee that raging beasts will come in fury to tear to pieces with their diabolical teeth this little book and the one the Holy Spirit made use of to write it, or they will cause it at least to lie hidden in the darkness and silence of a chest and so prevent it from seeing the light of day. They will even attack and persecute those who read it and put into practice what it contains. But no matter! So much the better! It even gives me encouragement to hope for great success at the prospect of a mighty legion of brave and valiant soldiers of Jesus and Mary, both men and women, who will fight the devil, the world, and corrupt nature in the perilous times that are sure to come. "Let the reader understand. Let him accept this teaching who can."

Principal practices of devotion to Mary

115. There are several interior practices of true devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Here briefly are the main ones: (1) Honouring her, as the worthy Mother of God, by the cult of hyperdulia, that is, esteeming and honouring her more than all the other saints as the masterpiece of grace and the foremost in holiness after Jesus Christ, true God and true man. (2) Meditating on her virtues, her privileges and her actions. (3) Contemplating her sublime dignity. (4) Offering to her acts of love, praise and gratitude. (5) Invoking her with a joyful heart. (6) Offering ourselves to her and uniting ourselves to her. (7) Doing everything to please her. (8) Beginning, carrying out and completing our actions through her, in her, with her, and for her in order to do them through Jesus, in Jesus, with Jesus, and for Jesus, our last end. We shall explain this last practice later.

116. True devotion to our Lady has also several exterior practices. Here are the principal ones: (1) Enrolling in her confraternities and joining her sodalities. (2) Joining religious orders dedicated to her. (3) Making her privileges known and appreciated. (4) Giving alms, fasting, performing interior and exterior acts of self-denial in her honour. (5) Carrying such signs of devotion to her as the rosary, the scapular, or a little chain. (6) Reciting with attention, devotion and reverence the fifteen decades of the Rosary in honour of the fifteen principal mysteries of our Lord, or at least five decades in honour of the Joyful mysteries—the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of our Lord, the Purification, the Finding of the Child Jesus in the temple; or the Sorrowful mysteries: the Agony in the Garden, the Scourging, the Crowning with thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, and the Crucifixion; or the Glorious mysteries: The Resurrection of our Lord, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Assumption of our Lady, body and soul, into heaven, the Crowning of Mary by the Blessed Trinity. One may also choose any of the following prayers: the Rosary of six or seven decades in honour of the years our Lady is believed to have spent on earth; the Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin in honour of her crown of twelve stars or privileges; the Little Office of our Lady so widely accepted and recited in the Church; the Little Psalter of the Blessed Virgin, composed in her honour by St. Bonaventure, which is so heartwarming, and so devotional that you cannot recite it without being moved by it; the fourteen Our Fathers and Hail Marys in honour of her fourteen joys. There are various other prayers and hymns of the Church, such as, the hymns of the liturgical seasons, the Ave Maris Stella, the O Gloriosa Domina, the Magnificat and other prayers which are found in all prayer-books. (7) Singing hymns to her or teaching others to sing them. (8) Genuflecting or bowing to her each morning while saying for example sixty or a hundred times, “Hail Mary, Virgin most faithful”, so that through her intercession with God we may faithfully correspond with his graces throughout the day; and in the evening saying “Hail Mary, Mother of Mercy”, asking her to obtain God’s pardon for the sins we have committed during the day. (9) Taking charge of her confraternities, decorating her altars, crowning and adorning her statues. (10) Carrying her statues or having others carry them in procession, or keeping a small one on one’s person as an effective protection against the evil one. (11) Having statues made of her, or her name engraved and placed on the walls of churches or houses and on the gates and entrances of towns, churches and houses. (12) Solemnly giving oneself to her by a special consecration.

117. The Holy Spirit has inspired saintly souls with other practices of true devotion to the Blessed Virgin, all of which are conducive to holiness. You can read of them in detail in “Paradise opened to Philagia”, a collection of many devotions practised by holy people to honour the Blessed Virgin, compiled by Fr. Paul Barry of the Society of Jesus. These devotions are a wonderful help for souls seeking holiness provided they are performed in a worthy manner, that is: (1) With the right intention of pleasing God alone, seeking union with Jesus, our last end, and giving edification to our neighbour. (2) With attention, avoiding willful distractions. (3) With devotion, avoiding haste and negligence. (4) With decorum and respectful bodily posture.

The

Perfect

Practice

118. Having read nearly every book on devotion to the Blessed Virgin and talked to the most saintly and learned people of the day, I can now state with conviction that I have never known or heard of any devotion to our Lady which is comparable to the one I am going to speak of. No other devotion calls for more sacrifices for God, none empties us more

completely of self and self-love, none keeps us more firmly in the grace of God and the grace of God in us. No other devotion unites us more perfectly and more easily to Jesus. Finally no devotion gives more glory to God, is more sanctifying for ourselves or more helpful to our neighbour.

119. As this devotion essentially consists in a state of soul, it will not be understood in the same way by everyone. Some—the great majority—will stop short at the threshold and go no further. Others—not many—will take but one step into its interior. Who will take a second step? Who will take a third? Finally who will remain in it permanently? Only the one to whom the Spirit of Jesus reveals the secret. The Holy Spirit himself will lead this faithful soul from strength to strength, from grace to grace, from light to light, until at length he attains transformation into Jesus in the fullness of his age on earth and of his glory in heaven.

B. FR. REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE⁶⁴

THE DIVINE MATERNITY: ITS EMINENT DIGNITY

The two truths which stand out like mountain peaks in the chain of revelation concerning Our Blessed Lady, and around which cluster all other truths we hold about her, are her divine maternity and her fullness of grace, both of which are affirmed in the Gospels and in the Councils of the Church. To grasp their importance it will be well to compare them, asking which of the two comes first, and gives, as it were, the true Pisgah view of all Mariology. In that spirit have theologians enquired which was the greater of Mary's prerogatives, her divine maternity (her motherhood of God) or her fullness of grace.

The Problem Stated

There have been theologians who have declared Mary's fullness of grace her greatest prerogative. The words spoken to Jesus by a certain woman as He passed in the midst of the people, and His answer, have led them to adopt this position: 'Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. But He said: Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it' (Luke 11:, 27-28). On their view the Savior's answer implies that the fullness of grace and of charity which was the principle of Mary's supernatural and meritorious acts was superior to her divine maternity, a privilege in itself of the corporeal order only.

According to many other theologians⁶⁵ the reason given just now is not conclusive. Their arguments are many. They say that the woman in question did not speak precisely of the divine maternity: she thought of Jesus less as God than as a prophet whose words were heard eagerly, who was admired and acclaimed, and she was thinking therefore of a natural

⁶⁴ R. Garrigou-Lagrangé, *The Mother of the Savior*, pp. 17–35, 246–51, 264–70.

⁶⁵ Among the Thomists special mention must be made of Contenson, Gotti, Hugon and Merkelbach. Father Merkelbach quotes the following in his *Mariologia* (p. 68) as having all admitted more or less explicitly that her divine maternity is the greatest of Mary's titles: St. Epiphanius, St. Ambrose, St. Sophronius, St. Germanus of Constantinople, St. John Damascene, Andrew of Crete, St. Peter Damien, Eadmer, Peter of Celles, St. Bernard, St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Denis the Carthusian, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Alphonsus, and all Thomists in general as, for example, Gonet, Contenson, Gotti, Hugon. Besides, Leo XIII says in his encyclical *Quamquam pluries* of August 15, 1889: 'Certainly the dignity of the Mother of God is so high that nothing could be greater.'

motherhood according to flesh and blood: 'Blessed is the womb that bore thee and the paps that gave thee suck.' She did not speak of the divine maternity as of something which included a supernatural and meritorious consent to the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation. That was why Our Blessed Lord answered as He did: 'Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.' For it was precisely by hearing the word of God and believing in it that Mary became Mother of the Savior. She said her fiat generously and with perfect conformity of will to God's good pleasure and all it involved for her, and she kept the divine words in her heart from the time of the Annunciation onwards. Elisabeth, for her part, expressed this when she said: 'Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things be shall accomplished which were spoken to thee by the Lord' (Luke 1: 45). What a contrast with Zachary who was struck dumb for not having believed the words of the Angel Gabriel: 'And behold thou shalt be dumb ... because thou hast not believed my words' (Luke 1: 20).

Nothing said so far, therefore, is sufficient to solve the problem: which was the greater, the divine maternity as realized in Mary or her fullness of grace and charity?

We must search deeper for a solution. To make the terms of the problem still more precise, it should be noted that the maternity proper to a creature endowed with reason is not the maternity according to flesh and blood which is found in the animal kingdom, but something which demands by its very nature a free consent given by the light of right reason to an act which is under the control of the will and is subject to the moral laws governing the married state: failing this, the maternity of a rational being is simply vicious. But the maternity of Mary was more than rational. It was divine. Hence her consent needed to be not free only, but supernatural and meritorious: and the intention of divine providence was that in default of this consent the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation would not have taken place. She gave her consent, St Thomas says, in the name of mankind (IIIa, q. 30, a. 2).

Hence the maternity we are discussing is not one which is merely of flesh and blood, but one which by its nature included a supernatural consent to the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation which was about to be realized, and to all the suffering it involved according to the messianic prophecies—especially those of Isaiah—all of which Mary knew so well. There can, in consequence, be no question of any divine maternity for Mary except a worthy one: in the designs of God she was to be a worthy Mother of the Redeemer, united perfectly in will to her Son. Tradition supports this by saying that her conceiving was twofold, in body and in soul: in body, for Jesus is flesh of her flesh, the flame of His human life having been lit in the womb of the Virgin by the most pure operation of the Holy Ghost: in soul, for Mary's express consent was needed before the Word assumed our nature in her.

To the problem so stated the great majority of theologians answer that tradition teaches that the divine maternity, defined in the Council of Ephesus, is higher than the fulness of grace, and that Mary's most glorious title is that of Mother of God. The reasons for their answer are as follows. We ask the reader's special attention for the first few pages. Once they have been grasped the rest follows quite naturally.

Article I **THE PREDESTINATION OF MARY**

Let us examine first the primary object in the predestination of Mary, and the sense in which it was absolutely gratuitous.

*Mary's predestination to the divine maternity preceded
her predestination to the fullness of glory and grace.*

This proposition may appear a little too profound for a beginning. In reality it is quite easy to understand. Most people admit it, at least implicitly. Besides it throws a flood of light on all that follows.

Pius IX affirmed it in effect in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, by which he defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, when he said that God the Father predestined Jesus to natural divine sonship—so superior to adoptive sonship—and Mary to be Mother of God, in one and the same divine decree. The eternal predestination of Jesus included not only the Incarnation itself as object but also all the circumstances of time and place in which it would be realized, and especially the one expressed by the Nicene Creed in the words: ‘Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine.’⁶⁶ By the same eternal decree, therefore, Jesus was predestined to be Son of the Most High and Mary to be Mother of God. It follows that as Christ was predestined to natural divine sonship before (*in signo priori*) being predestined to the summit of glory and to the fullness of grace (the germ of glory) so also the Blessed Virgin Mary was predestined first to the divine maternity, and in consequence to a very high degree of heavenly glory and to the fullness of grace, in order that she might be fully worthy of her mission as Mother of the Savior. This second predestination was all the more necessary seeing that, as His Mother, she was called to closest association with Jesus, by perfect conformity of her will with His, in His redemptive work. Such, in substance, is the teaching of Pius IX in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*.

Thus, just as in Jesus the dignity of Son of God, or Word made flesh, surpasses that of the plenitude of created grace, charity, and glory, which He received in His sacred soul as a result of the hypostatic union of two natures in Him by the Incarnation, so also in Mary the dignity of Mother of God surpasses that of the plenitude of grace and charity, and even that of the plenitude of glory which she received through her unique predestination to the divine maternity.

It is the teaching of St Thomas and many other theologians when treating of the motive of the Incarnation (for the redemption of mankind) that Mary’s predestination to be Mother of the Redeemer depended on the divine foreknowledge and permission of Adam’s sin. As St Thomas explains (IIIa, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3), that sin was permitted in view of a greater good, namely that through the redemptive Incarnation ‘where sin abounded, grace (might) more abound’ (Rom. 5: 20). Just as God wills the human body for the sake of the human soul, and yet, since He wills that the soul give life to the body, does not create a soul till there is a body ready to receive it, so also God allowed in view of the greater good of the redemptive Incarnation that there should be a sin to be atoned for, and He willed the redemptive Incarnation for the sake of the regeneration of souls: thus in the actually existing order of divine providence there would have been no Incarnation had there been no sin. And in this order everything is subordinated to Christ and His Holy Mother, so that it is true to say with St Paul (I Cor. 3: 23): ‘All things are yours ... And you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s’. Thus the greatness of Christ and of His Mother are in no way lessened by their dependence on Adam’s sin.

Mary was therefore predestined first to the divine maternity. This dignity appears all the greater if we recall that Mary, who was able to merit glory, was not able to merit the Incarnation nor the divine maternity, for the Incarnation and the divine maternity lie outside the sphere of merit of the just, which has as outer limit the beatific vision.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ The words ‘natus ex Maria Virgine’ [‘born of the virgin Mary’] are in the creed used in the West from at least the second century.

⁶⁷ cf. St Thomas IIIa, q. 2, a. 11: “Neither could the needs of any other man whatsoever have merited this union condignly: first, because the meritorious works of man are properly ordained to beatitude, which is the reward of virtue, and consists in the full enjoyment of God. Whereas the *union of the Incarnation*, inasmuch as it is in the personal being, *transcends the union of the beatified mind with God*, which is by the act of the soul in fruition; and therefore it cannot fall under merit.”

There is also another conclusive reason: the principle or beginning of merit cannot itself be merited. Since original sin, the Incarnation is the principle of all the graces and merits of the just; it cannot therefore be itself merited. Neither, then, could Mary merit her divine maternity *de condigno* nor *de congruo proprie*, for that would have been to merit the Incarnation.⁶⁸

As St. Thomas very accurately indicates, what Mary could merit by the first fullness of grace which she received gratuitously in view of the foreseen merits of her Son, was an increase of charity and that higher degree of purity and holiness which was becoming in the Mother of God.⁶⁹ Or, as he says elsewhere: ‘Mary did not merit the Incarnation (nor the divine maternity) but, granted that the Incarnation had been decreed, she merited (*merito congrui, not condigni*) that it should come to pass through her, since it was becoming that the Mother of God should be most pure and perfect.’⁷⁰ That is to say, she merited the degree of sanctity which it was becoming for the Mother of God to have, a degree which no other virgin had in fact merited, or could merit, since none other had received nor was entitled to receive the initial fullness of grace and charity which was the principle of Mary’s merits.

This first reason for the eminent dignity of the Mother of God, based on her gratuitous predestination to that glorious tide, is clear beyond question. It contains three truths which are, as it were, stars of first magnitude in the heavens of theology: 1st—that by one and the same decree the Father predestined Jesus for natural divine sonship and Mary for the divine maternity; 2nd—that Mary was predestined for the divine maternity before being predestined to the glory and the grace which the Father prepared for her that she might be the worthy Mother of His Son; 3rd—that though Mary merited heaven *de condigno* she could not merit the Incarnation, nor the divine maternity, since these lie outside the sphere and purpose of human supernatural merit which does not extend beyond gaining eternal beatitude.

Many theologians have considered the argument just given as conclusive. It implies the arguments we shall expose in the following article, which really are but its developments, much as the history of a predestined soul is the unfolding of what was implied in its predestination.

The gratuitousness of the predestination of Mary.

A few additional remarks about the uniqueness of Mary’s predestination will make its gratuitousness all the more apparent.

Among men Jesus is the first of the predestined, since His predestination is the model and cause of ours. As St Thomas shows (IIIa, q. 24, a. 3 and 4), He merited for us all the effects which follow on our predestination. But the man Jesus was predestined, as we have said, to natural divine sonship, even before being predestined to glory and grace. Hence, His first or primary predestination is none other than the decree of the Incarnation. This eternal decree covers not only the Incarnation taken in the abstract—its mere substance—but also all

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: “Secondly, because grace cannot fall under merit, for the principle of merit does not fall under merit; and therefore neither does grace, for it is the principle of merit. Hence, still less does Incarnation fall under merit, since it is the principle of grace, according to John 1:17: ‘Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.’” Mary could merit the Incarnation neither *de condigno* nor *de congruo proprie*. Even the second kind of merit must be excluded for it is based on charity, which the just have through the merits of the Redeemer. In other words, the eminent cause of our merits cannot itself be merited.

⁶⁹ IIIa, q. 2, a. 11, ad 3: “The Blessed Virgin is said to have merited to bear the Lord of all; not that she merited His Incarnation, but because by the grace bestowed upon her she merited that grade of purity and holiness, which fitted her to be the Mother of God.”

⁷⁰ *III Sent.*, d. IV, 9. 3, a. 1, ad 6: ‘Beata Virgo non meruit incarnationem sed praesupposita incarnatione, meruit quod per eam fieret, non merito condigni, sed merito congrui, in quantum decebat quod Mater Dei esset purissima et perfectissima.’

circumstances of time and place in which it was to be put into execution, including the fact that Jesus was to be conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary ‘espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David’ (Luke 1: 27). Mary’s predestination to the divine maternity being thus included in Jesus’ predestination to natural divine sonship, it follows that it precedes her predestination to glory, since Jesus is the first of those so predestined. A striking confirmation of the thesis of the preceding pages! It is no less clear that Mary’s predestination, like that of Jesus, was gratuitous. Jesus did not merit His predestination to natural divine sonship for the reason that His merits presuppose His Person, which is that of the Son of God by nature. Being therefore the principle of all His merits, His Divine Sonship could not itself be merited: else it would be cause and effect at the same time and under the same respect.⁷¹ In the same way Mary’s predestination to the divine maternity is gratuitous or independent of her merits, for we have seen that to merit it would involve meriting the Incarnation itself, which is the principle of all the merits of mankind since the Fall. That is the reason for Mary’s words in the *Magnificat*: ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord.... Because He hath regarded the humility (the lowly condition) of His handmaid.’ Her predestination to glory and grace is clearly gratuitous also, since it is a result or morally necessary consequence of her predestination to be Mother of God. This does not however involve a denial that she merited heaven. On the contrary, we affirm that she was predestined to gain heaven by her merits.

The sequence or order of the divine plan is therefore clear: 1st—God willed to manifest His goodness; 2nd—He willed Christ and His glory as Redeemer—in which will the permission of original sin for the sake of the greater good is included; 3rd—He willed Our Blessed Lady as Mother of the Redeemer; 4th—In consequence He willed her glory; 5th—He willed the grace and merits by which she would attain to glory; 6th—He willed the glory and grace of all the other elect.

The predestination of Mary appears now in all its sublimity. We can understand why the Church extends to her the application of the words of the Book of Proverbs, 8:22–35: ‘The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made. . . . when He prepared the heavens I was present . . . when He balanced the foundations of the earth, I was with Him forming all things: and was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times; playing in the world, and my delights were to be with the children of men . . . He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.’

Mary had been promised as the woman who would triumph over the serpent (Gen. 3: 15), as the Virgin who would bear Emmanuel (Is. 7: 14); she had been prefigured by the ark of alliance, the house of gold, the tower of ivory. All those testimonies show that she was predestined first of all to be Mother of God. And the precise reason why the fulness of glory and grace was given her was to make her the worthy Mother of God—‘to make her fit to be mother of Christ’, as St Thomas expresses it (IIIa, q. 27, a. 5, ad 2). This doctrine appeared to him so certain that we find him saying in the same article (corp. art.): ‘The Blessed Virgin Mary came nearer than any other person to the humanity of Christ, since it was from her that He received His human nature. And that is why Mary received from Christ a plenitude of grace which surpassed that of all the saints.’

Pius IX speaks in the same sense at the beginning of the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*: ‘From the beginning and before all ages God selected and prepared for His only Son the Mother from whom, having taken flesh, He would be born in the blessed fulness of time; He loved her by herself more than all creatures, and with such a love as to find His delight in a singular way in her. That is why, drawing from the treasures of His divinity, He endowed her, more than

⁷¹ Cf. St Thomas IIIa, q. 2, a. 11: ‘In Christo omnis operatio subsequuta est unionem (cum Verbo); ergo nulla ejus operatio potuit esse meritoria unionism’ (*Item* IIIa, q. 24, a. 1 and 2.)

all the angels and saints, with such an abundance of heavenly gifts that she was always completely free from sin, and that, all beautiful and perfect, she appeared in such a plenitude of innocence and holiness that, except God's, no greater than hers can be conceived, and that no mind but the mind of God can measure it.'

Article II OTHER REASONS FOR ASSERTING THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE DIVINE MATERNITY

We have seen that by the decree of the Incarnation *ex Maria Virgine* the Blessed Virgin was predestined first of all to the divine maternity and by way of consequence to glory and grace. There are still other reasons, which we shall now bring forward, which show that the divine maternity surpassed the plenitude of grace.

The value of a dignity of the hypostatic order

Since the value or worth of a relation depends on the term which it regards and which specifies it—as, for example, the dignity of the beatific knowledge and love of the elect depends on their object, which is the divine essence known intuitively—the dignity of the divine maternity is to be measured by considering the term to which it is immediately referred. Now this term is of the hypostatic order, and therefore surpasses the whole order of grace and glory.

By her divine maternity Mary is related really to the Word made flesh. The relation so set up has the uncreated Person of the Incarnate Word as its term, for Mary is the Mother of Jesus, who is God. It is not precisely the humanity of Jesus which is the term of the relation, but rather Jesus Himself in Person: it is He and not His humanity that is Son of Mary.⁷² Hence Mary, reaching, as Cajetan says, even to the frontiers of the Divinity,⁷³ belongs terminally to the hypostatic order, to the order of the personal union of the Humanity of Jesus to the Uncreated Word. This truth follows also from the very definition of the divine maternity as formulated in the Council of Ephesus.⁷⁴

But the order of the hypostatic union surpasses wonderfully that of grace and glory, just as this latter surpasses that of nature—of human nature and of angelic nature, created or possible. The three orders distinguished by Pascal in his *Pensees*, that of bodies, that of spirits with their powers sometimes amounting to genius, and that of supernatural charity, are separated by an immeasurable distance from each other. The same is true of the hypostatic order and that of glory and grace, considering the latter even as found in the greatest saints. 'The earth and its kingdoms, the firmament and all its stars, are not worth a single thought: all spirits taken together (and all their natural powers) are not worth the least movement of charity, for it belongs to another and an entirely supernatural order.' Similarly, all the acts of charity of the greatest saints, men or angels, and their heavenly glory, are far below the

⁷² cf. St Thomas IIIa, q. 35, a. 4: '*Concipi et nasci personae attribuitur secundum naturam iuam in qua concipitur et nascitur. Cum igitur in ipso principio conceptionis fuerit humana natura assumpta a divina persotia, consequens est quod vere possit dici Deum esse conceptum et natum de virgins... Consequens est quod B. Virgo vere dicatur Mater Dei.*' To deny that Mary is Mother of God it would be necessary first of all to assert that Jesus had been a mere man before becoming Son of God, or, with Nestorius, to deny that He had a divine personality.

⁷³ CE Cajet. in Ila, liae, q. I03, a. 4, ad 2: '*Ad fines Deitatis B. V. Maria propria actions attigit, dum Deum concepit, peperit, genuit et lacte proprio pavit.*' Of all creatures Mary had the closest 'affinity' to God.

⁷⁴ cf. Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, no. II 3: '*Si quis non confitetur Deum esse veraciter Emmanuel, et propterea Dei genitricem sanctam virginem (peperit enim secundum camem factum Dei Verbum), A.S.*' (*Item nos. 2x8, 2go.*)

personal or hypostatic union of the Humanity of Jesus to the Word. The divine maternity which is terminated by the uncreated Person of the Word made flesh surpasses therefore immeasurably, because of its term, the grace and glory of all the elect, and even the plenitude of grace and glory received by Mary herself.

St Thomas says (Ia, q. 25, a. 6, ad 4): ‘The Humanity of Christ since it is united to God, the beatitude of the elect since it is the possession of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary since she is the Mother of God—all these have a certain infinite dignity from their relation to God Himself, and under that respect there can be nothing more perfect than them since there can be nothing more perfect than God.’ St Bonaventure supports this when he says: ‘God could make a greater world, but He cannot make a more perfect mother than the Mother of God’ (*Speculum*, C. viii).

As Fr. E. Hugon, O.P., says: ‘The divine maternity is by its nature higher than adoptive sonship. This latter produces only a spiritual and mystic relationship, whereas the maternity of the Blessed Virgin establishes a relationship of nature, a relationship of consanguinity with Jesus Christ and one of affinity with the entire Trinity. Besides, adoptive sonship does not impose, as it were, such obligations on God: for the divine maternity imposed on Jesus those obligations of justice which ordinary children contract naturally in regard to their parents, and it confers on Mary that dominion and power over Him which are the natural right accompanying the dignity of motherhood.’

By way of corollary it may be mentioned that the divine maternity surpasses all the *gratiae gratis datae* or *charismata*, such as the gift of prophecy, knowledge of the secrets of hearts, the gift of miracles or of tongues, for all these graces are in some way exterior and lower in dignity than sanctifying grace (cf. Ia IIae, q. 3, a. 5). It should be noted also that the divine maternity cannot be lost, whereas grace can be lost on earth.

The eminent dignity of the divine maternity has been set in striking relief by Bossuet in his sermon on the Conception of the Blessed Virgin (towards the end of the first point): ‘God so loved the world, said Our Saviour, as to give His only begotten Son (John 3: 16) . . . (But) the ineffable love which He had for you, O Mary, made Him conceive many other designs in your regard. He ordained that He should belong to you in the same quality in which He belonged to Himself: and in order to establish an eternal union with you He made you the Mother of His only Son and Himself the Father of yours. O prodigy! O abyss of charity! what mind does not find itself lost to consider the incomprehensible regard He had for you; you come so near to Him, through this Son common to you both, this inviolable bond of your sacred alliance, this pledge of your mutual love which you have given so lovingly to each other, the Father giving Him in His impassible divinity, and you giving Him in the mortal flesh in which He was obedient.’

God the Father communicated to His Son the divine nature. Mary gave Him a human nature, subject to pain and death, in which to redeem us. But Mary’s Son is the only-begotten of the Father, and in that consists the whole grandeur of her maternity.

The reason why so many graces were conferred on Mary

The eminent dignity of the divine maternity is revealed in a new light if we consider that it is the reason why the fulness of grace was given to Mary, that it is the measure and end of that fulness, and that it is superior to it.

The reason why Mary was given a fulness of grace from the first instant was that she might be enabled to conceive the Man-God in holiness, by uttering her fiat with the utmost generosity on the day of the Annunciation ‘in spite of the sufferings which she knew had been foretold of the Messiah; it was given her, too, that she might bring forth her child while remaining a virgin, that she might surround Him with the most motherly and most holy

devotion; it was given her, finally, that she might unite herself to Him in closest conformity of will, as only a most holy mother can, during His hidden life, His apostolic life, and His suffering life that she might utter her second fiat most heroically at the foot of the Cross, with Him, by Him, and in Him.

As Fr. Hugon has so well put it: 'The divine maternity postulates intimate friendship with God. Since a mother is bound both by a law of nature and an express precept to love her son, and he to love her, Mary and Jesus love each other mutually; and since the maternity in question here is supernatural the love must be of the same order. But this means that it is a sanctifying love, since by the fact that God loves a soul He makes it lovable and sanctifies it.' There is thus the most complete conformity between the will of Mary and her Son's oblation which was, as it were, the soul of the sacrifice of the Cross.

It is clear that it was for the reason we have given and for none other that Mary was given an initial plenitude of grace followed by a consummated plenitude in glory. The same reason or end was the measure of her grace and glory: therefore it surpassed them. Admittedly it is not possible to deduce from the divine maternity each and every one of the privileges received by Mary,⁷⁵ but all derive ultimately from it. If, finally, she was predestined from all eternity to the highest degree of glory after Jesus, the reason is that she was predestined first of all to be His most worthy mother, and to retain that title during eternity after having enjoyed it in time. The saints who contemplate in heaven the sublime degree of glory, so far surpassing that of the angels, in which Mary is enthroned, know that the reason why she was predestined to it is that she might be and might remain for eternity the most worthy Mother of God: Mater Creatoris, Mater Salvatoris, Virgo Dei Genetrix.

Such was the teaching of St. Albert the Great on more than one occasion. The poets have sung it in their verses. We refer in a note to one of their most recent tributes.

The Motive of the Cult of Hyperdulia

A last consideration, which will be found in the works of many theologians, can be adduced in favour of our thesis. It is because she is Mother of God rather than because she is full of grace that Mary is entitled to the cult of hyperdulia, in a cult superior to that due to the saints highest in grace and glory. In other words, hyperdulia is due to Mary not because she is the greatest of the saints but because of her divine maternity. It would not have been her due had she been raised to her present degree of glory without having been predestined to be Mother of God. This is the express teaching of St. Thomas.⁷⁶

In the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin the first title of glory mentioned is the Sancta Dei Genetrix. All the others follow as something which pertains to Mary as Mother of God: Sancta Virgo Virginum, Mater divinae gratiae, Mater purissima, Mater castissima, Mater inviolata, Mater intemerata, Mater amabilis, Mater admirabilis, Mater boni consilii, etc.

⁷⁵ For example, we cannot deduce from it the privilege of the Assumption except by taking into consideration the further point that the Mother of God was associated intimately with Jesus's complete victory over Satan, sin and death. At the same time, it is clear that the reason for this intimate association is the divine maternity. This is much the same as to say that the second property of the circle cannot be deduced from the definition alone, but follows from it taken in conjunction with its first property.

⁷⁶ IIIA, q. 25, a. 5: 'Cum Beata Virgo sit pura creatura rationalis, non debetur ei adoratio latria, sed solum *veneratio duliae, eminentius tamen quam caeteris creaturis, in quantum ipsa est Mater Dei*. Et ideo dicitur quod debetur ei non quascumque duha, sed *hyperdulia*.'

ad I: *Matri regis debetur quidam honor consimilis (honori qui debetur regi), ratione cuiusdam excellentiae.*'

ad 2: 'Honor matris refertur ad filium.'

St Bonaventure speaks in the same sense in *III Sent., d. 9, q- 3, a. I*. The Sacred Congregation of Rites said also (June 1st, 1884): 'Reginae et dominae angelorum, *in quantum est mater Dei* ... debetur . . . non quascumque duha, sed hyperduha.'

II. Practices of Dominican Life

THE RULE IS FOR ALL DOMINICANS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THE PARTICULAR DIRECTORY IS FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE WESTERN PROVINCE IN THE UNITED STATES. THUS, THE DIRECTORY CAN BE MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT TOPICS AND THEMES ADDRESSED BY THE RULE. THIS PART OF THE DIRECTORY CONCERNS PRAYER AND STUDY. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT THAT THESE TWO THEMES ARE THE FIRST TWO BASIC ASPECTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE TO BE MENTIONED BY THE PARTICULAR DIRECTORY.

The Particular Directory of the Western Dominican Province

I. The Basics of Lay Dominican Life

A. Prayer

1. Dominican life centers on
 - a. the daily celebration of the Eucharist, to the extent that daily Mass and Communion are possible;
 - b. the daily celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer, and when possible, with other members of the Dominican Family.
2. Members celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, for example, once a month, preferably from a regular confessor.
3. Members recite the Rosary daily to help us know, love and serve Jesus Christ through the intercession of Mary, His Mother and ours.
4. Members foster special devotion to Saint Dominic, our Father and model in Christ, to Saint Catherine of Siena, the patroness of lay Dominicans and, in general, to all Dominican saints and blessed.
5. Members participate in an annual retreat, days of reflection, or other similar prayer days, preferably in common.
6. Prayers for the deceased have been a hallowed tradition since Saint Dominic founded the Order. At specific times throughout the year, members are expected to pray for the deceased, grateful for what they have preserved and passed on to us in faith and in the spirit of the Order.⁷⁷

B. Study of Sacred Truth

1. Serious prayerful study of Sacred Scripture, theology, spirituality, Church doctrine and history, and reflection on contemporary issues in the light of such study, are essential to lay Dominican life.
2. Reflective reading of the lives of the saints, especially those of the Dominican Family, provides models for our own lives and for our work with others.

⁷⁷ See Appendix A: Suffrages

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR A, UNIT V**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: THE BEATITUDES

A. St. Augustine, *On the Sermon on the Mount*, book I, chapters 1-4

Chapter I.

1. If any one will piously and soberly consider the sermon which our Lord Jesus Christ spoke on the mount, as we read it in the Gospel according to Matthew, I think that he will find in it, so far as regards the highest morals, a perfect standard of the Christian life: and this we do not rashly venture to promise, but gather it from the very words of the Lord Himself. For the sermon itself is brought to a close in such a way, that it is clear there are in it all the precepts which go to mould the life. For thus He speaks: "Therefore, whosoever heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, I will liken unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." Since, therefore, He has not simply said, "Whosoever heareth my words," but has made an addition, saying, "Whosoever heareth these words of mine," He has sufficiently indicated, as I think, that these sayings which He uttered on the mount so perfectly guide the life of those who may be willing to live according to them, that they may justly be compared to one building upon a rock. I have said this merely that it may be clear that the sermon before us is perfect in all the precepts by which the Christian life is moulded; for as regards this particular section a more careful treatment will be given in its own place.

2. The beginning, then, of this sermon is introduced as follows: "And when He saw the great multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying." If it is asked what the "mountain" means, it may well be understood as meaning the greater precepts of righteousness; for there were lesser ones which were given to the Jews. Yet it is one God who, through His holy prophets and servants, according to a thoroughly arranged distribution of times, gave the lesser precepts to a people who as yet required to be bound by fear; and who, through His Son, gave the greater ones to a people whom it had now become suitable to set free by love. Moreover, when the lesser are given to the lesser, and the greater to the greater, they are given by Him who alone knows how to present to the human race the medicine suited to the occasion. Nor is it surprising that the greater precepts are given for the kingdom of heaven, and the lesser for an earthly kingdom, by that one and the same God, who made heaven and earth. With respect, therefore, to that righteousness which is the greater, it is said through the prophet, "Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God:"⁷⁸ and this may well mean that the one Master alone fit to teach matters of so great importance teaches on a mountain. Then He teaches sitting, as behoves the dignity of the instructor's office; and His disciples come to Him, in order that they might be nearer in body for hearing His words, as they also approached in spirit to fulfil His precepts. "And He opened His

⁷⁸ Ps. xxxvi. 6

mouth, and taught them, saying.” The circumlocution before us, which runs, “And He opened His mouth,” perhaps gracefully intimates by the mere pause that the sermon will be somewhat longer than usual, unless, perchance, it should not be without meaning, that now He is said to have opened His own mouth, whereas under the old law He was accustomed to open the mouths of the prophets.

3. What, then, does He say? “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” We read in Scripture concerning the striving after temporal things, “All is vanity and presumption of spirit;”⁷⁹ but presumption of spirit means audacity and pride: usually also the proud are said to have great spirits; and rightly, inasmuch as the wind also is called spirit. And hence it is written, “Fire, hail, snow, ice, spirit of tempest.”⁸⁰ But, indeed, who does not know that the proud are spoken of as puffed up, as if swelled out with wind? And hence also that expression of the apostle, “Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.”⁸¹ And “the poor in spirit” are rightly understood here, as meaning the humble and God-fearing, *i.e.* those who have not the spirit which puffeth up. Nor ought blessedness to begin at any other point whatever, if indeed it is to attain unto the highest wisdom; “but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;”⁸² for, on the other hand also, “pride” is entitled “the beginning of all sin.”⁸³ Let the proud, therefore, seek after and love the kingdoms of the earth; but “blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Chapter II.

4. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall by inheritance possess the earth:” that earth, I suppose, of which it is said in the Psalm, “Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.”⁸⁴ For it signifies a certain firmness and stability of the perpetual inheritance, where the soul, by means of a good disposition, rests, as it were, in its own place, just as the body rests on the earth, and is nourished from it with its own food, as the body from the earth. This is the very rest and life of the saints. Then, the meek are those who yield to acts of wickedness, and do not resist evil, but overcome evil with good.⁸⁵ Let those, then, who are not meek quarrel and fight for earthly and temporal things; but “blessed are the meek, for they shall by inheritance possess the earth,” from which they cannot be driven out.

5. “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” Mourning is sorrow arising from the loss of things held dear; but those who are converted to God lose those things which they were accustomed to embrace as dear in this world: for they do not rejoice in those things in which they formerly rejoiced; and until the love of eternal things be in them, they are wounded by some measure of grief. Therefore they will be comforted by the Holy Spirit, who on this account chiefly is called the Paraclete, *i.e.* the Comforter, in order that, while losing the temporal joy, they may enjoy to the full that which is eternal.

6. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Now He calls those parties, lovers of a true and indestructible good. They will therefore be filled with that food of which the Lord Himself says, “My meat is to do the will of my Father,” which is righteousness; and with that water, of which whosoever “drinketh,” as he also says, it “shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.”⁸⁶

⁷⁹ Eccles. i. 14.

⁸⁰ Ps. cxlviii. 8

⁸¹ I Cor. viii. 1

⁸² Ps. cxi. 10

⁸³ Ecclus. x. 13

⁸⁴ Ps. cxlii. 5

⁸⁵ Rom. xii. 21

⁸⁶ John iv. 34, 14

7. “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” He says that they are blessed who relieve the miserable, for it is paid back to them in such a way that they are freed from misery.

8. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” How foolish, therefore, are those who seek God with these outward eyes, since He is seen with the heart! as it is written elsewhere, “And in singleness of heart seek Him.”⁸⁷ For that is a pure heart which is a single heart: and just as this light cannot be seen, except with pure eyes; so neither is God seen, unless that is pure by which He can be seen.

9. “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” It is the perfection of peace, where nothing offers opposition; and the children of God are peacemakers, because nothing resists God, and surely children ought to have the likeness of their father. Now, they are peacemakers in themselves who, by bringing in order all the motions of their soul, and subjecting them to reason-*i.e.* to the mind and spirit-and by having their carnal lusts thoroughly subdued, become a kingdom of God: in which all things are so arranged, that that which is chief and pre-eminent in man rules without resistance over the other elements, which are common to us with the beasts; and that very element which is pre-eminent in man, *i.e.* mind and reason, is brought under subjection to something better still, which is the truth itself, the only-begotten Son of God. For a man is not able to rule over things which are inferior, unless he subjects himself to what is superior. And this is the peace which is given on earth to men of goodwill;⁸⁸ this the life of the fully developed and perfect wise man. From a kingdom of this sort brought to a condition of thorough peace and order, the prince of this world is cast out, who rules where there is perversity and disorder. When this peace has been inwardly established and confirmed, whatever persecutions he who has been cast out shall stir up from without, he only increases the glory which is according to God; being unable to shake anything in that edifice, but by the failure of his machinations making it to be known with how great strength it has been built from within outwardly. Hence there follows: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Chapter III.

10. There are in all, then, these eight sentences. For now in what remains He speaks in the way of direct address to those who were present, saying: “Blessed shall ye be when men shall revile you and persecute you.” But the former sentences He addressed in a general way: for He did not say, Blessed are ye poor in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of heaven; but He says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:” nor, Blessed are ye meek, for ye shall inherit the earth; but, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” And so the others up to the eighth sentence, where He says: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” After that He now begins to speak in the way of direct address to those present, although what has been said before referred also to His present audience; and that which follows, and which seems to be spoken specially to those present, refers also to those who were absent, or who would afterwards come into existence.

For this reason the number of sentences before us is to be carefully considered. For the beatitudes begin with humility: “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” *i.e.* those not puffed up, while the soul submits itself to divine authority, fearing lest after this life it go away to punishment, although perhaps in this life it might seem to itself to be happy. Then it (the soul) comes to the knowledge of the divine Scriptures, where it must show itself meek in its piety, lest it should venture to condemn that which seems absurd to the unlearned, and should

⁸⁷ Wisd. i. 1

⁸⁸ Luke ii. 14

itself be rendered unteachable by obstinate disputations. After that, it now begins to know in what entanglements of this world it is held by reason of carnal custom and sins: and so in this third stage, in which there is knowledge, the loss of the highest good is mourned over, because it sticks fast in what is lowest. Then, in the fourth stage there is labour, where vehement exertion is put forth, in order that the mind may wrench itself away from those things in which, by reason of their pestilential sweetness, it is entangled: here therefore righteousness is hungered and thirsted after, and fortitude is very necessary; because what is retained with delight is not abandoned without pain. Then, at the fifth stage, to those persevering in labour, counsel for getting rid of it is given; for unless each one is assisted by a superior, in no way is he fit in his own case to extricate himself from so great entanglements of miseries. But it is a just counsel, that he who wishes to be assisted by a stronger should assist him who is weaker in that in which he himself is stronger: therefore “blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” At the sixth stage there is purity of heart, able from a good conscience of good works to contemplate that, highest good, which can be discerned by the pure and tranquil intellect alone. Lastly is the seventh, wisdom itself—*i.e.* the contemplation of the truth, tranquillizing the whole man, and assuming the likeness of God, which is thus summed up: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” The eighth, as it were, returns to the starting-point, because it shows and commends what is complete and perfect: therefore in the first and in the eighth the kingdom of heaven is named, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;” and, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:” as it is now said, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”⁸⁹ Seven in number, therefore, are the things which bring perfection: for the eighth brings into light and shows what is perfect, so that starting, as it were, from the beginning again, the others also are perfected by means of these stages.

Chapter IV.

11. Hence also the sevenfold operation of the Holy Ghost, of which Isaiah speaks,⁹⁰ seems to me to correspond to these stages and sentences. But there is a difference of order: for there the enumeration begins with the more excellent, but here with the inferior. For there it begins with wisdom, and closes with the fear of God: but “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” And therefore, if we reckon as it were in a gradually ascending series, there the fear of God is first, piety second, knowledge third, fortitude fourth, counsel fifth, understanding sixth, wisdom seventh. The fear of God corresponds to the humble, of whom it is here said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” *i.e.* those not puffed up, not proud: to whom the apostle says, “Be not high-minded, but fear;”⁹¹ *i.e.* be not lifted up. Piety⁹² corresponds to the meek: for he who inquires piously honours Holy Scripture, and does not censure what he does not yet understand, and on this account does not offer resistance; and this is to be meek: whence it is here said, “Blessed are the meek.” Knowledge corresponds to those that mourn who already have found out in the Scriptures by what evils they are held chained which they ignorantly have coveted as though they were good and useful. Fortitude corresponds to those hungering and thirsting: for they labour in earnestly desiring joy from things that are truly good, and in eagerly seeking to turn away their love from earthly and corporeal things: and of them it is here said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Counsel corresponds to the merciful: for this is the one remedy for escaping from so great

⁸⁹ Rom. viii. 35.

⁹⁰ Isa. xi. 2, 3

⁹¹ Rom. xi. 20

⁹² St. Augustine follows the Septuagint, which has “piety” instead of “the fear of the Lord” in the last clause of Isa. xi. 2.

evils, that we forgive, as we wish to be ourselves forgiven; and that we assist others so far as we are able, as we ourselves desire to be assisted where we are not able: and of them it is here said, “Blessed are the merciful.” Understanding corresponds to the pure in heart, the eye being as it were purged, by which that may be beheld which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and what hath not entered into the heart of man:⁹³ and of them it is here said, “Blessed are the pure in heart.” Wisdom corresponds to the peacemakers, in whom all things are now brought into order, and no passion is in a state of rebellion against reason, but all things together obey the spirit of man, while he himself also obeys God: and of them it is here said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

12. Moreover, the one reward, which is the kingdom of heaven, is variously named according to these stages. In the first, just as ought to be the case, is placed the kingdom of heaven, which is the perfect and highest wisdom of the rational soul. Thus, therefore, it is said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:” as if it were said, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” To the meek an inheritance is given, as it were the testament of a father to those dutifully seeking it: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” To the mourners comfort, as to those who know what they have lost, and in what evils they are sunk: “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” To those hungering and thirsting, a full supply, as it were a refreshment to those labouring and bravely contending for salvation: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” To the merciful mercy, as to those following a true and excellent counsel, so that this same treatment is extended toward them by one who is stronger, which they extend toward the weaker: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” To the pure in heart is given the power of seeing God, as to those bearing about with them a pure eye for discerning eternal things: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” To the peacemakers the likeness of God is given, as being perfectly wise, and formed after the image of God by means of the regeneration of the renewed man: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” And those promises can indeed be fulfilled in this life, as we believe them to have been fulfilled in the case of the apostles. For that all-embracing change into the angelic form, which is promised after this life, cannot be explained in any words. “Blessed,” therefore, “are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” This eighth sentence, which goes back to the starting-point, and makes manifest the perfect man, is perhaps set forth in its meaning both by the circumcision on the eighth day in the Old Testament, and by the resurrection of the Lord after the Sabbath, the day which is certainly the eighth, and at the same time the first day; and by the celebration of the eight festival days which we celebrate in the case of the regeneration of the new man; and by the very number of Pentecost. For to the number seven, seven times multiplied, by which we make forty-nine, as it were an eighth is added, so that fifty may be made up, and we, as it were, return to the starting-point: on which day the Holy Spirit was sent, by whom we are led into the kingdom of heaven, and receive the inheritance, and are comforted; and are fed, and obtain mercy, and are purified, and are made peacemakers; and being thus perfect, we bear all troubles brought upon us from without for the sake of truth and righteousness.

Chapter V.

13. “Blessed are ye,” says He, “when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.” Let any one who is seeking after the delights of this world and the riches of temporal things under the Christian name, consider that our blessedness, is within; as it is said of the soul of the Church by the mouth of the prophet, “All the beauty of the

⁹³ Isa. lxiv. 4 and 1 Cor. ii. 9

king's daughter is within;"⁹⁴ for outwardly revilings, and persecutions, and disparagements are promised; and yet, from these things there is a great reward in heaven, which is felt in the heart of those who endure, those who can now say, "We glory in tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."⁹⁵ For it is not simply the enduring of such things that is advantageous, but the bearing of such things for the name of Christ not only with tranquil mind, but even with exultation. For many heretics, deceiving souls under the Christian name, endure many such things; but they are excluded from that reward on this account, that it is not said merely, "Blessed are they which endure persecution;" but it is added, "for righteousness' sake." Now, where there is no sound faith, there can be no righteousness, for the just [righteous] man lives by faith.⁹⁶ Neither let schismatics promise themselves anything of that reward; for similarly, where there is no love, there cannot be righteousness, for "love worketh no ill to his neighbour;"⁹⁷ and if they had it, they would not tear in pieces Christ's body, which is the Church.⁹⁸

14. But it may be asked, What is the difference when He says, "when men shall revile you," and "when they shall say all manner of evil against you," since to revile is just this, to say evil against? But it is one thing when the reviling word is hurled with contumely in presence of him who is reviled, as it was said to our Lord, "Say we not the truth that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"⁹⁹ and another thing, when our reputation is injured in our absence, as it is also written of Him, "Some said, He is a prophet; others said, Nay, but He deceiveth the people."¹⁰⁰ Then, further, to persecute is to inflict violence, or to assail with snares, as was done by him who betrayed Him, and by them who crucified Him. Certainly, as for the fact that this also is not put in a bare form, so that it should be said, "and shall say all manner of evil against you," but there is added the word "falsely," and also the expression "for my sake;" I think that the addition is made for the sake of those who wish to glory in persecutions, and in the baseness of their reputation; and to say that Christ belongs to them for this reason, that many bad things are said about them; while, on the one hand, the things said are true, when they are said respecting their error; and, on the other hand, if sometimes also some false charges are thrown out, which frequently happens from the rashness of men, yet they do not suffer such things for Christ's sake. For he is not a follower of Christ who is not called a Christian according to the true faith and the catholic discipline.

15. "Rejoice," says He, "and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." I do not think that it is the higher parts of this visible world that are here called heaven. For our reward, which ought to be immoveable and eternal, is not to be placed in things fleeting and temporal. But I think the expression "in heaven" means in the spiritual firmament, where dwells everlasting righteousness: in comparison with which a wicked soul is called earth, to which it is said when it sins, "Earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt return."¹⁰¹ Of this heaven the apostle says, "For our conversation is in heaven."¹⁰² Hence they who rejoice in spiritual good are conscious of that reward now; but then it will be perfected in every part, when this mortal also shall have put on immortality. "For," says He, "so persecuted they the prophets also which were before you." In the present case He has used "persecution" in a

⁹⁴ Ps. xlv. 13.

⁹⁵ Rom. v. 3-5

⁹⁶ Hab. ii. 4 and Rom. i. 17

⁹⁷ Rom. xiii. 10

⁹⁸ Col. i. 24

⁹⁹ John viii. 48

¹⁰⁰ Chap. vii. 12

¹⁰¹ Gen. iii. 19

¹⁰² Phil. iii. 20.

general sense, as applying alike to abusive words and to the tearing in pieces of one's reputation; and has well encouraged them by an example, because they who speak true things are wont to suffer persecution: nevertheless did not the ancient prophets on this account, through fear of persecution, give over the preaching of the truth.

B. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 69, aa. 1–2

Whether the beatitudes differ from the virtues and gifts?

Objection 1. It would seem that the beatitudes do not differ from the virtues and gifts. For Augustine (*De Serm. Dom. in Monte* i, 4) assigns the beatitudes recited by Matthew (v 3, seqq.) to the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and Ambrose in his commentary on Luke 6:20, seqq., ascribes the beatitudes mentioned there, to the four cardinal virtues. Therefore the beatitudes do not differ from the virtues and gifts.

Objection 2. Further, there are but two rules of the human will: the reason and the eternal law, as stated above (q. 19, a. 3; q. 21, a. 1). Now the virtues perfect man in relation to reason; while the gifts perfect him in relation to the eternal law of the Holy Ghost, as is clear from what has been said (q. 68, a. 1, 3, seqq.). Therefore there cannot be anything else pertaining to the rectitude of the human will, besides the virtues and gifts. Therefore the beatitudes do not differ from them.

Objection 3. Further, among the beatitudes are included meekness, justice, and mercy, which are said to be virtues. Therefore the beatitudes do not differ from the virtues and gifts.

On the contrary, Certain things are included among the beatitudes, that are neither virtues nor gifts, e.g. poverty, mourning, and peace. Therefore the beatitudes differ from the virtues and gifts.

I answer that, As stated above (q. 2, a. 7; q. 3, a. 1), happiness is the last end of human life. Now one is said to possess the end already, when one hopes to possess it; wherefore the Philosopher says (*Ethic.* i, 9) that “children are said to be happy because they are full of hope”; and the Apostle says (Rm. 8:24): “We are saved by hope.” Again, we hope to obtain an end, because we are suitably moved towards that end, and approach thereto; and this implies some action. And a man is moved towards, and approaches the happy end by works of virtue, and above all by the works of the gifts, if we speak of eternal happiness, for which our reason is not sufficient, since we need to be moved by the Holy Ghost, and to be perfected with His gifts that we may obey and follow him. Consequently the beatitudes differ from the virtues and gifts, not as habit, but as act from habit.

Reply to Objection 1. Augustine and Ambrose assign the beatitudes to the gifts and virtues, as acts are ascribed to habits. But the gifts are more excellent than the cardinal virtues, as stated above (q. 68, a. 8). Wherefore Ambrose, in explaining the beatitudes propounded to the throng, assigns them to the cardinal virtues, whereas Augustine, who is explaining the beatitudes delivered to the disciples on the mountain, and so to those who were more perfect, ascribes them to the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Reply to Objection 2. This argument proves that no other habits, besides the virtues and gifts, rectify human conduct.

Reply to Objection 3. Meekness is to be taken as denoting the act of meekness: and the same applies to justice and mercy. And though these might seem to be virtues, they are nevertheless ascribed to gifts, because the gifts perfect man in all matters wherein the virtues perfect him, as stated above (q. 68, a. 2).

Whether the rewards assigned to the beatitudes refer to this life?

Objection 1. It would seem that the rewards assigned to the beatitudes do not refer to this life. Because some are said to be happy because they hope for a reward, as stated above (a. 1). Now the object of hope is future happiness. Therefore these rewards refer to the life to come.

Objection 2. Further, certain punishments are set down in opposition to the beatitudes, Lk. 6:25, where we read: “Woe to you that are filled; for you shall hunger. Woe to you that now laugh, for you shall mourn and weep.” Now these punishments do not refer to this life, because frequently men are not punished in this life, according to Job 21:13: “They spend their days in wealth.” Therefore neither do the rewards of the beatitudes refer to this life.

Objection 3. Further, the kingdom of heaven which is set down as the reward of poverty is the happiness of heaven, as Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei* xix) [Cf. *De Serm. Dom. in Monte* i, 1]. Again, abundant fullness is not to be had save in the life to come, according to Ps. 16:15: “I shall be filled when Thy glory shall appear.” Again, it is only in the future life that we shall see God, and that our Divine sonship will be made manifest, according to 1 Jn. 3:2: “We are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is.” Therefore these rewards refer to the future life.

On the contrary, Augustine says (*De Serm. Dom. in Monte* i, 4): “These promises can be fulfilled in this life, as we believe them to have been fulfilled in the apostles. For no words can express that complete change into the likeness even of an angel, which is promised to us after this life.”

I answer that, Expounders of Holy Writ are not agreed in speaking of these rewards. For some, with Ambrose (*Super Luc.* v), hold that all these rewards refer to the life to come; while Augustine (*De Serm. Dom. in Monte* i, 4) holds them to refer to the present life; and Chrysostom in his homilies (*In Matth.* xv) says that some refer to the future, and some to the present life.

In order to make the matter clear we must take note that hope of future happiness may be in us for two reasons. First, by reason of our having a preparation for, or a disposition to future happiness; and this is by way of merit; secondly, by a kind of imperfect inchoation of future happiness in holy men, even in this life. For it is one thing to hope that the tree will bear fruit, when the leaves begin to appear, and another, when we see the first signs of the fruit.

Accordingly, those things which are set down as merits in the beatitudes, are a kind of preparation for, or disposition to happiness, either perfect or inchoate: while those that are assigned as rewards, may be either perfect happiness, so as to refer to the future life, or some beginning of happiness, such as is found in those who have attained perfection, in which case they refer to the present life. Because when a man begins to make progress in the acts of the virtues and gifts, it is to be hoped that he will arrive at perfection, both as a wayfarer, and as a citizen of the heavenly kingdom.

Reply to Objection 1. Hope regards future happiness as the last end: yet it may also regard the assistance of grace as that which leads to that end, according to Ps. 27:7: “In Him hath my heart hoped, and I have been helped.”

Reply to Objection 2. Although sometimes the wicked do not undergo temporal punishment in this life, yet they suffer spiritual punishment. Hence Augustine says (*Confess.* i): “Thou hast decreed, and it is so, Lord--that the disordered mind should be its own punishment.” The Philosopher, too, says of the wicked (*Ethic.* ix, 4) that “their soul is divided against itself . . . one part pulls this way, another that”; and afterwards he concludes, saying: “If wickedness makes a man so miserable, he should strain every nerve to avoid vice.” In like manner, although, on the other hand, the good sometimes do not receive material rewards in this life, yet they never lack spiritual rewards, even in this life, according to Mt. 19:29, and Mk. 10:30: “Ye shall receive a hundred times as much” even “in this time.”

Reply to Objection 3. All these rewards will be fully consummated in the life to come: but meanwhile they are, in a manner, begun, even in this life. Because the “kingdom of heaven,” as Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei* xiv; *Cf. *De Serm. Dom. in Monte*, i, 1), can denote the beginning of perfect wisdom, in so far as “the spirit” begins to reign in men. The “possession” of the land denotes the well-ordered affections of the soul that rests, by its desire, on the solid foundation of the eternal inheritance, signified by “the land.” They are “comforted” in this life, by receiving the Holy Ghost, Who is called the “Paraclete,” i.e. the Comforter. They “have their fill,” even in this life, of that food of which Our Lord said (Jn. 4:34): “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.” Again, in this life, men “obtain” God’s “Mercy.” Again, the eye being cleansed by the gift of understanding, we can, so to speak, “see God.” Likewise, in this life, those who are the “peacemakers” of their own movements, approach to likeness to God, and are called “the children of God.” Nevertheless these things will be more perfectly fulfilled in heaven.

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

This section of the Particular Directory explains the common practices of penance that we embrace, but also encourages us to do more personally. The importance of the apostolate is stressed. Finally, it specifies the most important aspects of our community life. Thus there are five “basics” of Dominican life: prayer, study, penance, apostolate, and community.

The Particular Directory of the Western Dominican Province

I. The Basics of Lay Dominican Life

C. Penance

1. We strive for conversion of heart according to the spirit and practice of the Gospel.
2. We are encouraged to continue the custom of abstaining from meat on all Fridays of the year, and fasting on the vigils of Our Lady of the Rosary (October 7), Saint Dominic (August 8) and Saint Catherine of Siena (April 29).
3. Other forms of penance may include self-discipline as a positive means to imitate Our Lord and share in His work of redemption.

D. Apostolate or Ministry

1. The example of Christ and the vision of Saint Dominic call us to be engaged in spreading the Word of God. Attentive to the call of the Spirit, we are encouraged to discern, use and develop the gifts God has given us. The ways in which we use our gifts, whether individually or communally, are as varied as our talents.

2. Sensitive to the needs of others, especially the poor and troubled, we respond to the social teachings of the Church in the political and economic environments in which we live. We commit ourselves to the four priorities of the Order: catechesis, evangelization, justice and peace, and communication.¹⁰³

E. Community Life within a Chapter

1. The Chapter flourishes on the talents of each member and by their loving service to each member. It provides ways to grow in charity and perfection by
 - a. uniting us in our common love of God, and sharing that common love in the Eucharist, liturgical prayer, and suffrages;
 - b. learning together about God through study and reflection on Sacred Truth;
 - c. giving service to others in the Chapter, seeking their interest and well-being;
 - d. binding us together in a common goal which requires cooperation and integration of talents;
 - e. observing the customs and celebrations of the Order to enrich and to make joyous the lives we touch;
 - f. supporting one another; helping each to grow in holiness;
 - g. expressing compassion toward those in pain or sorrow, enabling us to be instruments of God's healing grace.

¹⁰³ See General Chapter of Quezon City, 1977 for priorities of the Order, General Declarations, page 7.

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR A, UNIT VI**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: GROWTH IN PRAYER

Like St. Dominic, we should be masters of the art of prayer. Thus, we need to know the different kinds of prayer and how each kind of prayer is perfected. We also need to know the different stages of growth in the practice of prayer. In the articles from St. Thomas that follow, we find that vocal prayer is not always a less perfect form of prayer than mental prayer, since all community prayer, such as the Mass and the Office, must be vocal. We never progress beyond these prayers. But in individual prayer the Holy Spirit, who “blows where he will” (John 3:8), inspires us to focus and dwell on certain truths, as St. Catherine teaches us. To be docile to these inspirations means being willing to leave behind the set words of a vocal prayer. In this way at least, then, growing in prayer means leaving vocal prayer for mental prayer when the Spirit moves us. While mental prayer at first follows the natural way our mind works—this is called meditation—Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange describes the form of mental prayer called infused contemplation. Here it is a matter of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which surpass our natural way of thinking, so that there is a certain suspension of the mind’s natural activity as it is drawn to a higher contemplation of divine things. Although it may at first be difficult to understand what kind of prayer this is, we cannot forget that this is the goal for each of us as we make progress in the art of prayer.

A. St. Thomas Aquinas

Whether prayer should be vocal?¹⁰⁴

Objection 1. It would seem that prayer ought not to be vocal. As stated above (a. 4), prayer is addressed chiefly to God. Now God knows the language of the heart. Therefore it is useless to employ vocal prayer.

Objection 2. Further, prayer should lift man’s mind to God, as stated above (a. 1, ad 2). But words, like other sensible objects, prevent man from ascending to God by contemplation. Therefore we should not use words in our prayers.

Objection 3. Further, prayer should be offered to God in secret, according to Mt. 6:6, “But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.” But prayer loses its secrecy by being expressed vocally. Therefore prayer should not be vocal.

On the contrary, It is written (Ps. 141:2): “I cried to the Lord with my voice, with my voice I made supplication to the Lord.”

I answer that, Prayer is twofold, common and individual. Common prayer is that which is offered to God by the ministers of the Church representing the body of the faithful: wherefore such like prayer should come to the knowledge of the whole people for whom it is offered: and this would not be possible unless it were vocal prayer. Therefore it is reasonably ordained that the ministers of the Church should say these prayers even in a loud voice, so that they may come to the knowledge of all. On the other hand individual prayer is that which is offered by any single person, whether he pray for himself or for others; and it is not essential to such a prayer as this that it be vocal. And yet the voice is employed in such like

¹⁰⁴ *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 83, a. 12.

prayers for three reasons. First, in order to excite interior devotion, whereby the mind of the person praying is raised to God, because by means of external signs, whether of words or of deeds, the human mind is moved as regards apprehension, and consequently also as regards the affections. Hence Augustine says (*ad Probam. Ep. cxxx, 9*) that “by means of words and other signs we arouse ourselves more effectively to an increase of holy desires.” Hence then alone should we use words and such like signs when they help to excite the mind internally. But if they distract or in any way impede the mind we should abstain from them; and this happens chiefly to those whose mind is sufficiently prepared for devotion without having recourse to those signs. Wherefore the Psalmist (Ps. 26:8) said: “My heart hath said to Thee: ‘My face hath sought Thee,’” and we read of Anna (1 Kgs. 1:13) that “she spoke in her heart.” Secondly, the voice is used in praying as though to pay a debt, so that man may serve God with all that he has from God, that is to say, not only with his mind, but also with his body: and this applies to prayer considered especially as satisfactory. Hence it is written (Osee 14:3): “Take away all iniquity, and receive the good: and we will render the calves of our lips.” Thirdly, we have recourse to vocal prayer, through a certain overflow from the soul into the body, through excess of feeling, according to Ps. 15:9, “My heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced.”

Reply to Objection 1. Vocal prayer is employed, not in order to tell God something He does not know, but in order to lift up the mind of the person praying or of other persons to God.

Reply to Objection 2. Words about other matters distract the mind and hinder the devotion of those who pray: but words signifying some object of devotion lift up the mind, especially one that is less devout.

Reply to Objection 3. As Chrysostom says [*Hom. xiii* in the *Opus Imperfectum* falsely ascribed to St. John Chrysostom], “Our Lord forbids one to pray in presence of others in order that one may be seen by others. Hence when you pray, do nothing strange to draw men’s attention, either by shouting so as to be heard by others, or by openly striking the heart, or extending the hands, so as to be seen by many.” And yet, according to Augustine (*De Serm. Dom. in Monte* ii, 3), “it is not wrong to be seen by men, but to do this or that in order to be seen by men.”

Whether attention is a necessary condition of prayer?¹⁰⁵

Objection 1. It would seem that attention is a necessary condition of prayer. It is written (Jn. 4:24): “God is a spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth.” But prayer is not in spirit unless it be attentive. Therefore attention is a necessary condition of prayer.

Objection 2. Further, prayer is “the ascent of the mind to God” [Damascene, *De Fide Orth.* iii, 24]. But the mind does not ascend to God if the prayer is inattentive. Therefore attention is a necessary condition of prayer.

Objection 3. Further, it is a necessary condition of prayer that it should be altogether sinless. Now if a man allows his mind to wander while praying he is not free of sin, for he seems to make light of God; even as if he were to speak to another man without attending to what he was saying. Hence Basil says [*De Constit. Monach.* i] that the “Divine assistance is to be implored, not lightly, nor with a mind wandering hither and thither: because he that prays thus not only will not obtain what he asks, nay rather will he provoke God to anger.” Therefore it would seem a necessary condition of prayer that it should be attentive.

On the contrary, Even holy men sometimes suffer from a wandering of the mind when they pray, according to Ps. 39:13, “My heart hath forsaken me.”

¹⁰⁵ *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 83, a. 13.

I answer that, This question applies chiefly to vocal prayer. Accordingly we must observe that a thing is necessary in two ways. First, a thing is necessary because thereby the end is better obtained: and thus attention is absolutely necessary for prayer. Secondly, a thing is said to be necessary when without it something cannot obtain its effect. Now the effect of prayer is threefold. The first is an effect which is common to all acts quickened by charity, and this is merit. In order to realize this effect, it is not necessary that prayer should be attentive throughout; because the force of the original intention with which one sets about praying renders the whole prayer meritorious, as is the case with other meritorious acts. The second effect of prayer is proper thereto, and consists in impetration: and again the original intention, to which God looks chiefly, suffices to obtain this effect. But if the original intention is lacking, prayer lacks both merit and impetration: because, as [Gregory](#) [Hugh St. Victor, *Expos. in Reg. S. Aug.* iii] says, "God hears not the prayer of those who pay no attention to their prayer." The third effect of prayer is that which it produces at once; this is the spiritual refreshment of the mind, and for this effect attention is a necessary condition: wherefore it is written (1 Cor. 14:14): "If I pray in a tongue . . . my understanding is without fruit." It must be observed, however, that there are three kinds of attention that can be brought to vocal prayer: one which attends to the words, lest we say them wrong, another which attends to the sense of the words, and a third, which attends to the end of prayer, namely, God, and to the thing we are praying for. That last kind of attention is most necessary, and even idiots are capable of it. Moreover this attention, whereby the mind is fixed on God, is sometimes so strong that the mind forgets all other things, as Hugh of St. Victor states [*De Modo Orandi* ii].

Reply to Objection 1. To pray in spirit and in truth is to set about praying through the instigation of the Spirit, even though afterwards the mind wander through weakness.

Reply to Objection 2. The human mind is unable to remain aloft for long on account of the weakness of nature, because human weakness weighs down the soul to the level of inferior things: and hence it is that when, while praying, the mind ascends to God by contemplation, of a sudden it wanders off through weakness.

Reply to Objection 3. Purposely to allow one's mind to wander in prayer is sinful and hinders the prayer from having fruit. It is against this that Augustine says in his Rule (Ep. ccxi): "When you pray God with psalms and hymns, let your mind attend to that which your lips pronounce." But to wander in mind unintentionally does not deprive prayer of its fruit. Hence Basil says (De Constit. Monach. i): "If you are so truly weakened by sin that you are unable to pray attentively, strive as much as you can to curb yourself, and God will pardon you, seeing that you are unable to stand in His presence in a becoming manner, not through negligence but through frailty."

B. St. Catherine of Siena¹⁰⁶

[God is speaking to the saint.] The soul, once on her way, must cross over by way of the teaching of Christ crucified, truly loving virtue and hating vice. If she perseveres to the end she will come to the house of self-knowledge, where she shuts herself up in watching and continuous prayer, completely cut off from worldly company.

Why does she shut herself up? Through fear, because she knows how imperfect she is. And through her longing to attain a genuine and free love. She sees well that there is no other way to attain it, and so she waits with a lively faith for my coming, so that she may grow in grace.

¹⁰⁶ St. Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, trans. Suzanne Noffke, O. P. (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), from "The Bridge," nn. 65–6, pp. 122–7.

How does one come to know lively faith? By persevering in virtue. You must never turn back for anything at all. You must not break away from holy prayer for any reason except obedience or charity. For often during the time scheduled for prayer the devil comes with all sorts of struggles and annoyances—even more than when you are not at prayer. He does this to make you weary of holy prayer. Often he will say, “This sort of prayer is worthless to you. You should not think about or pay attention to anything except vocal prayer.” He makes it seem this way so that you will become weary and confused, and abandon the exercise of prayer. But prayer is a weapon with which you can defend yourself against every enemy. If you hold it with love’s hand and the arm of free choice, this weapon, with the light of most holy faith, will be your defense.

Know, dearest daughter, that if she truly perseveres, the soul learns every virtue in constant and faithful humble prayer. Therefore she ought to persevere and never abandon it—neither for the devil’s illusion, nor through her own weakness (that is, any thought or impulse within her own flesh), nor because of what others say. For often the devil will sit on their tongues and make them say things calculated to hinder her prayer. She must overcome them all with the virtue of perseverance.

Oh, how delightful to the soul and pleasing to me is holy prayer made in the house of self-knowledge and knowledge of me! The soul opens her mind’s eye with the light of faith and with her affection steeped in the fullness of my charity made visible in the sight of my only-begotten Son, who showed it with his blood. That blood inebriates the soul. It clothes her in the fire of divine charity. It gives her the food of the sacrament that I have set up for you in the hostel of the mystic body of holy Church, the body and the blood of my Son, wholly God and wholly human, given to holy Church to be ministered by the hands of my vicar, who holds the key to this blood.

This is the hostel I had mentioned to you that stands on the bridge to dispense the food to strengthen the pilgrim travelers who go the way of my Truth’s teaching, so that weakness will not cause them to fall.

This food gives more or less strength according to the desire of those who receive it, whether they receive it sacramentally or virtually. “Sacramentally” is when one communicates in the holy Sacrament. “Virtually” is communicating through holy desire, both in longing for communion and in esteem for the blood of Christ crucified. In other words, one is communicating sacramentally in the loving charity one finds and tastes in the blood because one sees that it was shed through love. And so the soul is inebriated and set on fire and sated with holy longing, finding herself filled completely with love of me and of her neighbors.

Where did the soul learn this? In the house of self-knowledge, in holy prayer. There she lost her imperfection, just as the disciples and Peter lost their imperfection and learned perfection by staying inside in watchful prayer. How? Through perseverance seasoned with most holy faith.

But do not think that such ardor and nourishment is to be had from vocal prayer alone, as many souls believe. Their prayer consists more in words than in affection, and they seem to be concerned only to complete their multitude of psalms and to say a great many Our Fathers. When they have finished the number they have set themselves to say, they seem to think of nothing more. It seems they place the whole purpose of prayer in what is said vocally. But that is not how they should act, for if that is all they do they will draw little fruit from it and will please me little.

But if you ask me whether one should abandon vocal prayer, since it seems not everyone is drawn to mental prayer, the answer is no. A person has to walk step by step. I know well that, because the soul is imperfect before she is perfect, her prayer is imperfect as well. She should certainly, while she is still imperfect, stay with vocal prayer so as not to fall into laziness, but she should not omit mental prayer. In other words, while she says the

words she should make an effort to concentrate on my love, pondering at the same time her own sins and the blood of my only-begotten Son. There she will find the expansiveness of my charity and forgiveness for her sins. Thus self-knowledge and the consideration of her sins ought to bring her to know my goodness to her and make her continue her exercise in true humility.

Now I do not want her to think about her sins individually, lest her mind be contaminated by the memory of specific ugly sins. I mean that I do not want her to, nor should she, think about her sins either in general or specifically without calling to mind the blood and the greatness of my mercy. Otherwise she will only be confounded. For if self-knowledge and the thought of sin are not seasoned with remembrance of the blood and hope for mercy, the result is bound to be confusion. And along with this comes the devil, who under the guise of contrition and hatred for sin and sorrow for her guilt leads her to eternal damnation. Because of this—though not this alone—she would end in despair if she did not reach out for the arm of my mercy.

This is one of the subtle deceptions the devil works on my servants. So for your own good, to escape his deceit and to be pleasing to me, you must keep expanding your heart and your affection in the immeasurable greatness of my mercy, with true humility. For know this: The devil's pride cannot tolerate a humble mind, nor can his confounding withstand the greatness of my goodness and mercy when a soul is truly hopeful.

Do you recall when the devil wanted to frighten you with confusion? He tried to show you that your life was a delusion and that you had neither followed nor done my will. But you did what you should have done and what my goodness gave you strength to do—for my goodness is never hidden from anyone who wants to receive it. By my mercy and with humility you stood up and said, "I confess to my Creator that my life has been spent wholly in darkness. But I will hide myself in the wounds of Christ crucified and bathe in his blood, and so my wickedness will be consumed and I will rejoice with desire in my Creator."

You know that at this the devil fled. But he returned with another attack, wanting to exalt you in pride. He said, "You are perfect and pleasing to God. You no longer need to torture yourself or weep over your sins." But I gave you light and you saw the way you should take, that you should humble yourself. And you answered the devil, "How wretched I am! John the Baptist never sinned. He was made holy in his mother's womb, yet he did such great penance. But I have committed so many sins and have not yet even begun to acknowledge it with tears and true contrition, seeing who God is who is offended by me and who I am who offend him!"

Then the devil, unable to bear your humility of spirit and your trust in my goodness, said to you, "Damnable woman! There is no getting at you! If I throw you down in confusion, you lift yourself up to mercy. If I exalt you, you throw yourself down. You come even to hell in your humility, and even in hell you hound me. So I will not come back to you again, because you beat me with the cudgel of charity!"

The soul, then, should season her self-knowledge with knowledge of my goodness, and her knowledge of me with self-knowledge. In this way vocal prayer will profit the soul who practices it and it will please me. And if she perseveres in its practice, she will advance from imperfect vocal prayer to perfect mental prayer.

But if she looks only to the completion of her tally of prayers, or if she abandons mental prayer for vocal, she will never advance. A soul may set herself to say a certain number of oral prayers. But I may visit her spirit in one way or another, sometimes with a flash of self-knowledge and contrition for her sinfulness, sometimes in the greatness of my love setting before her mind the presence of my Truth in different ways, depending on my pleasure or her longings. And sometimes the soul will be so foolish as to abandon my visitation, which she senses within her spirit, in order to complete her tally. As if it were a matter of conscience to abandon what one has begun!

This is not the way she should act. If she did, she would be a dupe of the devil. No. As soon as she senses her spirit ready for my visitation, she ought to abandon vocal prayer. Then, after the mental prayer, if she has time, she can resume what she had set herself to say. If she does not have time she ought not worry or be annoyed or confounded in spirit. But the Divine Office is an exception to this. Clerics and religious are obliged to say it, and sin if they do not say it. They must say their Office right up to the time of death. If they feel their mind drawn by desire and lifted up at the time appointed for saying the Office, they should arrange to say it either earlier or later so they will not fail in their duty regarding the Office.

As far as concerns any other prayer the soul might begin, she ought to begin vocally as a way to reach mental prayer. When she senses that her spirit is ready she should abandon vocal prayer with this intent. Such prayer, made in the way I have told you, will bring her to perfection. This is why she should not abandon vocal prayer, whatever its form, but should advance step by step. Thus, with practice and perseverance she will experience prayer in truth and that food which is the body and blood of my only-begotten Son. And this is why I told you that some souls communicate in the body and blood of Christ actually, even though not sacramentally, when they communicate in loving charity, which they enjoy in holy prayer, in proportion to their desire.

A soul who walks with scant prudence and not step by step finds little. But one who has much finds much. For the more the soul tries to free her affection and bind it to me by the light of understanding, the more she will come to know. One who knows more loves more, and loving more, enjoys more.

You see, then, perfect prayer is achieved not with many words but with loving desire, when the soul rises up to me with knowledge of herself, each movement seasoned by the other. In this way she will have vocal and mental prayer at the same time, for the two stand together like the active life and the contemplative life. Still, vocal and mental prayer are understood in many different ways. This is why I told you that holy desire, that is, having a good and holy will, is continual prayer. This will and desire rises at the appointed time and place to add actual prayer to the continual prayer of holy desire. So also with vocal prayer. As long as the soul remains firm in holy desire and will, she will make it at the appointed time. But sometimes, beyond the appointed times, she makes this continual prayer, as charity asks of her for her neighbors' good and according to the need she sees and the situation in which I have placed her.

The principle of holy will means that each of you must work for the salvation of souls according to your own situation. Whatever you do in word or deed for the good of your neighbor is a real prayer. (I am assuming that you actually pray as such at the appointed time.) Apart from your prayers of obligation, however, everything you do can be a prayer, whether in itself or in the form of charity to your neighbors, because of the way you use the situation at hand. This is what my glorious trumpeter Paul said: "One who never stops doing good never stops praying." And this is why I told you that actual prayer can be one with mental prayer in many ways. For when actual prayer is done in the way I described, it is done with loving charity, and this loving charity is continual prayer.

Now I have told you how the soul arrives at mental prayer, that is, by practice and perseverance, and by abandoning vocal prayer for mental when I visit her. I have also told you about ordinary prayer, and ordinary vocal prayer apart from appointed times, and the prayer of a good and holy will, and prayer both in itself and in the form of [service to] your neighbors done with good will apart from the scheduled time for prayer.

Courageously, then, should the soul spur herself on with prayer as her mother. And this is what the soul does when she has attained the love of friendship and filial love, and shuts herself up in the house of self-knowledge. But if she does not keep to the paths I have described, she will stay forever lukewarm and imperfect, and will love only to the extent that she experiences profit and pleasure in me or in her neighbors.

The Gift of Wisdom and Infused Contemplation According to Theology

St. Thomas, in conformity with tradition, teaches that contemplation is chiefly the fruit of the gift of wisdom. This gift is an infused disposition (*habitus infusus*) of the intellect, as contemplation is an intellectual act,¹⁰⁸ requiring an illumination of the Holy Ghost. But as the gift of wisdom presupposes charity, contemplation depends essentially also on charity, which makes us desire to know God better, not for the joy of knowing, but for God Himself, that we may love Him more.¹⁰⁹ In this act the will applies the intellect to the consideration of divine things in preference to all others (order of exercise), and also (in the order of specification), from the fact that this will is fundamentally rectified and elevated by an eminent charity, these divine things appear to us more and more conformable to our highest aspirations. By experience we learn that they fill and surpass these aspirations and never cease to elevate them. Consequently we live more and more by God, by His supreme goodness, which makes itself felt by us as the life of our life. We “taste the sweetness of God”; “O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet.”¹¹⁰

St. Thomas says: “Wisdom denotes a certain rectitude of judgment according to the Eternal Law. Now rectitude of judgment is twofold: first, on account of perfect use of reason, secondly, on account of a certain connaturality with the matter about which one has to judge. Thus about matters of chastity, a man after inquiring with his reason forms a right judgment, if he has learned the science of morals, while he who has the habit of chastity judges of such matters by a kind of connaturality. Accordingly, it belongs to the wisdom that is an intellectual virtue to pronounce right judgment about divine things, after reason has made its inquiry; but it belongs to wisdom¹¹¹ as a gift of the Holy Ghost to judge aright about them on account of connaturality with them: thus Dionysius says (*Div., Nom., ii*) that Hierotheus is perfect in divine things, for he not only learns, but he is patient of divine things. Now this sympathy or connaturality with divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God, according to I Cor. 6: 17: He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.”¹¹²

Thus love makes the object loved better known, *affectus transit in conditionem objecti*, as John of St. Thomas says¹¹³ “for by it and by affective experience this object appears to us more and more conformable to our aspirations and intimately united to us. The intellect is thus directed toward God, as if it touched Him experimentally. In this way, love moves the understanding, by applying it to consideration (*in genere causae effectivae*), and also in an objective manner (*in genere causae objectivae*), since by this experience the object appears quite otherwise than without it” and manifests itself as supremely suitable, as Goodness itself that is felt. This is what made our Lord say: “If any man will do the will of

¹⁰⁷ *Christian Perfection and Contemplation According to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross*, (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1958), 314–21.

¹⁰⁸ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 1.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Ps. 33: 9.

¹¹¹ St. Thomas says in the preceding article: “Now man obtains this judgment through the Holy Ghost . . . who searcheth all things.” In this there might indeed be a simple affective knowledge through faith united to charity. That this knowledge may proceed from the gift of wisdom, there must be, moreover, an inspiration of the Holy Ghost; thereby infused contemplation is distinguished from the sensible consolations acquired in meditation, as we will point out later on.

¹¹² *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 45, a. 2.

¹¹³ On Ia IIae, q. 68, disp. 18, a. 4.

Him (the Father); he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.”¹¹⁴ This love unites us more closely to God than abstract¹¹⁵ knowledge; and by the experience it gives us, it makes us more and more keenly desire the intuitive knowledge of the life to come, the beatific vision. This true pragmatism, which scoffs at pragmatism, is born of supernatural charity, which supposes faith.

A soul might have affective knowledge from the simple fact that the love of charity is united to the act of faith; this is what occurs in affective, discursive prayer. But in infused contemplation there is, in addition, an inspiration and special illumination of the Holy Ghost. This subject was discussed at length in article 5 above.

When a distinction is made, as often occurs in the writings of the fathers and of theologians, between illumination and inspiration, special illumination is a grace for the intellect, inspiration a grace for the will. In this sense we speak of infused knowledge and love that we cannot produce at will. No one can set a limit to the growing intensity of the illumination which the gift of wisdom renders us apt to receive. This illumination, as we shall see, can always grow in intensity in this life, just as charity can.

This infused contemplation is obscure because it is superior both to every sensible image and to every distinct idea. This state of transluminous obscurity is indeed, in so far as the intelligence is concerned, what constitutes the foundation of the mystical state, according to the opinion of Dionysius, St. John of the Cross, and the other great spiritual teachers. It is very difficult to describe, for it is entirely supernatural and surpasses all expression. In it is something akin to a death of the understanding, which in reality is an incomparably superior new life, the true prelude of the life of heaven. St. John of the Cross should be consulted on this point, which he discusses in *The Dark Night of the Soul*. He says: “The imagination is bound, and unable to make any profitable reflections; the memory is gone; and the understanding, too, is darkened and unable to comprehend anything.”¹¹⁶ The faculties are, as it were, annihilated according to their human mode; here, there is a deeper and more vital communication of the divine mode of knowing and loving. St. John of the Cross¹¹⁷ quotes St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 1) and adds: “This happens in a secret, hidden way in which the natural operation of the understanding and the other faculties have no share. And, therefore, because the faculties of the soul cannot attain it, and since the Holy Ghost infuses it into the soul in a way unknown to it, as the Bride declares in the Canticle, it is called ‘secret.’ And, it is not only the soul that is ignorant of it, but every one else, even the devil; because the Master, who now teaches the soul, dwells substantially within it where neither the devil, nor the understanding, nor natural reason can penetrate.”

This is why so much difficulty is found in describing psychologically what theology calls the superhuman mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially of the gift of wisdom. Among the best descriptions are the one we have just quoted, and also the passage where St. Teresa¹¹⁸ distinguishes the first infused prayer (supernatural recollection) from the last of the acquired prayers which preceded it. We quoted this description above (chap. 5, arts. 2, 3).

It is important, however, not to believe with liberal Protestantism and modernistic agnosticism that this transluminous obscurity of infused contemplation, which brings no

¹¹⁴ John 7: 17.

¹¹⁵ *Summa*, Ia IIae, q.28, a. 1 ad 3um: “Knowledge is perfected by the thing known being united, through its likeness, to the knower. But the effect of love is that the thing itself which is loved, is, in a way, united to the lover, as stated above. Consequently, the union caused by love is closer than that which is caused by knowledge.” However, if knowledge is absolutely immediate, if one knows God by His very essence and no longer by a likeness, as is the case in the beatific vision, then it is this knowledge which makes us take possession of God rather than love. Cf. Ia IIae, q. 3, a. 4.

¹¹⁶ Bk. II, chap. 16, sec. 1.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 17.

¹¹⁸ *The Interior Castle*, fourth mansion, chap. 3.

distinct knowledge, can do without a definite *Credo*, or that it finds an obstacle in such a *Credo*.¹¹⁹ On the contrary, this obscurity is at the opposite extreme from the “unstable wandering of the soul” with which sentimentality or theosophy is satisfied. To this it is somewhat opposed, as God, its object, is opposed to prime matter, which is capable of receiving all forms. In fact, infused contemplation is what gives ever more clearly the spirit of the words, concepts, and formulas of faith. It thus makes us, in a way, pass beyond the formulas of dogmas in order to enter into the deep things of God by believing in the mysteries as they are in Him, without its being granted us to see them. Thus conceived, this contemplation, far more profoundly than any study or meditation could, enables us to grasp the evangelical parables, the different mysteries of salvation, the unfathomable perfections of God, the supreme mystery of the Deity which contains them all, and the ineffable relations of the divine Persons.

Hence St. Thomas¹²⁰ following Dionysius, distinguishes three principal degrees in this contemplation, according to the brilliance of the illumination of the Holy Ghost, which has an unlimited intensive progress.

1) The soul contemplates God in the mirror of sensible things of which He is the author, or in the mirror of the evangelical parables, as for instance, infinite mercy in the story of the prodigal son. The soul rises from a sensible fact toward God by a straight movement, like that of a lark soaring directly from earth toward heaven. While preaching the parable, our Lord placed His hearers in this prayer.

2) The soul contemplates God in the mirror of the mysteries of salvation, the mysteries of the Word made flesh, the incarnation, redemption, Holy Eucharist, the life of the Church; mysteries which the rosary constantly sets before our eyes to familiarize us with them. In this spiritual mirror the soul contemplates the goodness of God. It comprehends better and better the harmony of these mysteries, and passes from one to another by an oblique movement analogous to that of a bird which, being already aloft, flies from one point to another, its gaze lost in the azure depths of the sky.

3) The soul contemplates God in Himself, not as the blessed in heaven do, but in the penumbra of faith. Here the soul has risen above the multiplicity of sensible images and ideas. It sees, but a little indistinctly, that God our Father, who is infinitely good, is superior to every idea we can have of Him; and it sees that His goodness surpasses everything He Himself could put into human formulas for us, as the sky includes all the stars which manifest its depths to us. The soul not only tells itself these things, which every philosopher can think, even though he be in the state of mortal sin; but, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by a loving and quasi-experimental knowledge it is wholly united to this unknown God; holy and sweet ignorance, superior to all knowledge. This is the pure contemplative movement which recollects the soul in God alone above all things, as Dionysius describes it in *The Divine Names*.¹²¹ This prayer has been compared to an eagle’s circular movement high up in the air, or to the movement of a bird hovering as though suspended and seeming to be motionless. This immobility is far more perfect than the varied movement that preceded it. As a circular movement has neither beginning nor end, there is here no method, for one does not start from principles in order to reach conclusions. Under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, it is truly *simplex intuitus veritatis*, the simple intuition of divine truths in the obscurity of faith, and the impetuosity of love which mysteriously unites us to God.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Every true Catholic mystic is and should be ready to give his life for the least iota of the *Credo*. Every formal heresy destroys infused faith in us and therefore charity; that is, the essential principle from which proceeds the contemplation we are speaking of.

¹²⁰ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 6.

¹²¹ Chap. 4.

¹²² *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 6. This contemplation, compared by Dionysius to a circular movement, consists, as he says (*loc. cit.*), “in the soul leaving exterior things so that it may enter into itself; that it may recall its

Christ's sacerdotal prayer in the Gospel of St. John¹²³ gives us the idea of this circular contemplation. An argument with major, minor, and conclusion must not be sought in it; on the contrary, it is composed, as it were, of luminous undulations which descend from heaven to us.

This circular contemplation no more resembles meditation or abstract speculation on the divine essence than a circumference resembles a polygon inscribed within it; in proportion as the circumference is simple, the other is complex. Very often commentaries on the works of the saints give the same impression as this polygon; in vain we would multiply its sides in an attempt to make them identical with the circle enclosing them.

As can be seen from his Commentary on *the Divine Names*,¹²⁴ St. Thomas follows Dionysius. Above symbolical theology, which speaks of God in metaphors, and above speculative theology, which is expressed in less unsuitable terms and which reasons on the divine perfections and mysteries, there is "a perfect knowledge of God, which is obtained by ignorance in virtue of an incomprehensible union. This takes place when the soul, leaving all things and forgetting self, is united to the splendors of the divine glory and is enlightened in the splendid depths of unfathomable wisdom."¹²⁵ Only a person who has received this grace can clearly understand all that these words express. St. Thomas adds: "We know God by ignorance, by a certain union with the divine which is above the nature of the mind . . . and thus knowing God, in such a state of knowledge, the soul is illumined from the very depths of divine Wisdom, which we cannot scrutinize."¹²⁶

We attain the mysterious ocean of being, which is superior to substance, to life, and to light, only by the repose of the superior faculties, not by reasoning or by a sight of God, but by a most loving and intimate union, "by a sort of initiation which no master can teach."¹²⁷ Dionysius says: "We desire to enter that transluminous obscurity and to see and know, by the very fact of not seeing and not knowing, Him who is above all sight and all knowledge. For the soul truly sees and knows and supersubstantially praises the supersubstantial when it declares that the supersubstantial is nothing of that which other beings are."¹²⁸ "The good Being . . . drives away ignorance and error from all souls in which He reigns; He dispenses to them all sacred light. . . . First of all He gives them a little light; then when, having tasted it, they desire it in greater abundance, He distributes it to them with greater largess. Because they have loved much, He inundates them with this light; and He ever urges them forward in proportion to the zeal they exercise in directing their faculties toward Him."¹²⁹

The soul cannot by its own efforts reach this infused contemplation, but it ought to prepare itself to receive it. This it should do by prayer and mortification,¹³⁰ and by setting aside the senses and reasoning: "As for thee, O well beloved Timothy, exercise thyself unceasingly in mystical contemplation. Put aside the senses and the operations of the

intellectual faculties to unity in order that shut up, as it were, in a circle it may not go astray; then in this release from distractions, in this recollection and simplification of itself, that it may unite itself to the angels marvelously lost in unity, and allow itself thus to be led toward the beautiful and the good, toward the Deity itself, superior to the beautiful and the good." Philip of the Blessed Trinity, C.D., followed by Vallgornera, O.P., recognizes in his *Mystical Theology*, II, 66, where he discusses circular contemplation, that it is generally infused. This is the least that can be said. This contemplation differs enormously from the acquired speculation of the philosopher or from meditation on the ineffability of the divine essence.

¹²³ John, chap. 17.

¹²⁴ He says in the *Summa* (IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 6 ad 2um): "Discoursing must be laid aside and the soul's gaze fixed on the contemplation of the one simple truth."

¹²⁵ *The Divine Names*, VII, 3.

¹²⁶ *Loc. cit.*, lect. 4.

¹²⁷ *Ep.*, IX, 1.

¹²⁸ *Theol. myst.*, II.

¹²⁹ *The Divine Names*, IV, 5.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 1.

understanding, all that is material and intellectual, all the things that exist and those that do not, and by a supernatural flight unite thyself as intimately as possible with Him who is above all being and all knowledge. For it is by this sincere, spontaneous, and total abandonment of thyself and of all things that, free and disengaged from all ties, thou wilt cast thyself into the mysterious splendor of the divine obscurity.”¹³¹

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

In the conclusion of the Particular Directory we are reminded that we are not bound to the Rule under pain of sin. We are also told of how a change to the Rule or Directory is to be made, something that reminds us that we are part of a larger, worldwide order.

The Particular Directory of the Western Dominican Province

IX. Conclusion

- A. We embrace these obligations not as slaves under the law but as free persons under grace; no transgression of The Rule or of the Particular Directory constitutes a moral fault or sin.
- B. Changes in any section of this Particular Directory must be approved by a majority of Chapters, the Provincial Council, and the Prior Provincial.
- C. Petitions for changes in The Rule must have the approval of a majority of Chapters and of the Provincial Council, the Provincial Promoter and the Prior Provincial and then be submitted to the Promoter-General for his approval and that of the Master of the Order.
- D. This edition of the Particular Directory replaces all that have gone before it, it abrogates any custom in any Chapter of the Province that does not conform to it.

¹³¹ *Theol. myst.*, I, 1.

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR A, UNIT VII**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: PENANCE

St. Dominic practiced severe penances, of course, but in this respect perhaps no saint can rival Catherine of Sienna, patroness of the Dominican Third Order. Her penances went beyond the extraordinary and rose to the level of the miraculous, as Blessed Raymond of Capua, her confessor and biographer, tells us. Her penances were not only corporal, but also spiritual: she suffered tremendous persecution throughout her life. She inflicted penances upon herself, but she was also caused suffering by others: God, the devil, her mother, and many others—including even other members of the Dominican Third Order! In the last chapter of his biography of St. Catherine, Bl. Raymond says that patience, a virtue that takes its name from the Latin word for suffering, characterized her whole life.

At times, St. Catherine had a specific purpose for her penances, as when she mortified her appetite to help her grow in chastity or when she suffered to divert the divine wrath from the church in Rome. But in two passages from her Dialogue we learn that the primary goal of penance is to purify our wills of selfishness so that we may love God more perfectly.

A. From the *Life of St. Catherine of Sienna* by Bl. Raymond of Capua¹³²

Part I, Chapter 5: Her Austere Penances and the Persecutions of her Mother

As soon as Catherine had the liberty of serving God conformably to her desires, she set to work in an admirable manner; she procured a small apartment separate from the others, in which she could erect a solitude, and torment her body at will. It is impossible to describe the austerities that she practiced and the ardor with which she sought the presence of her Spouse.

From her infancy, Catherine seldom touched meat; she interdicted herself so completely at that time, and so habituated herself to this privation, that in the end, she could not smell the odor of it without her stomach being offended. One day as I found her in a state of extreme weakness, because she had taken nothing to sustain her strength, I caused a bit of sugar to be put into the water that she was drinking; when she perceived it, she said to me: “I see that you are anxious to extinguish the remnant of life that I yet have.” As I asked her why, she stated that she had become so accustomed to taking unsavory dishes, that whatever was sweetened, sickened her; it was the same thing in reference to animal food: as to wine, she mingled it so, that at the time in which she dwelt in her cell, it had neither taste or odor, and hardly preserved the rich color of the wine of that region. At the age of fifteen she renounced it entirely and drank only pure water, and by daily retrenching some new article of diet, she terminated by taking only a little bread and some uncooked vegetables.

Her body was weighed down with infirmities, and subject to insupportable indispositions; her stomach was incapable of performing its functions, and yet the want of nourishment did not diminish her physical strength, her existence was a miracle, for medical

¹³² Part I, cc. 5-8; Part III, cc. 2, 4, 6.

men assured me that it was quite inexplicable to them. During the whole time that I had the privilege of being witness of her life, she took no food, and no drink that was capable of sustaining her, and this she supported, however, joyously even when undergoing sufferings and extraordinary fatigue.

We must beware of supposing that this was the natural consequence of a certain diet and graduated abstinence; it is quite evident that her strength was maintained by the ardor of her soul, for when the spirit superabounds in the body and is satiated with heavenly food, the body easily endures the torments of hunger.

Her bed was composed of a few planks without any covering: she sat on them when meditating and knelt on them when praying, and then extended herself on them for sleeping, without laying aside any portion of her clothing which was wholly composed of wool. She wore a haircloth, but as she cherished exterior neatness as a figure of interior purity, she exchanged this haircloth for a chain of iron which she drew around her person with such force that it entered her flesh: this I learned from her companions who were obliged to change it on account of the profuse perspirations, which caused her fainting fits. When her weakness increased towards the close of her life I obliged her, in virtue of holy obedience, to quit this chain, which occasioned her great pain. At first she prolonged her vigils until the hour of Matins; afterwards she overcame sleep so entirely, that she gave a short half hour to sleep every other day, and she did not allow herself that repose, but when the feebleness of her body forced her to do it. She acknowledged to me that no victory had cost her so dearly, and that she had undergone great combats in this triumphing over sleep.

Had she found persons capable of understanding her, she would willingly have passed the days and nights in talking of God, and her discourses, instead of weakening her, on the contrary rendered her more joyous and appeared to fortify her, for while she spoke of holy things, she seemed to be redolent with the vigor of youth, and when she ceased, she became languid and without energy. Sometimes she spoke to me of the profound mysteries of God, and as she never wearied, and I did not possess her sublime elevation of soul, I would fall asleep. But she, absorbed in God, would not perceive it, and continue talking, and when she discovered me asleep, she would arouse me with a louder tone of voice, and recall to my mind that I was losing precious truths and considerations in thus allowing her to converse with the walls.

Peruse the lives of the fathers of the desert; muse over the pages of the Sacred Writings, and in vain will you seek any similar instance. You will see that Paul the Hermit lived a long time in the wilderness, but a raven daily brought him half of a loaf. The celebrated St. Anthony practiced astonishing austerities, but he had gathered, like odorous flowers, the example of the other anchorites whom he visited; for St. Jerome relates that St. Hilarion, during his youth, had gone to find St. Anthony, and had taught him the secrets of solitude, and the means of acquiring victory. The two Saints Macarius, Arsenius, and numerous others, had who led them in the paths of the Lord; all these lived amid the peace of solitude, and in the protecting shade of some monastery; whilst this worthy daughter of Abraham was neither in a convent nor in the wild, but in the bosom of her family, without the help of spiritual direction, and surrounded by obstacles of every sort; and yet she attained a degree of abstinence that no Saint besides had ever attained. True, Moses fasted twice during a period of forty days; Elias did it once, and the Gospel teaches us that the Savior deigned to give us the same example, but these are not fasts during consecutive years. When John the Baptist was conducted by the spirit of God into the wilderness, it is written, that his food was the locust and wild honey; but this was not an absolute fast; there is none but St. Magdalen to whom history, and not the Gospel, writes that she fasted during thirty-three years on a rock which is still pointed out, and therefore we may conclude, that the holy examples I have cited give us to understand with what magnificence, and inexhaustible bounty, God enriches his saints and bestows on them new perfection. They should also prove the admirable virtue of

Catherine, and that the Church may say of her, without injury to her other saints: “We find none like her!” *Non est inventus similis illi*. The infinite power of Him who sanctifies souls, can give them, when it seems to him good, a particular glory.

One more fact will recapitulate all I have said of Catherine, and will give you to comprehend to what point she had weakened her body and subjected her mind. Her mother informed me that her daughter, before her penances, possessed such physical strength, that, she could easily take on her shoulders a weight sufficient for a horse, and carry it with speed up two flights of stairs, that is to the attic on top of the house. Her body was twice as strong and twice heavier than at her twenty-eight years of age, and she became so weak that a miracle was necessary to sustain her. When I was acquainted with her, the spirit had so exhausted her physical energies, that we always believed her end was approaching, and yet she was filled with an admirable ardor, especially when there was question of the salvation of souls; then, she forgot all her infirmities and after the example of her holy patroness St. Magdalen, she suffered in her body and prayed by her soul, which communicated to her exhausted members, the superabundance of its strength.

The old serpent whom she had vanquished, did not, however, renounce his efforts to torment her; he addressed himself to Lapa, whom he knew to be a true daughter of Eve, and succeeded, by means of the love which led her to consider Catherine’s body more than her soul, in inspiring her with the thought of hindering her penance. When she found Catherine lying on simple planks, she conducted her forcibly into her room, and obliged her to share her own bed. Then Catherine, docile to the lessons of Wisdom, would fall on her knees, before her mother, soften her by words full of humility and sweetness, entreating her to calm herself, and promising to repose by her side in accordance with her wishes. She would then lie down on the extreme edge of the bed and there meditate with fervor; and when she found her mother was asleep, she would softly arise and return to her devout exercises. It would not be long, for Satan provoked by her constancy, would awaken Lapa. Then Catherine sought a means of satisfying her love of austerities and of leaving her mother in tranquility; she managed to slide one or two planks under the sheets in the place she was to occupy; but after some days her mother perceiving it said: “I see that all my endeavors prove futile; at least do not try to conceal it from me, and sleep now as you wish.” She yielded to such perseverance, and permitted her to follow the divine inspiration.

Part I, Chapter 6: Of her Self-conquest at the Baths, and Her Clothing with the Holy Habit of St. Dominic

Catherine resumed her pious exercises, and was continually speaking to her parents of her desire to give herself more fully to her divine Spouse. She also solicited the “Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic,” who are denominated *Mantelees*, to condescend to receive her among them, and allow her to wear their costume. Her mother afflicted at these requests, dared not, however, refuse her, and so as to try to distract her from her austerities she, without precisely knowing it, became the accomplice of Satan, by proposing to go to the Baths and to take Catherine with her. The spouse of our Lord, combatted with invincible arms, and all the attacks of the devil turned to her advantage. She found a method of torturing her body; for, under pretext of bathing herself better, she approached the canals by which the sulphurous waters enter the Baths, and she endured the burning heat, on her uncovered and delicate flesh, to such a degree, that she suffered more than when scourging herself with iron chains. When her mother told me this fact, Catherine told me that she had asked to bathe after the departure of the others, because she was well assured that she would not be suffered to do this; and when I inquired how she could support such atrocious torture without dying, she answered me with dovelike simplicity: “When there, I thought much on the pains of Hell, and of Purgatory: I besought my Creator, whom I had often offended, to

deign to accept for the torments I had merited, those that I then voluntarily underwent; and the thought that his mercy consented to it, filled my soul with such heavenly consolation that I was happy in the midst of my pain.”

On their return Lapa tried in vain to obtain from Catherine a relaxation in her austere practices; her daughter turned a deaf ear, and only implored her, day by day, to go and press the “Sisters of Penance” to no longer refuse her the holy habit for which she languished. Lapa, overcome by her importunities consented to it. The sisters replied that it was not their custom to give their habits to young maidens, but to widows of mature age, who had consecrated themselves to God; that they kept no enclosure (or cloister,) but that each sister must be capable of governing herself at home. Lapa returned with this answer, which was, we may presume, less painful to her, than to her pious daughter.

The Spouse of Jesus Christ was not however troubled; she trusted in the promise she had received from heaven, and solicited anew its accomplishment. She told her mother that she was not discouraged, and that she must insist with the sisters, and Lapa yielded at length to her earnestness, but returned home without any better success.

In the mean time Catherine was seized with a malady common to young persons in her country. Providence had his designs. Lapa loved all her children with tenderness, but this one in particular. The poor mother sat by her bedside, giving her every imaginable remedy and seeking to console her; but Catherine, amidst her sufferings, only pursued with new ardor the object of her desires, and strove to profit by a moment in which her anxious and loving mother was ready to accord her anything she requested. She said to her sweetly: “Dearest mother, if you wish me to recover my health and strength, try to obtain for me the habit of the ‘Sisters of Penance.’ I am convinced that God and St. Dominic who call me, will take me from you, if I wear any other religious dress.”

Lapa gave way to sadness on hearing these words, but as she feared losing her daughter, she once more addressed herself to the Sisters, and was so importunately persuasive that they were shaken in their resolutions. They answered: “If she be not handsome, nor of a beauty too remarkable, we will receive her, on her account and yours, but if she be too pretty, we are bound to avoid the inconveniences that might spring from the malice of men of the present period.” Lapa invited them to come and judge for themselves. Then, three or four of the sisters, selected among the most enlightened and prudent, accompanied her to see Catherine and examine her vocation. They could not judge of her personal appearance, for her whole body was covered with a kind of eruption consequent on her malady, which quite disfigured her, besides her beauty was not excessive; but they heard her express herself with so much fervor, and remarked in her such a profound wisdom that they were quite enchanted; they comprehended that the maturity of her mind redeemed the fewness of her years, and that there were not very many aged persons who were as rich in virtues before God.

They retired filled with pious joy and edification, and rendered an account of their visit to their associates. These after having taken the opinion of the monks of the Order, assembled and received Catherine unanimously. They announced to her mother that, as soon as she would be recovered from her illness, she might repair to the church of the Friar Preachers, to take the habit of St. Dominic, in presence of the Brethren and Sisters, with the customary ceremonies. At this happy news, Catherine shed tears of joy, and gave thanks to her heavenly Spouse and to Saint Dominic, who realized at last his promise. She implored her restoration to health, not in order to be released from sufferings, but so as to accomplish more promptly the first and strongest wish of her heart. She was heard, and became quite well in a few days, for how could our Lord refuse her when she asked him to remove an obstacle in the way of his greater glory, and the service of one who loved him so devotedly.

The mother now sought to retard the happy day of her reception, but in vain; she was obliged to yield to the pressing solicitations of Catherine, and repair to the Church, where in the presence of many Sisters of the Order who rejoiced at it, and the Friar Preachers who directed them, Catherine was clothed with their habit which by its black and white draperies represented humility and innocence. It seems to me that the habit of no other Order would have been so suitable for her; had it been wholly white or wholly black, the signification would have been incomplete: gray which results from their mixture, could indeed have represented her mortification, but not her triumph over poisonous natural pride, nor the bright purity of her virginal innocence. Catherine was the first Virgin that was ever received, in Sienna, among the *Sisters of Penance*, but many followed her, and the words of David may appropriately be applied to her (Ps. 46: 15): *Adducentur regi, virgines post eam*. In her train virgins were presented to the Lord. Had the Sister reflected more seriously I presume they would not have refused her request, for she was more worthy than they to wear a habit given to the Church to symbolize innocence, and the innocence of virginity is assuredly superior to the chastity of widowhood.

Part I, Chapter 7: Of the Origin and Establishment of the "Sisters of Penance" of St. Dominic, and of their Mode of Life

The following particulars I have drawn from manuscripts which I consulted in Italy, from informations taken from the seniors of the Order, and the members of it most worthy of trust, and the history of our blessed Founder St. Dominic. That glorious defender of the Catholic Faith, that valiant soldier of Jesus Christ, combatted so victoriously the heresies that arose in Toulouse and in Italy, that by himself and his disciples, it was proved at his canonization that his doctrine and his miracles had converted, in Lombardy alone, more than a hundred thousand heretics.

However the poison of error had corrupted minds to such a degree, that all the benefices of the Church were usurped by laymen, who transmitted them in regular inheritance. The Bishops, obliged to beg for their own subsistence, had no means of reforming these abuses, and could not, in accordance with their charge, provide for the wants of regulars nor of the poor. St. Dominic who had chosen poverty for his own portion, did not wish however to see it in such a degree in the Church, and he resolved to strive to restore to her, her wealth. He collected some laymen, whom he knew to be filled with the fear of God, and organized from amongst them a pious soldiery, for recovering the riches of the Church, defending them, and resisting the injustice of the heretics, this plan succeeded. Those who enrolled themselves, swore to do all in their power for the attainment of their ends proposed, and to sacrifice if necessary, their fortunes and their persons; but as their wives might sometimes offer obstacles, St. Dominic induced them to promise never to hinder their husbands, but on the contrary to assist them as far as possible. These Associates took the title of *Brethren of the Militia of Jesus Christ*. The holy founder desired to distinguish them among other laymen by an exterior badge and assign them some particular obligations. He prescribed to them the color of the habit of his Order; the garments of the men and women, whatever might be their shape, were to be black and white, as emblematic of innocence and humility. He imposed on them the recitation of a prescribed number of *Pater* and *Ave*, which were to supply the canonical hours, when they could not assist at the Divine Office.

Later, when our blessed Father St. Dominic had quitted the earth and soared away to Heaven, and his numerous miracles had decided the Church to inscribe his name in the catalogue of her Saints, the Brothers and Sisters of the *Militia of Jesus Christ* wished to honor their glorious founder, by taking the title of *Brothers of Penance of St. Dominic*; besides, the merits of St. Dominic and the apostolic labors of his Order had almost banished heresy; exterior combats were no longer necessary, but it remained yet to overcome by

penance, the interior enemy of the soul, and hence the new appellation was more becoming than the old one. When the number of the Friar Preachers had augmented, and Peter, (virgin and martyr,) had shone among them as a radiant star, in triumphing over his enemies, still more by his death than by his life, the troop of foxes that wished to ravage the vineyard of the Lord, was completely destroyed, and God restored peace to his Church. The reasons which led to the institution of the *Militia of Jesus Christ* no longer existed, the association therefore lost its military characteristic. When the men who were members of it died, their widows accustomed to the religious life which they had observed, renounced marriage, and persevered in their holy practices until death. Other widows who had not contracted the same engagements, but who would not marry again imitated the *Sisters of Penance* and adopted their rule in order to purify themselves from past faults. By degrees their number increased in the different cities of Italy, and the Friar Preachers directed them according to the Spirit of St. Dominic. But as there was nothing settled in this direction, a Spanish Friar, called Brother Munie, a Religious of saintly memory, who had governed the whole Order, committed the Rule to writing, and it still exists. This Rule is not absolutely a religious Rule, because it does not require the three Vows, which are the foundation of every Religious Order.

The *Sisters of Penance* continually increasing in numbers and sanctity, the sovereign Pontiff Honorius IV, in consideration of their merit, granted them by a bull, the permission to hear the Offices in the Churches of the Friar Preachers, even during the period of the interdict; John XXII, after having promulgated the bull *Clementina* against the Béguines and the Bégards, declared formally that his prohibitions did not extend to “*St. Dominic’s Sisters of Penance*,” which existed in Italy and in whose Rule there was nothing that needed change.

Part I, Chapter 8: Of Catherine’s Admirable Progress in the Ways of God, and of Some Particular Graces She Received

Catherine did not pronounce the three Vows of Religion on taking the habit of Saint Dominic, but she took the resolution of observing them perfectly: there could be no deliberation concerning that of chastity, because she had already taken the Vow of Virginity. She promised to obey all that the father Master of the *Sisters of Penance* prescribed her, and also the orders of their Prioress. During her whole life she was so faithful to this engagement, that she was able to declare to her Confessor on her death-bed that she could not remember having failed even once in obedience.

Catherine also observed the Vow of Poverty perfectly. When she lived in her father’s house, and plenty reigned in it, she took nothing for herself; only she bestowed alms on the poor, for her father had given her full latitude on this point. She loved poverty so much, that she acknowledged, that nothing could console her for not finding it in her family. She asked God ardently to deign to render her parents poor: “Lord,” said she, “is it not better that I ask for my parents and brothers, the goods of eternity: I know that those of earth are accompanied with ills and dangers, and I wish that they may not be exposed to them.” God heard her prayer: extraordinary circumstances reduced her parents to extreme poverty, without any fault on their part, as can be easily proved by those who know them. After laying such foundations, Catherine began to raise the edifice of her perfection, like an industrious bee she profited by every occasion of advancing and took every means possible of living a more retired life and one more closely united to her divine Spouse. She proposed, in order to preserve herself unsullied by the world, to observe the most rigorous silence, and never to speak except when she went to confess her sins. Her Confessor who proceeded me, declared and wrote that she observed this resolution during three

years. She remained in her cell continually except when she went to Church; not even leaving it to take her food, which was, as we have already said, the veriest trifle; again, she bedewed her repasts with her tears, and never commenced one without offering to God the tribute of her grief. Who can recount her vigils, her prayers, her meditations and her sighs, in the solitude which she had found in her own house and amid the noise of the city. She had arranged her time so as to watch while the Dominicans whom she called her Brothers were sleeping, and when she heard the second toll for Matins, she said to her divine Spouse: “Lord, my brethren who serve you, have slept until now, and I have watched for them in thy presence, praying thee to preserve them from evil and the wiles of the enemy. Now that they are rising to offer thee their praises, protect them and suffer me to take a short repose”—and then she would lie down on her planks using a piece of wood for her pillow.

He whom she loved, smiled upon her ardor and encouraged it by new graces, he was unwilling that so faithful a lamb should be destitute of a pastor, and a pupil so desirous of improvement without a good master; but he gave her neither an angel nor a man, but appeared to her himself in her little cell and taught her whatever might prove useful to her soul. “Be sure, father,” said she to me, “that naught that I know concerning the ways of salvation was taught by mere man; it was my Lord and Master, the cherished Spouse of my soul, our Lord Jesus Christ, who revealed it to me by his inspirations and by his apparitions. He spoke to me, as I now speak to you.” She owned to me that, in the beginning of her visions, when she perceived them by her exterior senses, she dreaded being deceived by Satan; our Lord far from being offended extolled her prudence. The traveller, said he to her, should be ever on his guard, for it is written: Blessed is the man that liveth in fear. (Prov. 28: 14). “If thou wilt I will teach thee, how thou canst discern my visions, from the visions of the enemy.” And as Catherine begged him earnestly, our Lord continued: “It would be easy to enlighten thy soul directly and show thee how to distinguish at once, the origin of thy visions; but for thy utility and the benefit of others, I will tell thee what the doctors teach, to whom I have made known my truth: my visions commence by terror and continue in peace; their arrival or presentation is attended with a certain bitterness which little by little changes into sweetness. The contrary happens in the visions of the bad spirit;—they begin with a certain joy, but always terminate by plunging the soul into trouble; and this is just, for our ways are widely different. The way of penance and my commandments at first appears rude and painful; but as the soul advances, it becomes easy and delightful; in the way of evil on the contrary, the first moments are agreeable; but trouble and danger soon show themselves. I will give thee one more, and an infallible sign. My visions render the soul humble, by giving it the grace of comprehending the truth of its unworthiness. But as the demon is the father of falsehood and the prince of pride, he can only give of what he possesses: his visions always engender in the soul a certain self-esteem which excites it to vanity. Examine thyself therefore, with care, and see whether thy visions proceed from the truth, or the opposite; truth excites humility, falsehood creates pride.”

From this moment, her heavenly visions and communications multiplied to such a degree, that the most active conversation between two friends, would not suffice to illustrate the exchange of thoughts between Catherine and her divine Spouse. Her prayers, meditation and spiritual reading, her vigils and her short repose, all were blessed with the same divine presence. These supernatural relations are the origin and cause of her abstinence, her admirable doctrine and her miracles, of which God rendered us witnesses during her life.

In the beginning of my acquaintance with her, I had heard so many marvellous things concerning her, that I hesitated in believing them; God permitted it for greater good. I sought in all possible ways to discover some means of assuring myself, whether these phenomena came from God or from some other source—whether they were true or false. I have found many deluded souls, especially among females, whose heads are easily turned, and who are

more exposed to the seductions of Satan. Certain remarks troubled me, and I desired to be satisfied by him, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, when suddenly the thought came to my mind, that if I were to obtain from God by Catherine's prayers a contrition for my sins superior to that which I felt habitually, it would be an evident sign, that all that occurred came from the Holy Spirit, for no one can have a true contrition except by the Holy Spirit, and although we are ignorant, whether we are worthy of love or of hatred, contrition of heart is a proof that we are in the grace of God. I did not say a word of these thoughts which occupied me; but went to Catherine, and earnestly asked of her to please to obtain from God the remission of my sins. She answered me with a joy replete with charity, that she would most willingly comply, and I then added, that to satisfy my desire I must have a satisfactory evidence, namely, an extraordinary contrition for my sins. She assured me that she would obtain it, and on the morrow she was conversing with me, when her discourse insensibly turned on God and on the ingratitude with which we offend his goodness. Whilst she spoke, I had a sudden vision of my sins, of surprising accuracy and distinctness: I saw myself, divested of all things, in the presence of my Judge, and I felt that I merited death, as do malefactors when stricken by the justice of men; I saw also the bounty of my Judge, who by his grace took me into his service and replaced death by life, fear by hope, sorrow by joy, and shame by glory. These mental visions so triumphed over my hardness and obduracy of heart, that I began to shed torrents of tears over my sins: and my grief became so profound that I thought I should die of it.

Catherine, whose end was accomplished, kept silence, and left me to my tears and sobs. Some moments after in the midst of my surprise at these interior dispositions, I remembered my request and the promise she had made me on the eve: I turned towards her, and said, "Is not this the gift I asked for yesterday?" "The same," answered she, and added "Remember the graces of God." My companion and myself were filled with gladness and edification—and I exclaimed with the incredulous Thomas—"My Lord and my God"—*Dominus meus et Deus meus* (St. John 20: 28).

I received another proof of Catherine's sanctity which I relate to her honor and my own confusion. She was detained by sufferings in her bed, and she sent me notice that she desired to speak with me concerning some revelations. I went and approached her couch; she began then, notwithstanding the fever which burned in her veins, to discourse to me of God, and to explain to me all that had been revealed to her during the day; the things were so extraordinary, that I forgot what had just happened to me, and I asked myself, "must I believe what she says?" Whilst I hesitated and looked at her, her countenance suddenly changed into that of a stern man who was regarding me fixedly, and who filled me with terror: her oval face indicated the plentitude of life; her scanty beard was the color of wheat, and her whole countenance bore the impress of that majesty which revealed the holy presence of God. It was impossible for me to perceive any other countenance than hers. I was thoroughly terrified, and exclaimed, with lifted hands: "Oh! who looks at me thus?" Catherine answered, "*He that is!*" The vision disappeared, and I again saw the face of Catherine, which I could not distinguish before. My understanding was enlightened with such an abundant light, chiefly upon the subject of our discourse, that I then comprehended that word of our Lord, when promising the coming of the Holy Ghost: "*Et quae ventura sunt annuntiabit vobis*" (St. John. 16: 13).

Part III, Chapter 2: Of Circumstances which Happened a Year and a Half Before the Death of the Blessed Catherine, and of the Martyrdom that Satan Caused Her to undergo

As I have said above, after that, (in accordance with the order of the Sovereign Pontiff,) I had quitted the Spouse of Christ, who remained at Rome, several circumstances occurred which merit narration. I have only cited some of them; but now, with the grace of

God, I will declare facts which display the splendid sanctity of her happy death, and which were so many preludes to her entrance into eternal bliss. The Blessed Catherine saw the Church of God, that she so ardently loved, rent by the miseries of schism, and the Vicar of Jesus Christ surrounded by difficulties and persecutions; tears had become her bread by night and by day, and she never ceased crying to God, supplicating him to restore peace to the Church. God gave her some consolations: thus, a year previous to her death, the very day on which she was to quit the earth, he granted a double victory to the Church and to the Sovereign Pontiff. The Schismatics, hitherto masters of the Castle of St. Angelo, disturbed the peace of the city, and ravaged the entire country: they were completely vanquished, the chiefs were taken, and many perished. The Pope could not reside near the Church of the Holy Apostles, on account of the vicinity of the Castle of St. Angelo. Catherine advised him to go, barefooted, to the august Basilica. All the people followed him in great devotion, and rendered to Almighty God, solemn thanksgiving for all his benefits. The holy Church and her Pontiff began to breathe a little, and our Saint enjoyed, at last, some consolation in their relief.

But her anguish was soon renewed. The old serpent, who could not succeed by this method, attacked her by others more dangerous and more rude. What he could not effect by foreigners and schismatics, he attempted by means of those who had remained faithful to the Holy See; he created a division between the people of Rome and the Sovereign Pontiff, and things attained such a point, that the populace openly threatened the life of the Supreme Pontiff. When Catherine was informed of it, she was deeply affected; she had recourse as usual to prayer, and ardently implored her divine Spouse never to permit such a crime. At that time Catherine wrote me a letter, in which she told me, that she had seen, in spirit, the city of Rome filled with demons, who excited the people to Parricide; they uttered horrible cries against the Saint, and said to her: "Cursed be thou that wouldst arrest us; but we will put thee to death in a frightful manner." She answered naught, but she continually prayed with fervor, and implored God, that for the honor of his Name, and the salvation of the Church, then rocked by rude storms, that he would deign to subvert the schemes of hell, in order to save the Sovereign Pontiff, and not allow the people to commit such an abominable offence. The Lord once answered her: "Suffer that nation which daily blasphemes my name, to fall into that crime, and when it will be committed, I will execute vengeance and destroy it, because my justice demands that I no longer support its iniquities." But she prayed with still increased fervor: "O most clement God, thou knowest how deeply the Spouse that thou hast redeemed by thy precious blood, is outraged throughout the broad universe; thou knowest how few defenders she has, and thou canst not be ignorant how ardently its enemies desire the humiliation and death of thy Vicar. If that misfortune happen, not only people of Rome, but also all Christians and the Holy Church will suffer deeply from it. Therefore let thine anger be appeased, and despise not thy people for whom thou has paid so heavy a ransom." This contest with God endured several days and nights and her feeble body had much to endure. God opposed his justice to her prayers, and the demons continued their vociferations against her. Her fervor was then so great that if God, to use an expression familiar with her, had not encircled her members, she must have sunk back, weighed down upon herself. But at length, in this obstinate combat in which her body was perishing through protracted sufferings, Catherine triumphed and obtained her petition. When God alleged his justice, she replied, "Lord because thy justice must be satisfied, despise not I entreat thee the prayers of thy servant; inflict the chastisement that this people merit on my body: yes, for the honor of thy Name and that of thy holy Church, I will cheerfully drain that chalice of suffering and death; thy Truth knows, that I have ever ardently desired it, and that thy grace has

continually inflamed my soul with that desire.” At these words which she pronounced in the intensity of her heart, the interior voice of God was no longer heard and she understood by this divine silence that her prayer had prevailed. In effect from that moment, the popular sedition gradually calmed and at last was completely appeased; but the Blessed like a pure victim supported its expiation. The powers of hell had permission to torment her virginal body, and exert their rage on it with such cruelty, that those who witnessed it, declared to me that it would be impossible to conceive an idea of it without having seen its evidences.

Those cruel sufferings increased daily; her skin adhered to her bones and her body appeared like one issuing from the tomb; she walked, prayed and worked without intermission; but those who saw her, would have believed her to be a phantom rather than a living soul: her tortures multiplied and visibly consumed her body. Far from interrupting her prayers, Catherine increased their length and their fervor; her spiritual family who were surrounding her at that time, saw very distinctly the exterior signs of the tortures heaped upon her by hell; but no one could apply a remedy. The will of God opposed it, and besides, notwithstanding the wasting of her corporeal frame, her soul rose joyfully and courageously above trouble. The more she prayed, the more she suffered: I was informed by the spectators, and indeed she wrote to me herself, that in the midst of her martyrdom, she heard the devils shriek: “Cursed, thou hast always pursued us, and thou continest thy pursuit: now we intend satiating our vengeance: thou designest to force us to go hence, but we will take thy life.” And whilst saying that, they redoubled their blows.

Catherine suffered thus, from Sunday of Sexagesima until the last day of April on which she died, and the sufferings continually increased until her spirit winged its heavenward flight. She wrote me a very remarkable circumstance which took place about that time. Hitherto on account of pain in her side, and other infirmities which never forsook her, she deferred hearing Mass until the hour of Terce; thus she continued during the entire season of Lent, and went every morning, to the church at St. Peter’s. She heard Mass, prayed longer than formerly and returned home at the hour of Vespers: those who then saw her extended on her bed could not have believed her capable of rising; on the morrow however, at the dawn of day, she arose, set out from her house, via del Papa, entered the Minerva and the Campo di Fiore, and went with a hasty step to St. Peter’s; this course was capable of fatiguing any one in good health. Some days before she was called to Heaven, she found herself unable to rise; finally, on Sunday April 29, 1380, on the festival of St. Peter, martyr of the Order of Preaching Friars, about the hour of Terce, she yielded her beautiful soul to its loving Spouse and Redeemer.

Many remarkable events transpired then, which I will narrate in the following chapters.

Part II, Chapter 4 (excerpt): Of the Death of St. Catherine, and of the Recommendations Proposed to her Spiritual Sons and Daughters in her Dying Moments

The Blessed Catherine, perceiving her last hour approach, summoned around her her followers and such “the Lord had made members of her household; she addressed to them first a general discourse, exhorting all to advance in the path of virtue; she developed therein several important points, which I found in the Manuscripts of the witnesses above mentioned.

The first and fundamental obligation that she laid down was this: He who gives himself to God, if he desires to possess Him in return must divest his heart from all sensible love; not only towards persons, but creatures, in order to tend to God, his Creator, in entire

simplicity and sincerity of soul; for, said she, the heart cannot give itself unreservedly to God if it be not liberated, disentangled and disfranchised from every bond. A soul cannot give its heart to God without prayer, founded on humility, which acknowledges itself nothing, and devoid of all personal confidence. A generous application to mental prayer is also requisite, because it increases and fortifies virtues which without that aliment would become weak and then vanish. She taught all her followers to devote *stated hours* to vocal prayer, and to give themselves continually to mental prayer either by acts or with the heart.

She said besides, that by the aid of a strong faith, she saw and perfectly understood in her mind, that whatever happened to herself or others, came from God, and proceeded from his immense love to his creatures; which excited and developed in her a love for, and a promptitude in obeying the orders of God, and of her superiors, believing always that their orders came from God Himself, either for the necessities of salvation, or for the increasing of virtues in her soul. She declared that in order to acquire parity of mind, it was necessary for man to beware of judging unfavorably of his neighbor, and to abstain from all idle words concerning his conduct; for in all creatures we must behold the will of God. She particularly recommended never to despise or condemn any one under form of judgment, even though we should see them commit a fault; if sometimes the evil is evident, we should take compassion on him who committed it, and pray for him without despising or condemning him. She ever entertained a strong confidence in divine Providence, because she knew by experience, how graciously his bounty extends over all. Catherine and her followers had always experienced that God provided for all their necessities. She added, that those who trust in Divine Providence, shall not only never be abandoned, but shall experience a special help.

The Blessed Catherine also gave her followers other counsel; then she terminated by the last recommendation of the Savior to his disciples, conjuring them humbly and earnestly to love one another. By their mutual affection, they would prove themselves her spiritual children, and she would believe herself their Mother, by so doing they would prove her glory and her crown; and she would intercede with the divine Goodness in their behalf that he would bless them as copiously as he had blessed herself. She commanded them, in the name of charity, to address continual and fervent prayers for the reformation and prosperity of the holy Church, and for the Vicar of Jesus Christ. These had been her ever-present thoughts during seven years: and to obtain an answer to her prayers she had constantly endured in her body, very great pains and infirmities in the latter years. She added that, as Satan had obtained from God permission to overwhelm Job with every variety of ill, it seemed to her that hell had also obtained permission to afflict and harass her body by every species of torments, so that from her head to her feet it appeared “that there was no health in her.” She then said in conclusion: “My dear friends, it appears evident to me that my beloved Spouse has disposed and designed all, so that, according to my hearts earnest desire, after the trials that his goodness has deigned to accord me, my soul shall be liberated from its obscure prison, and return to its true source.”

The witnesses whom I have cited have written that the anguish and deep distress of Catherine appeared so terrible, that no one could have supported them without the grace of God; she endured them calmly without demonstrating any sign of sadness. As they were in amazement and wept at beholding her in that condition she thus addressed them: “Beloved sons, you ought not to be afflicted at my death; you should rather rejoice with me and congratulate me, because I am about to quit this land of exile, and repose in the unending peace of God. I give you the positive assurance that I shall be more useful to you after my decease, than I would, or could have been by remaining with you in this life so obscured by grief and so filled with miseries. Nevertheless I commend my existence, its termination and my whole being into the hands of my ever Blessed Spouse; and if he perceives that I can be useful to any living creature, if he will that I yet remain amid anguish and torture, I am ready for the honor of his Name and the salvation of the neighbor, to suffer a hundred times a day,

were it possible, death and all other imaginable torments. But if it be agreeable to him that I depart, be certain, dear children, that *I have given my life for the Church: I have a certain knowledge that God has permitted it by a peculiar grace.*” After that, she called her disciples, one after another, and prescribed to each one the kind of life that he ought to embrace after her death; she desired that all should submit to my direction, as the one who held her place, indicating to some, the Religious, and to others a Solitary life. For the women, and particularly the Sisters of Penance, she designated Alessia as Superior. She regulated all, according to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; the event proved it thus, for her directions proved beneficial to every one.

After that she asked pardon of all. “My beloved,” said she, “I have hungered and thirsted for your salvation, I dare not say the reverse; nevertheless I may have been wanting to you in many things; not only I have not given you an example of good works and of virtue as I should and might have done, had I been a true Spouse of our Lord and a perfect Religious, but also in your temporal wants I have not been zealous and attentive as I should have been. I therefore implore of all, in general and in particular, pardon and indulgence; I entreat you, and I conjure you humbly and earnestly, to pursue to the end the path of virtue, that you may be, as I have foretold you, my joy and my crown.” After these words she then kept silent: she then made, as she did daily, her general confession, and humbly asked for the Holy Eucharist and the last Sacraments. Her requests were granted; she also implored the plenary Indulgence which had been granted to her by the Sovereign Pontiffs Gregory XI and Urban VI, who had already given it to her. She then began to enter upon her agony and contend against Satan; the assistants perceived it by her words and gestures. Sometimes she maintained silence, sometimes she replied, sometimes she smiled, occasionally she appeared to despise what she heard, and again to feel indignant.

Those who related to me the events that then transpired, remarked one peculiar circumstance, and I believe it happened for the greater glory of God. After observing silence, as though she were listening to an accusation, she replied with it joyful countenance: “*No, never vainglory, but the real honor and glory of God.*” There was a motive for Divine Providence permitting these words to be heard; for several persons, on account of the meekness of her charity and the abundant graces that were granted to her, believe that she courted praise or at least enjoyed it, and that on this account she took delight in appearing before the public. Some said, when speaking of her: “Why run from all sides to her; it is only a woman; she ought to remain in her cell, if she desires to serve God.” The response to these reproaches was complete; “*No, never vain-glory:*” said she, “*but the true glory of God and his honor;*” that is; no, it was not vain-glory that induced me to go on all sides and perform good works, but I acted continually for the glory of the Savior and the honor of his Name. I likewise can give testimony with certitude, having so often heard her general confessions and her particular ones, and who have carefully examined all her acts; she always obeyed the direct order of God and his inspirations; not only she sought not praise, but she did not even think of men, except when she was praying for their salvation and laboring to promote it. One who had not been witness of her life, could never know to what a degree, she was a stranger to those human passions which are even usual in persons consecrated in religion. The words of the Apostle may most suitably be applied to her: *Nostra autem conversatio in coelis est.* (Phil. 3: 20) “Our conversation is in heaven.” Nothing could for one moment distract her desires, and weaken the ardor of her charity.

After this prolonged contest and her victory, Catherine came to herself, renewed the public confession she was accustomed to make and for greater security asked to receive again the absolution and indulgence that had already been given; she followed in that, the doctrine and the example of St. Martin, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine, who wish that no Christian, whatever be his state of perfection, leave this world, without accusing himself of his defects, and exciting in his heart regret for having committed them. St. Augustine, in his last malady,

caused the seven Penitential Psalms to be inscribed on the wall, near to his bed; he read them constantly and with an abundance of tears. St. Jerome, when dying, confessed his sins and defects publicly. St. Martin, in his last moments, taught his disciples, by word and example, that a Christian ought to die on sackcloth and ashes, to testify his humility and heartfelt repentance. In imitation of those great Saints, Catherine showed her contrition, by all possible means—and twice humbly petitioned absolution for her sins, and satisfaction of pains which are attached to the indulgence.

When all was terminated, the attendants observed that her physical strength diminished rapidly. She never desisted, however, from giving pious recommendations to her spiritual sons and daughters, to those present and to those who were absent; for, in her last agony she said to the individuals who were present: “Apply to Friar Raymond in all your doubts and difficulties, and tell him never to become remiss and to fear not, in whatever may befall him. I will be with him continually and will protect him in all his dangers; when he does wrong I will warn him, so that he may correct himself.” I was assured that she repeated these words often, and pronounced them as long as she had strength to do it. Seeing that the moment of her exit had arrived, she said “Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit;” *Domine, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum*. And as she had so long desired, that devout soul was freed from its captivity and united in an indissoluble, eternal union, to the Spouse whom she had so ardently loved, in the year of our Lord, 1380, on Sunday, the 29th of April, at the hour of Terce.

Part III, Chapter 6: Of the Great Patience that Catherine Manifested in All the Actions, from her Infancy until her Death, This Chapter will be a Sort of Condensed Statement of her Whole Life

The Eternal Truth, incarnate for our salvation says: *Qui in corde bono et optimo audientes verbum retinent, et fructum afferunt in patientia* (St. Luke. 8: 15). “Who in a good and very good heart, hearing the word with patience, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.” In his Book of Dialogues, St. Gregory said I think that the virtue of patience, is above prodigies and miracles: *Ego virtutem patientiae signis et miraculis puto majorem*. The Apostle St. James says in his canonical Epistle (St. Jas. 1: 4,) *Patientia opus perfectum*. Patience hath a perfect work. She is not the chief and the queen of virtues; but according to the testimony of the Apostle, she is the inseparable companion of that virtue which is the greatest, and shall never fail. When speaking of Charity, St. Paul said: “Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up.” (I. Cor. xiii. 4.) Hence, when the Church examines the lives of her Saints, she does not apply her principal attention to the prodigies they have performed, for two reasons: 1. The wicked have accomplished and still effect prodigies which resemble miracles, which are not such, as those of the Magicians of Pharaoh; Anti-Christ and his followers will do the same in their time. 2. Some have actually performed miracles by the help of divine power, but have afterwards been reprobate like Judas, and those who, according to the Gospel, shall at the last judgment say: Lord have we nor performed miracles in thy Name; it will be answered, “*Withdraw from Me, ye workers of iniquity.*” Consequently, in accordance with the doctrine of Divines, prodigies and miracles cannot of themselves, assure to the church militant, the eternal glory of those who performed them, though they are nevertheless a strong indication of their sanctity, especially when they happen after their decease; but even those do not give a definite certitude, because God in his compassion, may recompense the faith of those who pray, without intending to manifest the glory of those whom they supplicate.

When the Church wishes to ascertain the merits of the Saints, she informs herself of their lives, and actions on earth. Her Divine Spouse taught her this, when he said *By their*

fruits you will know them, for a bad tree cannot produce good fruit, nor a good tree evil fruit. (St. Matth. 7: 18.) Good fruits are the works of charity towards God and towards the neighbor. Those works are agreeable to God, and consequently insupportable to Satan, who makes untiring efforts to hinder them, either in himself, or by men who belong to him in the world. The Saints who are faithful and who persevere, have necessarily practiced patience which preserved them in the love of God and of the neighbor, notwithstanding all imaginable persecutions. Our Lord said to his disciples; *in patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras*, “in your patience you shall preserve your souls.” (St. Luke 21: 19) And that is, according to the Apostle, the first condition of Charity. *Charity is patient; charitas patiens est.* (I Cor. 13: 4.) Therefore this point is greatly insisted upon in the canonization of the Saints; their deeds are more exactly scrutinized than their miracles: and among their actions, their fruits of patience are particularly sought, because they prove charity and sanctity more than all others.

My intention in writing this volume, being to make known Catherine’s sanctity to the Catholic Church and those who govern it, I thought that I would complete my work by adding a chapter on the Patience of Catherine, it having been the glory of her life. I will recapitulate her entire annals, and I shall thus prove useful to a class of readers who find an hour longer than a day, when pious subjects are in question, while a day seems to them to fly more rapidly than an hour when they are occupied in perusing fables.

Patience is exercised in enduring things opposite; its very name indicates it, since it is derived from *patir*, to suffer. The things contrary to man may be divided into two classes, according to their double nature; those which affect the mind, and those which affect the body.

The good possessed by man is separated by philosophers into three classes: the agreeable, useful and honorable, and it is by the continued privation of these blessings that patience is exercised. The agreeable comprehends health, the pleasures of the table, of the toilette, with whatever flatters nature, and in particular sensuality. The useful comprehends riches, houses, lands, money, animals, luxury, parentage and kindred, with domestics and whatever serves to the material existence. The honorable embraces whatever gives man consideration among his equals: as a good, or a renowned name, a great reputation, distinguished friends, recognized abilities, and the means of doing good.

Among the things that I have enumerated, some are culpable and must be renounced; some are hindrances to perfection, and must be avoided and despised; others are allowed and are even necessary sometimes, and their privation must be supported patiently. We shall consider Catherine’s conduct in all these, pursuing the order that we have selected. The Saint understood that patience is not serviceable when we do not first shun what is forbidden, as all sensual pleasures; hence, at a tender age, she avoided them with fortitude and prudence. It was in consequence of a remarkable vision with which she was favored at six years of age, when the Lord appeared to her with his chief Apostles, and blessed her with his kingly hand, and gave her a look of tender affection. Her soul was then filled with such perfect love, that she abandoned the habits of infancy, and consecrated herself, notwithstanding the weakness of her years to penance and to meditation. So rapid was her progress that the following year, namely, her seventh, she made a Vow of perpetual chastity, in presence of the Blessed Virgin, after having maturely reflected and prayed much.

As the pious child had understood that there was nothing more necessary for preserving her virginity than sobriety and mortification in her diet, she applied to that at a tender age, and finished by practicing it with a marvelous perfection. She began by depriving herself of meat and then renounced it wholly; the wine which she drank was mingled with so much water that it lost its taste; at fifteen she abstained from it completely, and refused all food except bread and vegetables; in fine, at the age of twenty, she retrenched bread, and supported her body with uncooked herbs; she did so, until God granted her the favor of living without taking any food; and this took place, if I am not deceived, at the age

of twenty-five or twenty-six. I have declared the murmurs that were excited against this extraordinary state, which she then endured and with admirable patience.

Having thus retrenched, by abstinence and purity, against the pleasures of sense, Catherine was deprived by others of many things permitted and even desirable. Some trials gave her a veritable joy, but there were others that afflicted her profoundly. Among her relatives and friends, many were an occasion of pain from her infancy until her death. Her mother and brothers in order to force her to marry, took away her room, and obliged her to perform the vilest employments of the kitchen, so as to prevent her from praying and meditating. She remained fixed and immovable in her resolutions; not only the privation of her cell, and the services of the house did not induce her to neglect ordinary prayers, but she daily increased them, until she triumphed. The demon was intent upon hindering her austerities, the length of her vigils and the hardness of her bed; he excited her mother Lapa against her, we may say, even to rage; but *she*, armed with invincible patience, and wonderful discretion, softened her mother's anger, while continuing her vigorous penances.

The enemy of salvation sought by all possible means to deprive that holy soul of the consolations and favors of her divine Spouse, or at least to distract her from them for a time; but she triumphed over her attacks by fervor; she disconcerted his snares and projects by her wisdom, and confounded him by her perseverance. The evil spirit endeavored to induce her to forget her Vow, by means of her sister-in-law, who succeeded in inspiring her with a kind of particularity in the arrangement of her hair and in her toilette. God permitted this for her good, as I have shown in the fourth Chapter of the First Part. He afterwards tormented her by temptations and even by false visions.

One day when she was praying before a Crucifix the demon presented himself holding a robe of rich silk with which he desired to clothe her. She repulsed it with contempt, and armed herself with the sign of the Cross; the devil disappeared, but left in her mind a temptation to vanity, in adorning her person, and she was extremely troubled by it; but she remembered the vow of virginity that she had contracted, and said to our Saviour: "Beloved Spouse, thou knowest that I never desired any other spouse than thee; assist me to triumph over these temptations; I do not ask thee to remove them, but only deign in thy mercy never to permit me to yield." She had scarcely terminated this prayer, than the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, appeared to her, and it seemed to her that she drew from the side of her crucified Son, a magnificent robe, which she embroidered with her own hand, setting it with dazzling and priceless gems; she clothed her with this robe, saying: "Know, my daughter, that the garments which come from the side of my Son surpass all other garments in brightness and beauty." The temptation vanished immediately, and the Saint was filled with heavenly consolation.

The devil, seeing that he could not lead her to be less fervent in keeping her resolutions, strove to render them useless during a period of time, and aided himself by several individuals. He employed her mother, who conducted her to the Baths, so as to oblige her to suspend her austerities; but Catherine contrived to find ruder mortifications than she practiced in her cell, by exposing her body to boiling water. . . . Deficiency of light in her directors, and in the Prioress of the "Third Order," also caused her much suffering. They hindered her from confessing as much as she desired to do, and constrained her in the exercises of piety which she loved the most. Their understanding was incapable of comprehending them; they condemned light because they were in darkness, and they wished to take measure of the mountain peaks, without leaving the shades of their humble valleys.

The following fact will show the extent of her patience. It will redound to the shame of a few Religious, but it is better to publish it than to be silent concerning the gifts that the Holy Ghost lavished on that faithful soul.

Catherine could scarcely perform any public exercise of piety, without exciting a calumny, and drawing upon herself the persecutions of those same individuals who ought to have defended and encouraged her; and let us not be astonished: Religious who have not perfectly overcome their self-love, allow their jealousy to carry them farther than persons in the world. As the Sisters of Penance saw Catherine, yet so young, surpassing all the others by the austerity of her life, the severity of morals, and the fervor of her prayer and a sublime contemplation, some among them were seduced by Satan, and began through envy to censure her conduct, and denounce her to some Religious of the Order. If some extolled her virtue, and proved it by things evident to *all*, others, maintained that she was instigated by an evil spirit. Those females, genuine descendants of Eve, acted so adroitly that they seduced Adam himself, that is to say, the Superiors of the Convent, of St. Dominic, who would not receive her, refused her holy Communion, and even went so far as to deprive her of her Confessor. She supported the whole with patience and without murmuring as though she were not the injured one, and no one even heard her utter the smallest complaint.

If they allowed her to approach Communion, they exacted that she should terminate her prayers directly and quit the church, which was wholly impossible; for, she received holy Communion with so much fervor, that she lost the use of her senses; her body became completely insensible, and she remained in that state for several hours. Those whom the Sisters had misled, became furious at this; they would take her during her ecstasies, carry her away in a rough, even brutal manner, and throw her down at the Church door as though she were the most contemptible of human beings. Her companions bathed in tears, remained around her to protect her, exposed to the burning rays of the noonday sun, and awaiting the moment in which she would return to herself. Some individuals gave her furious blows with the foot, whilst she was in ecstasy, and nevertheless she never uttered a word of reproach: she never even mentioned that ill-treatment except to excuse those who made her suffer! But the more she remained patient, amid these injuries, the more her divine Spouse, who is justice itself, was provoked against her persecutors, and punished them with severity. I know this by the Confessor who preceded me and from several persons worthy of confidence.

A woman who gave her a blow with the foot, during an ecstasy, was taken, just as she entered her house, with agonizing pains, and expired directly, without being able to receive the last Sacraments. Another wretch also struck her with the foot, and carried her to the door of the Church, offering her the grossest injuries; his punishment was awful: that man (whom I knew perfectly well) not only behaved odiously towards Catherine, but he even designed to kill her. A few days after, the unhappy individual, without any apparent cause, became enraged as though he was possessed by the devil; he shrieked continually: "In mercy help me! See, here comes the executioner to cut off my head!" The occupants of the house were anxious to encourage and comfort him, but they soon perceived by his words and gestures that he had entirely lost his reason; they therefore watched him closely, because they discovered that he was tempted to commit suicide. Some time after, as he appeared more calm, the care diminished; he found means of escape, and went like Judas to hang himself! I have this fact from the very person that found his corpse; he was not buried in consecrated ground, but in a ditch, as he well merited.

Catherine had much to suffer in her reputation, and in this especially appeared her admirable patience. What more precious than the reputation of a Maiden, and what more delicate than the honor of a consecrated Virgin! It was in consideration of this that God would have his Mother, the Queen of Virgins protected by a husband in the eyes of the world; and on the Cross, he confided the virginity of his Mother to the virginity of St. John. Three facts which I have narrated, show Catherine's patience and her continual progress in virtue. The first was the story of Tecca, the leper whom Catherine nursed when she was slighted by everybody. I also mentioned Palmerina who wore the same religious habit as Catherine and who indulged an unjust and implacable hatred against her. Perfect charity

triumphed in this case; persevering prayer destroyed all the evil that the devil had created in that poor soul, and grace diffused in the heart and on the lips of Catherine was so potent, as to save Palmerina from the flames of perdition. Although in those two circumstances, and particularly in the second, Catherine's patience is displayed in an admirable manner, it shone even more brightly in the case of Andrea the cancerous woman.

After having recalled the prodigies of patience of the Blessed Catherine, it appears to me beneficial to give some details of which I have not yet spoken. Almost all the persons who approached her to follow her counsels and her examples, afflicted her in some way; the demon thus endeavored to torment her by means of those who were dearest to her. Catherine suffered more vexations from those whom she directed than from strangers: she however triumphed over them by patience. Like an immovable column which the power of the Holy Spirit had fixed in Charity, the most violent persecutions could not weaken her stability; the words of the wise man might be aptly applied to her: "She has her everlasting foundations on the solid rock, and God's commandments are in the heart of the devout woman:" *Fundamenta aeterna super petram solidam et mandata Dei in corde mulieris sanctae* (Eccl. 26: 24). Yes, the will of Catherine was so established by indissoluble bonds with the foundation stone Jesus Christ, that she preserved piously within her heart the precepts of God.

A Religious (man) had been so misled by the devil, that he insulted Catherine in the coarsest manner in the very presence of her companions. She was so patient that she would not allow any exterior sign of trouble to appear; she uttered not a word, and expressly recommended not to offer the slightest reproach to the culpable individual, and not to give him any pain. He therefore, emboldened by Catherine's meekness, went so far as to take the money that had been remitted to her for giving alms. The Saint did not swerve from her charity; she would not allow any one of those who were aware of the theft to say or do any thing; but she remained steadfast in silence and hope. She finished by vanquishing, and thus teaches us, by her words and her example, to overcome ourselves.

It is quite impossible to describe the patience that Catherine exhibited in corporeal infirmities; she suffered a continual and very violent pain in the side, and it was this that delivered her father's soul from the anguish of purgatorial flames. She had likewise an unintermitting pain in the head, and an acute pain in the breast; this last named torture, commenced on the day that our Lord permitted her to take the sufferings of his sacred Passion; it remained with her ever after, and she affirmed that it surpassed all the others. To these dolors were frequently added violent fevers, and yet she never breathed a plaint or showed that she was ill. Her countenance bore no impress of sadness, and with a gentle and engaging smile, she received and consoled those who approached her for consultation or conversation. When words would not suffice, and fatigue and labor were requisite to promote the salvation of souls—all her infirmities seemed to vanish; she arose and walked as though she were not subject to any infirmity.

What persecutions did not that holy soul endure from Satan! I recount an incident that I witnessed. We were returning to Sienna, one day, when she was suddenly precipitated from the ass on which she was riding into a deep ravine; I ran, invoking the Blessed Virgin, and found her on the ground, laughing and saying "that it was a blow from the 'evil beast'"—meaning Satan. She seated herself anew; but scarcely had she advanced a few steps than the malign spirit again threw her into the dust, and in such manner that she found herself directly underneath the animal. She said to us laughingly: "This good mule warms the side in which I suffer pain." She thus mocked Satan who could not succeed in doing her any injury. We drew her from the ground, but, we were unwilling to allow her to mount the animal anew, and as we were near the city, we wished her to walk in the midst of us. Her enemy was not yet deterred, he dragged her every way, and if we had not sustained her, she would certainly

have been overthrown; but she continued to rally the evil spirit on his impotence. It was at this time that Catherine effected so much good in souls, and the devil showed by his persecutions, the rage which embittered him.

The incredible sufferings that charity led Catherine to undergo, a short time before her death, entitle her (it appears to me) to the dignity of martyr. The Blessed Anthony thirsted for martyrdom and petitioned it from our Lord, who heard him by allowing the demons to beat him cruelly, without however taking away his life. Catherine was frequently beaten, and even found death in the last torments which hell obliged her to suffer. It alone would be a sufficient proof of her holiness, and for the conviction of those who may doubt it, I will cite a fact which will show how similar Catherine was to her Spouse, at least as to the cause of her sufferings.—I will thus terminate this chapter to the glory of the Incarnate Truth, to the honor of the virgin Catherine, his Spouse, and in opposition to what may be said by the devotees of falsehood.

Towards the year 1375, either by the malice of the great Sower of tares, or through defect of those in charge of the Holy See, or by the pecuniary aid of certain Florentines, or by reciprocal arts, the City of Florence, which hitherto had ranked among the most devoted daughters of the Catholic Church, assembled the enemies of the Church and used great efforts to destroy in union with them its temporal power; the Sovereign Pontiff of Rome, who commanded in Italy sixty Episcopal Cities and a thousand fortified places, was reduced to a few meager, paltry strips of land. Pope Gregory XI fulminated against the Florentines terrible decrees which caused all their goods to be seized by the Proprietors of the countries with which they carried on commerce. The consequences accruing from this chastisement, forced them to sue for peace to the Supreme Pontiff, by the intermediation of persons whom they knew to be agreeable to him. It was made known to them, that the Blessed Catherine, on account of her reputation of sanctity, would be perfectly well received by his Holiness; they therefore decided that I should be commissioned by Catherine to go to the Holy Father; then they caused her to be conducted to Florence. The chief citizens went forth to meet her, and supplicated her to go in person to Avignon, and treat with the Holy See. Catherine, abounding with love for God and her neighbor, and very desirous of promoting the welfare of the church, undertook this journey and came to Avignon, where I was at the moment. I acted as interpreter between her and the Pope, because the Sovereign Pontiff spoke Latin, and she employed the dialect of Tuscany. I can affirm, before God and before man, that the Holy Father, in my presence and by my mouth committed the treaty of peace to the decision of Catherine saying to her, *“In order to prove to you that I desire peace, I commit the entire negotiation into your hands: only be careful of the honor of the Church.”*

But some among the individuals who then governed Florence at the same time that they publicly asked for peace, secretly plotted against her, and endeavored to destroy the temporal power of the Church, and place it an impossibility of obtaining the smallest satisfaction; they owned it to me themselves, when they could fearlessly say aloud what they then carefully concealed. They acted as genuine hypocrites, and exhibited these dispositions by their conduct towards Catherine.

When that Saint undertook the long and painful journey, they promised to send after her deputies who would have orders not to attempt, or do anything absolutely, without her counsel. As they delayed long in sending those whom they had announced, the Sovereign Pontiff was surprised and said to Catherine: “Believe me, they have deceived and will deceive you: those ambassadors will never come, or if they do come, their mandate will be useless.” In effect when the ambassadors arrived at Avignon, Catherine caused them to come, and told them in my presence, the powers that the magistrates of Florence had bestowed on her; she announced to them that the Sovereign Pontiff entrusted the peace into her hands, and that thus they could if they would, obtain favorable conditions. But, they far from responding to these

advances, pretended that they had no orders to treat with her. Catherine then discovered their dishonesty and perceived that the Holy Father had predicted correctly: she did not however discontinue her solicitations to Gregory XI to ask him for them, the clemency of a father, rather than the severity of a Judge.

When the Vicar of Jesus Christ, in conformity with Catherine's advice, returned to establish himself at Rome, we went back to Italy. Catherine sent me to him with several projects, which would have proved very useful to the church, had they been carried out. During my sojourn there, I was compelled by my Order, to accept the charge of Prior of a Roman Convent, which I had formerly governed under the pontificate of Urban V, and it became impossible for me to go back to Catherine. Before quitting Tuscany, I held an interview with Nicholas Soderini, a citizen of Florence, a man most faithful to God and the church, and strongly attached to Catherine; we had spoken of the affairs of the Republic, and in particular of the ill-will of those who pretended to desire reconciliation with the church, and who did all they could to prevent peace. As I complained of this course of conduct, that excellent man answered me thus: "Be convinced that the people of Florence and every honest man in the town desire peace: but some obstinate hearts that govern us, offer an obstacle." I said: "Could there be no remedy applied to this evil?" He rejoined: "Yes, if some respectable citizens took to heart the cause of God, and had an understanding with the Guelphs, in order to deprive those intermeddlers of their power, for they are enemies of the public good, it would be sufficient to remove four or five of them." When I went to fulfill my commission to the Sovereign Pontiff, I related to him the conversation which I had held with Nicholas Soderini.

I had been occupied several months in filing my charge of Prior, and announcing the word of God, when one Sunday morning an envoy of the Pope came to inform me that His Holiness awaited my presence at dinner-time. I obeyed this command, and after the repast the Holy Father sent for me, and said, "I am told that if Catherine of Sienna repairs to Florence, peace will be concluded." I replied, "Not only Catherine, but we all are ready to obey your Holiness and to suffer, if necessary, martyrdom." The Holy Father said to me: "I do not desire you should go to Florence, because they would maltreat you, but for *her*, she is a woman and they venerate her, I do not think she will incur any danger. Consider what powers it would be suitable to grant her; present them tomorrow morning for my signature, so that this business may be promptly concluded." I obeyed, and forwarded the letters to the Saint, who submitted and set out directly. Arrived at Florence, she was received with much honor by those who had remained faithful to God and the Church, and with the aid of Nicholas Soderini, she held conferences with the well-disposed citizens, whom she persuaded not to offer longer opposition to the Shepherd of their souls, and to be reconciled directly with the Vicar of Christ. She was also able to confer with the Guelphs, and lead them to understand that those who entertained division between the Father and the Children, ought to be deprived of their functions; that they were rather the destroyers than the governors of the public weal; that not only peace was necessary to the preservation of their goods and of their lives, but that it was indispensable to their souls' salvation. They had actively contributed to stripping the Roman Church of her incontestable rights; and even though there were merely questions of private interests, they ought before God, and for their conscience' sake, to make restitution of what they had taken, or caused to be taken by others. The chief of the party and a great number of good citizens surrendered to these considerations, and asked the Governors of the city to labor for peace not merely in word, but by prompt and energetic action.

The opposition was violent, especially among those who had been chosen to war against the Church; they were eight in number; the chiefs of the Guelphs deprived me of them of his charge, and succeeded in discarding from affairs a few other citizens. But soon serious troubles declared themselves: they had exiled those who were opposed to the peace,

many others were so, but only to satisfy their private revenge. The number of the banished became so considerable that the whole city murmured: minds were irritated against Catherine, who was however a stranger to what was passing; she even complained of these proceedings bitterly, saying and causing to be said everywhere, that it was very ill to strike so many citizens, and that they ought not, under pretext of procuring peace, satisfy their personal and individual hatred.

These excesses increased continually, and disorder soon reached its height; those who had been formerly named for commanding the soldiery, collected troops and excited the lower classes of the population against the authors of all these banishments, and set the whole city in revolution; they succeeded in chasing out those who had banished others, they confiscated their goods, burned their houses, and even massacred, as I was informed, a very great number.

Many innocent persons suffered, and almost all those who desired peace were obligated to become voluntary exiles. Catherine who came to labor to arrange a peace and who had given from the outset merely an advice to deprive some few persons who offered an obstacle, was consequently seriously compromised; the leaders designated her to the people, and the cry was everywhere heard: “*Take that wicked woman and burn her alive; let us cut her in pieces.*” Those who had received her in their houses were frightened, and sent her away with all those who accompanied her. Catherine, quite sure of her innocence, suffered the whole joyfully for the sake of the Holy Catholic Church, and lost nothing of her ordinary tranquility; she continued cheerful and encouraged her companions. After giving them an exhortation, she withdrew, in imitation of her Spouse, into a place where there was a garden and gave herself to prayer.

While she was praying in that garden with our Lord, the satellites of Satan came also in tumult, armed with swords and clubs. They cried out: “*Where is that cursed woman—where is she?*” Catherine heard them and prepared herself for martyrdom, as for a delicious banquet. She went out before one of those furies who was armed with a sword, and who shrieked louder than the others: “*Where is Catherine?*” She knelt joyously and said to him: “I am Catherine, do whatever God suffers you to do to me; but in the name of the Almighty, I command you not to touch any of mine.” At these words the man who threatened her so lost his strength, that it was impossible for him to endure her presence. He ordered her to go away; but she, in her ardor for martyrdom, answered: “I am well *here*; where would you have me go? I am ready to suffer for God and his Church; this is the object of all my wishes. Why flee since I have found the object of my search? I offer myself a living holocaust to my divine Spouse; if you are charged to kill me, act fearlessly; I will make no effort to escape; but do not harm those who are with me.” God visibly protected his servant, and the man who had menaced her departed, quite confused, with his iniquitous associates. Then Catherine’s spiritual children surrounded her and congratulated her on her fortunate escape; but she, on the contrary, was quite sad and said weeping: “Ah! how unhappy I am! I thought this day the Almighty was about to crown my desire; he has deigned to bestow on me the white Rose of Virginity, and I hoped that he would join to it the crimson Rose of Martyrdom. But alas! I am deceived in my expectations; my innumerable sins have deprived me of that great blessing. O! how happy for my soul had I poured out my blood for the love of Him who redeemed me at the price of his own.”

Although this tumult was appeased, the Saint and those who accompanied her, risked many dangers, so great was the terror, that no one was willing to receive her into her house. Her friends advised her to return to Sienna, but she answered that she could not quit the territory of Florence before peace had been restored between the father and the children, because she had received an order from God. Those who surrounded her dared not contradict her, and at last found a “*good man fearing God,*” who concealed her in his house.

Some days after the popular effervescence was calmed, Catherine was conducted outside of the city, but not out of the territory; and that holy Virgin departed with those whom she had cherished as her children in the Lord, into a solitary place inhabited by Hermits.

Divine Providence put an end to this tempest; those who excited it were punished by justice and obliged to flee on all sides. Catherine then came back to Florence; she remained there in secret at first, on account of the hatred existing towards her: but she remained there afterwards publicly until the death of Gregory XI, and the election of Urban VI. Peace was then concluded between the Holy See and the Florentines, and Blessed Catherine said to her spiritual children: "We can now quit the city of Florence, because, with the grace of God, I have followed his commandments and those of his Vicar; those whom I found in revolt against the Holy Church, I have left subject to that kind and tender Mother. Return therefore to Sienna."

Catherine thus escaped the hands of the wicked; she obtained the peace that she desired, and that, by the power of the Savior Jesus, whose Angels accomplished what the malice of men obedient to Satan, intended to prevent. How can we fail to admire Catherine in the perfection of her patience, the uprightness of her prudence, and that settled confidence which led her to knock at the door of the pacific King, until she obtained for the Church and for Florence, that peace which she so earnestly desired!

Let us now speak of that supreme patience of Catherine, displayed in the long and cruel death that she suffered for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and of his holy Church. Not only she equaled the merits of the Saints, but it also appears to me that she surpassed several among them. The martyrs were tortured by men who sometimes ameliorated their sufferings, or yielded at least to their own weariness; but Catherine was tormented by devils, whose cruelty was insatiable and who never reposed. Some martyrs fought a short time and died in excessive sufferings; Catherine suffered thirteen weeks, from Sexagesima till the last day of April; her torments were incredible, and her anguish increased daily; she supported all these with patience and with holy joy; she thanked God for them, and offered her life to appease his anger, and preserve his Church from scandal. Hence, neither cause, nor suffering was wanting to the perfection of her martyrdom, and in the canonization the process might have been as short and as certain as in the procedures that the Church employs in the canonization of Confessors of the Faith. The witnesses of whom I have spoken in the first Chapter of the the Third Part, may also be invoked for the second and the following Chapters.

All that I have written proves that Catherine, Virgin and Martyr, is worthy of being inscribed by the Church militant in the catalogue of the Saints. . . . May the happiness of eternal life be granted to me and her other spiritual children, by the Eternal Bounty who lives and reigns in his Unity and Trinity, world without end. Amen.

B. From the *Dialogue* of St. Catherine of Sienna

Chapter 11

Such are the fruits of action that I ask of the soul: that virtue should prove itself in response to need. This is what I told you long ago, if you remember, when you wanted to do great penance for me. You said, "What can I do to suffer for you?" And in your mind I answered, "I am one who is pleased by few words and many works." I wanted to show you that I am not much pleased with one who simply shouts, "Lord, Lord, I would like to do

something for you?"¹³³ nor with one who wishes to kill the body with great penances without slaying the selfish will. What I want is many works of patient and courageous endurance and of the other virtues I have described to you—interior virtues that are all active in bearing the fruit of grace.

Actions based on any other principle I would consider a mere “shouting of words.” For these are finite works, and I who am infinite insist upon infinite works, that is, infinitely desirous love. I want works of penance and other bodily practices to be undertaken as means, not as your chief goal. By making them your chief goal you would be giving me a finite thing—like a word that comes out of the mouth and then ceases to exist—unless indeed that word comes out of the soul’s love, which conceives virtue and brings it to birth in truth. I mean that finite works—which I have likened to words—must be joined with loving charity. Such works, undertaken not as your chief goal but as means, and not by themselves but in the company of true discernment, would please me.

It would not be right to make penance or other bodily works either your motivation or your goal, for, as I have already said, they are only finite. They are done in time that comes to an end, and sometimes one has to abandon them or have them taken away. In fact, it would not only not be meritorious but would offend me if you continued in these works when circumstances or obedience to authority made it impossible to do what you had undertaken. So you see how finite they are. Take them up, then, not as your goal but only as they are useful. For if you take them as a goal and then have to abandon them at some point, your soul will be left empty.

This is what the glorious Paul taught when he said in his letter that you should mortify your body and put to death your selfish will. In other words, learn to keep your body in check by disciplining your flesh when it would war against the spirit.¹³⁴ Your selfish will must in everything be slain, drowned, subjected to my will. And the knife that kills and cuts off all selfish love to its foundation in self-will is the virtue of discernment, for when the soul comes to know herself she takes for herself what is her due, hatred and contempt for sin and for her selfish sensuality.

If you act so, you will be my delight, offering me not only words but many works; for, as I have told you, I want few words but many works. I say “many” rather than giving you any number, because when the soul is grounded in charity (which gives life to all the virtues) her desire must reach to the infinite. As for words, I said I want few not because I have no use for them, but to emphasize that any act in itself is finite and can please me only if it is taken as an instrument of virtue and not as virtuous in itself.

Let no one, therefore, make the judgment of considering those great penitents who put much effort into killing their bodies more perfect than those who do less. I have told you that penance is neither virtuous nor meritorious in itself. Were that the case, how unfortunate would be those who for legitimate reasons cannot perform actual works of penance! But the merit of penance rests completely in the power of charity enlightened by true discernment.

I am supreme eternal Truth. So discernment sets neither law nor limit nor condition to the love it gives me. But it rightly sets conditions and priorities of love where other people are concerned. The light of discernment, which is born of charity, gives order to your love for your neighbors. It would not permit you to bring the guilt of sin on yourself to benefit your neighbor. For that love would indeed be disordered and lacking in discernment which would commit even a single sin to redeem the whole world from hell or to achieve one great virtue. No, neither the greatest of virtues nor any service to your neighbor may be bought at the price of sin. The priorities set by holy discernment direct all the soul’s powers to serving me courageously and conscientiously. Then she must love her neighbors with such affection

¹³³ Cf. Mt. 7:21.

¹³⁴ Cf. Ga. 5:17.

that she would bear any pain or torment to win them the life of grace, ready to die a thousand deaths, if that were possible, for their salvation. And all her material possessions are at the service of her neighbors' physical needs. Such is the work of the light of discernment born of charity.

So you see, every soul desirous of grace loves me—as she ought without limit or condition. And with my own infinite love she loves her neighbors with the measured and ordered charity I have described, never bringing on herself the evil of sin in doing good for others. Saint Paul taught you this when he said that charity cannot fully profit others unless it begins with oneself.¹³⁵ For when perfection is not in the soul, whatever she does, whether for herself or for others, is imperfect.

It could never be right to offend me, infinite Good, under the pretext of saving my finite creation. The evil would far outweigh any fruit that might come of it, so never, for any reason, must you sin. True charity knows this, for it always carries the lamp of holy discernment.

Discernment is that light which dissolves all darkness, dissipates ignorance, and seasons every virtue and virtuous deed. It has a prudence that cannot be deceived, a strength that is invincible, a constancy right up to the end, reaching as it does from heaven to earth, that is, from the knowledge of me to the knowledge of oneself, from love of me to love of one's neighbors.¹³⁶ Discernment's truly humble prudence evades every devilish and creaturely snare, and with unarmed hand—that is, through suffering—it overcomes the devil and the flesh. By this gentle glorious light the soul sees and rightly despises her own weakness; and by so making a fool of herself she gains mastery of the world, treading it underfoot with her love, scorning it as worthless.

When the soul has thus conceived virtue in the stirring of her love, and through her neighbors proved it and for their sakes brought it to birth, not all the world can rob her of that virtue. Indeed, persecution only serves to prove it and make it grow. But for that very reason, were the soul's virtue not evident and luminous to others in time of trial, it could not have been conceived in truth; for I have already told you clearly that virtue cannot be perfect or bear fruit except by means of your neighbors. If a woman has conceived a child but never brings it to birth for people to see, her husband will consider himself childless. Just so, I am the spouse of the soul, and unless she gives birth to the virtue she has conceived [by showing it] in her charity to her neighbors in their general and individual needs in the ways I have described, then I insist that she has never in truth even conceived virtue within her. And I say the same of vice: Every one of them is committed by means of your neighbors.

Chapter 104

I have told you, dearest daughter, about two; now I will tell you about the third thing I want you to be careful of. Reprove yourself if ever the devil or your own short-sightedness should do you the disservice of making you want to force all my servants to walk by the same path you yourself follow, for this would be contrary to the teaching given you by my Truth. It often happens, when many are going the way of great penance, that some people would like to make everyone go that very same way. And if everyone does not do so, they are displeased and scandalized because they think these others are not doing the right thing. But you see how deluded they are, because it often happens that those who seem to be doing wrong because they do less penance are actually better and more virtuous, even though they do not perform such great penances, than those who are doing the grumbling.

¹³⁵ The reference is not directly Pauline.

¹³⁶ *Dalla carità mia alla carità del prossimo.*

This is why I told you earlier that if those who eat at the table of penance are not truly humble, and if their penance becomes their chief concern rather than an instrument of virtue, they will often, by this sort of grumbling, sin against their very perfection. So they should not be foolish, but should see that perfection consists not only in beating down and killing the body but in slaying the perverse selfish will. It is by this way of the will immersed in and subjected to my gentle will that you should—and I want you to—want everyone to walk.

This is the lightsome teaching of this glorious Light, by which the soul runs along in love with my Truth and clothed in him. I do not for all that despise penance, for penance is good for beating the body down when it wants to fight against the spirit. Yet I do not want you, dearest daughter, to impose this rule on everyone. For all bodies are not the same, nor do all have the same strong constitution; one is stronger than another. Also, it often happens that any number of circumstances may make it right to abandon the penance one has begun. But if you took penance as your foundation, or made it so for others, that foundation would be weak and imperfect, and the soul would be bereft of consolation and virtue.

Then, when you were deprived of the penance you had loved and taken as your foundation, you would think you had lost me. And thinking you had lost my kindness, you would become weary and very sad, bitter and confused. So you would abandon the exercises and the fervent prayer you had been accustomed to when you were doing your penance. With that penance left behind because of circumstances, prayer simply would not have the same flavor it had for you before.

All this would happen if your foundation were in your love for penance rather than in eager desire for true and solid virtue.

So you see what great evil would follow on taking penance alone for your foundation. You would foolishly fall to grumbling about my servants. And all this would bring you weariness and great bitterness. You would be putting all your effort into mere finite works for me; but I am infinite Good and I therefore require of you infinite desire.

It is right, then, that you should build your foundation by slaying and annihilating your self-will. Then, with your will subjected to mine, you would give me tender, flaming, infinite desire, seeking my honor and the salvation of souls. In this way you would feast at the table of holy desire—a desire that is never scandalized either in yourself or in your neighbors, but finds joy in everything and reaps all the different kinds of fruit that I bestow on the soul.

Not so do the wretched souls who do not follow this teaching, the gentle straight way given by my Truth. In fact, they do the opposite. They judge according to their own blindness and lame vision. They carry on like frantic fools and deprive themselves of the goods of earth as well as those of heaven. And even in this life they have a foretaste of hell.

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

As mentioned in the section of the Particular Directory on prayer, suffrages for the dead “have been a hallowed tradition since Saint Dominic founded the order.” Here we read of the particular suffrages that the Directory specifies.

The Particular Directory of the Western Dominican Province

Appendix A: Suffrages

1. Prayers for the deceased have been a hallowed tradition since Saint Dominic founded the Order. Members are expected to:
 - a. say daily an Our Father, a Hail Mary and Eternal Rest for the deceased members of the Order;

- b. offer at least three Masses a year for all deceased Dominicans;
 - c. have a Mass offered and/or say five decades of the Rosary on the death of a Chapter member;
 - d. commemorate all the faithful departed in a special way on
 - February 7, for the deceased parents of all Dominicans,
 - September 5, for the deceased benefactors of the Order,
 - November 2, for all souls,
 - November 8, for all deceased Dominicans.
2. Upon the death of a member, the Chapter is expected to:
- a. receive from the Moderator / Prior / Prioress notice of the death;
 - b. attend the funeral Mass and recite the appropriate Hour of the Office of the Dead as a Chapter, if possible;
 - c. have a Mass offered as soon as possible for the deceased member;
 - d. recite the appropriate Hour of the Office of the Dead, at the first meeting following the death of a member.

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR B, UNIT I**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: THE LIFE OF ST. DOMINIC

Although the elements of the Christian life are the same for all Christians, every saint emphasizes certain of these elements according to God's particular will for that saint. Some of these saints, founders of religious families, lived the Christian life in a way that is a pattern for all their sons and daughters. This means, of course, that St. Dominic is the exemplar for all Dominicans. In this formation program, we want to focus on the most important aspects of this pattern of life that our father St. Dominic has given us. But before we separate these different aspects and give them each our separate attention, we should see them together in the organic unity that they had for St. Dominic, and that they should have for every Dominican. There is no better way to do this than to study the life of St. Dominic, and we are fortunate to have his biography written by another saint, an eminent scholar, friend and follower of St. Dominic, Blessed Jordan of Saxony, second master general of the Order. Let us remember, however, that we must not only study the life of St. Dominic and strive to be like him. We must develop a friendship with him ourselves, a friendship based on knowledge, love and regular communication in prayer.

THE LIBELLUS OF [BL.] JORDAN OF SAXONY

Prologue to a History of the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers

1. To the sons of grace and co-heirs of glory, all the brethren, Brother Jordan, their unprofitable servant, sends greetings and prays that they may attain joy in their holy Profession.

2. Many of the brethren have requested an account of the beginnings and institutions of this Order of Preachers, through which God's plan has provided against the perils of these latter days, as well as a description of the first brethren of our Order, as to how they grew in number and became strengthened through grace. Recently these matters have been investigated and made known by the brethren who were present from the very beginning and saw and heard, the venerable servant of Christ, Master Dominic, the original founder of this religious order, as well as its first Master and brother, who, while living among sinners in the flesh, conversed piously with God and the angels. He kept the precepts, zealously observed the counsels, served his eternal Creator with all his faculties, and lit up the hideous darkness of this world by his blameless life and the celibacy of very holy fellowship.

3. Therefore, having put all the facts into right order, it has seemed to me fitting to put them down in writing. Although I was not one of the very first brethren, yet I enjoyed their companionship and frequently saw, as well as intimately knew, the Blessed Dominic, both outside and within the Order, since I went to him for confession and, on his advice, accepted the office of deacon and, four years after he had established the Order, I received this habit. It has seemed to me I say, that the things I personally saw and heard, as well as learned from the first brethren, about the life and miracles of this saintly man, our Father Dominic, as well as the lives of certain other brethren, should be set down in writing, as occasion brought them

to the fore of my memory. In this way, the children who will be born and spring up will know about the first beginnings of this Order. Otherwise, as time rolled by, if no one could be found to relate anything definite about these beginnings, their desire to know its history would be frustrated. Therefore, dearly beloved brothers and sons in Christ, since the following facts have been gathered in one way or another for your consolation and edification, accept them in a spirit of devotion and stir up a desire to emulate the first charity of our brethren.

About Diego, Bishop of Osma

4. There lived in Spain a venerable man named Diego, bishop of the church of Osma. The worldly nobility of his birth was crowned by his knowledge of sacred letters and by a signal integrity of virtue. This love for God so completely absorbed him that, abandoning himself and seeking only the things that are Jesus Christ's he turned his mind and effort to one main task, namely, how to become such a dealer in souls as to return to his Master, with manifold interest, the talent entrusted to him. For this purpose he used every available means to draw to himself, wherever they could be found, good and virtuous men whom he endowed with benefices and established in the church which he governed. Those of his own flock who were more inclined to the world than to holiness he persuaded to lead a more devout and virtuous life, and confirmed his words by the example of his own life. Hence it happened that he took pains to urge his canons, by frequent admonitions and salutary exhortations, to agree to observe a canonical religious life under the Rule of St. Augustine. This he did with such fatherly solicitude that, although some were opposed to it, he finally disposed their hearts to his desire.

Blessed Dominic and the Character of His Youth

5. During this time a boy named Dominic was born in this diocese in the town of Caleruega. Before his mother conceived him, she saw in a vision that she would bear in her womb a dog who, with a burning torch in his mouth and leaping from her womb, seemed to set the whole earth on fire. This was to signify that her child would be an eminent preacher who, by "barking" sacred knowledge, would rouse to vigilance souls drowsy with sin, as well as scatter throughout the world the fire which the Lord Jesus Christ came to cast upon the earth. From infancy this child was carefully reared by his parents and a maternal uncle, an archpriest who lost no time training him in the practices of the Church. In this way the child, whom God had destined to be a vessel of election, was from his earliest years pervaded with an odor of holiness which always clung to him.

6. In due time he was sent to Palencia for instruction in the liberal sciences, which flourished there in those days. When he was satisfied that he learned them sufficiently well, he abandoned them for something on which he could more profitably spend his limited time here on earth and turned to the study of theology. Now he began to have a strong savor of the word of God as of something sweeter than honey to his mouth.

7. To these sacred studies he devoted four years, during which he learned, with such continual eagerness, to drink from the streams of Sacred Scripture that, in his untiring desire to learn, he spent his nights with almost no sleep at all and the truth which he heard made its way into the deep recesses of his mind, where it was held fast by his memory. Indeed, the things which he easily understood were watered by the pious bent of his mind and blossomed into salutary works. In this he was blessed, according to the statement of Truth in the Gospel: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." For, whereas there are two ways of keeping God's word, namely, one whereby we store in our memory whatever we hear, and

the other whereby we put into practice what we have heard (and none will deny that the latter is more commendable, inasmuch as it is better to sow grain than to keep it stored in the barn), this happy servant of God failed in neither. His memory, which was a storehouse of divine things, fruitfully spilled out from this to that, and his external words and character clearly bespoke what lay hidden within his sacred breast. Because he embraced the Lord's commandments with such burning love and listened to the Spouse's voice with the very pious approval of his good will, the God of the sciences increased his grace, so that he became able, not only to receive the milk of doctrine, but also to make a deep penetration of difficult questions through the humble understanding of his heart and consume the more solid food of mystery with sufficient ease.

8. From his earliest days he had a good disposition and his infancy augured a greatness which his future would reveal. He did not engage in play or join those who walk in frivolity, but, after the example of gentle Jacob, he avoided the roving of Esau, preferring not to leave the bosom of Mother Church and the familiar tabernacles of a quiet, holy life. You could see at once the child and the man, since the fewness of his years showed his childhood, but his maturity of conduct and firmness of character bespoke the adult man. He eschewed the attractions and follies of the world in order to walk in the perfect way. To the end he kept the bright ornament of virginity unspotted for his Lord, the lover of poverty.

His Mothers Vision During His Childhood

9. Even during Dominic's childhood, God, Who knows the future beforehand, was pleased to intimate that something remarkable was to be expected of this child. In a vision he was shown to his mother as having the moon on his forehead, to signify that he was destined to be a light to the gentiles, to illumine those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, as later events proved.

What He Did for the Poor During a Famine

10. While he was a student at Palencia, a famine arose and almost all Spain was stricken. Being moved with pity for the poor at the sight of their misery, he resolved at once to put into practice our Lord's counsel and do all he could to relieve the wants of the dying poor. He sold all his belongings, even his books, which he very much needed in that city. Establishing a center for almsgiving, he distributed his goods and gave them to the poor. This example so stirred the souls of his fellow-students and masters in theology that, seeing how stingy their own help had been in comparison with this young man's liberality, they began to give alms in greater abundance.

How He was Called to the Church of Osma

11. While this man of God was disposing his heart to ascend step by step and make daily progress from virtue before the eyes of men, among whom he shone as the morning star in the midst of a cloud by reason of his innocent life, reports about him reached the Bishop of Osma, who, after carefully verifying all that he heard, summoned Dominic and made him a Canon Regular of his church.

12. At once he began to shine as a special star among the canons. His humble heart and extraordinary holiness made him an odor of life unto life among them and as sweet-smelling frankincense in summertime. They marveled at his rapid progress in religious observance and made him subprior, so that, from this pinnacle, he might shine before the eyes of all and influence them by his good example. Now, as a fruitful olive-tree and as a cypress rearing itself on high, he frequented the church day and night. He prayed without ceasing and, making use of the leisure afforded for contemplation, he scarcely ever left the monastery

grounds. God gave him the singular gift of weeping for sinners, the wretched, and the afflicted, whose sufferings he felt within his compassionate heart, which poured out its hidden feelings in a shower of tears.

13. It was his custom to spend his night-watches in prayer and, having shut the door, to pray to the Father in secret. At times during his prayer he betrayed the feelings of his heart with groans and sounds which could not be stifled and could be heard from a distance, His frequent and special prayer to God was for the gift of true charity capable of laboring for and procuring the salvation of men, since he deemed that he would be a true member of Christ only when he could devote himself entirely to winning souls, like the Lord Jesus, the Savior of all men, Who offered Himself completely for our salvation. He loved to read the book called the *Conferences of the Fathers*, which deals with vices and with all matters of spiritual perfection. The paths of salvation outlined therein he carefully studied and tried to imitate with all the strength of his soul. Along with the help of grace, this book refined the purity of his conscience, intensified the light of his contemplation, and raised him to a high level of perfection.

How the Bishop of Osma Took a Journey to the Marches

14. While the beauty and embraces of Rachel thus held him captive, Lea took it ill and importuned him to soften the reproach of her bleareyedness by raising up children to her. Thus it happened that Alphonse, King of Castile, was, at that time, making plans for a marriage between his son Ferdinand and a princess of the Marches. He approached the Bishop of Osma and asked that he consent to arrange the matter. The Bishop agreed to the king's request and, since it was fitting that he have a companion suited to his holy state, he took with him the man of God, Dominic, the subprior of his church, and set out on his journey.

15. When they reached Toulouse, they discovered that many of its people had for some time been heretics. Dominic's heart was moved to pity at the great number of souls being so wretchedly deluded. At the inn where they found shelter in Toulouse, Dominic spent the entire night fervently exhorting and zealously arguing with the heretical innkeeper, who, no longer able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke, returned by God's grace to the true faith.

16. They left Toulouse and, after many hardships, reached the place where the girl lived. After explaining their mission and obtaining the consent of the parties concerned, they hurried back and Bishop Diego told the king of their success. Then the king sent him back with a more magnificent retinue, so as to show all possible honor to the girl who would return with them and marry his son. After a strenuous journey, he and Dominic reached the Marches only to learn that the girl had died. However, God had Planned to reap other benefits from this journey, since, as events proved, it paved the way for a more excellent marriage, a union between God and the souls recalled from the errors of their sins to the nuptials of eternal salvation.

How the Bishop of Osma Visited the Pope and What They Discussed

17. After sending the news to the king by messenger, the Bishop, taking advantage of this opportunity, went with his clerics to the Roman Curia. When he saw the Supreme Pontiff, the Lord Innocent, he at once begged of him, if it were possible, permission to resign; he alleged that he had too many shortcomings and that the immense dignity of the office was far above him. He intimated to the Supreme Pontiff, also, that his heart's desire was to convert the Cumans, on whose behalf he would like to labor diligently, if his resignation were accepted.

But the Pope did not grant these petitions, or even the further request that he be allowed to remain a bishop while permitted to enter Cuman territory and preach. Thus, by God's hidden design, the labors of this saintly man were being reserved for an entirely different harvest.

How This Bishop Took the Cistercian Habit

18. On his return journey, he visited a Cistercian monastery where he observed the life of many servants of God. Attracted by the loftiness of the religious state, he took the monk's habit and, accompanied by many of the monks under whose instruction he would learn their type of life, he began his journey to Spain. But at that time he little knew the obstacles God would put in his way before he would reach his destination.

The Advice He Gave to Those Sent by the Pope

19. At the time the Lord Pope Innocent had directed twelve abbots of the Cistercian Order to take each a companion and preach the faith against the Albigensian heretics. Thereupon the abbots held a council with the archbishops, bishops, and other prelates of that region to discuss the most suitable means of fruitfully fulfilling the mission now entrusted to them.

20. During these discussions, the Bishop of Osma happened to reach Montpellier, where the council was being held. He was received with honor and was invited to give his advice, since they knew that he was a saintly man, mature and just, and zealous for the faith. But, being circumspect and versed in God's ways, he began to inquire about the ceremonies and customs of the heretics. Then he commented that the methods these heretics were using to convert souls of their perfidy by persuasion, preaching, and the example of their false holiness were in striking contrast to the stylish and expensive carriages and furnishing displayed by those who had been sent. "This is not the way, my brethren, this is not the way for you to proceed. I do not think it possible, by words alone, to lead back to the faith such men as are better attracted by example. Look at the heretics! While they make a pretense at piety, while they give counterfeit examples of evangelical poverty and austerity, they win the simple people to their ways. Therefore, if you come with less poverty and austerity, you will give hardly any edification, you will cause much harm, and You will fail utterly of your objective. Match steel with steel, rout false holiness with the true religion, because the arrogance of these false apostles must be overthrown by genuine humility. Was this not the way whereby Paul became unwise, namely, by enumerating his true virtues and recounting his austerities and dangers, in order to burst the bubble of those who boasted about the merits of their holy lives?" So they asked him, "What is your advice, then, good Father?" and he answered, "Do what I am about to do." And the spirit of the Lord entering into him, he called the men he had with him and sent them and his carriages and furnishings back to Osma, and kept only a few clerics as his companions. After that he announced that his present intention was to spend some time in that region to spread the faith.

21. Among those the Bishop kept with him was the subprior Dominic, whom he regarded highly and loved greatly. This was Brother Dominic, the founder of the Order of Preachers and its first friar, who, from that moment, began to be called, not subprior, but Brother Dominic. He was a true Dominic "man of the Lord", protected by the Lord, innocent of sin; a true man of the Lord, adorned with every virtue of the Lord.

22. After the abbots who had been sent heard this advice and saw the example set by the Bishop, they agreed with him and sent back each to his own monastery whatever seemed superfluous, keeping only the books they would need for the divine office, study, and disputations. Taking the Bishop as their superior and head of the whole affair, they began to

go on foot without purse and, in voluntary poverty, to preach the faith. When the heretics saw this, they, too, began to preach more vigorously.

23. Then public disputations refereed by approved judges were frequently held at Pamiers, Lavaur, Montreal, and Fanjeaux. On established days these were attended by rulers and magistrates and their wives, as well as by all of the common people who wanted to attend a disputation of the faith.

24. One day a famous disputation was being held at Fanjeaux and a large number of the faithful and unbelievers had gathered. Many of the former had written their own books containing arguments and authorities in support of the faith. After these books had been inspected, the one written by Blessed Dominic was commended above the others and unanimously accepted. Accordingly, his book and that produced by the heretics were presented to three judges chosen with the assent of both sides, with the understanding that the side whose book was chosen as the more reasonable defense should be regarded as having the superior faith.

25. After much wrangling, the judges came to no decision. Then they decided to cast both books into a fire and, if either of them was not burned, it would be held as containing the true faith. So they built a huge fire and cast the books therein. The heretical book was immediately consumed by the fire, but the one written by the man of God, Dominic, not only escaped burning, but, in the sight of all, leaped far from the fire. For a second and a third time, it was cast into the fire, but each time it leaped back and thereby openly testified to the truth of its doctrine and the holiness of the person who had written it.

26. Now such a splendor of character was evident in the man of God, Bishop Diego, that he won the love of the unbelievers and so influenced the hearts of all among whom he lived that the heretics said of him that it would be impossible for such a man not to have been predestined to life and that he had possibly been sent to their region for no purpose other than to bring them to an understanding of the true faith.

A Monastery for Sisters is Founded at Prouille

27. In order to give assistance to certain women of the nobility whose parents were led by poverty to give them over to the heretics for training and support, he established a monastery between Fanjeaux and Montreal in a place called Prouille. There, to this day, handmaids of Christ give a pleasing service to their Creator. By the vigor of their holiness and the noble purity of their innocence, they lead a life which is of spiritual benefit to themselves, a source of edification to men, a joy to the angels, and a pleasure to God.

The Return of the Bishop of Osma to Spain and His Death

28. Bishop Diego spent two years preaching in this region. Then, for fear that he could be accused of neglecting his own church at Osma if he remained longer, he decided to go back to Spain where he could visit his church, collect enough money to finish the abovementioned monastery of women, and return. After that, he planned, with the Pope's approval, to ordain, in that region, men capable of preaching, whose duty it would be to hammer away at the errors of the heretics and protect the true faith.

29. Before leaving, he entrusted the spiritual care of those who remained to Brother Dominic as to one truly filled with the spirit of God. To William Claret of Pamiers he entrusted the care of temporal matters, with the understanding that he must give to Brother Dominic an account of all his transactions. Then he bade farewell to the brethren.

30. After traveling through Castile on foot, he reached Osma. But within a few days he became sick and completed his earthly life in great holiness, reaping the glorious fruit of his good works and entering for a rich repose. It is related that, after his death, he became renowned for his miracles. However, it is not surprising that such power to work wonders should be given by the all-powerful God to one who, during his sojourn in this weak and sorrowful life, was known for his marvelous graces and splendid virtues.

The Return of Those Whom the Pope Had Sent into Albigensian Territory

31. When most of those who had remained in Toulouse learned that this man of God had died, they returned to their monasteries. Only Brother Dominic remained and continued preaching, and, although some of the others remained with him for a while, they were not yet bound to him by any ties of obedience. Among them was William Claret and another Brother Dominic of Spain, who later became prior at Manino in Spain.

The Preaching of a Crusade against the Albigensians

32. After the death of the Bishop of Osma, a crusade began to be preached against the Albigensians in France. This move was taken by Pope Innocent, who decided that, if the rebellious spirit of the heretics could not be tamed by the pious measures of truth or pierced by the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, then at least they would respect the power of the material sword.

33. Resort to material force had already been predicted by Bishop Diego. On one occasion, when he had publicly and clearly refuted the error of the heretics in the Presence of an assembly of nobles, and they had mockingly defended their subverters with sacrilegious excuses, he raised his hands to heaven and said, "Lord, put forth thy hand and touch them." Those who heard him speak these words in the spirit recalled them later, when tribulations finally brought them to understand their meaning.

The Injustices Inflicted upon Him by the Heretics in Albigensian Territory

34. During this crusade, Brother Dominic zealously continued to preach the word of God until the death of the Count de Montfort. How many insults he endured from the impious in those days? How many snares he removed? On one occasion, when they threatened to kill him, he calmly answered, "I am not worthy of the martyr's glory; as yet I haven't merited such a death." Some time later, as he neared a place in which he suspected traps had been laid for him, he started to sing and walked by fearlessly. When the heretics learned of this, they marveled at his courage and asked him, "Aren't you afraid of death? What would you have done if we had captured you?" His only answer was, "I would have asked you not to kill me all at once, but to cut me up member by member, so as to give me a lingering martyrdom. Then, before you plucked out my eyes, I would ask you to hold before me each part you had cut from my body. After all that, you could let the rest of my body roll about in its own blood or you could kill me altogether." Astounded by these words, the enemies of truth no longer laid snares for him or hunted for the soul of the just man whom they would help rather than hurt, if they killed him. But, with all his power and zeal he continued to busy himself winning as many souls as he could for Christ, since his heart was filled with an admirable and almost incredible desire for the salvation of all men.

How He offered to Sell Himself to Help Someone

35. He was not lacking in that charity greater than which no man hath that he lay down his life for his friends. Once he was exhorting an unbeliever to return to the bosom of Mother Church and the latter pleaded that temporal necessity bound him to the heretics, who gave

him all he needed for a living, because he could not get them in any other way. Deeply moved by compassion for this man, Dominic resolved to sell himself and use the money to relieve the poverty of this soul. And he would have done so, had not the Lord, who is rich towards all, provided another means of supplying that man's needs.

36. The servant of God, Dominic, grew in virtue and reputation to such a degree that he aroused the envy of the heretics. The kinder he was, the more difficult it became for their weak eyes to withstand the rays of his light. So they mocked and laughed at those who followed him, thereby bringing forth evil from the evil treasure of their hearts. But, although the unbelievers ridiculed him, he was consoled by the devotion of the faithful and was held in such loving veneration by all the Catholics that his delightful holiness and beautiful character stirred even the hearts of the nobles, and he was held in honor by the archbishops, bishops, and other prelates of that region.

37. Then it was that the Count de Montfort, who cherished him with special devotion, gave a remarkable fortress called Casseneuve to Dominic and the followers who helped him in the work of salvation he had undertaken. In addition to this, Brother Dominic had the church at Fanjeaux and other places from which he could derive enough to sustain himself and his followers. Whatever they could afford from these revenues they gave to the sisters of the monastery at Prouille, since the Order of Preachers had not yet been instituted; only the plans of its institution had been laid, although Dominic himself persisted in the work of preaching. Furthermore, they were not yet following what would later be part of their constitutions, namely, not to accept possessions or keep those already accepted. Thus, from the time of the Bishop of Osma's death until the Lateran Council, almost ten years went by, during which time he was practically alone in this work.

The First Brethren Offering Themselves to Brother Dominic

38. At the very time when the bishops began to arrive in Rome for the Lateran Council, two good and worthy men of Toulouse offered themselves to Brother Dominic. One was Brother Peter of Seila, later the prior at Limoges; the other was Brother Thomas, a very gracious and eloquent man. The former of these, Brother Peter, gave Brother Dominic and his companions the tall, stone houses he owned ... near the village of Narbonne. And, so, for the first time, they began to live together at Toulouse in the same houses. From then on, all who were gathered there began to grow more and more in humility and to live according to the customs of religious.

The Revenues from Which They Obtained Food and Other Necessities

39. Then the Bishop of Toulouse, Foulques, of happy memory, who tenderly loved Brother Dominic, the delight of God and men, took note of the religious devotion of these brethren and of the grace and fervor in their preaching. So much did he rejoice at the coming of this fresh light that, with the consent of his chapter, he conferred upon them a sixth of all the tithes of his diocese and, with this, they were able to provide themselves with books and other necessities of life.

How Master Dominic Went to the Pope With the Bishop of Toulouse

40. This same bishop took Brother Dominic as his companion to the council and, together, they besought the Lord Pope Innocent to confirm Brother Dominic and his companions in an Order which would be called and would be an Order of Preachers, as well as to ratify the revenues already assigned to the brethren by the Count and the Bishop.

41. After listening to this request, the head of the Roman See urged Brother Dominic to return to his brethren and, after a full discussion with them on the matter of unanimously accepting an already approved rule, the Bishop should assign them a church. After that, he was to return and get the Pope's approval of their work.

42. Accordingly, after the council, Dominic returned to Toulouse and, calling the brethren together, he notified them of the Lord Pope's wishes. Now the future preachers chose the Rule of St. Augustine, who had been an outstanding preacher, and added to it some stricter details about food and fasts, as well as about bedding and clothing. They agreed, also, to hold no possessions, lest concern about temporal things be an obstacle to their office of preaching, but would remain content with their revenue.

43. Along with this, the Bishop of Toulouse, with the consent of his chapter, assigned them three churches: one within the city, another in the village of Parniers, and a third between Sorèze and Puylaurens, called the Church of St. Mary of Lescure. A convent and priory were to be attached to each of these churches.

The First Church Conferred on the Brethren at Toulouse

44. During the summer of 1216 the brethren received the first church in the city of Toulouse, which had been built in honor of St. Romain. None of the brethren had ever lived in either of the other two churches. But in the church of St. Romain they built an enclosure, above which were cells for study and sleep. At that time the brethren numbered about sixteen.

Death of Lord Innocent and Elevation of Pope Honorius, Who Confirm the Order

45. In the meantime, the Lord Pope Innocent died and was succeeded by Honorius, upon whom Dominic called at once in order to present the plan and organization agreed upon for his Order. From him he obtained full and complete confirmation of the Order and of everything else he requested.

Count de Montfort's Death, Which Had Been Foretold to Master Dominic

46. In 1217 the people of Toulouse rose up against Count de Montfort. We can suppose that the man of God, Dominic, had been informed of this in the spirit, some time earlier, for, in a vision, he had been shown a tree, majestic in height and beautiful in appearance, in whose branches a large number of birds dwelt. The tree was cut down and the birds nesting in it flew away. From this the man full of God's spirit understood that the Count de Montfort, the great and noble prince and protector of many orphans, was about to be struck down by death.

47. After invoking the Holy Spirit, [Dominic] assembled the brethren and announced that, in spite of their small number, his heart's desire was to send them throughout the whole world and that they would no longer live together in their present abode. Although they were all surprised at the announcement of this unexpected plan, yet, because his evident authority of holiness animated them, they easily agreed to it in the hope that it would result in a good purpose.

48. He proposed, also, that they elect one of their number to be an abbot who would rule the others as their superior and head, with the understanding that Dominic reserved to himself the right of correcting him. Accordingly, Brother Matthew was canonically elected abbot. He was the first and last one to be called an abbot in this Order, since later the brethren, to show their humility, were pleased to have the superior called, not "abbot," but "Master of the Order."

The Brethren Sent To Spain

49. In keeping with his plan, four brothers were sent to Spain: Brother Peter of Madrid, Brother Gomez, Brother Michael of Uzero, and Brother Dominic. The latter two were sent later by Master Dominic to Bologna from Rome, whither they had returned from Spain, since they could not bear the fruit they desired in Spain, although the other two made abundant progress in spreading the word of God. This other Brother Dominic was remarkable for his humility, and, though not unusually learned, was rich in virtue. It will not be out of place to tell something about him.

How This Brother Dominic Overcame a Temptation

50. Not without the possible connivance of some of his enemies, it came about that a bold and wanton woman, an instrument of Satan, an obstacle to chastity, and a tinder-box of vices, came to him under the pretense of going to confession and said, "I am overcome by a burning desire for a certain person, but alas he does not know me, and, even if he did, he would not consent to me. My love for him has wounded my heart beyond repair. Please, I beg you, give your advice and the remedy to one who is perishing, for you are the one who can." As this lewd woman continued thus to entice him with these poisonous words and would not be diverted from her purpose in spite of his dissuasions, he perceived the very cause of danger and she admitted that it was for him that she was consumed. "Go, but come back later," he said; "in the meantime I shall prepare a place where we can meet without risk." Then he lit two fires very close to each other in the place agreed upon and, when the woman returned, he cast himself between the fires and urged her to come. "Look," he said, "I have prepared a suitable place for our sin." But she became terrified at seeing him hurl himself nonchalantly between the two raging fires and hurried away screaming and repentant. Then he arose, unaffected by the heat of the material fire or the lustful temptation.

The First Brethren Sent to Paris

51. Brother Matthew, who had been elected abbot, was sent to Paris with Brother Bertrand, who later became prior provincial of the province. The latter was a man of great holiness and inflexible severity with himself, for he was unyielding in mortifying his flesh and had reproduced in himself the form and image of Master Dominic, whom he accompanied on some of his journeys. These two, then, were heading for Paris with letters from the Supreme Pontiff to make the Order known. With them came two other brethren for the purpose of study, namely, Brother John of Navarre and Brother Lawrence of England. Before they reached Paris, many things touching on the future of the brethren at Paris, namely, the place and size of their houses and the reception of many brethren, were revealed to Lawrence by our Lord. These brethren were soon followed by another group composed of Brother Mannes (blood-brother of Master Dominic), Brother Michael of Spain, and a lay brother from Normandy having the name of Oderic.

52. All of these had been sent to Paris, but the last three arrived first and entered the city on September 12, [1217], three weeks ahead of the others. Here they rented a house near the Hospice of Blessed Virgin Mary close to the residence of the Bishop of Paris.

The House of Saint-Jacques

53. In the year of Our Lord, 1218, the house of Saint Jacques was given to the Order, although not unconditionally as yet, by Master John, dean of St. Quentin, and by the University of Paris, at the urging of Pope Honorius. They first occupied it on August 6th.

54. This same year a number of young brothers and simple clerics were sent to Orleans. They were the seed from which a rich harvest was to grow later.

The First Brethren Sent to Bologna

55. Near the beginning of that same year, Master Dominic sent brethren from Rome to Bologna. These were Brother John of Navarre and, later on, Brother Christian and a lay brother. During their stay in Bologna they endured great distress from poverty.

The Miraculous Reception of Master Reginald by Master Dominic in Rome

56. This same year, while Master Dominic was in Rome, Master Reginald, dean of St. Aignan in Orleans, arrived in the Eternal City en route to a journey across the sea. He was a man renowned for his knowledge and celebrated for his authority, especially in Canon Law, which he had skillfully taught at Paris for five years. In Rome he fell gravely ill and was visited a number of times by Master Dominic, who persuaded him to imitate the poverty of Christ and join the Order. The result was that he freely and fully bound himself by vow to enter this religious state.

57. After that, he recovered from his serious illness, but only in virtue of a miracle occurring after his condition had become desperate. For during the height of one of his fevers the Queen of Heaven and Mother of Mercy, the Virgin Mary, visibly appeared to him and anointed his eyes, nose, ears, mouth, chest, hands, and feet with a soothing ointment and said these words, 'I anoint your feet with a holy oil in preparation for the gospel of peace.' Then she showed him the complete habit of this Order. At once he became well and so sudden was his cure that the physicians, who had almost given up all hope, were at a loss to explain his evident recovery. This miracle was later revealed by Master Dominic to many who are still living, and I myself was present when he once related it to a group assembled for a conference in Paris.

How Master Reginald Crossed the Sea and Later Returned to Bologna, Where His Preaching Brought Many to the Order

58. After being restored to health, Master Reginald, although now bound to the Order by profession, was able to fulfill his desire and cross the sea. After his return, he went to Bologna on December 21, [1218], where he dedicated himself entirely to preaching. His was a burning eloquence and his talks so inflamed the hearts of all his hearers that even the most hardened could not escape his warmth. All Bologna was astir, because a new Elias seemed to have arisen. During these days he received many of its citizens into the Order and the number of disciples began to grow.

Master Dominic's Journey to Spain and His Return

59. That same year Master Dominic arrived in Spain, where he restored two houses: one at Madrid, which is now used by nuns, and the other Segovia, which had been the first house of the brethren in Spain. He left Spain and reached Paris in 1219, where he found that the number of brethren had now grown to thirty.

60. After a brief stay in Paris, he set out for Bologna. Here, at St. Nicholas', he found a large group of brethren being nourished in the discipline of Christ under the diligent care of Brother Reginald. They all received him with joy and treated him with the respect accorded to a father. He remained there for a while to direct the growth of these tender plants with spiritual exhortations and example.

He Sends Master Reginald to Paris

61. While at Bologna, he transferred Brother Reginald to Paris, much to the dismay of those children whom he had so recently begotten in Christ through the word of the Gospel and who wept at being so suddenly snatched from the breasts of their accustomed mother.

62. But all this was being done under divine influence. Indeed, Master Dominic's practice of sending brethren here and there into various parts of God's Church, as noted above, was so remarkable for the confident and unhesitating manner with which it was done, even against the advice of some who deemed it unfeasible, that he seemed to be sure of the future or to have a mind which was being guided by a special revelation. And who can deny this, when one considers that the few brethren he had in the beginning were, for the most part, simple men of ordinary learning? To the children of this world, who judge according to their own prudence, the practice of dispersing these brethren in small groups throughout the Church seemed to presage failure, rather than success, for his venture. Nevertheless, the ones he sent he aided with his prayers, and the Lord's power was present to make them increase.

Master Reginald's Arrival in Paris and His Death

63. Accordingly, Brother Reginald, of happy memory, reached Paris and, by word and example, applied himself with unremitting zeal to preaching Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. But God soon took him from this life after a brief period of great accomplishment. He was suddenly laid low by a sickness which proved fatal, and he died in the Lord. While he lived, he showed himself a champion of poverty and lowliness, which he exchanged for the glorious riches of the house of God. He was buried in the Church of St. Mary of the Fields, since the brethren had not yet acquired a burial place of their own.

Blessed Reginald's Remark on How Pleased He was With the Order

64. Even now I recall how Brother Matthew, who had known him as a renowned, but fastidious person in the world, once asked him, "Have you ever regretted putting on this habit, Master Reginald?" To this he gave the modest reply, "I do not consider myself worthy of anything in this Order, for I have been nothing but pleased with it."

A Vision After His Death.

65. On the very night when the soul of this saintly man returned to its Lord, I seemed to see a group of the brethren being conducted through the midst of the sea in a ship. After a while the ship sank, but they reached the shore safely. At the time I was not yet wearing the habit of the Order, although I had made my profession into Master Reginald's hands. But in looking back, I deem that the ship was Brother Reginald, whom the brethren of his time considered to be the bearer of their burdens.

Another Vision

66. Before Master Reginald's death, another person had a vision of a clear fountain drying up and, in its place, two other fountains suddenly gushing forth. Whether this vision meant anything I do not presume to say, since I know that, at Paris, Master Reginald received the profession of only two persons. Of these I was the first; the other was Brother Henry, who later became prior at Cologne. I recall seeing none in this life more gracious than Brother Henry, a true vessel of honor and of grace whom I hold dearer than any other mortal. Perhaps it will not be too much to describe the virtue of this man, who made such rapid progress in perfection that he has already entered into the rest of the Lord.

Brother Henry: How and Where He Was Educated

67. This Brother Henry, then, was well-born according to worldly standards and, at an early age, became a canon in the church of Utrecht. Here he was carefully educated during his

boyhood in the teaching and fear of the Lord by a holy and very religious canon of that Church. For while this same good and just man was crucifying his own flesh in order to resist the attractions of this world and to lay up a treasure in heaven, he was training the tender soul of Henry in all the works of virtue by making him wash the feet of the poor, frequent the church, abhor vice, despise luxury, and love purity. And he, being a well-gifted lad, showed himself quick to learn and easy to train in virtue. As a result, his moral growth kept pace with his years so well that, had you lived with him, you would have regarded him as an angel and credited him with an innate holiness.

68. In due time, he came to Paris and applied himself at once to the study of theology, for he had a penetrating and well-ordered mind. He and I shared lodgings at Paris and this companionship united our hearts in a strong and pleasant friendship.

69. During this time, Brother Reginald, of happy memory, came to Paris to preach. As I listened to him, God's grace moved me and I vowed inwardly to enter that Order, for I was convinced that, for me it was the sure road to salvation upon which I had often reflected, even before I knew any of the brethren. After I was satisfied that my resolve was firm, I began to consider how I might induce the companion and friend of my soul to make a like vow, since it was plain to me that he was endowed by nature and by grace for the ministry of preaching. Although he rejected the idea, I continued to press him.

70. At least he agreed to make his confession to Brother Reginald and take his advice. When he returned, he opened the Book of Isaias at random, and his eyes fell on the passage: "The Lord hath given me a learned tongue that I should know how to uphold by word him that is weary. He awaketh in the morning, in the morning he awakeneth my ear that I may hear him as a master. The Lord God hath opened my ear and I do not resist: I have not gone back." These words of the prophet, I explained to him, were like a voice from heaven describing his talents, since his was a remarkable eloquence. I, therefore, urged him to submit himself to the yoke of obedience. Further on we read the passage: "Let us stand together," as though we were being counseled never to desert each other in this splendid kind of society.

71. Later on, when I was at Bologna and he at Cologne, he recalled this occasion and wrote to me: "Where, now, is our 'Let us stand together,' you at Bologna and I at Cologne?" But I wrote him: "What, may I ask, is more meritorious or more calculated to enrich our crown than to spurn this life for the love of Christ by sharing the poverty which He showed in Himself and which His apostles observed?" [Before entering the Order, however,] he was convinced in mind, but his slothful resistant will inclined him not to enter.

How Henry's Will Was Moved

72. Therefore, that same night we went to the church of the Blessed Virgin for Matins and remained until dawn, praying and entreating the Mother of the Lord to have his will bent in line with his convictions. But when it seemed to him that his prayers would be of no avail and he could still feel his hardness of heart, he began to pity himself and said, "O Blessed Virgin, I now see that you shall not hear me. There is no place for me among the poor of Christ." For he did have a genuine desire for that perfection which he knew could be found in voluntary poverty, because he had once been instructed by the Lord how secure poverty would make him before the strict judge.

73. For he once imagined himself before the tribunal of Christ and saw a large multitude of those waiting to be judged and those who were judging with Christ. As he waited, he felt secure and innocent of any crime, until one of the judges pointed to him and said, "You, what

have you ever done for the Lord?" This stern examination terrified him, for he had no answer to give. Then the vision left him. From then on he would have sought the heights of voluntary poverty, if his reluctant will could be turned.

74. But, as I said, he was walking to the door of the church reproaching himself, when the foundations of his heart were shaken by Him Who hath regard to the humble. Tears came to his eyes and a new resolve to his spirit. He began to pour out his soul to the Lord, so that all its hardness was crushed by the fervor of his spirit. Then the sweet yoke of Christ, which, before, seemed unbearable, but now purified at the presence of the oil, became light and pleasant. He arose in the spirit of that fervor and went straight way to Brother Reginald, before whom he made a vow. After that he came to me with the tears still on his angelic face. When I asked him where he had been, he answered, "I have vowed a vow to the Lord and I will pay it." But we delayed our novitiate until Lent. In the meanwhile we gained one of our companions, Brother Leo, who later succeeded Brother Henry as prior.

The Entrance of Brothers Jordan, Henry and Leo

75. On Ash Wednesday, when the imposition of ashes reminds the faithful of their origin from and return to dust, we decided that a suitable way to begin the season of penance would be to fulfill the vow we had made to the Lord. Now none of our companions where we lived knew of our plan. So when Brother Henry left his lodgings and one of his companions asked him where he was going, he answered, "To Bethany." He did not understand what Henry meant, but later on he did, when he saw Henry enter Bethany, which means "the house of obedience." The three of us met at Saint-Jacques and, while the brethren were chanting "*Immutemus habitu,*" we presented ourselves before them, much to their surprise, and, putting off the old man, we put on the new, thus suiting our actions to what they were singing.

76. After Brother Henry's induction, the holy man who had trained him, together with two other good spiritual men of the same church, was much disturbed. These three had a deep love for Henry and, knowing nothing of the Order he had entered, they were worried about the welfare of the young man for whom they had great hopes. Accordingly they had just about decided that one of them would go to Paris to save him from this indiscretion and bring him back. But one of them said, "Let's not be hasty. Tonight, as we are praying, we can ask the Lord to make known His will in the matter." And so that night, as they prayed, one of them heard a voice from on high that said, "It has been done by the Lord and cannot be changed." Thus assured, they worried no more but, instead, wrote to him at Paris encouraging him to persevere confidently and describing the manner and order of this revelation. I myself read their kind, gentle letter so filled with piety.

77. This is the Brother Henry whom the Lord blessed with such marvelous grace in his talks to the clergy of Paris and whose moving eloquence pierced the hearts of his audience. As far as I can recall, the clergy of Paris had never before witnessed so young, so forceful and so polished a preacher.

78. The God of all graces had endowed the vessel of election with many signal virtues. He was prompt in his obedience, firm in his patience, gentle in his meekness, pleasant in his gaiety, and diffuse in his charity. Nor did he lack nobility of character, sincerity of heart, and virginal purity; indeed, through his entire life, he neither looked at or touched a woman for an unchaste motive. His manner of conversation was modest, his tongue eloquent, his mind penetrating, his countenance pleasing, his bearings graceful, his style of writing smooth, his dictation skillful, and the melody of his voice was that of an angel. He was never seen to be

sad or disturbed, but always calm and cheerful. Justice had freed him of all severity and hardness, and mercy claimed him as her own. He was so amiable towards everyone and could so easily win hearts that, if you conversed with him but for a little while, you would feel that there was none he liked more than you. Since God had poured out His grace upon him, it was not strange that everyone was attracted to him. He excelled everyone in all qualities I have mentioned; yet he did not permit himself to become puffed up, for he had learned from Christ to be meek and humble of heart.

Brother Henry's Mission to Cologne

79. In time he was sent to be prior at Cologne. How rich was the harvest of virgins and widows and true penitents that his continual preaching reaped for Christ, and how carefully he kindled in many hearts the fire which the Lord had come to cast upon the earth, all of Cologne is still a witness. He preached that, since the name of Jesus is the name above all names, it is most worthy of all reverence and adoration, so that even today, when this name is pronounced in prayer or in preaching, many devout hearts are aroused to show some sign of reverence.

Brother Henry's Death

80. At length his life drew to a close and he shut his eyes in the Lord as his brethren prayed. Before his death, while the ceremonies of Extreme Unction were being held, he recited the litanies and prayers along with the brethren. When these were finished, he spoke to them with such tender devotion that they wept. Who can count the tears shed at his death, or the weeping and sobbing of widows and virgins, the sighs of his brethren and friends!

81. Many other things about him come to mind, but I shall confine myself to just one of the many things which occurred after his death and were told to me under the truth of confession and by holy and trustworthy persons.

82. There lived in the city of Cologne a saintly woman who loved Brother Henry with a tender devotion and had once asked him to promise that, should he precede her in death, he would appear to her. He agreed on condition that God so willed. After Henry's death, she waited eagerly and longingly to see him, especially since she was being troubled by a temptation from the devil, who caused her to have grave doubts about whether the souls of the dead continued to live after this life or returned to nothing. But, in spite of her hopeful longing, he did not appear. Then she suffered a grievous temptation and said in her heart, "Surely if there were any truth in what we have been told about the future life, the one whom I venerated with such affection would by now have answered me."

83. As she grew increasingly weary of heart under these trials, Brother Henry appeared to a certain religious man. "Go to this woman," he said, calling her by a name the man had not known was hers, for, until Brother Henry explained otherwise, he had assumed that the name her family had used out of endearment ever since her childhood was her baptismal name. "Go to her," he said, "and, when you greet her for me, say to her, 'Such and such works you have been accustomed to doing, do them no longer, but, from now on, do this!'" The works he referred to were so secret that none but she knew of them. Then that good man noticed a bright and gleaming jewel on Henry's breast and, behind him, a wall inlaid with precious stones. As he contemplated them, he asked, "My Lord, what does that bright jewel on your breast mean, and this precious wall?" But he answered, "This jewel signifies the purity of heart which I observed in the world; when I look at it, it affords me great consolation. This wall is the part of the Lord's palace I built during my life by counseling, by preaching, and by hearing confessions." Then the Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven and Mother of Mercy,

appeared. As she drew near, Brother Henry said to the man, “This is Our Lady, the Mother of the Savior; it was she who chose me for her servant. Think how refreshing it is to be in her company.” With that he joined her and departed.

84. Then that good man went to the woman and told her everything, especially the secret works the very mention whereof would prove the truth of his appearance. This news brought her great consolation and relief from her severe trials.

85. But she was to be much more consoled by something she herself experienced later. For one day, as she was reclining on a chair in her room piously re-reading the letters Brother Henry had written her at various times, her eyes fell upon the words: “Recline upon the sweet breast of Jesus to satisfy the thirst of your soul.” Moved at the memory of these words as though he were still alive and speaking them in her presence, she was rapt in spirit and saw herself standing at one side near the heart of Jesus and Brother Henry at the other. During this rapture she enjoyed so deep and marvelous a draught of divine consolation that she became completely inebriated by it. And when her maid-servants came and shouted for her to come and eat, because her husband was waiting for her at the table, she heard nothing, until she awakened from this joyful intoxication of spirit and returned to her senses. Having completed this digression on Brother Henry, let us continue.

The First Chapter at Bologna

86. In the year of our Lord 1220, the first general chapter of this Order was held at Bologna, and I was sent from Paris with three brethren to attend, for Master Dominic had written that the Paris house was to send four brethren to the Bologna Chapter. At that time I had not yet been two months in the Order.

87. During this chapter, it was decreed, by the general consent of the brethren, that a general chapter would be held at Bologna one year and at Paris the next, but that the one scheduled for the coming year would be at Bologna. It was decided, too, that our brethren would no longer retain any possessions or revenues, not even what they now held in the Toulouse area. Many other constitutions still in vogue today, too, were formulated.

Brother Jordan’s Appointment as Prior of Lombardy; Brethren Sent to England

88. In 1221 the general chapter at Bologna appointed me first prior of the Lombardy Province, even though I had been in the Order only one year and my roots were not so firmly planted as they should have been, for I ought to have learned to rule my own imperfection before being set over others. This was also the chapter which sent a group of brethren, with Brother Gilbert, as Prior, to England. I was not present at this chapter.

Brother Everard, Archdeacon at Lyons

89. About this time, the Paris priory welcomed Brother Everard, a man of great virtue, indefatigable labor, and remarkable prudence. Since he had enjoyed such great prestige, his decision to assume a life of poverty edified everyone who had known him in the world.

90. Since he wanted to see Master Dominic, whom he seemed to love with tender affection, he traveled with me to Lombardy. Bearing in his body the poor and needy Christ, he preached at all the places we traversed in France and Burgundy where he had been known at one time or another. But he fell sick and, at Lausanne, where he had once been elected bishop but refused, his sojourn in this miserable vale of tears came to a sudden, but very happy end.

91. Shortly before his death, when his physicians were sure that the end was imminent, but would not tell him, he said to me, “If the physicians think I am going to die, why don’t they tell me? Let them hide the news of death from those who find it unpleasant to face. I am not afraid to die. Death holds no terrors for a person consoled by the thought that, if the earthly home of this wretched flesh is destroyed, he will receive an eternal home not made by hands, in heaven.” And so he died, commending his body to the earth and his spirit to its Creator. To me a marvelous indication of his happy death was that, instead of being depressed in spirit and sad of heart, I experienced a feeling of fervor and gaiety, as though being instructed by my soul not to mourn for one who had entered into his joy.

The Death of Master Dominic

92. Meanwhile, at Bologna, Master Dominic’s pilgrimage on this earth was drawing to a close and he became seriously ill. On his deathbed he summoned twelve of the more prudent brethren and, after exhorting them to be zealous in promoting the Order and persevering in holiness, he warned them against any questionable association with women, especially the young, whose attractions can be a snare for souls not solidly rooted in purity. “Behold,” he said, “up to this hour the grace of God has kept my flesh unsullied; yet I confess to not escaping the fault that talks with young women affected my heart more than conversations with those who were older.”

93. Before his death he also assured his brethren that he would be of more benefit to them after death than in life, for he knew the one to whom he had entrusted the treasure of his labors and fruitful life. As for the rest, he was certain that there was laid up for him a crown of justice which would increase his power to obtain requests the more firmly it rooted him in the Lord’s power.

94. As a result of fever and dysentery, he grew weaker and weaker, until, at last, that pious soul departed from its body and returned to the Lord, Who had given it. In return for a mournful dwelling, he received the eternal consolation of a home in heaven.

The Vision Brother Guala Saw at the Hour of His Death

95. On the very day and hour that Master Dominic died, Brother Guala, prior of Brescia and later its bishop, was resting in the bell-tower of his convent. As he was about to doze off he saw what appeared to be an opening in the heavens through which two shining ladders had been let down. Christ was standing above one and His Mother above the other. Angels could be seen ascending and descending. Between the two ladders at the very bottom, was a seat upon which someone was sitting who seemed to be one of the brethren, for his face was covered with a capuce, just as we do for burial. Our Lord and His Mother were slowly raising the ladder until the person on the seat reached them. Thereupon he was received into heaven in great splendor amidst a choir of angels. Then the bright opening in the heavens suddenly closed and no more could be seen. Then the friar who had seen this regained his strength, for he had previously been ill and weak, and hurried to Bologna, where he discovered that his vision, which he related to us, had occurred at the very time when the servant of Christ, Dominic, had died.

The Burial of St. Dominic; His Miracles

96. But let us dwell a while on the burial of this blessed man. A short time before his death, it happened that the venerable bishop of Ostia -- at that time legate of the Holy See in Lombardy, but now the Supreme Pontiff of the Roman See, Pope Gregory -- had come to Bologna. In his wake came many nobles and prelates of the Church. When he learned of the death of Master Dominic, whom he had intimately known and greatly loved as a just and

holy man, he decided to officiate at his burial service. Present, too, were many who knew of this blessed man's happy death, of his holy life, and of the state of eternal immortality he had earned. When the preacher of the occasion talked on contempt of the world, he remarked how safe it is to earn one's heavenly home and a place of eternal rest by despising the present life, and by leading a lowly life to assure oneself a happy death.

97. Then were awakened the devotion and reverence of the people. Day and night the sick and the infirm came and remained to tell that they had been restored to health. As witness to their cures, they hung over the tomb of this blessed man waxen replicas of eyes, hands, feet, and other parts of the body, depending on the infirmity and the parts of the body restored to health.

98. But, in the midst of all this, scarcely one friar came to give due thanks for this divine generosity. Indeed, some insisted that the miracles should be hushed for fear of seeking gain under pretense of piety. But, in thus allowing a false notion of holiness to sway their judgment, they neglected the general welfare of the Church and buried the glory of God under ground.

99. Yet it is undeniable that, even during his life, he showed great power and worked miracles, many of which were narrated to me. Due to inconsistencies among those who recounted them, they were not committed to writing, for, were they published as reported, they would have only confused the reader. But we can mention a few which we know were related by persons worthy of trust.

100. It happened that, once while he was in Rome, a young man, related to the Lord Cardinal Stephen of Fossa Nuova, was riding recklessly down a steep hill and thrown from his horse. While he was being carried away, it was hard to tell whether he was still alive or dead. As the crowd which had gathered was displaying its grief with wails and lamentations, Master Dominic happened along with Brother Tancred, a good, fervent man and one prior in Rome; in fact, it was he who told me of this incident. Brother Tancred said to him, "Why do you hesitate? Why don't you call on the Lord? Where is your pity for your neighbor, your confidence in God?" Stirred by these words and inflamed by the fire of his own ardent compassion, he ordered that the young man be brought to a nearby house. There he restored him to life by his prayers and personally led him out of the house in the sight of those who had gathered.

How He Held Back the Rain with a Sign of the Cross

101. The next story was told to me by Brother Bertrand, whose transfer to Paris I have already mentioned. He relates that, when he once accompanied him on a journey, a heavy storm arose and, although the rain had already flooded the fields, Master Dominic made a sign of the Cross which so effectively held back every trace of the rain that, as they walked along, they could see the rain pouring down two or three feet in front of them, but not a single drop so much as touched the hem of their clothing.

102. Many sure tokens of his sanctity, the great number of cures I have heard worked on the bodies of the sick have, up to the present, not been recorded in writing.

103. But more splendid than the miracles were his sublime character and burning zeal, which indisputably proved him a true vessel of honor and grace, a vessel adorned with every precious stone. His mind always retained its usual calm, unless he was stirred by compassion and mercy; and, because a joyful heart begets a cheerful face, he manifested the peaceful

harmony within his soul by his cordial manner and his pleasant countenance. So steadfastly did he adhere to a decision reached before God that he seldom, if ever, changed a resolve born of due reflection. And, while the joy which shone in his features bore witness to a clear conscience, the light of his countenance was not cast down to the ground.

104. This cheerfulness is what enabled him so easily to win everyone's affection, for, as soon as they looked at him, they were captivated. No matter where he happened to be, whether on a journey with his companions or in the house of a stranger, or even in the presence of princes, prelates, or other dignitaries, his conversation was always edifying and abounded with allusions which would draw his hearers toward love for Christ and away from love of the world. At all times his words and his works proclaimed him a man of the Gospel. During the day, none was more affable, none more pleasant to his brethren or associates.

105. At night none was more instant in prayer or watching. In the evening, tears found a place with him and, in the morning, gladness. The daytime he shared with his neighbor, but the night he dedicated to God, for he knew that, in the daytime, God has commanded His mercy, and a canticle to Him in the night. He wept frequently; indeed, his tears were his bread day and night. In the day he shed tears during his Mass and, at night, during his untiring vigils.

His Vigils

106. It was his custom to spend so much of the night in the church that he hardly seemed to have a bed in which he rested. At night he continued his prayer and watching as long as his weak body could endure it. When sleep overcame his tired body and slackened spirit, he would rest his head, after the manner of the patriarch Jacob, upon a stone before the altar or some other place. After a brief rest, he would rouse his spirit and continue his fervent prayer.

107. All men were swept into the embrace of his charity, and, in loving all, he was beloved by all. His abundant piety spent itself in caring for his neighbor and in showing compassion to the wretched, for he claimed it his right to rejoice with the joyful and to weep with the sorrowful. What pleased everyone, too, was that, in the simplicity of his way, no word or work of his ever showed a trace of insincerity or pretense.

108. As a true friend of poverty, he wore shabby clothing. In food as well as in drink, he observed the strictest moderation, the firm mastery he held over the flesh enabling him to avoid delicacies and to be content with simple fare. He diluted the wine, so as neither to lose its benefit to the body nor to allow it to dull his fine and keen spirit.

Praise for the Man of God, St. Dominic

109. Who would be able to imitate perfectly the virtue of this man? We can but admire his example and permit it to show us the inertia of our own times. But for anyone else to be able to accomplish what he accomplished would be a work, not of human power, but of a special grace of God's merciful goodness calling one to a like degree of holiness. Yet who would be worthy of that? Nevertheless we can, as far as possible, my brethren, walk in the steps of our father and, at the same time, give thanks to the Savior, Who has provided for His servants such a leader to follow in this road we travel and through him has regenerated us into the light of this religious state. Let us beseech the Father of mercies that, under the guidance of that Spirit by whom the children of God are led, we, too, by following the paths marked out by our fathers, may deserve to reach the same goal of perpetual felicity and eternal happiness which he has attained and enjoys forevermore. Amen.

A Certain Brother Bernard's Obsession by a Demon

110. After this account of events which occurred during the lifetime of St. Dominic, we now turn to things which happened later. It will be recalled that I spoke of Brother Everard's death at Lausanne, as he and I were on our way to Lombardy. After his death, I continued my journey and entered Lombardy in order to carry out the commission assigned me in that province. There I discovered a certain Brother Bernard obsessed by a fierce demon who so tormented him that he raved day and night and disturbed the entire community almost beyond endurance. No doubt God in His mercy had permitted this trial to exercise the patience of His servants.

111. But let us tell how such a scourge came to be visited upon this brother. It seems that, after he came to us, he suffered much remorse for his sins and desired that the Lord cleanse him by some kind of affliction. Hence he often pondered in his heart the advisability of letting himself be obsessed by a demon, but he recoiled from the thought and could not consent. But after many deliberations he one day experienced such terrible displeasure at his past offenses that he consented in spirit to have his body given over to a demon as a means of purification, as he himself told me. Thus, with God's permission, the affair he had conceived in his heart at once came to pass.

112. The demon spoke many remarkable things through the mouth of this brother. For, although the obsessed was neither learned in theology nor versed in the Holy Scriptures, such profound statements about the sacred writings issued from his mouth as to rank with the best insights of St. Augustine. But, through pride, he glorified overmuch if anyone but gave ear to his words.

113. I recall that, on one occasion, he proposed to me that, if I would desist from preaching, he would stop being a trial to the brethren. To this I replied, "Be it far from me to enter into a covenant with death or to make a pact with hell. For, in spite of your intentions, the friars will . . . [missing trans.]

114. Again, he cleverly took refuge in soft words to conceal his frequent attempts to sow seeds of his wickedness in our hearts. When I noticed this, I said to him, "Why do you repeat the same tricks so often? We are not unaware of your plans." He answered, "And I know those imaginings of yours which you first scorn and reject, but, after a while, you will succumb to my wickedness and gladly admit them." Here is a lesson for the soldiers of Christ, "whose struggling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." May they learn from the unremitting efforts of their enemies to persevere in their fervor and overcome any sluggish inclinations to sloth.

115. Furthermore, at times he could use such stirring language as to seem to be preaching. On these occasions the piety with which he spoke and the depths sounded by his words could bring tears from the hearts of his hearers. Again, the demon would surround the body of the obsessed brother with the sweetest of aromas such as no perfumer could concoct. He also subjected me to the same kind of wicked temptation, for he pretended to be tortured by these odors, as though they were being caused by an angel from heaven. Yet all the time it was he who laid this snare, in order to arouse a rash presumption of personal holiness.

116. On another occasion he was grievously afflicting this brother in our presence, but feigned being tormented as he exclaimed in a pained voice, "Notice the odor, notice the odor, notice the odor!" And, as the sweetness of the odor [the demon] poured upon his brother

reached us, his face and voice displayed the horror and offense he wanted us to believe he was enduring. He said to me, “Do you know what is afflicting me now? This brother’s angel has come to comfort him with these fragrances, and the consolation he derives is a source of severe torment to me. But look! I shall draw from my treasure odors of another sort, such as I am wont to produce.” And, with that, he filled the air with a stink of sulphur, hoping that the contrast between these successive odors would deceive us as to their common origin.

117. Then, because he might do the same things to me, I became puzzled. For while I put no stock in its value, I still wondered what to do should that fragrance surround me. I scarcely dared move my hands for fear of spoiling some sweetness of which I was not even conscious. If I held a chalice, as I occasionally did when carrying the host of the Lord’s Body, such a pleasant odor seemed to flow from that chalice that one could be entirely overcome by the power of such sweetness.

118. But the spirit of truth did not allow the wiles of this evil spirit to continue. For one day, as I was preparing for Mass and was attentively reciting the psalm “Judge, O Lord, those that harm me,” which is a very useful psalm for warding off temptation, I suddenly reached the verse “all my bones will say, who is like unto you, O Lord,” when suddenly I noticed such a stronger odor of sweetness about me that even the marrow of my bones seemed to be permeated by it. I was stunned. But, then, as I perceived what a rare and pleasant fragrance it was, I asked the Lord that, in His mercy, He reveal whether this man was an artifice of the devil, so as not to suffer His poor one to be reviled by the powerful, since there was no other helper to be trusted. Hardly had I prayed thus to the Lord -- I say this to His honor -- than I received an inner illumination so instructive and so reassuring that I hesitated no longer to label the entire affair a hoax of the deceitful enemy.

119. Now that the mystery was solved, I notified that brother about the source of his trials. At once the odors ceased and, from then on, he began to utter foul statements, a striking departure from his former sanctimonious utterances. When I asked him, “What happened to your edifying speeches’?” he retorted that “since the plan of my wickedness is now known, I shall henceforth employ my known wickedness.”

The Institution of the Antiphon “Salve Regina” After Compline

120. This cruel harassment of Brother Bernard was the first occasion that moved us to establish the custom of singing the “Salve Regina” after compline at Bologna. From there the practice spread through the province of Lombardy and eventually became general throughout the Order. How many tears of devotion have sprung from this holy praise of God’s venerable Mother? How many hearts of those who sang or listened has it not melted, how often has it not softened bitterness and installed fervor in its place? Do we believe that the Mother of our Redeemer is pleased with such praises and moved by such cries? A certain man, both religious and trustworthy, has told me that, in spirit, he often saw the Mother of our Lord prostrate before her Son praying for the security of the whole Order, as the friars were singing: “Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us.” I mention this so that the brethren reading it may be inspired to even greater devotion in praising the Virgin.

The Years Before the Translation

121. In its inscrutable wisdom, divine goodness frequently postpones a benefit, not to deny it, but to await a more fruitful time for bestowing it. Therefore, whether we lay it to God’s providing something better for His Church or to men’s conflicting opinions, there were, at any rate, some who followed the way of simplicity without prudence and insisted that as long as the memory of St. Dominic, the servant of the Most High and founder of the Order of

Preachers, was preserved immortal with God, it mattered little if it reached the knowledge of men. For, as I said before, a cloud had covered the hearts of the brethren, so that scarcely one gave God the thanks due to His divine generosity.

122. Thus, after this man of God had died, a popular devotion arose. Many came with various diseases and ailments and, after remaining there for some days and nights, proclaimed that they had completely recovered. They testified to their cures by hanging on this blessed man's tomb waxen impressions of eyes, hands, feet, and other parts of the body according to the nature of their infirmities and the parts of the body restored to health. He was, indeed, performing miracles on earth to announce the life he had obtained in heaven. But many thought that these miracles should not be acknowledged for fear of seeking gain under pretext of piety. Therefore, they broke those waxen images and threw them on the ground. But, by thus pursuing a course of misguided zeal, they betrayed the general welfare of the Church and buried God's glory in the earth. Although others deemed otherwise, their pusillanimity kept them from offering any opposition.

123. So it came to pass that the glory of our blessed father Dominic lay dormant and, for almost twelve years, no veneration was paid to his sanctity. A treasure lay forgotten and no use was made of it. Benefits which could have rained down from the Giver of graces were suspended. For the demands of justice require that graces be withheld from those who try to bury the grace and glory of God. The grain bears no fruit if, after sprouting, it is crushed under foot. Dominic's virtue was trying to sprout, but the negligence of his sons choked it. The God of patience and mercy waited patiently. When no voice was heard and no sign of the honor due to the saintly Dominic was forthcoming, the Lord Himself provided the occasion which roused the brethren from their lethargy.

124. For, as the number of friars at Bologna increased, it became necessary to enlarge the house and church. As new things appear, the old vanish and the body of God's servant rested under the sky. But what reasonable person would deem concealment in a lowly tomb worthy of a mirror of purity, a vessel of chastity, an instrument of the Holy Spirit? Not once during his entire life, as his last confession in the presence of the twelve priests showed, did the stain of mortal sin banish from his soul the Holy Spirit, its sweet Guest. Therefore, when some of the brethren underwent a change of heart, they discussed transferring his body to a more fitting place, but they were unwilling to do even this without leave of the Roman Pontiff. In many cases, the virtue of humility truly deserves to be extolled. The friars, his own children, could have buried their father by themselves, but, in seeking a higher permission, they obtained something better, namely, the translation of the glorious saint would be, not simple, but canonical.

125. Even now they were remiss, for some of the brethren prolonged their discussion about a suitable sarcophagus; others visited Pope Gregory to inform him of their plans. But he, being a man of very great zeal and faith, chided them severely for having neglected to pay the honor due such a father. Then he declared, "I knew him as a man who was loyal to the entire apostolic rule, and I am sure that, in heaven, he is joined in glory to the apostles." Then, because his many duties would keep him from being present in person, he wrote the Archbishop of Ravenna, telling him that, along with his suffragans, he should take part in the transference.

126. Then Almighty God, after thus dissolving the clouds of indolence through the good offices of the universal pastor of the Church, opened His hands from on high and thundered from heaven with a crash of miracles to make it plain that the whole court of the heavenly

Jerusalem was now exulting and applauding the glory to be paid on earth to their great compatriot. For the saints who enjoy the embrace of divine life are not troubled with jealousy, but wish the abundance of their blessings to be shared with everyone. Sight is proclaimed for the blind, steps for the lame, health for the paralyzed, speech for the dumb, flight for the demons, strength for the feverish, and exile for various infirmities. Thus is the holiness of God's chosen one, Dominic, openly demonstrated. On this solemn occasion, Nicholas of England, long paralyzed, was seen dancing; a case of incurable hemorrhoids was cured by taking a vow, abscesses disappeared. Many other evident cures took place which were recorded and proclaimed during his canonization in the presence of the Supreme Pontiff, his lord cardinals, and all those in attendance. If he is reigning with God, it is not strange to see such marvels wrought by one who, during his mortal life, had his book of faith returned, not even singed by the fire; saw the Virgin Mother appear to a sick friar; held back the rain with the Sign of the Cross; and, with a prayer, lit a candle buried in the mud; snatched from death a novice whose clothing was on fire; expelled a demon by the power of the crucifix; warned two persons of their impending death; predicted death of a soul to two others; and, at Rome, restored two to life; saw Christ calling him on his death-bed; appeared in a crown of glory to a disciple; and was seen seated on a shining ladder being raised to a throne of glory by the Virgin Mary and her Son. The Lord Pope Gregory's letter of canonization mentions many of his miracles, the insignia and glorious crowns of a virtuous life.

127. The day for celebrating the transference of the famous teacher has arrived. The venerable archbishop and a host of bishops and prelates are present. The devotion of numberless people from many regions is expressed. The armed troops are on hand so as not to lose the protection of this hallowed body. But the brethren are uneasy and fearful; they pray anxiously, "they have trembled for fear, where there was no fear." Perhaps the body of St. Dominic, so long a prey to rain and heat in its paltry tomb, will be swarming with vermin; perhaps its horrid stench will offend the populace and arrest their devotion to him. Not knowing what to do, they had only the recourse of abandoning themselves entirely to God. The bishops approach the tomb and the workmen take out their tools. They first remove the stone embedded in the hard cement covering the tomb. They then dig up the wooden box in which the venerable Pope Gregory, as bishop of Ostia, has buried the sacred body.

128. From a small opening in the box a marvelous odor issues forth as soon as the stone is removed. The bystanders are struck by its fragrance, but are unable to tell what it is. The lid is removed from the box and lo! a storehouse of perfumes, a paradise of fragrances, a garden of roses, a field of lilies and violets, a hillside of sweet flowers could not match what filled the air. When the wagons make the rounds of Bologna, the city reeks with stench; but when the tomb of glorious Dominic is opened, the air is purified by a fragrance surpassing the sweetness of all aromas. The bystanders are overcome and fall in fear to the ground. Tears inspired by God mingle with feelings of joy; fear and hope arise on the battlefield of the soul and wage marvelous war, as the fragrance continues to spread its sweetness. We were among the many who perceived the sweetness of this odor, and what we saw and sensed we are here describing. And, although we stood for a long time near the body of the Lord's herald, St. Dominic, we never grew tired of its fragrance. It was a fragrance which dispelled weariness, aroused devotion, and produced marvels. If a hand, a cincture, or anything else touched the body, it acquired an odor which lingered for some time.

129. The body was transferred to a marble monument to be enclosed there within its own fragrance. This remarkable odor emanated from the holy body so that all could understand what a good odor of Christ rested there. The Solemn Mass was celebrated by the Archbishop.

Since it was the third day of Pentecost, the Introit sung by the choir was “Receive the joy of your glory.” In their joy, the brethren took these words as sounding from heaven. Trumpets blare and the countless multitude raise their candles. As they march in procession, “Blessed be Jesus Christ” is heard everywhere. This event took place in the city of Bologna on March 24, 1233, in the sixth year of the cycle, Gregory IX being Pope and Frederick II, Emperor.

130. Though God alone knows the number of miracles, I mentioned only a few which were most authentic and thoroughly examined for his canonization before the Supreme Pontiff, the reverend Cardinals, and all the clergy and people.

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

Each unit of the formation program, in addition to including a section on study, also contains a part of the Rule or the Particular Directory. The Rule is valid for all members of the Third Order throughout the world. By necessity, therefore, it must be somewhat general.

Nevertheless, it is an important statement about what the Dominican way of life is. This portion of the Rule, in particular, describes our identity as members of the Third Order.

The Rule of the Lay Chapters of Saint Dominic

I. The Fundamental Constitution of the Dominican Laity

1. (Laity in the Church) Among the Christian faithful, men and women living in the world by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, have been made partakers in the prophetic, priestly and royal mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are called to make the presence of Christ alive in the midst of the people *so that the divine message of redemption may be heard and welcomed by all everywhere.*¹³⁷

2. (Dominican Laity) Some of these Christian faithful, moved by the Holy Spirit to live according to the spirit and charism of Saint Dominic, are incorporated into the Dominican Order through a special commitment according to their appropriate statutes.

3. (Dominican Family) Gathered together in their communities, with the other groupings of the Order, they constitute one Dominican Family.¹³⁸

4. (Distinctive Character of Dominican Laity) Within the Church they have a distinctive character in both their spirituality and service to God and neighbor. As members of the Order, they participate in its apostolic mission through prayer, study, and preaching according to the state of the laity.

5. (Apostolic Mission) Supported by their mutual communion, in the example of Saint Dominic, Saint Catherine of Siena and our predecessors, who have enlightened the life of the Order and the Church, they witness their own Faith, attentive to the needs of people of their time and serving Truth.

¹³⁷ Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People, #3, paragraph 3. Vatican II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (November 18, 1965). (In the Austin Flannery, O.P. translation it reads: *to bring all men (sic) throughout the whole world to hear and accept the divine message of salvation.*)

¹³⁸ Constitutions of the Order of Friars Preachers, [Hereinafter LCO] # 141.

6. Zealously attending to the particular goals of the contemporary Church, they strive in a special way to evidence authentic mercy toward all suffering, to defend freedom and to promote peace and justice.

7. Animated by the special charism of the Order, they are conscious that their apostolic activity has as its source an abundance of contemplation.

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR B, UNIT II**

I. Elements of Dominican Life: Christian Perfection and Contemplation

We may be familiar with the term “holiness” and understand that holiness in this life consists in charity: the love of God and the love of our neighbor for God’s sake. But how do mysticism and mystical forms of prayer relate to holiness? Are mystical forms of prayer (e.g. infused contemplation) a normal part of growth in holiness? Or are mystical forms of prayer something essentially extraordinary, like visions and the stigmata? In this reading Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange explains how all Christians should experience mystical forms of prayer as they grow in holiness. He refers to the traditional teaching that there are three stages of growth in the spiritual life: the purgative way, the illuminative way, and the unitive way. (These are sometimes called the way of beginners, the way of proficients, and the way of the perfect.) According to St. John of the Cross, a doctor of the Church, mystical prayer is a normal part of the illuminative and unitive ways. In other words, the perfection of charity that is our goal in this life is accompanied by mystical contemplation. It behooves us to know something of this contemplation that we are striving toward.

Another aspect of this teaching is that we are all called to possess and exercise the virtues in a heroic degree. This does not mean, of course, that we must do deeds of great renown. But even the actions of our daily lives must be performed with heroic virtue. And if God should call us to heroic actions, even martyrdom, we must be prepared to answer this call.

Finally, it is necessary to avoid some misunderstandings of this teaching. When we say that mystical contemplation is normal or ordinary, we do not mean it is a common experience. It should be common, but far too few of us respond with sufficient generosity to our Lord’s invitation to take up our cross and follow him. Nevertheless, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange and contemporary spiritual directors attest that contemplation is not uncommon among generous, selfless souls. It is also important to note that by ordinary mystical contemplation we do not mean the charismata (what St. Thomas calls the graces gratis datae): visions, locutions, the stigmata, speaking in tongues, performing miracles, etc. These are truly extraordinary gifts, even among the saints. As Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange points out, these gifts are not primarily for the person who receives them, but for others, and God gives them to whomever He wills.

**R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christian Perfection and Contemplation*
ARTICLE IV¹³⁹**

*According to Tradition the Full Perfection of Christian
Life Belongs to the Mystical Order*

According to St. John of the Cross, the full perfection of Christian life belongs clearly to the mystical order, and is truly realized only in the transforming union. However, many modern writers on asceticism hold an entirely different opinion. Whence comes this divergence?

¹³⁹ pp. 156–78, 235–8.

Father Poulain's explanation is well known. He says: "All the ascetic writers speak of the three ways, the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive, and they make them correspond, approximately at all events, to the terms: way of beginners, of proficient, and of the perfect. Some allow mysticism to play no part here; others at the most, place it only at the end of the third way. St. John of the Cross also employs these six terms, but gives them a meaning peculiar to his teaching. He looks at matters from the special point of view of mysticism, and places it in the second and third way . . . : 'The way of the spirit, which is that of proficient, is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation' (*The Dark Night of the Soul*, Bk. 1, chap. 14). Certainly this language is very different from that of other spiritual authors."

The language of St. John of the Cross, to be sure, differs notably from that of many modern writers on asceticism. Some of the latter distinguish not merely three ways, but six; three ascetical and three mystical.¹⁴⁰ Is this not placing a materialistic interpretation on everything under the pretext of being more precise? Tradition has always spoken of only three ways, not six; but materially they appear in an imperfect manner or in their plenitude, according to the spiritual condition of the subject.¹⁴¹ Although St. John of the Cross clarifies on several points the language of the great doctors who preceded him, nevertheless he teaches the same doctrine as they do.

Is a less elevated doctrine found in the spiritual works of the fathers, of St. Augustine, Dionysius, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Tauler, Louis de Blois, Dionysius the Carthusian, the author of *The Imitation*, St. Francis de Sales, and, in a general way, in the works of the saints who have spoken of the perfect life considered in its plenitude? We cannot find in their works, any more than we can in those of St. John of the Cross, mention of a twofold unitive life; the first ordinary, and the second extraordinary by its very nature and, as such, inaccessible to the majority of interior souls.

How can we, then, explain the divergence which we have just pointed out? While certain authors are especially concerned with beginners and with souls that have only a relative perfection in view, St. John of the Cross writes "for those who are determined to pass through nudity of spirit," especially for contemplative souls. He proposes to them the loftiest perfection attainable in this life, and the most efficacious and direct means to reach it. He himself states this fact in the prologue of *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*.¹⁴² This explains the apparent exaggeration of his insistence on mortification. It explains also his very lofty idea of the illuminative and of the unitive ways, which he presents to us in their plenitude, which is found only in the mystical life. Some modern writers on asceticism give us, on the contrary, only an inferior and a diminished idea of them; for if these two ways appear in the course of the ascetical life, it can only be in a manner that is still very imperfect.

We find here something similar to that which occurs in intellectual culture. For many, adequate theological training is given by a manual that can be studied in three years, and that one does not feel impelled to reread, because all it contains is quickly exhausted. Who can claim that the perfection of theological culture is found in such a study? Others can satisfy the demands of their minds only by the profound study of St. Thomas and of his principal commentators. This study is neither an extraordinary undertaking nor a luxury for them; it is necessary for the training of their minds. They realize that even if they spend all their lives teaching the *Summa theologiae*, written though it is for novices, they will never

¹⁴⁰ In this division there would be the purgative-ascetical way, the illuminative-ascetical way, and the unitive-ascetical way below the three corresponding mystical ways.

¹⁴¹ Thus the same doctrine explained to several students is dearly understood by one of them, less clearly by another.

¹⁴² "Both groups will find a substantial doctrine in this book, but it is on condition that they decide to pass through nudity of spirit. I confess, however, that in this treatise I have had in mind especially some members of our holy order."

exhaust it, and will never arrive at a complete grasp of its breadth, height, and depth; to do so, would require an intellect equal to that of the master. “To comprehend is to equal,” said Raphael. To study the tract on grace, some will consecrate three months to it and scarcely ever return to it; others understand that the work of a lifetime would not suffice to penetrate what the doctors of the Church wished to tell us about this great mystery.

Thus, from the spiritual point of view, many souls are quickly, even too quickly, satisfied by a very relative perfection, which seems altogether insufficient to others. The latter feel a need for the eminent exercise of charity and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Certain very passionate temperaments and extremely vigorous intellects seem to find peace only in a lofty perfection, even that described by St. John of the Cross. With still greater reason, this is true of souls which received early in life a superior attraction of grace. They will find rest, only after the painful purifications, in the transforming union, in which they will no longer be disturbed by the devil, the flesh, and the world.

Why should we not believe that St. John of the Cross has preserved in its essentials the true and very lofty traditional conception of Christian perfection, or of union with God? Should we not believe, on the contrary, that some modern writers on asceticism have impoverished tradition by confounding the full normal development of the life of grace on earth with what is only its prelude? This is the opinion of some contemporary theologians who consider the mystical life necessary to full perfection, to that required, for example, for beatification.¹⁴³ They add that the other opinion, while claiming to combat presumption, might cause some souls to believe they have reached the unitive life, when, as a matter of fact, they are far from it. As a result, the ideal of perfection, the aim of the religious life, might be lowered and souls deprived of one of the greatest stimulants to an increasingly fervent and more generous life in closer union with God.

The true view seems to us to be the latter; namely, that there are not two unitive ways, the one ordinary and the other extraordinary by its nature, to which all fervent souls could not aspire, but only one unitive way, which, by an ever more perfect docility to the Holy Ghost, leads to a more intimate mystical union. This way is extraordinary in fact because of the small number of souls that are completely docile, but it is not extraordinary in itself or by its nature, like miracles or prophecy. On the contrary, it is in itself the perfect order, the full development of charity, actually realized in truly generous souls, at least at the close of their lives, if they live long enough. It may well be that, for lack of proper direction or favorable surroundings, or again by reason of a nature given to exterior activities, certain generous souls would reach the mystical life only after a much longer time than the ordinary span of life. But these are accidental circumstances and, however frequent they may be, they do not affect the fundamental law of the full development of the life of grace.¹⁴⁴ St. John of the Cross makes this point very clear when, at the beginning of his works, he says they are written “in order to help the many souls which are in great need of assistance. After the first steps in the path of virtue, when the Lord wishes to make them enter the dark night in order to lead them to divine union, there are some that go no further. Occasionally, it is the desire which is lacking, or they are not willing to let themselves be led therein. At times, it is because of ignorance, or because they vainly seek an experienced guide capable of leading them to the summit.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Cf. Father Arintero, O.P., *La Ciencia tomista*, May, 1919. The expression “full perfection” shows that we are speaking not only of its essence but of its integrity. Thus to have five fingers on each hand belongs to the integrity of the human body, without being of its essence.

¹⁴⁴ The same is true in the physical order. A cedar will not attain its normal height if it is not planted in suitable ground, or if certain exterior circumstances are lacking. Similarly, from an intellectual point of view, by reason of a lack of serious foundation, of favorable environment, or because of an unreceptive temperament, certain laborious minds never attain their full normal development.

¹⁴⁵ *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Prologue.

This summit is not reached without infused contemplation; and certainly infused contemplation is not the fruit of our personal effort, for it surpasses the human mode of the Christian virtues. We do not have it when we wish it; it comes from a special grace, from an inspiration and illumination to which the gifts of the Holy Ghost render us docile. Though we do not have this inspiration when we wish it, we can hold ourselves ready to receive it; we can ask it, and merit it, at least in the broad sense of the word “merit.” Every soul in the state of grace has, in fact, received the gifts of the Holy Ghost which develop with charity. As a general rule, the Holy Ghost moves us according to the degree of our habitual docility.¹⁴⁶

“The conclusion is clear,” says the holy doctor, “that, as soon as the soul has succeeded in carefully purifying itself of sensible forms and images, it will bathe in this pure and simple light, which will become for it the state of perfection. In truth, this light is always ready to penetrate us. Its infusion is prevented by the forms and veils of creatures, which envelop and hamper the soul. Tear aside these veils . . . and little by little, without delay, rest and divine peace will overwhelm your soul with admirable and profound views on God, which are enfolded in divine love.”¹⁴⁷

We shall demonstrate that this doctrine of St. John of the Cross, while clarifying that of the great doctors who preceded him, remains perfectly conformable to their teaching, and that it is contained in the evangelical beatitudes. These propose to us Christian perfection in all its grandeur, and are certainly not inferior in elevation to what the author of *The Spiritual Canticle* has written.

Thus we begin to see the answer which should be made to three questions already proposed:

1) What characterizes the mystical life? A special passivity or the predominance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, having a superhuman mode specifically distinct from the human mode of the Christian virtues, without, however, being confounded with graces *gratis datae*, such as prophecy. These last are in no way necessary to the mystical life; they are in a certain sense exterior, and given especially for the benefit of one’s neighbor.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Cf. John of St. Thomas, commentary on Ia IIae, q. 68, *De donis Spiritus Sancti*, disp. XVIII, a. 2, no. 31: “The actual inspiration of the Holy Ghost is not within our power, but it is within our power to have our heart always ready to obey, in order that we may be easily moved by the Holy Ghost.”

The Carmelite theologians and those of the Dominican school teach that all souls should aspire to supernatural or infused contemplation, and that this contemplation can be merited at least *de congruo*: “All ought to aspire to Supernatural contemplation.” This thesis is defended by Philip of the Blessed Trinity, *Theol. myst.* (1874), II, 299, 311; by Anthony of the Holy Ghost, *Directorium mysticum* (1732), p. 99; by Vallgornera, O.P., *Theol. mystica* (Berthier ed.), I, 428; by Father Meynard, O.P., *Traité de la vie intérieure*, II, 131.

¹⁴⁷ *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, chap. 15. This is true in principle. However, we must keep in mind predestination, about which St. John of the Cross writes: “It is true that souls, whatever their capacity may be, can have attained union, but all do not possess it in the same degree. God disposes freely of this degree of union as He disposes freely of the degree of the beatific vision (*The Ascent*, Bk. II, chap. 5). From the fact that all the just are not predestined to glory and do not infallibly attain it, one cannot claim that it is not the normal consummation of grace as well as of the mystical union in this life. We must not confound vocation and predestination: ‘Many are called, but few are chosen.’ This difference should, however, be noted: it is through his own fault only that an adult fails to attain salvation, while he may fail through no fault of his own to attain contemplation.

¹⁴⁸ This doctrine stands out as a happy medium between and a culminating point above two opinions which are contrary to each other. The first opinion reduces mystical contemplation to an act of living faith more intense than other acts of faith, and this because it fails to understand the specific distinction between the virtues and the gifts, established by St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 1-3. The second opinion seems to elevate the mystical life greatly, though in reality it reduces it, because it does not see clearly enough the profound difference which exists between the gifts of the Holy Ghost (supernatural by their essence and their mode, and present in all souls in the state of grace) and the graces *gratis datae*, which are not generally supernatural by their very essence, but only by their mode (*quoad modum*); which do not necessarily presuppose the state of grace, and which are, so to speak, not only actually but essentially exterior and extraordinary. Cf. Ia IIae, q. 3, a.5.

2) When does the mystical life begin in the course of the spiritual life? Normally with the passive purification of the senses, and the prayer of passive recollection which St. Teresa speaks of in the fourth mansion.

3) Is a special vocation necessary to reach the mystical life? In principle, no. “The grace of the virtues and of the gifts” suffices in itself by its normal development to dispose us to the mystical life, and mystical contemplation is necessary for the full perfection of Christian life. But in fact, for lack of certain conditions which at times are independent of our will, even generous souls would attain contemplation only after a longer space of time than the ordinary span of life; just as some minds, which are capable of a superior intellectual development, never reach it for lack of certain conditions. And lastly, in some who are more fitted for the active life, the gifts of action dominate.¹⁴⁹

This teaching antedates that of St. John of the Cross. It will be interesting to recall the chapter of *The Imitation* on “True Peace” (Bk. IV, chap. 25). It is certainly not inferior to the doctrine we have just set forth, and it is addressed to all souls to show them an ideal of perfection which they may aspire to without presumption. We quote some passages. “Peace is what all desire, but all do not care for the things that pertain to true peace. My peace is with the humble and gentle of heart; in much patience shall thy peace be. . . . Direct thy whole attention to please Me alone, and neither to desire nor to seek anything besides Me. . . . The spiritual progress and perfection of a man consist in these things . . . in giving thyself up with all thy heart to the divine will, not seeking thine own interest either in great matters or in small, either in time or in eternity. So shalt thou keep one and the same demeanor always giving thanks both in prosperity and adversity, weighing all things in an equal balance. Be thou so full of courage and so patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawn thou mayest prepare thy heart to suffer even greater things; and do not justify thyself, as though thou oughtest not to suffer such and so great afflictions, but justify Me in whatsoever I appoint, and cease not to praise My holy name. Then thou walkest in the true and right way of peace, and thou shalt have a sure hope to see My face again with great delight. Now, if thou attain to the full contempt of thyself, know that thou shalt then enjoy abundance of peace, as great as is possible in this thy state of sojourning.”

This peace is the fruit of an eminent charity and of the gift of wisdom which makes us see everything, whether agreeable or painful, in relation to God, the beginning and end of all things. St. Augustine says that the beatitude of the peacemakers corresponds to this gift.

And this is why, in the same book of *The Imitation*,¹⁵⁰ the disciple asks for the superior grace of contemplation, saying: “O Lord, I stand much in need of yet greater grace if it be Thy will that I should attain to that state where neither man nor any creature shall be a hindrance to me. . . . He desired to fly freely that said, ‘Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?’ (Ps. 54: 7.) . . . A man ought, therefore, to mount above all creatures and perfectly renounce himself, and in ecstasy of mind perceive that Thou, the Creator of all things, hast nothing amongst creatures like unto Thee. Unless a man be set free from all creatures, he cannot wholly attend unto divine things and therefore are there so few contemplative, because few can wholly withdraw themselves from things created and perishing. To obtain this there is need of much grace to elevate the soul and carry it away above itself, and unless a man be uplifted in spirit and be freed from all creatures and wholly united unto God, whatsoever he knoweth and whatsoever he hath are of small account.

¹⁴⁹ It may be conceded that materially and in fact there are two unitive ways, although formally and in principle there is only one, now perfectly, now imperfectly, realized. We must not elevate a material or actual distinction into a formal or essential distinction.

¹⁵⁰ Bk. IV, chap. 31.

This remarkable chapter is not less sublime than the chapters of St. John of the Cross on the transforming union. Properly speaking, it belongs to the mystical order, in which alone the true perfection of the love of God is to be found.

The saints use such language as this when they speak of perfect love, of the intimate knowledge of God and of ourselves which it presupposes, and of the signs by which it may be recognized.

God Himself used such words as these when speaking to St. Catherine of Siena: "I must now tell thee the sign that gives evidence that the soul has reached perfect love. This sign is the same as that which was seen in the Apostles after they had received the Holy Ghost. They left the Cenacle and, freed from all fear, they announced My word and preached the doctrine of My only Son. Far from fearing suffering, they gloried in it. . . .

"Those who passionately desire My honor and who hunger for the salvation of souls hasten to the table of the holy cross. Their only ambition is to suffer and to bear a thousand fatigues for the service of their neighbor. . . . They bear in their bodies the wounds of Christ, and the crucified love which burns them bursts forth in the contempt they feel for themselves, in the joy they experience in opprobrium, in the welcome they give to the contradictions and the pains that I grant them, wherever they may come from, and in whatever manner I may send them. . . .

"They run ardently in the way of Christ crucified. They follow His doctrine, and nothing can slacken their course, neither injuries nor persecutions nor the pleasures which the world offers them and would wish to give them. With unshakable fortitude they pass all this by, equipped as they are with a perseverance which nothing can trouble, their hearts transformed by charity, tasting and enjoying this nourishment of the salvation of souls, ready to bear all things for them. This is the incontestable proof that the soul loves God perfectly and without any selfish motive. . . . If the perfect love each other, it is for My sake. If they love their neighbor, it is for Me, in order to give honor and glory to My name. That is why suffering always finds them strong and persevering. . . . In the midst of injuries, patience shines forth and proclaims its royalty.

"To these souls I give the grace of a consciousness of My continual presence,¹⁵¹ while to others I give it from time to time; not that I withdraw My grace from them, but rather the feeling of My presence. . . . These souls are plunged into the burning flames of My charity, purified of everything that is not I, stripped of all self-will and consumed with love of Me. Who then could withdraw them from Me and from My grace? . . . They always experience My divine presence in them, and I never deprive them of this feeling. . . . Moreover, their bodies are frequently raised from the earth by reason of this perfect union. . . . The body remains, as it were, motionless, broken by the love of the soul to such an extent that it would die, did not My goodness gird it with strength. . . . Furthermore, I interrupt this union for a time in order to permit the soul to remain united to the body. St. Paul complained of this body to which he was enslaved, because it hindered him from the immediate enjoyment of My divinity. He groaned because he was among mortals who continually offend Me, because he was deprived of the sight of Me, deprived of seeing Me in My essence."¹⁵²

The sober, theological language of St. Thomas Aquinas is no less sublime when he treats of the question: "Whether anyone can be perfect in this life."

"The divine law," he answers, "does not prescribe the impossible. Yet it prescribes perfection, according to Matt. 5: 48, 'Be you . . . perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.'" The perfection of the Christian life consists in charity. Now, perfection implies a certain universality because the perfect is that which lacks nothing. Hence we may consider a threefold perfection. . . . Absolute perfection consists in loving God as much as He is

¹⁵¹ These words clearly indicate the mystical union, and even the perfect mystical union.

¹⁵² St. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue*, chaps. 74, 78, 79, *passim*.

lovable. Such perfection as this is not possible to any creature; for God alone can love Himself in this way, that is to say, infinitely. Another perfection consists in loving God to the extent of our power, so that our love always actually tends to God. Such perfection as this is not possible in this life, but we shall have it in heaven. Finally, there is a third perfection which consists in loving God not as much as He is lovable, nor in always actually tending to Him, but to the exclusion of whatever is opposed to the love of Him. ‘The poison which kills charity,’ says St. Augustine, ‘is cupidity or covetousness. When this is destroyed, perfection exists.’ On earth this perfection can exist, and that in two ways. Man may exclude from his affection all that is contrary to charity, and which would destroy it, such as mortal sin. This is necessary to salvation. Secondly, man may exclude from his affection not only what is contrary to charity, but also whatever hinders his love from being directed completely toward God. Without this perfection, charity can exist, for instance, in beginners and in proficients.”¹⁵³

It is this last perfection which is peculiar to the perfect. They still commit venial sins through frailty or surprise, but they avoid deliberate venial sin and also slight, conscious, and voluntary imperfections. They are very faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, whether these inspirations remind them of a duty, even though quite unimportant, or of a simple counsel.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, instead of being content to make acts of charity which are comparatively weak for the degree of supernatural life to which they have attained (*actus remissi*), the perfect frequently make acts which are at least as intense as their degree of charity. By these acts they merit an immediate and notable increase of this virtue.¹⁵⁵ Having ten talents, they take good care not to act as if they had only two. Moreover, they receive communion with great fervor of will; they hunger for the Eucharist.¹⁵⁶ Ever tending toward great things by reason of the virtue of magnanimity,¹⁵⁷ they show a profound humility in their confessions, as also in their whole life, and, in their own opinion, they are the least of men.¹⁵⁸ They are meek and humble of heart, as well as firm and strong. In them “prudence scorns the things of the world for the contemplation of divine things; it directs all the efforts of their souls toward God. Temperance abandons, in so far as nature can bear it, whatever the body demands. Fortitude prevents the soul from becoming frightened in the face of death and the supernatural. Finally, justice leads the soul to enter fully on this wholly divine way.”¹⁵⁹ Higher still, according to St. Thomas, are the virtues of the soul that has been completely purified. They are those of the great saints in this life, and of the blessed in heaven.

In the perfect, the prayer of desire is almost continuous. They understand our Lord’s saying that we must pray always. Their faith has become loving contemplation;¹⁶⁰ their hope, invincible confidence.¹⁶¹

St. Thomas states that, “while beginners strive above all to flee sin, to resist the movements of concupiscence . . . and proficients direct their principal efforts toward advancing in the practice of charity and of the other virtues. . . . the perfect tend, above all, to unite themselves with God, to adhere to Him, to enjoy Him. They desire to die in order to be with Christ.”¹⁶²

¹⁵³ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 184, a. 2.

¹⁵⁴ *Summa*, Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 2.

¹⁵⁵ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 6.

¹⁵⁶ *Summa*, IIIa, q. 80, a. 10.

¹⁵⁷ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 129, a. 3 ad 4um.

¹⁵⁸ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 161, a. 6. On the Degrees of Humility.

¹⁵⁹ *Summa*, Ia IIae, q. 61, a. 5.

¹⁶⁰ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 4, 7; q. 45: q. 180, a. 6.

¹⁶¹ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 18, a. 4; q. 129, a. 6.

¹⁶² *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 9.

We find that St. Thomas expresses a no less sublime idea of what the love of one's neighbor should be in the perfect: "There are, likewise, three degrees in charity toward one's neighbor. In the first degree, our charity, without excluding anyone, extends positively only to our friends and to those who are known to us. Then it wishes well to strangers and does good to them, and finally, to our enemies. The last, says St. Augustine, is characteristic of the perfect.

"This progress in the extension of charity is accompanied by like progress in the intensity of this virtue. This growing intensity displays itself in the things which a man despises for the sake of his neighbor. He finally reaches a point where he despises not only exterior goods, but bodily afflictions and ultimately death itself, according to our Lord's expression, 'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' Last of all, the progress of fraternal charity is manifested by its effects, so that a man will surrender for his neighbor not only his temporal but also his spiritual goods, and even himself, according to the words of St. Paul: 'But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls; although loving you more, I be loved less.'"¹⁶³ St. Bonaventure teaches the same doctrines.¹⁶⁴

St. Thomas teaches that to these three degrees of charity correspond three degrees in the moral virtues,¹⁶⁵ and also in the gifts and in contemplation.¹⁶⁶ A more sublime idea of Christian perfection can hardly be conceived. This conception excludes everything that would hinder the soul from belonging completely to God. To adhere to Him, to aspire eagerly to the beatific vision, to love effectively and in particular even our enemies, to scorn death for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls, such is the perfect age of the spiritual life.

An examination of the early doctors, who first spoke of the three ways (the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive) and of the corresponding degrees of charity, shows that they used these terms in a broad sense, which has been preserved by St. John of the Cross, and not in the narrow acceptance of these terms, which has become current among several modern writers on asceticism. Evidently the distinction of the three ways owes its origin to the doctrine of Christian contemplation as formulated by St. Augustine and Dionysius. Pourrat recognizes this fact in his recent work, *La spiritualité chrétienne*, when he says: "The doctrine of the three stages, the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive . . . was gradually generalized and applied to the ordinary Christian life"; that is, in the course of time these expressions were often used in a diminished sense. At the beginning they were understood in their loftiest acceptance, which did not designate something extraordinary in itself, or something miraculous, but something of eminent degree, the perfect order, or the full development of the supernatural life here below.

Dionysius often speaks of these three ways, especially throughout chapter five of his book, *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. "God," he says, "first purifies the souls in which He dwells, then He illumines them, and finally leads them to divine union. . . . In the same way, in the Church the power of purifying belongs to the diaconate, . . . the power of illuminating, to the priesthood, and that of perfecting, to the episcopate." St. Thomas later repeats this doctrine and makes it his own.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 184, a. 2 ad 3um.

¹⁶⁴ St. Bonaventure, *De gradibus virtutum*, chap. 1; *De triplici via vel incendio amoris*.

¹⁶⁵ *Summa*, Ia IIae, q. 61, a. 5. Manifestly the perfection of the virtues of the purified soul, described by St. Thomas, belongs to the mystical order.

¹⁶⁶ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 6. Dionysius the Carthusian, *De donis*, tr. II, a. 15, has well described these three degrees of the gifts; the third certainly belongs to the mystical order.

¹⁶⁷ See *IV Sent.*, d. 4, q. 1, a. 1, q. 3, and *II Sent.*, d. 9, q. 1, a. 2, c. and ad 8um. This entire article, which is entitled "Whether one angel purifies another," should be read to see how exactly St. Thomas, following Dionysius, takes the words purgation, illumination, and union. Cf. also the general index of the works of St.

In his *Mystical Theology*,¹⁶⁸ Dionysius shows more explicitly what he understands by these words, which he uses so frequently: “As for thee, O well beloved Timothy, in thy desire to reach mystical contemplation strive without wearying to detach thyself both from the senses and from the operations of the understanding, from all that is sensible and intellectual, and from all that is or is not, in order to raise thyself by unknowing, as much as it is possible to do so, to union with Him, who is above all being and all knowledge; that is to say, to raise thyself by detachment from self and from all things, stripped of all and untrammelled, to that supernatural, transluminous way of the divine darkness.” This is exactly the same doctrine and the terms are the same as those which in a later age St. John of the Cross often used.

St. Augustine employs the same language when he discusses contemplation in the *Confessions*,¹⁶⁹ in the *Soliloquies*,¹⁷⁰ in *De beata vita*, and in *De quantitate animae*. In particular in this last named work,¹⁷¹ when he is describing the various degrees of the life of the soul, after considering the vegetative, the sensitive, and the intellectual life, or the knowledge of the sciences, he studies the degrees of the spiritual life: (1) The struggle against sin, the very difficult work of purification, during which entire confidence must be placed in God. This purification, he says, leads to true virtue, which shows all the grandeur of the soul, its incomparable superiority over the world of bodies. (2) The entrance into the light, which is possible only to those who are purified, for infirm eyes cannot endure the light which a pure and healthy eye desires. (3) Contemplation and divine union, which permit us to enjoy the sovereign good: “How shall I describe the joys and the foretastes of eternal serenity which the soul experiences in the intellectual vision and the contemplation of truth? Some great and incomparable souls have related these marvels. . . . We know that they have seen them and still see them.”¹⁷²

St. Augustine describes this contemplation in the *Confessions*,¹⁷³ when he relates his meeting with his mother at Ostia. In the following phrases he indicates his conception of the contemplative state: “He who would silence in himself the tumult of the flesh, who would close his eyes to the spectacles offered by the earth, the waters, the air, and the firmament, who would impose silence on his very soul, suppressing self, . . . he who would no longer hear these creatures . . . and to whom God alone would speak directly . . . in an entirely spiritual manner. . . . Were this rapture to continue and this contemplation alone to absorb him who would enjoy it, . . . would not this state of things be the fulfillment of the expression found in the Gospel: ‘Enter thou into the joy of the Lord’?”¹⁷⁴

It is not surprising that, to reach such contemplation and divine union, the full purification, spoken of by St. John of the Cross, is necessary. St. Augustine himself insists upon it, and it would be an error to separate his asceticism from his mysticism. The first leads to the second, as adolescence does to maturity. The three ways that he speaks of, in

Thomas, called *Tabula aurea*, under the heading *Illustratio*. An idea of what he understands by the illuminative life can be obtained by reading what he says of the gift of understanding, *III Sent*, d. 34, q. 1, a. 1, c: “The gift of understanding, as Gregory says, illumines the mind in regard to things that are heard, so that man, even in this life, receives a foretaste of the future manifestation.” This illumination of the gift of understanding gives us a foretaste of the beatific vision.

¹⁶⁸ Chap. 1, no. 1.

¹⁶⁹ Bk. IX, chap. 10.

¹⁷⁰ Bk. 1, chaps. 1, 12, 13.

¹⁷¹ *De quantitate animae*, Bk. I, chap. 33.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ Bk. IX, chap. 10.

¹⁷⁴ Certainly he is speaking here of infused and, indeed, of lofty contemplation

terms quite similar to those used by later great masters, correspond to the three degrees of charity which he mentions elsewhere, that of beginners, of proficients, and of the perfect.¹⁷⁵

According to St. Augustine, a soul must, in fact, possess great charity to be numbered even among the proficients. We may say that a Christian is not of that number until he has undergone the trial of criticism and contradiction on the part of people who cannot bear to have anyone surpass them in virtue.¹⁷⁶ The perfect charity, which St. Augustine speaks of in *The Cantic of the Degrees*¹⁷⁷ and in the *Confessions*,¹⁷⁸ presupposes that one is ready to die for his brethren, and cannot be conceived as existing without that intimate and penetrating knowledge of God which is mystical contemplation. The gift of wisdom grows with charity; the supernatural organism of grace, of the virtues, and of the gifts develops at the same time.

Therefore we conclude that St. John of the Cross, in his description of the three ways (the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive) and in his account of the three corresponding degrees of charity, agrees perfectly with St. Augustine, Dionysius, St. Thomas Aquinas, and also with St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, and the true disciples of these great masters. He clarifies their teaching on several points, but he does not alter it. His lofty conception of the illuminative and unitive ways is therefore entirely traditional. He does more than depict them in an inferior or embryonic form, as do several modern writers on asceticism. He shows them to us in their plenitude; thus considered, they belong to the mystical order.

In company with this great master, who is the faithful echo of tradition, we must hold that the full perfection of charity in this life cannot exist without mystical contemplation, without the full development of the gifts of understanding and of wisdom, which grow with charity. **The entire supernatural organism should develop at the same time. This development is not anything extraordinary in itself; it is the full harmony, the perfect order, of the life of grace which has attained here on earth the summit of its normal development.** This grace, called by St. Thomas “the grace of the virtues and of the gifts,”¹⁷⁹ is entirely distinct, as we have seen, from the graces *gratis datae*, such as prophecy or the gift of miracles.¹⁸⁰

This is what makes St. John of the Cross exclaim: “O souls created for such glories, and called to them, of what are you thinking? With what are you occupied? How mediocre are your aspirations, and how wretched your pretended good! How sad is the blindness of your soul! You are blind to the most dazzling light and deaf to the powerful voices which solicit you. By allowing yourselves to be led on by what you consider happiness and glory, you do not see that you remain plunged in your wretchedness and your mediocrity, and you render yourselves ignorant and unworthy of the treasures destined for you.”¹⁸¹

All should say with the psalmist: “As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?”¹⁸²

Relative Perfection, Heroism And Sanctity

¹⁷⁵ Cf. St. Augustine, *De natura et gratia*, chap. 70, nos. 82, 84. *Commentary on the First Canonical Epistle of John* (Tract. V, 4) “As soon as charity is born it takes food . . . after taking food, it waxes strong . . . and when it has become strong it is perfected. . . . If a man be ready even to die for his brethren, charity is perfect in him.” St. Thomas quotes this classic text in IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 9, sed c.

¹⁷⁶ *Enarr. in psalm.*, CXIX, no. 3.

¹⁷⁷ *Enarr. in psalm.*, LXXXIII, no. 10.

¹⁷⁸ *Confessions*, XIII. 8.

¹⁷⁹ *Summa*, IIIa, q. 62, a. 2.

¹⁸⁰ St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q. 111, a. 5.

¹⁸¹ *The Spiritual Cantic*, IV, st. 39.

¹⁸² Ps. 41: 3.

Mystical theologians¹⁸³ have remarked that even among the perfect we should distinguish between those who are beginning to live a perfect life, those who are making progress in this life by heroism of virtue, and those who reach full perfection or sanctity.

Immediately after the passive purification of the senses, the soul already possesses a relative perfection. It generally avoids deliberate venial sins and enjoys a very calm and loving contemplation of God,¹⁸⁴ described by St. Teresa in the fourth and fifth mansions. But it still has many imperfections to remove.

Especially during the passive purifications of the spirit and their concomitant trials, heroic virtues, particularly those of faith, hope, and charity, are practiced, as St. John of the Cross shows,¹⁸⁵ and as St. Teresa describes them at the beginning of the sixth mansion.

Finally, when the soul has passed through and beyond the passive purifications of the spirit, it reaches the full perfection of the interior life, described by St. John of the Cross in *The Living Flame* and in the third part of *The Spiritual Canticle*; by St. Teresa in the seventh mansion; and by St. Bernard in the higher of the ten degrees of charity which he enumerates.¹⁸⁶ Because of this distinction made even among the perfect, we have in this present work, as a rule, purposely spoken of the full perfection of Christian life, and not only of that lesser, relative perfection discussed in several works on asceticism which do not deal with the mystical life, properly so called.

Is not this full perfection truly the summit of the normal development of the life of grace? The word “normal” should not make us forget the word “summit,” and vice versa. To understand it clearly, we must remember that Christian life requires of all souls heroism of virtue (according to the preparation of the mind); that is, in the sense that every Christian must be ready, with the help of the Holy Ghost, to accomplish heroic acts when circumstances require them. Martyrdom in certain cases is of precept and not only of counsel, for we must all prefer torments and death to abjuration, and we must love God more than life. Otherwise how should we be conformed to Christ crucified and sealed with His countenance?¹⁸⁷ Christians who habitually fulfill their duties must hope that, if they ask with humility, trust, and perseverance, the Holy Ghost will grant them the strength to remain faithful even in torture, should they have to undergo such a trial. Our Lord told His disciples not to fear those who kill the body, and He assured them that the Holy Ghost would inspire them on occasion with what they should say. Considering the matter from a purely human point of view, should we not say that every citizen ought to be ready, if necessary, to die heroically in defense of his country?

Moreover, every Christian ought to prefer the supernatural good, the salvation of his neighbor, to his own natural good. Charity counsels him to assist, even at the risk of his life, a soul in extreme spiritual need. This obligation is stricter for a priest who has charge of souls and for a bishop in regard to his flock. Although the latter is not obliged to have the virtues in a heroic degree, he must be ready, if the occasion arises, to give his life for the faithful of his diocese.

Therefore it must be conceded that Christian charity should in its daily progress tend normally to the heroic degree, which permits the prompt and even joyful performance of most difficult acts for God and our neighbor. Every soul that has undergone the passive purifications of the spirit feels strongly inclined to this heroic degree of charity.

¹⁸³ Notably Joseph of the Holy Ghost, in his *Cursus theol. scolastico-mysticae* in which he considers the perfect according to the teaching of St. John of the Cross.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. St. John of the Cross, *The Dark Night of the Soul*, Bk. II, chap. 1.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ St. John of the Cross explains them: *The Dark Night of the Soul* (Bk. II, chap. 20), following a short work attributed to St. Thomas.

¹⁸⁷ On this point, cf. St. Thomas on the question of martyrdom, *IIa IIae*, q. 124. a. 1 ad 3um.

These purifications lead finally to true sanctity, which is perfect purity, immutable union with God,¹⁸⁸ and also the intimate harmony of all the virtues, even of those which to all appearances are most opposed: the perfect accord of great fortitude and unalterable meekness, of rigorous justice and tender mercy, of the loftiest and simplest wisdom with all-embracing prudence. This is truly sanctity before God, although it may not always be manifested by definite signs to the Church. Only in this sanctity is found the full perfection of Christian life, a perfection truly superior to the relative perfection which is mentioned by several authors on asceticism and which is only the entrance into the way of the perfect.

Evidently we are speaking not merely of the essence of perfection, but of its normal integrity; as, for example, to have good eyes belongs, if not to the essence of the human body, at least to its integrity. Similarly, as will become more and more evident, infused contemplation belongs, if not to the essence of Christian perfection, at least to its integrity. This contemplation, very manifest in the perfect who are more fitted to the contemplative life, is diffuse in the other perfect in whom dominate especially the gifts of the Holy Ghost which relate to action—the gifts of fear, fortitude, counsel, and knowledge, united to the gift of piety, under a less visible influence of the gifts of wisdom and of understanding.

The Ordinary and the Extraordinary in the Supernatural Life

In order to learn whether infused or characteristically mystical contemplation is extraordinary or whether it is ordinarily granted to the perfect, we must clearly define these terms.¹⁸⁹

In the supernatural life whatever is outside the normal way of sanctity and not at all necessary to attain it, is, strictly speaking, essentially, or by its nature, extraordinary.¹⁹⁰ For example, graces *gratis datae*, such as the gift of prophecy, of tongues, of miracles, the gift of expressing the loftiest mysteries of religion (*sermo sapientiae*)¹⁹¹ are in no way necessary for personal holiness. They are granted primarily for the good of others, although they may secondarily help in the sanctification of him who receives them, if he uses them with charity. The beatific vision, received in a transitory manner before death, as St. Paul seems to have received it (according to the opinion of St. Augustine and St. Thomas), is with even greater reason essentially extraordinary. A miraculous conversion, which without any previous preparation instantly purifies the soul and introduces it immediately into the mystical life, such as the conversion of St. Paul, is also essentially extraordinary. Likewise the grace of the transforming union or of the spiritual marriage granted from childhood, that is, at the age of six or seven, to certain saints, is manifestly extraordinary. Less elevated mystical graces bestowed on souls still very imperfect, before they have the dispositions ordinarily required,¹⁹² are extraordinary in a lesser degree.

On the contrary, in the supernatural life whatever belongs to the normal way of sanctity and in the majority of cases is absolutely or morally necessary to attain it, is

¹⁸⁸ *Summa*, IIa IIae, q. 81, a. 8.

¹⁸⁹ It would be suitable to define ordinary first, if the present difficulties did not bear exactly on this word.

¹⁹⁰ This is true at least of the holiness generally required for entrance into heaven immediately after death; for no one goes to purgatory except through his own fault, by reason of negligences which could have been avoided.

¹⁹¹ This is the meaning which St. Thomas gives to the grace *gratis data* called *sermo sapientiae*, the highest degree of the gift of wisdom. This degree not only makes one contemplate the loftiest mysteries, but renders the recipient of it capable of manifesting them to others and of directing his neighbor. Cf. IIa IIae, q. 45, a. 5.

¹⁹² Among extraordinary graces we may place interior words and visions, even if they are directly ordered to the sanctification of the soul that receives them. They are not then graces *gratis datae*, but concomitant phenomena of the mystical life; accessory and passing phenomena which in the majority of cases are not necessary to reach sanctity.

essentially ordinary.¹⁹³ In other words, whatever in the supernatural life is accomplished in accordance with even the superior laws of its full development, is ordinary in itself, though these laws are infinitely more elevated than those of our nature. This is why the beatific vision after death, although entirely supernatural, is not an extraordinary gift; it is the normal crowning of the life of grace, such as God has gratuitously willed it for us all. But we are not to conclude that the majority of men will reach this very high end. “Many are called, but few are chosen.” The elect in heaven will evidently be an elite, as the name indicates,¹⁹⁴ but an elite chosen from men of all classes, to which we should all eagerly desire to belong.¹⁹⁵

Likewise here on earth, the summit in the normal development of the life of grace, no matter how elevated, should not be called essentially extraordinary (*per se*), although it may be rare or extraordinary in fact, like the perfect generosity which it supposes. This summit is called sanctity, even lofty sanctity, which implies heroic virtues. Before reaching it, we can have a certain perfection, but it is not yet the full perfection to which the life of grace is essentially ordained. Just as a distinction is made between beginners, proficients, and the perfect, so among the latter a distinction¹⁹⁶ must be drawn between those who have just entered upon the unitive way, those who are more advanced in it, and finally those who have reached the plenitude of perfection, lofty sanctity, which alone deserves to be called the culminating point in the development of the life of grace.

It follows, then, that whatever in the majority of cases is either absolutely or morally necessary to attain this summit **is** not essentially extraordinary. On the contrary, these things belong to and make up the plenitude of the normal order willed by God. In studying this point, we must take care not to confound what is eminently useful for reaching sanctity in the majority of cases with what is observed in the majority of pious souls, with what is common among them; for many of them are still far from the goal. Consequently, without admitting that the mystical prayers are essentially extraordinary, we can distinguish them from the common forms of prayer, because the former suppose in fact an eminent or superior grace.

The passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit (a mystical state) and infused contemplation, even in its highest degree, which is realized in the transforming union, are, as St. John of the Cross teaches,¹⁹⁷ generally necessary to the perfect purification and sanctification of the soul. Therefore they should not be called essentially extraordinary, although in fact they may be quite rare because of the common mediocrity of souls. These passive purifications seem extraordinary to us because they are so painful and take our nature by surprise; they are an anticipated purgatory. Very generous souls ought normally to suffer their purgatory on earth while meriting, rather than after death without meriting. If we go to purgatory after death, it will be our own fault, it will be because we have neglected graces that were granted us or offered us during life. Purgatory after death, frequent though it may be, is not according to the order arranged by God for the full development of the supernatural life, since immediately after death it is radical to the order established by Him that the soul should possess God by the beatific vision. Hence the precise reason why the soul suffers so greatly in purgatory is because it does not see God. We will consider, by a study of the writings of the saints, what in their opinion is the normal way to holiness here on earth.

¹⁹³ This definition is given by Father Arintero in his *Cuestiones misticas*, 2d ed., p. 45.

¹⁹⁴ The words “elite” and “elect” are derived from the Latin word meaning “chosen”.

¹⁹⁵ St. Thomas observes on this subject (Ia, q. 23, a. 7 ad 3um): “Since eternal happiness, consisting in the vision of God, exceeds the common state of nature and especially in so far as it is deprived of grace through the corruption of original sin, the fewer will be saved. In this, however, appears the mercy of God that He has chosen some for salvation from which very many in accordance with the common cause and tendency of nature fall short.”

¹⁹⁶ This is particularly the teaching of St. John of the Cross, as Joseph of the Holy Ghost observes several times in his great *Cursus theologiae mystica-scholasticae*. Cf. *supra*, chap. 4, art. 4.

¹⁹⁷ The Dark Night of the Soul, Bk I, c. 3; Bk II, c. 1.

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

The Rule attempts to give concrete form to the charism of St. Dominic as lived by members of the Third Order. It helps us to understand what imitating St. Dominic means in a more particular way, while still leaving ample room for discernment—by the chapter and the individual member—about what this means in our daily lives.

The Rule of the Lay Chapters of Saint Dominic

II. Life of the Chapters

8. (Life of the Chapters) Let them strive, to the best of their ability, to live in authentic communion in accord with the spirit of the Beatitudes. This is done in all circumstances, performing works of mercy, sharing in good works with members of the Chapter, especially toward the poor and the sick, and praying for the dead. In this way they will be *of one heart and one mind in the Lord*.¹⁹⁸

9. Collaborating with all their sisters and brothers [Latin original: *cum fratribus et sororibus*] in the Order, the laity should participate actively in the life of the Church, ready always to work with other apostolic groups.

10. To advance in their vocation, a union of action and contemplation, the Dominican Laity have as their principal sources:

- a. listening to the Word of God and reading the Sacred Scriptures, especially the New Testament;
- b. daily participation, if possible, in the celebration of the liturgy and the Eucharist;
- c. frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation;
- d. celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours with all the Dominican Family and private prayer, such as meditation and the Rosary;
- e. conversion of heart through spirit and practice of evangelical asceticism [Latin original: *paenitentiae*];
- f. assiduous study of revealed truth and reflection on contemporary problems, in the light of Faith;
- g. devotion to the Virgin Mary, according to the tradition of the Order, to our Father Saint Dominic and Saint Catherine of Siena;
- h. periodic spiritual retreats.

¹⁹⁸ Acts of the Apostles 4:32.

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR B, UNIT III**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: VERITAS: STUDY

LEWIS & SHORT LATIN LEXICON

studeo, ui, 2—to be eager or zealous, to take pains about, be diligent in, anxious about, busy one's self with, strive after, to apply one's self to or pursue some course of action, etc.; to desire, wish, etc.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: PRAYER FOR ORDERING A LIFE WISELY

St. Thomas recited this daily before the image of Christ.

O merciful God, grant that I may desire ardently, search prudently, recognize truly, and bring to perfect completion whatever is pleasing to You for the praise and glory of Your name. Put my life in good order, O my God. Grant that I may know what You require me to do. Bestow upon me the power to accomplish Your will, as is necessary and fitting for the salvation of my soul. Grant to me, O Lord my God, that I may not falter in times of prosperity or adversity, so that I may not be exalted in the former, nor dejected in the latter. May I not rejoice in anything unless it leads me to You; may I not be saddened by anything unless it turns me from You. May I desire to please no one, nor fear to displease anyone, but You. May all transitory things, O Lord, be worthless to me and may all things eternal be ever cherished by me. May any joy without You be burdensome for me and may I not desire anything else besides You. May all work, O Lord, delight me when done for Your sake and may all repose not centered in You be ever wearisome for me. Grant unto me, my God, that I may direct my heart to You and that in my failures I may ever feel remorse for my sins and never lose the resolve to change. Lord my God, make me submissive without protest, poor without discouragement, chaste without regret, patient without complaint, humble without posturing, cheerful without frivolity, mature without gloom, and quick-witted without flippancy. Lord my God, let me fear You without losing hope, be truthful without guile, do good works without presumption, rebuke my neighbor without haughtiness, and—without hypocrisy—strengthen him by word and example. Give to me, O Lord God, a watchful heart, which no capricious thought can lure away from You. Give to me a noble heart, which no unworthy desire can debase. Give to me a resolute heart, which no evil intention can divert. Give to me a stalwart heart, which no tribulation can overcome. Give to me a temperate heart, which no violent passion can enslave. Give to me, O Lord my God, understanding of You, diligence in seeking You, wisdom in finding You, discourse ever pleasing to You, perseverance in waiting for You, and confidence in finally embracing You. Grant that with Your hardships I may be burdened in reparation here, that Your benefits I may use in gratitude upon the way, that in Your joys I may delight by glorifying You in the Kingdom of Heaven. You Who live and reign, God, world without end. Amen.

St. Thomas Aquinas: Prayer Before Study

St. Thomas frequently recited this before he dictated, wrote, or preached.

Ineffable Creator, Who, from the treasures of Your wisdom, have established three hierarchies of angels, have arrayed them in marvelous order above the fiery heavens, and have marshaled the regions of the universe with such artful skill, You are proclaimed the true font of light and wisdom, and the primal origin raised high beyond all things. Pour forth a ray of Your brightness into the darkened places of my mind; disperse from my soul the twofold darkness into which I was born: sin and ignorance. You make eloquent the tongues of infants. Refine my speech and pour forth upon my lips the goodness of Your blessing. Grant to me keenness of mind, capacity to remember, skill in learning, subtlety to interpret, and eloquence in speech. May You guide the beginning of my work, direct its progress, and bring it to completion. You Who are true God and true Man, Who live and reign, world without end. Amen.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES*, BOOK I, CHAPTERS 1–3, 7

CHAPTER I: In What Consists The Office Of A Wise Man

My mouth shall meditate truth, and my lips shall hate wickedness.—PROV. viii. 7.

THE general use which, in the Philosopher's opinion, should be followed in naming things, has resulted in those men being called wise who direct things themselves and govern them well. Wherefore among other things which men conceive of the wise man, the Philosopher reckons that it *belongs to the wise man to direct things*. Now the rule of all things directed to the end of government and order must needs be taken from their end: for then is a thing best disposed when it is fittingly directed to its end, since the end of everything is its good. Wherefore in the arts we observe that the art which governs and rules another is the one to which the latter's end belongs: thus the medical art rules and directs the art of the druggist, because health which is the object of medicine is the end of all drugs which are made up by the druggist's art. The same may be observed in the art of sailing in relation to the art of ship-building, and in the military art in relation to the equestrian art and all warlike appliances. These arts which govern others are called *master-arts (architectonicæ)*, that is *principal arts*, for which reason their craftsmen, who are called *master-craftsmen (architectores)*, are awarded the name of wise men. Since, however, these same craftsmen, through being occupied with the ends of certain singular things, do not attain to the universal end of all things, they are called wise about this or that, in which sense it is said (1 Cor. iii. 10): *As a wise architect, I have laid the foundation*; whereas the name of being wise simply is reserved to him alone whose consideration is about the end of the universe, which end is also the beginning of the universe: wherefore, according to the Philosopher, it belongs to the wise man to consider the *highest causes*.

Now the last end of each thing is that which is intended by the first author or mover of that thing: and the first author and mover of the universe is an intellect, as we shall prove further on. Consequently the last end of the universe must be the good of the intellect: and this is truth. Therefore truth must be the last end of the whole universe; and the consideration thereof must be the chief occupation of wisdom. And for this reason divine Wisdom, clothed in flesh, declares that He came into the world to make known the truth, saying (Jo. xviii. 37): *For this was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth*. Moreover the Philosopher defines the First Philosophy as being the *knowledge of truth*, not of any truth, but of that truth which is the source of all truth, of that, namely, which relates to the first principle of being of all things; wherefore its truth is the principle of all truth, since the disposition of things is the same in truth as in being.

Now it belongs to the same thing to pursue one contrary and to remove the other: thus medicine which effects health, removes sickness. Hence, just as it belongs to a wise man to meditate and disseminate truth, especially about the first principle, so does it belong to him to refute contrary falsehood.

Wherefore the twofold office of the wise man is fittingly declared from the mouth of Wisdom, in the words above quoted; namely, to meditate and publish the divine truth, which antonomastically is *the truth*, as signified by the words, *My mouth shall meditate truth*; and to refute the error contrary to truth, as signified by the words, and *my lips shall hate wickedness*, by which is denoted falsehood opposed to divine truth, which falsehood is contrary to religion that is also called *godliness*, wherefore the falsehood that is contrary thereto receives the name of *ungodliness*.

CHAPTER II: The Author's Intention In This Work

Now of all human pursuits, that of wisdom is the most perfect, the most sublime, the most profitable, the most delightful. It is the most perfect, since in proportion as a man devotes himself to the pursuit of wisdom, so much does he already share in true happiness: wherefore the wise man says (Ecclus. xiv. 22): *Blessed is the man that shall continue in wisdom*. It is the most sublime because thereby especially does man approach to a likeness to God, *Who made all things in wisdom*: wherefore since likeness is the cause of love, the pursuit of wisdom especially unites man to God by friendship: hence it is said (Wis. vii. 14) that *wisdom is an infinite treasure to men: which they that use, become the friends of God*. It is the most profitable, because by wisdom itself man is brought to the kingdom of immortality, for *the desire of wisdom bringeth to the everlasting kingdom* (Wis. vi. 21). And it is the most delightful because *her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness* (Wis. viii. 16).

Wherefore, taking heart from God's lovingkindness to assume the office of a wise man, although it surpasses our own powers, the purpose we have in view is, in our own weak way, to declare the truth which the Catholic faith professes, while weeding out contrary errors; for, in the words of Hilary, *I acknowledge that I owe my life's chief occupation to God, so that every word and every thought of mine may speak of Him*. But it is difficult to refute the errors of each individual, for two reasons. First, because the sacrilegious assertions of each erring individual are not so well known to us, that we are able from what they say to find arguments to refute their errors. For the Doctors of old used this method in order to confute the errors of the heathens, whose opinions they were able to know, since either they had been heathens themselves, or had lived among heathens and were conversant with their teachings. Secondly, because some of them, like the Mohammedans and pagans, do not agree with us as to the authority of any Scripture whereby they may be convinced, in the same way as we are able to dispute with the Jews by means of the Old Testament, and with heretics by means of the New: whereas the former accept neither. Wherefore it is necessary to have recourse to natural reason, to which all are compelled to assent. And yet this is deficient in the things of God.

And while we are occupied in the inquiry about a particular truth, we shall show what errors are excluded thereby, and how demonstrable truth is in agreement with the faith of the Christian religion.

CHAPTER III: In What Way It Is Possible To Make Known The Divine Truth

SINCE, however, not every truth is to be made known in the same way, *and it is the part of an educated man to seek for conviction in each subject, only so far as the nature of the*

subject allows, as the Philosopher most rightly observes as quoted by Boethius, it is necessary to show first of all in what way it is possible to make known the aforesaid truth.

Now in those things which we hold about God there is truth in two ways. For certain things that are true about God wholly surpass the capability of human reason, for instance that God is three and one: while there are certain things to which even natural reason can attain, for instance that God is, that God is one, and others like these, which even the philosophers proved demonstratively of God, being guided by the light of natural reason.

That certain divine truths wholly surpass the capability of human reason, is most clearly evident. For since the principle of all the knowledge which the reason acquires about a thing, is the understanding of that thing's essence, because according to the Philosopher's teaching the principle of a demonstration is *what a thing is*, it follows that our knowledge about a thing will be in proportion to our understanding of its essence. Wherefore, if the human intellect comprehends the essence of a particular thing, for instance a stone or a triangle, no truth about that thing will surpass the capability of human reason. But this does not happen to us in relation to God, because the human intellect is incapable by its natural power of attaining to the comprehension of His essence: since our intellect's knowledge, according to the mode of the present life, originates from the senses: so that things which are not objects of sense cannot be comprehended by the human intellect, except in so far as knowledge of them is gathered from sensibles. Now sensibles cannot lead our intellect to see in them what God is, because they are effects unequal to the power of their cause. And yet our intellect is led by sensibles to the divine knowledge so as to know about God that He is, and other such truths, which need to be ascribed to the first principle. Accordingly some divine truths are attainable by human reason, while others altogether surpass the power of human reason.

Again. The same is easy to see from the degrees of intellects. For if one of two men perceives a thing with his intellect with greater subtlety, the one whose intellect is of a higher degree understands many things which the other is altogether unable to grasp; as instanced in a yokel who is utterly incapable of grasping the subtleties of philosophy. Now the angelic intellect surpasses the human intellect more than the intellect of the cleverest philosopher surpasses that of the most uncultured. For an angel knows God through a more excellent effect than does man, for as much as the angel's essence, through which he is led to know God by natural knowledge, is more excellent than sensible things, even than the soul itself, by which the human intellect mounts to the knowledge of God. And the divine intellect surpasses the angelic intellect much more than the angelic surpasses the human. For the divine intellect by its capacity equals the divine essence, wherefore God perfectly understands of Himself what He is, and He knows all things that can be understood about Him: whereas the angel knows not what God is by his natural knowledge, because the angel's essence, by which he is led to the knowledge of God, is an effect unequal to the power of its cause. Consequently an angel is unable by his natural knowledge to grasp all that God understands about Himself: nor again is human reason capable of grasping all that an angel understands by his natural power. Accordingly just as a man would show himself to be a most insane fool if he declared the assertions of a philosopher to be false because he was unable to understand them, so, and much more, a man would be exceedingly foolish, were he to suspect of falsehood the things revealed by God through the ministry of His angels, because they cannot be the object of reason's investigations.

Furthermore. The same is made abundantly clear by the deficiency which every day we experience in our knowledge of things. For we are ignorant of many of the properties of sensible things, and in many cases we are unable to discover the nature of those properties which we perceive by our senses. Much less therefore is human reason capable of investigating all the truths about that most sublime essence.

With this the saying of the Philosopher is in accord (2 *Metaph.*) where he says that our intellect *in relation to those primary things which are most evident in nature is like the eye of a bat in relation to the sun.*

To this truth Holy Writ also bears witness. For it is written (Job xi. 7): *Peradventure thou wilt comprehend the steps of God and wilt find out the Almighty perfectly?* and (xxxvi. 26): *Behold God is great, exceeding our knowledge,* and (1 Cor. xiii. 9): *We know in part.*

Therefore all that is said about God, though it cannot be investigated by reason, must not be forthwith rejected as false, as the Manicheans and many unbelievers have thought.

CHAPTER VII: That The Truth Of Reason Is Not In Opposition To The Truth Of The Christian Faith

Now though the aforesaid truth of the Christian faith surpasses the ability of human reason, nevertheless those things which are naturally instilled in human reason cannot be opposed to this truth. For it is clear that those things which are implanted in reason by nature, are most true, so much so that it is impossible to think them to be false. Nor is it lawful to deem false that which is held by faith, since it is so evidently confirmed by God. Seeing then that the false alone is opposed to the true, as evidently appears if we examine their definitions, it is impossible for the aforesaid truth of faith to be contrary to those principles which reason knows naturally.

Again. The same thing which the disciple's mind receives from its teacher is contained in the knowledge of the teacher, unless he teach insincerely, which it were wicked to say of God. Now the knowledge of naturally known principles is instilled into us by God, since God Himself is the author of our nature. Therefore the divine Wisdom also contains these principles. Consequently whatever is contrary to these principles, is contrary to the divine Wisdom; wherefore it cannot be from God. Therefore those things which are received by faith from divine revelation cannot be contrary to our natural knowledge.

Moreover. Our intellect is stayed by contrary arguments, so that it cannot advance to the knowledge of truth. Wherefore if conflicting knowledges were instilled into us by God, our intellect would thereby be hindered from knowing the truth. And this cannot be ascribed to God.

Furthermore. Things that are natural are unchangeable so long as nature remains. Now contrary opinions cannot be together in the same subject. Therefore God does not instill into man any opinion or belief contrary to natural knowledge.

Hence the Apostle says (Rom. x. 8): *The word is nigh thee even in thy heart and in thy mouth. This is the word of faith which we preach.* Yet because it surpasses reason some look upon it as though it were contrary thereto; which is impossible.

This is confirmed also by the authority of Augustine who says (*Gen. ad lit. ii*): *That which truth shall make known can nowise be in opposition to the holy books whether of the Old or of the New Testament.*

From this we may evidently conclude that whatever arguments are alleged against the teachings of faith, they do not rightly proceed from the first self-evident principles instilled by nature. Wherefore they lack the force of demonstration, and are either probable or sophistical arguments, and consequently it is possible to solve them.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *SUMMA CONTRA GENTILES*, BOOK IV, CHAPTER 1

Lo, these things are said in part, of his ways: and seeing we have heard scarce a little drop of his word, who shall be able to behold the thunder of his greatness? (Job xxvi. 14).

FOR as much as the human intellect acquires knowledge in a manner conformable with its nature, it cannot by itself arrive at an intuitive knowledge of the divine substance in itself, since the latter infinitely transcends the whole range of things sensible, nay all other beings whatsoever.

Nevertheless, seeing that man's perfect good consists in his knowing God in some way, lest so noble a creature should seem to be utterly void of purpose, through being unable to obtain its own end, man has been given the means of rising to the knowledge of God. For, since all the perfections of things come down from God the summit of all perfection, man begins from the lowest things and rising by degrees advances to the knowledge of God: thus too, in corporeal movements, the way down is the same as the way up, and they differ only as regards their beginning and end.

Now this descent of perfections from God presents a twofold aspect. In the first we look at it from the viewpoint of the origin of things: since divine wisdom, that there might be perfection in things, established a certain order among them, so that the universe might be made up of the highest as well as the lowest things. The second aspect is that of the things considered in themselves; for, since causes rank higher than effects, the things caused first fall short of the first cause, namely God, while they transcend their own effects, and so on until we come to those things that are caused last. And because in God, the summit of all things, there is found the most perfect unity; and since the more a thing is one, the greater its power and worth, it follows that the further we recede from the first principle, the more do we find things to be diversified and varied. Consequently the things that proceed from God must needs derive unity from their principle, and multiplicity from the ends to which they are ordained. Accordingly from the diversity of things we consider the diversity of ways, as beginning from one principle and terminating in different things.

Wherefore our intellect is able to mount by these ways to the knowledge of God; and yet by reason of the weakness of our intellect we are unable to know perfectly the very ways themselves. Because, as our senses, wherein our knowledge begins, are directed to exterior accidents, such as colour, smell, and the like, which are by themselves sensible, the intellect is scarcely able through suchlike externals to arrive at the knowledge of what lies within, even in those things whose accidents it grasps perfectly through the senses. Much less, therefore, will it be able to succeed in comprehending the nature of those things, of whose accidents but few can be grasped by the senses, and still less the nature of those things whose accidents cannot be grasped, although it may be partly gathered from certain effects that fall short of those things. But, even though the very natures of things were known to us, nevertheless their order, in so much as by divine providence they are both referred one to another and directed to their end, could be but little known to us, since we cannot succeed in knowing the purpose of divine providence.

Wherefore, if the ways themselves are known by us but imperfectly, how can they serve us as a means of obtaining perfect knowledge of their principle, which transcends them out of all proportion? Even if we knew those same ways perfectly, not yet should we have perfect knowledge of their principle.

Since then it was but a meager knowledge of God that man was able to obtain in the above ways by a kind of intellectual insight, God of His overflowing goodness, in order that man's knowledge of Him might have greater stability, revealed to man certain things about Himself which surpass the human intelligence. In this revelation a certain order is observed, in keeping with human nature, so that the imperfect leads to the perfect, as happens in other things subject to movement.

Accordingly, at first, these things are revealed to man, yet so that he understands them not, but merely believes them as things heard by him, because his intellect, in this state of life wherein it is connected with sensibles, is utterly unable to rise so as to behold such

things as transcend all proportion to the senses: but, when freed from this connection with the senses, then it will be raised so as to behold the things revealed.

Hence man's knowledge of divine things is threefold. The first is when man, by the natural light of reason, rises through creatures to the knowledge of God. The second is when the divine truth which surpasses the human intelligence comes down to us by revelation, yet not as shown to him that he may see it, but as expressed in words so that he may hear it. The third is when the human mind is raised to the perfect intuition of things revealed.

This threefold knowledge is indicated by the words of Job quoted above.—The words, *These things are said in part of his ways* refer to the knowledge in which our intellect rises to the knowledge of God by the way of creatures. And because we know these ways but imperfectly, he rightly adds *in part*: since *we know in part*, as the Apostle says (1 Cor. xiii. 9). The words that follow, *And seeing we have heard scarce a little drop of his word*, refer to the second knowledge, wherein divine things are revealed to our belief by way of speech: because *faith*, as it is said, *is by hearing, and hearing is by the word of Christ*, of which it is also said (Jo. xvii. 17): *Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth*. Wherefore, since the revealed truth in divine things is offered not to our sight but to our belief, he rightly says *we have heard*. And whereas this imperfect knowledge flows from that perfect knowledge whereby the divine truth is seen in itself, when revealed to us by God by means of the angels who *see the face of the Father*, the expression *drop* is appropriate: hence it is said (Joel iii. 18): *In that day the mountains shall drop down sweetness*. But since not all the mysteries which the angels and blessed know through seeing them in the first truth, are revealed to us, but only a certain few, he says pointedly *a little*. For it is said (Ecclus. xliii. 35, 36): *Who shall magnify him as he is from the beginning? There are many things hidden from us, that are greater than these: for we have seen but a few of his works*. Again the Lord said to his disciples (Jo. xvi. 12): *I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now*. Moreover these few things that are revealed to us are proposed to us figuratively and obscurely, so that only the studious can succeed in understanding them, while others revere them as things occult, and so that unbelievers are unable to deride them. Hence the Apostle says (1 Cor. xiii. 12): *We see now through a glass in a dark manner*; wherefore Job adds significantly the word *scarce*, to indicate difficulty.—When he goes on to say, *Who shall be able to behold the thunder of his greatness?* he is referring to the third knowledge, whereby the first truth shall be known as an object not of belief but of vision, for *we shall see him as he is* (1 Jo. iii. 2), wherefore he says *behold*. Nor shall a small portion of the divine mysteries be perceived, but the divine majesty itself shall be seen, and the entire perfection of good things: hence the Lord said to Moses (Exod xxxiii. 19): *I will show thee all good*; wherefore he says rightly *greatness*. Nor will the truth be revealed to man obscurely, but made clearly manifest: wherefore our Lord said to His disciples (Jo. xvii. 25): *The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father*; hence the word *thunder* is significant as indicating manifestation.

Now the passage quoted is suitable to our purpose: because hitherto we have spoken of divine things, in as much as natural reason is able to arrive at the knowledge of them through creatures; imperfectly however and as far as its own capacity allows, so that we can say with Job: *Lo, these things are said in part, of his ways*.

It remains then for us to speak of those things that God has proposed to us to be believed, and which surpass the human intelligence. In what manner we are to proceed in this matter we are taught by the words quoted above. For seeing that we scarce hear the truth in the words of Holy Writ, coming down to us like a little drop, and since, in this state of life, no man is able to behold the thunder of His greatness, we must proceed in such sort that the things delivered to us in the words of Holy Writ shall serve as principles. Thus we shall endeavor in some fashion to grasp what is delivered to us in a hidden manner by the aforesaid words, and to defend them from the attacks of unbelievers; yet so as not to presume

that we understand them perfectly. For such things are to be proved by the authority of Holy Writ, and not by natural reason: and yet we must show that they are not opposed to natural reason, so as to defend them from the attacks of unbelievers. This manner of procedure has in fact already been decided on at the outset of this work. And since natural reason rises to the knowledge of God through creatures, while on the other hand the knowledge of God by faith comes down to us by divine revelation, and since the way of ascent is the same as that of descent, we must needs proceed by the same way in those things above reason which are an object of faith, as that which we followed hitherto in those matters concerning God which we investigated by reason.

Accordingly we shall treat in the first place of those things concerning God which are above reason and are proposed to our belief, such as belief in the Trinity (Ch. ii.-xxvi.).

Secondly we shall treat of those things above reason that have been done by God, such as the work of the Incarnation and things that follow in sequence thereto (Ch. xxvii.-lxxviii.).

Thirdly we shall treat of those things above reason to which we look forward in man's last end, such as the resurrection and glory of the body, the eternal happiness of souls, and matters connected therewith (Ch. lxxix.-xcvii.).

The Letter of St. Thomas Aquinas to Brother John "De Modo Studendi"

BROTHER JOHN, most dear to me in Christ: Since you have asked me how one should set about to acquire the treasure of knowledge, this is my advice to you concerning it: namely, that you should choose to enter, not straightway into the ocean, but by way of the little streams; for difficult things ought to be reached by way of easy ones.

The following, therefore, is my advice to you concerning your way of living:

I urge you to hesitate before speaking, and to hesitate before visiting the common room;

Hold fast to the cleanness of your conscience;

Do not cease from devoting time to prayer;

Love your cell by making constant use of it, if you want to be admitted into the wine-cellar;

Show yourself to be lovable to everybody, or at least try to do so; but be very familiar with nobody, for too much familiarity breeds contempt and introduces factors which retard study;

Also, do not in any way get yourself involved in the doings and sayings of outsiders;

Avoid aimless meanderings above all things;

Do not fail to follow in the footsteps of the saints and of sound men.

Do not heed by whom a thing is said, but rather what is said you should commit to your memory;

What you read, set about to understand, verifying what is doubtful;

Strive to put whatever you can in the cupboard of your mind, as though you were wanting to fill a vessel to the brim;

"Seek not the things that are too high for thee."

Follow in the footsteps of that blessed Dominic, who, while he yet had life for his fellow-traveler, brought forth and produced foliage, blossom, fruit—fruit both serviceable and astonishing—in the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts. If you shall have followed these steps, you will be able to attain to whatsoever you have a mind. Fare you well!

Reading and rereading the Rule can remind us of our Dominican identity. It can even serve as an examination of conscience or a measure of how we are growing as sons and daughters of St. Dominic. Note especially in the section given below that what we promise in our profession is to live according to the Rule. We should know the Rule well and be animated by its Spirit.

The Rule of the Lay Chapters of Saint Dominic

II. Life of the Chapters

11. (Formation) The object of Dominican formation is to form adults in the Faith, capable of accepting, celebrating, and proclaiming the Word of God. Each Province is to establish a program of:

- a. formation in stages for new members:
- b. ongoing formation for all, even for members without direct access to a Chapter.

12. Every Dominican must be prepared to preach the Word of God. This preaching is the exercise of the prophetic mission of the baptized, strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the present world, the preaching of the Word of God involves the defense of the dignity of human life, the family and the person. The promotion of Christian unity and dialogue with non-Christians and non-believers are part of the Dominican vocation.

13. The [Latin text: *praecipui*, i.e. principal] sources of Dominican formation are:

- a. the Word of God and theological reflection,
- b. liturgical prayer,
- c. the history and tradition of the Order,
- d. contemporary documents of the Church and Order,
- e. awareness of the signs of our times.

14. (Profession) To be incorporated into the Order, members must make profession which consists of a formal promise by which they propose to live according to the spirit of Saint Dominic and according to the way of life prescribed by The Rule. This profession is either temporary or perpetual. The following or a substantially similar formula is to be used for making profession:

To the honor of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of Saint Dominic, I (name), before you (name), the Moderator of this Chapter and (name) the religious promoter, representing the Master of the Order of Friars Preachers, promise to live according to The Rule of the Dominican Laity for (three years or my whole life).

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR B, UNIT IV**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: THE ROSARY

If Dominicans should be known for anything, it is the Rosary. In this we have been too successful—if that were possible—since use of the Rosary became so widespread that few associate it with the Dominican Order. Unfortunately, however, many Catholics have abandoned the practice of regularly praying the Rosary. Pope John Paul II has recently tried to rekindle devotion to this great prayer, and we as Dominicans can aid this crusade. But recitation of the Rosary will never achieve popularity or bear much fruit if it is a hollow and unattentive repetition of words. We must understand what makes the Rosary great and learn to say the Rosary well ourselves if we are to teach others how to do so. St. Louis de Montfort, Apostle of Mary and a Third Order Dominican, gives us something of the history of the Rosary and the theological basis for the value of this form of prayer. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange explains how this is far more than a vocal prayer, it really can be a contemplative form of prayer.

A. St. Louis de Monfort¹⁹⁹

A White Rose

1. Dear ministers of the most high God, you my fellow priests who preach the truth of God and who teach the gospel to all nations, let me give you this little book as a white rose that I would like you to keep. The truths contained in it are set forth in a very simple and straightforward manner, as you will see. Please keep them in your heart so that you yourselves may make a practice of the Rosary and taste its fruits. Please have them always on your lips too, so that you will always preach the Rosary and thus convert others by teaching them the excellence of this holy devotion. I beg of you to beware of thinking of the Rosary as something of little importance—as do ignorant people, and even several great but proud scholars. Far from being insignificant, the Rosary is a priceless treasure which is inspired by God. Almighty God has given it to you because he wants you to use it as a means to convert the most hardened sinners and the most obstinate heretics. He has attached to it grace in this life and glory in the next. The saints have said it faithfully and the Popes have endorsed it. When the Holy Spirit has revealed this secret to a priest and director of souls, how blessed is that priest! For the vast majority of people fail to know this secret or else only know it superficially. If such a priest really understands this secret, he will say the Rosary each day and will encourage others to say it. God and his blessed Mother will pour abundant grace into his soul, so that he may become God's instrument for his glory; and his word, though simple, will do more good in one month than that of other preachers in several years.

2. Therefore, my dear brothers and fellow priests, it will not be enough for us to preach this devotion to others; we must practice it ourselves, for if we firmly believed in the importance of the holy Rosary but never said it ourselves, people could hardly be expected to act upon

¹⁹⁹ St. Louis de Montfort, *The Secret of the Rosary for Renewal and Salvation*, "Introduction" and "First Decade," downloaded from the internet.

our advice, since no one can give what he does not have: “Jesus began to do and to teach.” We ought to pattern ourselves on our Lord, who began practicing what he preached. We ought to emulate St. Paul, who knew and preached nothing but Jesus crucified. I could tell you at great length of the grace God has given me to know by experience the effectiveness of the preaching of the holy Rosary, and of how I have seen, with my own eyes, the most wonderful conversions it has brought about. I would gladly tell you all these things if I thought that it would move you to preach this beautiful devotion, in spite of the fact that priests are not in the habit of doing so these days. But instead of all this, I think it will be quite enough for this little summary that I am writing if I tell you a few ancient but authentic stories about the holy Rosary. These excerpts really go to prove what I have outlined for the faithful.

A Red Rose

3. Poor men and women who are sinners, I, a greater sinner than you, wish to give you this rose, a crimson one, because the precious blood of our Lord has fallen upon it. Please God that it may bring true fragrance into your lives - but above all, may it save you from the danger that you are in. Every day unbelievers and un-repentant sinners cry, “Let us crown ourselves with roses.” But our cry should be, “Let us crown ourselves with the roses of the holy Rosary.” How different are theirs from ours! Their roses are pleasures of the flesh, worldly honors and passing riches which wilt and decay in no time, but ours, which are the Our Father and Hail Mary which we have said devoutly over and over again, and to which we have added good penitential acts, will never wilt or die, and they will be just as exquisite thousands of years from now as they are today. On the contrary, sinners’ roses only look like roses, while in point of fact they are cruel thorns which prick them during life by giving them pangs of conscience, at their death they pierce them with bitter regret and, still worse, in eternity they turn to burning shafts of anger and despair. But if our roses have thorns, they are the thorns of Jesus Christ, who changes them into roses. If our roses prick us, it is only for a short time, and only in order to cure the illness of sin and to save our souls.

4. So by all means we should eagerly crown ourselves with these roses from heaven, and recite the entire Rosary every day, that is to say, three rosaries each of five decades, which are like three little wreaths or crowns of flowers. There are two reasons for doing this: first of all, to honor the three crowns of Jesus and Mary – Jesus’ crown of grace at the time of his Incarnation, his crown of thorns during his passion, and his crown of glory in heaven, and of course the three-fold crown which the Blessed Trinity gave Mary in heaven. Secondly, we should do this so that we ourselves may receive three crowns from Jesus and Mary, the first a crown of merit during our lifetime; the second, a crown of peace at our death; and the third, a crown of glory in heaven. If you say the Rosary faithfully until death, I do assure you that, in spite of the gravity of your sins “you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory.” Even if you are on the brink of damnation, even if you have one foot in hell, even if you have sold your soul to the devil as sorcerers do who practice black magic, and even if you are a heretic as obstinate as a devil, sooner or later you will be converted and will amend your life and save your soul, if - and mark well what I say - if you say the Rosary devoutly every day until death for the purpose of knowing the truth and obtaining contrition and pardon for your sins. In this book there are several stories of great sinners who were converted through the power of the Rosary. Please read and meditate upon them.

A Mystical Rose Tree

5. Good and devout souls, who walk in the light of the Holy Spirit, I do not think you will mind my giving you this little mystical rose tree which comes straight from heaven and which is to be planted in the garden of your soul. It cannot possibly harm the sweet-smelling flowers of your contemplations; for it is a heavenly tree and its scent is very pleasant. It will not in the least interfere with your carefully planned flower-beds; for, being itself all pure and well-ordered, it inclines all to order and purity. If it is carefully watered and properly attended to every day, it will grow to such a marvellous height, and its branches will have such a wide span that, far from hindering your other devotions, it will maintain and perfect them. Of course, you understand what I mean, since you are spiritually minded; this mystical rose tree is Jesus and Mary in life, death and eternity.

6. Its green leaves are the Joyful Mysteries, the thorns the Sorrowful ones, and the flowers the Glorious Mysteries of Jesus and Mary. The buds are the childhood of Jesus and Mary, and the open blooms show us both of them in their sufferings, and the full-blown roses symbolize Jesus and Mary in their triumph and glory. A rose delights us because of its beauty: so here we have Jesus and Mary in the Joyful Mysteries. Its thorns are sharp, and they prick, which makes us think of them in the Sorrowful Mysteries, and last of all, its perfume is so sweet that everyone loves it, and this fragrance symbolizes their Glorious Mysteries. So please do not scorn this beautiful and heavenly tree, but plant it with your own hands in the garden of your soul, by making the resolution to say your Rosary every day. By saying it daily and by doing good works you will be tending your tree, watering it, hoeing the earth around it. Eventually you will see that this little seed which I have given you, and which seems so small now, will grow into a tree so great that the birds of heaven, that is, predestinate and contemplative souls, will dwell in it and make their nests there. Its shade will shelter them from the scorching heat of the sun and its height will keep them safe from the wild beasts on the ground. And best of all, they will feed upon the tree's fruit, which is none other than our adorable Jesus, to whom be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

God Alone

A Rosebud

7. Dear little friends, this beautiful rosebud is for you; it is one of the beads of your Rosary, and it may seem to you to be such a tiny thing. But if you only knew how precious this bead is! This wonderful bud will open out into a gorgeous rose if you say your Hail Mary really well. Of course it would be too much to expect you to say the whole fifteen mysteries every day, but do say at least five mysteries, and say them properly with love and devotion. This Rosary will be your little wreath of roses, your crown for Jesus and Mary. Please pay attention to every word I have said, and listen carefully to a true story that I want to tell you, and that I would like you to remember. Two little girls, who were sisters, were saying the Rosary very devoutly in front of their house. A beautiful lady suddenly appeared, walked towards the younger girl, who was only about six or seven, took her by the hand, and led her away. Her elder sister was very startled and looked for the little girl everywhere. At last, still not having found her, she went home weeping and told her parents that her sister had been kidnapped. For three whole days the poor father and mother sought the child without success. At the end of the third day they found her at the front door looking extremely happy and pleased. Naturally they asked her where on earth she had been, and she told them that the lady to whom she had been saying the Rosary had taken her to a lovely place where she had given her delicious things to eat. She said that the lady had also given her a baby boy to hold, that he was very beautiful, and that she had kissed him again and again. The father and mother, who had been converted to the Catholic faith only a short time before, sent at once for the Jesuit Father who had instructed them for their reception into the Church and who had

also taught them devotion to the Rosary. They told him everything that had happened, and it was this priest himself who told me this story. It all took place in Paraguay. So, dear children, imitate these little girls and say your Rosary every day as they always did. If you do this, you will earn the right to go to heaven to see Jesus and Mary. If it is not their wish that you should see them in this life, at any rate after you die you will see them for all eternity. Amen. Therefore let all men, the learned and the ignorant, the just and the sinners, the great and the small, praise and honour Jesus and Mary night and day, by saying the holy Rosary. "Greet Mary who has laboured much among you."

FIRST DECADE

The surpassing merit of the Rosary as seen in its origin and name.

First Rose

9. The Rosary is made up of two things: mental prayer and vocal prayer. In the Rosary mental prayer is none other than meditation of the chief mysteries of the life, death and glory of Jesus Christ and of his blessed Mother. Vocal prayer consists in saying fifteen decades of the Hail Mary, each decade headed by an Our Father, while at the same time meditating on and contemplating the fifteen principal virtues which Jesus and Mary practised in the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. In the first five decades we must honour the five Joyful Mysteries and meditate on them; in the second five decades, the Sorrowful Mysteries; and in the third group of five, the Glorious Mysteries. So the Rosary is a blessed blending of mental and vocal prayer by which we honour and learn to imitate the mysteries and the virtues of the life, death, passion and glory of Jesus and Mary.

Second Rose

10. Since the Rosary is composed, principally and in substance, of the prayer of Christ and the Angelic Salutation, that is, the Our Father and the Hail Mary, it was without doubt the first prayer and the principal devotion of the faithful and has been in use all through the centuries, from the time of the apostles and disciples down to the present.

11. It was only in the year 1214, however, that the Church received the Rosary in its present form and according to the method we use today. It was given to the Church by St. Dominic, who had received it from the Blessed Virgin as a means of converting the Albigensians and other sinners. I will tell you the story of how he received it, which is found in the very well-known book *De Dignitate Psalterii*, by Blessed Alan de la Roche. Saint Dominic, seeing that the gravity of people's sins was hindering the conversion of the Albigensians, withdrew into a forest near Toulouse, where he prayed continuously for three days and three nights. During this time he did nothing but weep and do harsh penances in order to appease the anger of God. He used his discipline so much that his body was lacerated, and finally he fell into a coma. At this point our Lady appeared to him, accompanied by three angels, and she said, "Dear Dominic, do you know which weapon the Blessed Trinity wants to use to reform the world?" "Oh, my Lady," answered Saint Dominic, "you know far better than I do, because next to your Son Jesus Christ you have always been the chief instrument of our salvation." Then our Lady replied, "I want you to know that, in this kind of warfare, the principal weapon has always been the Angelic Psalter, which is the foundation-stone of the New Testament. Therefore, if you want to reach these hardened souls and win them over to God, preach my Psalter." So he arose, comforted, and burning with zeal for the conversion of the people in that district, he made straight for the cathedral. At once unseen angels rang the bells

to gather the people together, and Saint Dominic began to preach. At the very beginning of his sermon, an appalling storm broke out, the earth shook, the sun was darkened, and there was so much thunder and lightning that all were very much afraid. Even greater was their fear when, looking at a picture of our Lady exposed in a prominent place, they saw her raise her arms to heaven three times to call down God's vengeance upon them if they failed to be converted, to amend their lives, and seek the protection of the holy Mother of God. God wished, by means of these supernatural phenomena, to spread the new devotion of the holy Rosary and to make it more widely known. At last, at the prayer of Saint Dominic, the storm came to an end, and he went on preaching. So fervently and compellingly did he explain the importance and value of the Rosary that almost all the people of Toulouse embraced it and renounced their false beliefs. In a very short time a great improvement was seen in the town; people began leading Christian lives and gave up their former bad habits.

Third Rose

12. The miraculous way in which the devotion to the holy Rosary was established is something of a parallel to the way in which God gave his law to the world on Mount Sinai, and it obviously proves its value and importance. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, instructed by the Blessed Virgin as well as by his own experience, Saint Dominic preached the Rosary for the rest of his life. He preached it by his example as well as by his sermons, in cities and in country places, to people of high station and low, before scholars and the uneducated, to Catholics and to heretics. The Rosary, which he said every day, was his preparation for every sermon and his little tryst with our Lady immediately after preaching.

13. One day he had to preach at Notre Dame in Paris, and it happened to be the feast of St. John the Evangelist. He was in a little chapel behind the high altar prayerfully preparing his sermon by saying the Rosary, as he always did, when our Lady appeared to him and said: "Dominic, even though what you have planned to say may be very good, I am bringing you a much better sermon." Saint Dominic took in his hands the book our Lady proffered, read the sermon carefully and, when he had understood it and meditated on it, he gave thanks to her. When the time came, he went up into the pulpit and, in spite of the feast day, made no mention of Saint John other than to say that he had been found worthy to be the guardian of the Queen of Heaven. The congregation was made up of theologians and other eminent people, who were used to hearing unusual and polished discourses; but Saint Dominic told them that it was not his desire to give them a learned discourse, wise in the eyes of the world, but that he would speak in the simplicity of the Holy Spirit and with his forcefulness. So he began preaching the Rosary and explained the Hail Mary word by word as he would to a group of children, and used the very simple illustrations which were in the book given him by our Lady.

14. Carthage, the great scholar, quoting Blessed Alan de la Roche in *De Dignitate Psalterii*, describes how this took place. "Blessed Alan writes that one day Father Dominic said to him in a vision, 'My son, it is good to preach; but there is always a danger of looking for praise rather than the salvation of souls. Listen carefully to what happened to me in Paris, so that you may be on your guard against this kind of mistake. I was to preach in the great church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and I was particularly anxious to give a fine sermon, not out of pride, but because of the high intellectual stature of the congregation. An hour before the time I had to preach, I was dutifully saying my Rosary - as I always did before giving a sermon - when I fell into ecstasy. I saw my beloved friend, the Mother of God, coming towards me with a book in her hand. "Dominic," she said, "your sermon for today may be very good indeed, but no matter how good it is, I have brought you one that is very much

better.” Of course I was overjoyed, and I took the book and read every word of it. Just as our Lady had said, I found exactly the right things to say in my sermon, so I thanked her with all my heart. When it was time to begin, I saw that the University of Paris had turned out in full force, as well as a large number of noblemen. They had all seen and heard of the great things that the good Lord had been doing through me. I went up into the pulpit. It was the feast of Saint John the Evangelist but all I said about him was that he had been found worthy to be the guardian of the Queen of Heaven. Then I addressed the congregation: “My Lords and illustrious doctors of the University, you are accustomed to hearing learned sermons suited to your refined tastes. Now I do not want to speak to you in the scholarly language of human wisdom but, on the contrary, to show you the Spirit of God and his greatness.”” Here ends the quotation from Blessed Alan, after which Carthage goes on to say in his own words, “Then Saint Dominic explained the Angelic Salutation to them, using simple comparisons and examples from everyday life.”

15. Blessed Alan, according to Carthage, mentioned several other occasions when our Lord and our Lady appeared to Saint Dominic to urge him and inspire him to preach the Rosary more and more in order to wipe out sin and convert sinners and heretics. In another passage Carthage says, “Blessed Alan said our Lady revealed to him that, after she had appeared to Saint Dominic, her blessed Son appeared to him and said, ‘Dominic, I rejoice to see that you are not relying on your own wisdom and that, rather than seek the empty praise of men, you are working with great humility for the salvation of souls. But many priests want to preach thunderously against the worst kinds of sin at the very outset, failing to realize that before a sick person is given bitter medicine, he needs to be prepared by being put into the right frame of mind to really benefit by it. That is why, before doing anything else, priests should try to kindle a love of prayer in people’s hearts and especially a love of my Angelic Psalter. If only they would all start saying it and would really persevere, God in his mercy could hardly refuse to give them his grace. So I want you to preach my Rosary.’”

16. In another place Blessed Alan says, “All priests say a Hail Mary with the faithful before preaching, to ask for God’s grace. They do this because of a revelation that Saint Dominic had from our Lady. ‘My son,’ she said one day, ‘do not be surprised that your sermons fail to bear the results you had hoped for. You are trying to cultivate a piece of ground which has not had any rain. Now when God planned to renew the face of the earth, he started by sending down rain from heaven - and this was the Angelic Salutation. In this way God reformed the world. So when you give a sermon, urge people to say my Rosary, and in this way your words will bear much fruit for souls.’ Saint Dominic lost no time in obeying, and from then on he exerted great influence by his sermons.” (This last quotation is from “The Book of Miracles of the Holy Rosary,” written in Italian, also found in Justin’s works, Sermon 143.)

17. I have been very pleased to quote these well-known authors word for word for the benefit of those who might otherwise have doubts as to the marvellous power of the Rosary. As long as priests followed Saint Dominic’s example and preached devotion to the holy Rosary, piety and fervour thrived throughout the Christian world and in those religious orders which were devoted to the Rosary. But since people have neglected this gift from heaven, all kinds of sin and disorder have spread far and wide.

Fourth Rose

18. All things, even the holiest, are subject to change, especially when they are dependent on man’s free will. It is hardly to be wondered at, then, that the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary

only retained its first fervour for a century after it was instituted by Saint Dominic. After this it was like a thing buried and forgotten. Doubtless, too, the wicked scheming and jealousy of the devil were largely responsible for getting people to neglect the Rosary, and thus block the flow of God's grace which it had drawn upon the world. Thus, in 1349 God punished the whole of Europe with the most terrible plague that had ever been known. Starting in the east, it spread throughout Italy, Germany, France, Poland and Hungary, bringing desolation wherever it went, for out of a hundred men hardly one lived to tell the tale. Big cities, towns, villages and monasteries were almost completely deserted during the three years that the epidemic lasted. This scourge of God was quickly followed by two others, the heresy of the Flagellants and a tragic schism in 1376.

19. Later on, when these trials were over, thanks to the mercy of God, our Lady told Blessed Alan to revive the former Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. Blessed Alan was one of the Dominican Fathers at the monastery at Dinan, in Brittany. He was an eminent theologian and a famous preacher. Our Lady chose him because, since the Confraternity had originally been started in that province, it was fitting that a Dominican from the same province should have the honour of re-establishing it. Blessed Alan began this great work in 1460, after a special warning from our Lord. This is how he received that urgent message, as he himself tells it: One day when he was offering Mass, our Lord, who wished to spur him on to preach the holy Rosary, spoke to him in the Sacred Host. "How can you crucify me again so soon?" Jesus said. "What did you say, Lord?" asked Blessed Alan, horrified. "You crucified me once before by your sins," answered Jesus, "and I would willingly be crucified again rather than have my Father offended by the sins you used to commit. You are crucifying me again now because you have all the learning and understanding that you need to preach my Mother's Rosary, and you are not doing it. If you only did that, you could teach many souls the right path and lead them away from sin. But you are not doing it, and so you yourself are guilty of the sins that they commit." This terrible reproach made Blessed Alan solemnly resolve to preach the Rosary unceasingly.

20. Our Lady also said to him one day to inspire him to preach the Rosary more and more, "You were a great sinner in your youth, but I obtained the grace of your conversion from my Son. Had such a thing been possible, I would have liked to have gone through all kinds of suffering to save you, because converted sinners are a glory to me. And I would have done that also to make you worthy of preaching my Rosary far and wide." Saint Dominic appeared to Blessed Alan as well and told him of the great results of his ministry: he had preached the Rosary unceasingly, his sermons had borne great fruit and many people had been converted during his missions. He said to Blessed Alan, "See what wonderful results I have had through preaching the Rosary. You and all who love our Lady ought to do the same so that, by means of this holy practice of the Rosary, you may draw all people to the real science of the virtues." Briefly, then, this is the history of how Saint Dominic established the holy Rosary and of how Blessed Alan de la Roche restored it.

Fifth Rose

21. Strictly speaking, there can be only one kind of Confraternity of the Rosary, that is, one whose members agree to say the entire Rosary of 150 Hail Marys every day. However, considering the fervour of those who say it, we may distinguish three kinds: Ordinary Membership, which entails saying the complete Rosary once a week; Perpetual Membership, which requires it to be said only once a year; Daily Membership, which obliges one to say it all every day, that is, the fifteen decades made up of 150 Hail Marys. None of these oblige under pain of sin. It is not even a venial sin to fail in this duty because such an undertaking is

entirely voluntary and supererogatory. Needless to say, people should not join the Confraternity if they do not intend to fulfil their obligation by saying the Rosary as often as is required, without, however, neglecting the duties of their state in life. So whenever the Rosary clashes with a duty of one's state in life, holy as the Rosary is, one must give preference to the duty to be performed. Similarly, sick people are not obliged to say the whole Rosary or even part of it if this effort might tire them and make them worse. If you have been unable to say it because of some duty required by obedience or because you genuinely forgot, or because of some urgent necessity, you have not committed even a venial sin. You will then receive the benefits of the Confraternity just the same, sharing in the graces and merits of your brothers and sisters in the Rosary, who are saying it throughout the world. And, my dear Catholic people, even if you fail to say your Rosary out of sheer carelessness or laziness, as long as you do not have any formal contempt for it, you do not sin, absolutely speaking, but you forfeit your participation in the prayers, good works and merits of the Confraternity. Moreover, because you have not been faithful in things that are little and of supererogation, almost without knowing it you may fall into the habit of neglecting big things, such as those duties which bind under pain of sin; for "He that scorns small things shall fall little by little."

Sixth Rose

22. From the time Saint Dominic established the devotion to the holy Rosary up to the time when Blessed Alan de la Roche reestablished it in 1460, it has always been called the Psalter of Jesus and Mary. This is because it has the same number of Hail Marys as there are psalms in the Book of the Psalms of David. Since simple and uneducated people are not able to say the Psalms of David, the Rosary is held to be just as fruitful for them as David's Psalter is for others. But the Rosary can be considered to be even more valuable than the latter for three reasons: 1. Firstly, because the Angelic Psalter bears a nobler fruit, that of the Word incarnate, whereas David's Psalter only prophesies his coming; 2. Just as the real thing is more important than its prefiguration and the body surpasses the shadow, so the Psalter of our Lady is greater than David's Psalter, which did no more than prefigure it; 3. Because our Lady's Psalter or the Rosary made up of the Our Father and Hail Mary is the direct work of the Blessed Trinity. Here is what the learned Carthage says about it: The scholarly writer of Aix-la-Chapelle says in his book, *The Rose Crown*, dedicated to the Emperor Maximilian: "It cannot be maintained that Salutation of Mary is a recent innovation. It spread almost with the Church itself. For at the very beginnings of the Church the more educated members of the faithful celebrated the praises of God in the 150 psalms of David. The ordinary people, who encountered more difficulty in divine service, thus conceived a holy emulation of them. . . . They considered, which is indeed true, that the heavenly praises of the Rosary contained all the divine secrets of the psalms, for, if the psalms sing of the one who is to come, the Rosary proclaims him as having come. That is how they began to call their prayer of 150 Salutations 'The Psalter of Mary,' and to precede each decade with an Our Father, as was done by those who recited the psalms."

23. The Psalter or Rosary of our Lady is divided into three chaplets of five decades each, for the following reasons: 1. to honour the three persons of the Blessed Trinity; 2. to honour the life, death and glory of Jesus Christ; 3. to imitate the Church triumphant, to help the members of the Church militant, and to bring relief to the Church suffering; 4. to imitate the three groups into which the psalms are divided, the first being for the purgative life, the second for the illuminative life, and the third for the unitive life; 5. to give us graces in abundance during life, peace at death, and glory in eternity.

Seventh Rose

24. Ever since Blessed Alan de la Roche re-established this devotion, the voice of the people, which is the voice of God, gave it the name of the Rosary, which means “crown of roses.” That is to say that every time people say the Rosary devoutly they place on the heads of Jesus and Mary 153 white roses and sixteen red roses. Being heavenly flowers, these roses will never fade or lose their beauty. Our Lady has approved and confirmed this name of the Rosary; she has revealed to several people that each time they say a Hail Mary they are giving her a beautiful rose, and that each complete Rosary makes her a crown of roses.

25. The Jesuit brother, Alphonsus Rodriguez, used to say his Rosary with such fervour that he often saw a red rose come out of his mouth at each Our Father, and a white rose at each Hail Mary, both equal in beauty and differing only in colour. The chronicles of St. Francis tell of a young friar who had the praiseworthy habit of saying this crown of our Lady every day before dinner. One day, for some reason or other, he did not manage to say it. The refectory bell had already been rung when he asked the Superior to allow him to say it before coming to the table, and, having obtained permission, he withdrew to his cell to pray. After he had been gone a long time, the Superior sent another friar to fetch him, and he found him in his room bathed in a heavenly light in the presence of our Lady and two angels. Beautiful roses kept issuing from his mouth at each Hail Mary, and the two angels were taking them one by one and placing them on our Lady’s head, while she smilingly accepted them. Finally, two other friars who had been sent to find out what had happened to the first two saw the same scene, and our Lady did not leave until the whole Rosary had been said. So the complete Rosary is a large crown of roses and each chaplet of five decades is a little wreath of flowers or a little crown of heavenly roses which we place on the heads of Jesus and Mary. The rose is the queen of flowers, and so the Rosary is the rose of devotions and the most important one.

Eighth Rose

26. It is scarcely possible for me to put into words how our Lady esteems the Rosary and how she prefers it to all other devotions. Nor can I sufficiently express how wonderfully she rewards those who work to make known the devotion, to establish it and spread it nor, on the other hand, how strictly she punishes those who work against it. St. Dominic had nothing more at heart during his life than to praise our Lady, to preach her greatness, and to inspire everybody to honour her by saying her Rosary. As a reward he received countless graces from her. This powerful Queen of heaven crowned his labours with many miracles and prodigies. God always granted him what he asked through our Lady. The greatest favour of all was that she helped him to crush the Albigensian heresy and made him the founder and patriarch of a great religious order.

27. As for Blessed Alan de la Roche, who restored the devotion of the Rosary, he received many privileges from our Lady; she graciously appeared to him several times to teach him how to work out his salvation, to become a good priest and perfect religious, and how to pattern himself on our Lord. He used to be horribly tempted and persecuted by devils, and then a deep sadness would fall upon him and sometimes he would be near to despair. But our Lady always comforted him by her presence, which banished the clouds of darkness from his soul. She taught him how to say the Rosary, explaining its value and the fruits to be gained by it; and she gave him a great and glorious privilege, which was the honour of being called her new spouse. As a token of her chaste love for him, she placed a ring upon his finger and a necklace made of her own hair about his neck and gave him a Rosary. Fr. Triteme, the

learned Carthage and Martin of Navarre, as well as others, have spoken of him in terms of highest praise. Blessed Alan died at Zwolle, in Flanders, on September 8th, 1475, after having brought more than a hundred thousand people into the Confraternity.

28. Blessed Thomas of St. John was well known for his sermons on the holy Rosary, and the devil, jealous of his success, tortured him so much that he fell ill and was sick for such a long time that the doctors gave him up. One night, when he really thought he was dying, the devil appeared to him in the most terrible form imaginable. There was a picture of our Lady near his bed; he looked at it and cried with all his heart and soul and strength, "Help me, save me, my dearest Mother." No sooner had he said this than the picture seemed to come alive and our Lady put out her hand, took him by the arm and said, "Do not be afraid, Thomas my son, here I am and I am going to save you; get up now and go on preaching my Rosary as you used to do. I promise to shield you from your enemies." When our Lady said this, the devil fled and Blessed Thomas got up, finding himself in perfect health. He then thanked our Lady with tears of joy. He resumed his Rosary apostolate, and his sermons were wonderfully successful.

29. Our Lady not only blesses those who preach her Rosary but she highly rewards all those who, by their example, get others to say it. Alphonsus, King of Leon and Galicia, very much wanted all his servants to honour the Blessed Virgin by saying the Rosary, so he used to hang a large rosary on his belt, though he never said it himself. Nevertheless, his wearing it encouraged his courtiers to say the Rosary devoutly. One day the King fell seriously ill and when he was given up for dead he found himself, in spirit, before the judgment-seat of our Lord. Many devils were there accusing him of all the sins he had committed, and our Lord was about to condemn him when our Lady came forward to speak in his favour. She called for a pair of scales and had his sins placed in one of the balances, while she put the large rosary which he had always worn on the other scale, together with all the rosaries that had been said through his example. It was found that the Rosaries weighed more than his sins. Looking at him with great kindness, our Lady said, "As a reward for the little service you did for me in wearing my rosary, I have obtained a great grace for you from my Son. Your life will be spared for a few more years. See that you spend those years wisely, and do penance." When the King regained consciousness he cried out, "Blessed be the Rosary of the most holy Virgin Mary, by which I have been delivered from eternal damnation." After he had recovered his health, he spent the rest of his life in spreading devotion to the Rosary, and said it faithfully every day. People who love the Blessed Virgin ought to follow the example of King Alphonsus and that of the saints whom I have mentioned, so that they too may win other souls for the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. They will receive great graces here on earth and finally eternal life. "Those who explain me will have life everlasting" (Ecclus. 24:31).

Ninth Rose

30. It is very wicked indeed and unjust to hinder the progress of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. God has severely punished many of those who have been so benighted as to scorn the Confraternity and have sought to destroy it. Even though God has set his seal of approval on the Rosary by many miracles, and though it has been approved by the Church in many papal bulls, there are only too many people who are against the holy Rosary today. Such are free-thinkers and those who scorn religion, who either condemn the Rosary or try to turn others away from it. It is easy to see that they have absorbed the poison of hell and that they are inspired by the devil; for no one can condemn devotion to the holy Rosary without condemning all that is most holy in the Catholic faith, such as the Lord's prayer, the Hail

Mary and the mysteries of the life, death and glory of Jesus Christ and his holy Mother. These freethinkers, who cannot bear to have people saying the Rosary, often fall into an heretical state of mind without realizing it and come to hate the Rosary and its mysteries. To have a loathing for confraternities is to fall away from God and true piety, for our Lord himself has told us that he is always in the midst of those who are gathered together in his name. No good Catholic would neglect the many great indulgences which the Church has granted to confraternities. Finally, to dissuade others from joining the Rosary Confraternity is to be an enemy of souls, because the Rosary is a means of avoiding sin and leading a good life. St. Bonaventure says in his "Psalter" that whoever neglects our Lady will die in his sins. What, then, must be the punishment in store for those who turn people away from devotion to her?

Tenth Rose

31. While St. Dominic was preaching the Rosary in Carcassone, a heretic made fun of his miracles and the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary, and this prevented other heretics from being converted. As a punishment God allowed fifteen thousand devils to enter the man's body. His parents took him to Father Dominic to be delivered from the evil spirits. He started to pray and he begged everyone who was there to say the Rosary out loud with him, and at each Hail Mary our Lady drove a hundred devils out of the man, and they came out in the form of red-hot coals. After he had been delivered, he abjured his former errors, was converted and joined the Rosary Confraternity. Several of his associates did the same, having been greatly moved by his punishment and by the power of the Rosary.

32. The learned Franciscan, Carthage, as well as several other authors, says that an extraordinary event took place in 1482. The venerable Fr. James Sprenger and the religious of his order were zealously working to re-establish devotion to the Rosary and its Confraternity in the city of Cologne. Unfortunately, two priests who were famous for their preaching ability were jealous of the great influence they were exerting through preaching the Rosary. These two Fathers spoke against this devotion whenever they had a chance, and as they were very eloquent and had a great reputation, they persuaded many people not to join the Confraternity. One of them, the better to achieve his wicked end, wrote a special sermon against the Rosary and planned to give it the following Sunday. But when the time came for the sermon he did not appear and, after a certain amount of waiting, someone went to fetch him. He was found to be dead, and he had evidently died without anyone to help him. After persuading himself that this death was due to natural causes, the other priest decided to carry out his friend's plan and give a similar sermon on another day, hoping to put an end to the Confraternity of the Rosary. However, when the day came for him to preach and it was time to give the sermon, God punished him by striking him down with paralysis which deprived him of the use of his limbs and of his power of speech. At last he admitted his fault and that of his friend and in his heart he silently besought our Lady to help him. He promised that if only she would cure him, he would preach the Rosary with as much zeal as that with which he had formerly fought against it. For this end he implored her to restore his health and his speech, which she did, and finding himself instantaneously cured he rose up like another Saul, a persecutor turned defender of the holy Rosary. He publicly acknowledged his former error and ever afterwards preached the wonders of the Rosary with great zeal and eloquence.

33. I am quite sure that freethinkers and ultra-critical people of today will question the truth of the stories in this little book, as they question most things, but all I have done has been to copy them from very good contemporary authors and, in part, from a book written a short

time ago, *The Mystical Rose-tree*, by Fr. Antonin Thomas, O.P. Everyone knows that there are three different kinds of faith by which we believe different kinds of stories. To stories from Holy Scripture we owe divine faith; to stories on non-religious subjects which are not against common sense and are written by trustworthy authors, we pay the tribute of human faith; and to stories about holy subjects which are told by good authors and are not in any way contrary to reason, to faith or to morals (even though they may sometimes deal with happenings which are above the ordinary), we pay the tribute of a pious faith. I agree that we must be neither too credulous nor too critical, and that we should keep a happy medium in all things in order to find just where truth and virtue lie. But on the other hand, I know equally well that charity easily leads us to believe all that is not contrary to faith or morals: “Charity believes all things,” in the same way as pride induces us to doubt even well authenticated stories on the plea that they are not to be found in Holy Scripture. This is one of the devil’s traps; heretics of the past who denied tradition have fallen into it, and over-critical people of today are falling into it too, without even realizing it. People of this kind refuse to believe what they do not understand or what is not to their liking, simply because of their own spirit of pride and independence.

B. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange²⁰⁰

THE ROSARY: A SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATION

From among the many customary devotions to Our Lady, such as the *Anqelus*, the Office of the Blessed Virgin, the Rosary, we shall speak especially of the last in so far as it prepares us for and leads us up to contemplation of the great mysteries of salvation. After Holy Mass it is one of the most beautiful and efficacious forms of prayer, on condition of understanding it and living it.

It sometimes happens that its recitation—reduced to that of five mysteries—becomes a matter of routine. The mind, not being really gripped by the things of God, finds itself a prey to distractions. Sometimes the prayer is said hurriedly and soullessly. Sometimes it is said for the purpose of obtaining temporal favors, desired out of all relation to spiritual gain. When a person says the Rosary in such a way, he may well ask himself in what way his prayer is like that of which Pope Leo XIII spoke in his encyclicals on the Rosary, and about which Pius XI wrote one of his last apostolic letters.

It is true that to pray well it is sufficient to think in a general way of God and of the graces for which one asks. But to make the most out of our five mysteries, we should remember that they constitute but a third of the whole Rosary, and that they should be accompanied by meditation—which can be very simple—on the joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries, which recall the whole life of Jesus and Mary and their glory in heaven.

The Three Great Mysteries of Salvation

The fifteen mysteries of the Rosary thus divided into three groups are but different aspects of the three great mysteries of our salvation: the Incarnation, the Redemption, Eternal Life.

The mystery of the Incarnation is recalled by the joys of the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of the Savior, His Presentation in the Temple and His finding among the doctors. The mystery of the Redemption is recalled by the different stages of the Passion: the Agony in the garden, the Scourging, the Crowning with thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion. The mystery of eternal life is recalled by the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, the Assumption of Our Lady and her crowning as Queen of heaven.

²⁰⁰ *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life* (Rockford, Ill.: TAN, 1993), 251–5.

Thus, the Rosary is a *Credo*: not an abstract one, but one concretized in the life of Jesus, Who came down to us from the Father and Who ascended to bring us back with Himself to the Father. It is the whole of Christian dogma in all its splendor and elevation, brought to us that we may fill our minds with it, that we may relish it and nourish our souls with it.

This makes the Rosary a true school of contemplation. It raises us gradually above vocal prayer and even above reasoned out or discursive meditation. Early theologians have compared the movement of the soul in contemplation to the spiral in which certain birds—the swallow, for example—move when they wish to attain to a great height.²⁰¹ The joyful mysteries lead to the Passion, and the Passion to the door of heaven. The Rosary well understood is, therefore, a very elevated form of prayer which makes the whole of dogma accessible to all.

The Rosary is also a very practical form of prayer for it recalls all Christian morality and spirituality by presenting them from the sublime point of view of their realization in Jesus and Mary. The mysteries of the Rosary should be reproduced in our lives. Each of them is a lesson in some virtue—particularly in the virtues of humility, trust, patience and charity.

There are three stages in our progress towards God. The first is to have knowledge of the final end, whence comes the desire of salvation and the joy to which that desire gives rise. This stage is symbolized in the joyful mysteries which contain the good news of the Incarnation of the Son of God Who opens to us the way of salvation. The next stage is to adopt the means—often painful to nature—to be delivered from sin and to merit heaven. This is the stage of the sorrowful mysteries. The final stage is that of rest in the possession of eternal life. It is the stage of heaven, of which the glorious mysteries allow us some anticipated glimpse.

The Rosary is therefore most practical. It takes us from the midst of our too human interests and joys and makes us think of those which center on the coming of the Savior. It takes us from our meaningless fears, from the sufferings we bear so badly, and reminds us of how much Jesus has suffered for love of us and teaches us to follow him by bearing the cross which divine providence has sent us to purify us. It takes us finally from our earthly hopes and ambitions and makes us think of the true object of Christian hope—eternal life and the graces necessary to arrive there.

The Rosary is more than a prayer of petition. It is a prayer of adoration inspired by the thought of the Incarnate God, a prayer of reparation in memory of the Passion of Our Savior, a prayer of thanksgiving that the glorious mysteries continue to reproduce themselves in the uninterrupted entry of the elect into glory.

The Rosary and Contemplative Prayer

A more simple and still more elevated way of reciting the Rosary is, while saying it, to keep the eyes of faith fixed on the living Jesus Who is always making intercession for us and Who is acting upon us in accordance with the mysteries of His childhood, or His Passion, or His glory. He comes to us to make us like Himself. Let us fix our gaze on Jesus Who is looking at us. His look is more than kind and understanding: it is the look of God, a look which purifies, which sanctifies, which gives peace. It is the look of our judge and still more the look of our Savior, our Friend, the Spouse of our souls. A Rosary said in this way, in solitude and silence, is a most fruitful intercourse with Jesus. It is a conversation with Mary too which leads to intimacy with her Son.

²⁰¹ Cf. IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 6. The spiral movement lifts itself up to God progressively by the consideration of the different mysteries of salvation, all of which lead to Him.

We sometimes read in the lives of the saints that Our Blessed Lord reproduced in them first His childhood, then His hidden life, then His apostolic life, and finally His Passion, before allowing them to share in His glory. He comes to us in a similar way in the Rosary and, well said, it is a prayer which gradually takes the form of an intimate conversation with Jesus and Mary. It is easy to see how saintly souls have found in it a school of contemplation.

It has sometimes been objected that one cannot reflect on the words and the mysteries at the same time. An answer that is often given is that it is not necessary to reflect on the words if one is meditating on or looking spiritually at one of the mysteries. The words are a kind of melody which soothes the ear and isolates us from the noise of the world around us, the fingers being occupied meanwhile in allowing one bead after another to slip through. Thus, the imagination is kept tranquil and the mind and the will are set free to be united to God.

It has also been objected that the monotony of the many repetitions in the Rosary leads necessarily to routine. This objection is valid only if the Rosary is said badly. If well said, it familiarizes us with the different mysteries of salvation and recalls what these mysteries should produce in our joys, our sorrows, and our hopes. Any prayer can become a matter of routine—even the Ordinary of the Mass. The reason is not that the prayers are imperfect, but that we do not say them as we should—with faith, confidence and love.

The Spirit of the Rosary as St Dominic Conceived It

To understand the Rosary better it is well to recall how St. Dominic conceived it under the inspiration of Our Lady at a time when southern France was ravaged by the Albigensian heresy—a heresy which denied the infinite goodness and omnipotence of God by admitting a principle of evil which was often victorious. Not only did Albigensianism attack Christian morality, but it was opposed to dogma as well—to the great mysteries of creation, the redemptive incarnation, the descent of the Holy Ghost, the eternal life to which we are called.

It was at that moment that Our Blessed Lady made known to St. Dominic a kind of preaching till then unknown, which she said would be one of the most powerful weapons against future errors and in future difficulties. Under her inspiration, St. Dominic went into the villages of the heretics, gathered the people, and preached to them the mysteries of salvation—the Incarnation, the Redemption, Eternal Life. As Mary had taught him to do, he distinguished the different kinds of mysteries, and after each short instruction he had ten *Hail Marys* recited—somewhat as might happen even today at a Holy Hour. And what the word of the preacher was unable to do, the sweet prayer of the *Hail Mary* did for hearts. As Mary had promised, it proved to be a most fruitful form of preaching.²⁰²

If we live by the prayer of which St. Dominic's preaching is the example our joys, our sorrows, and our hopes will be purified, elevated and spiritualized. We shall see that Jesus, Our Savior and Our Model, wishes to make us like Himself, first communicating to us something of His infant and hidden life, then something of His sorrows, and finally making us partakers of His glorious life for all eternity.

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

The Rule is for all Dominicans throughout the world. The Particular Directory is for those who live in the boundaries of the Western Province in the United States. Thus, the Directory

²⁰² The first fruit of the Rosary was the victory of Simon of Montfort over the Albigensians, obtained while St. Dominic implored Mary's help in prayer.

can be more specific about topics and themes addressed by the Rule. This part of the Directory concerns prayer and study. It is worth noting that that these two themes are the first two basic aspects of Dominican life to be mentioned by the Particular Directory.

The Particular Directory of the Western Dominican Province

I. The Basics of Lay Dominican Life

A. Prayer

1. Dominican life centers on
 - a. the daily celebration of the Eucharist, to the extent that daily Mass and Communion are possible;
 - b. the daily celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, especially Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer, and when possible, with other members of the Dominican Family.
2. Members celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, for example, once a month, preferably from a regular confessor.
3. Members recite the Rosary daily to help us know, love and serve Jesus Christ through the intercession of Mary, His Mother and ours.
4. Members foster special devotion to Saint Dominic, our Father and model in Christ, to Saint Catherine of Siena, the patroness of lay Dominicans and, in general, to all Dominican saints and blessed.
5. Members participate in an annual retreat, days of reflection, or other similar prayer days, preferably in common.
6. Prayers for the deceased have been a hallowed tradition since Saint Dominic founded the Order. At specific times throughout the year, members are expected to pray for the deceased, grateful for what they have preserved and passed on to us in faith and in the spirit of the Order.²⁰³

B. Study of Sacred Truth

1. Serious prayerful study of Sacred Scripture, theology, spirituality, Church doctrine and history, and reflection on contemporary issues in the light of such study, are essential to lay Dominican life.
2. Reflective reading of the lives of the saints, especially those of the Dominican Family, provides models for our own lives and for our work with others.

²⁰³ See Appendix A: Suffrages

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR B, UNIT V**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: LITURGICAL PRAYER: THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Praying the Liturgy of the Hours is the most prominent part of our lives as Dominicans; we do it several times a day. This prayer gives a rhythm to our whole lives. This prayer often strikes us as unusual when we first learn it, but it should become second nature as the habit of saying it develops. To get the most out of any vocal prayer, we must give our attention to the words we are praying. Understanding how and why the Liturgy of the Hours received its present form helps us to understand why a given psalm, canticle or prayer is included, and what we should be focusing on as we recite it. The following is an excerpt from a long introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours (found in the first volume of the four volume breviary or on-line). Once one has some experience with the Liturgy of the Hours, it is worthwhile to read this document in order to draw more profit from this prayer of the Church.

Congregation for Divine Worship, *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*

Chapter I: Importance of the Liturgy of the Hours or Divine Office in the Life of the Church

1. Public and common prayer by the people of God is rightly considered to be among the primary duties of the Church. From the very beginning those who were baptized "devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the community, to the breaking of the bread, and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). The Acts of the Apostles give frequent testimony to the fact that the Christian community prayed with one accord. [1]

The witness of the early Church teaches us that individual Christians devoted themselves to prayer at fixed times. Then, in different places, it soon became the established practice to assign special times for common prayer, for example, the last hour of the day when evening draws on and the lamp is lighted, or the first hour when night draws to a close with the rising of the sun.

In the course of time other hours came to be sanctified by prayer in common. These were seen by the Fathers as foreshadowed in the Acts of the Apostles. There we read of the disciples gathered together at the third hour. [2] The prince of the apostles "went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour" (10:9); "Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour" (3:1); "about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God" (16:25).

2. Such prayer in common gradually took the form of a set cycle of hours. This liturgy of the hours or divine office, enriched by readings, is principally a prayer of praise and petition. Indeed, it is the prayer of the Church with Christ and to Christ.

Chapter I-I. Prayer of Christ

3. When the Word, proceeding from the Father as the splendor of his glory, came to give us all a share in God's life, "Christ Jesus, High Priest of the new and eternal covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile the hymn of praise that is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven." [3] From then on in Christ's heart the praise of God assumes a human sound in words of adoration, expiation, and intercession, presented to the Father by the Head of the new humanity, the Mediator between God and his people, in the name of all and for the good of all.

4. In his goodness the Son of God, who is one with his Father (see Jn 10:30) and who on entering the world said: "Here I am! I come, God, to do your will" (Heb 10:9; see Jn 6:38), has left us the lesson of his own prayer. The Gospels many times show us Christ at prayer: when his mission is revealed by the Father; [4] before he calls the apostles; [5] when he blesses God at the multiplication of the loaves; [6] when he is transfigured on the mountain; [7] when he heals the deaf-mute; [8] when he raises Lazarus; [9] before he asks for Peter's confession of faith; [10] when he teaches the disciples how to pray; [11] when the disciples return from their mission; [12] when he blesses the little children; [13] when he prays for Peter. [14]

The work of each day was closely bound up with his prayer, indeed flowed out from it: he would retire into the desert or into the hills to pray, [15] rise very early [16] or spend the night up to the fourth watch [17] in prayer to God. [18]

We are right in thinking that he took part both in public prayers: in the synagogues, which he entered on the Sabbath "as his custom was;" [19] in the temple, which he called a house of prayer; [20] and in the private prayers that for devout Israelites were a daily practice. He used the traditional blessings of God at meals, as is expressly mentioned in connection with the multiplication of the loaves, [21] the last supper [22] and the meal at Emmaus. [23] He also joined with the disciples in a hymn of praise. [24]

To the very end of his life, as his passion was approaching, [25] at the last supper, [26] in the agony in the garden, [27] and on the cross, [28] the divine teacher showed that prayer was the soul of his Messianic ministry and paschal death. "In the days of his life on earth he offered up prayers and entreaties with loud cries and tears to the one who could deliver him from death and because of his reverence his prayer was heard" (Heb 5:7). By a single offering on the altar of the cross "he has made perfect forever those who are being sanctified" (Heb 10-14). Raised from the dead, he lives for ever, making intercession for us. [29]

Chapter I-II. Prayer of the Church

Command to Pray

5. Jesus has commanded us to do as he did. On many occasions he said: "Pray," "ask," "seek" [30] "in my name." [31] He taught us how to pray in what is known as the Lord's Prayer. [32] He taught us that prayer is necessary, [33] that it should be humble, [34] watchful, [35] persevering, confident in the Father's goodness, [36] single-minded, and in conformity with God's nature. [37]

Here and there in their letters the apostles have handed on to us many prayers, particularly of praise and thanks. They instruct us on prayer in the Holy Spirit, [38] through Christ, [39] offered to God, [40] as to its persistence and constancy, [41] its power to sanctify, [42] and on prayer of praise, [43] thanks, [44] petition, [45] and intercession for all. [46]

Christ's Prayer Continued by the Church

6. Since we are entirely dependent on God, we must acknowledge and express this sovereignty of the Creator, as the devout people of every age have done by means of prayer.

Prayer directed to God must be linked with Christ, the Lord of all, the one Mediator [47] through whom alone we have access to God.[48] He unites to himself the whole human community [49] in such a way that there is an intimate bond between the prayer of Christ and the prayer of all humanity. In Christ and in Christ alone human worship of God receives its redemptive value and attains its goal.

7. There is a special and very close bond between Christ and those whom he makes members of his Body, the Church, through the sacrament of rebirth. Thus, from the Head all the riches belonging to the Son flow throughout the whole Body: the communication of the Spirit, the truth, the life, and the participation in the divine sonship that Christ manifested in all his prayer when he dwelt among us.

Christ's priesthood is also shared by the whole Body of the Church, so that the baptized are consecrated as a spiritual temple and holy priesthood through the rebirth of baptism and the anointing by the Holy Spirit [50] and are empowered to offer the worship of the New Covenant, a worship that derives not from our own powers but from Christ's merit and gift.

"God could give us no greater gift than to establish as our Head the Word through whom he created all things and to unite us to that Head as members. The results are many The Head is Son of God and Son of Man, one as God with the Father and one as man with us. When we speak in prayer to the Father, we do not separate the Son from him and when the Son's Body prays it does not separate itself from its Head. It is the one Savior of his Body, the Lord Christ Jesus, who prays for us and in us and who is prayed to by us. He prays for us as our priest, in us as our Head; he is prayed to by us as our God. Recognize therefore our own voice in him and his voice in us." [51]

The excellence of Christian prayer lies in its sharing in the reverent love of the only-begotten Son for the Father and in the prayer that the Son put into words in his earthly life and that still continues without ceasing in the name of the whole human race and for its salvation, throughout the universal Church and in all its members.

Action of the Holy Spirit

8. The unity of the Church at prayer is brought about by the Holy Spirit, who is the same in Christ, [52] in the whole Church, and in every baptized person. It is this Spirit who "helps us in our weakness" and "intercedes for us with longings too deep for words" (Rom 8:26). As the Spirit of the Son, he gives us "the spirit of adopted children, by which we cry out: Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15; see Gal 4:6; 1 Cor 12:3; Eph 5:18; Jude 20). There can be therefore no Christian prayer without the action of the Holy Spirit, who unites the whole Church and leads it through the Son to the Father.

Community Character of Prayer

9. It follows that the example and precept of our Lord and the apostles in regard to constant and persevering prayer are not to be seen as a purely legal regulation. They belong to the very essence of the Church itself, which is a community and which in prayer must express its nature as a community. Hence, when the community of believers is first mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, it is seen as a community gathered together at prayer "with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers" (Acts 1:14). "There was one heart and soul in the company of those who believed" (Acts 4:32). Their oneness in spirit was founded on the word of God, on the communion of charity, on prayer, and on the eucharist. [53]

Though prayer in private and in seclusion [54] is always necessary and to be encouraged [55] and is practiced by the members of the Church through Christ in the Holy Spirit, there is a special excellence in the prayer of the community. Christ himself has said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst" (Mt 18:20).

Chapter I-III. Liturgy of the Hours

Consecration of Time

10. Christ taught us: "You must pray at all times and not lose heart" (Lk 18:1). The Church has been faithful in obeying this instruction; it never ceases to offer prayer and makes this exhortation its own: "Through him (Jesus) let us offer to God an unceasing sacrifice of praise" (Heb 15:15). The Church fulfills this precept not only by celebrating the eucharist but in other ways also, especially through the liturgy of the hours. By ancient Christian tradition what distinguishes the liturgy of the hours from other liturgical services is that it consecrates to God the whole cycle of the day and the night. [56]

11. The purpose of the liturgy of the hours is to sanctify the day and the whole range of human activity. Therefore its structure has been revised in such a way as to make each hour once more correspond as nearly as possible to natural time and to take account of the circumstances of life today. [57]

Hence, "that the day may be truly sanctified and the hours themselves recited with spiritual advantage, it is best that each of them be prayed at a time most closely corresponding to the true time of each canonical hour." [58]

Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharist

12. To the different hours of the day the liturgy of the hours extends [59] the praise and thanksgiving, the memorial of the mysteries of salvation, the petitions and the foretaste of heavenly glory that are present in the eucharistic mystery, "the center and high point in the whole life of the Christian community." [60]

The liturgy of the hours is in turn an excellent preparation for the celebration of the eucharist itself, for it inspires and deepens in a fitting way the dispositions necessary for the fruitful celebration of the eucharist: faith, hope, love, devotion, and the spirit of self-denial.

Priesthood of Christ in the Liturgy of the Hours

13. In the Holy Spirit Christ carries out through the Church "the task of redeeming humanity and giving perfect glory to God," [61] not only when the eucharist is celebrated and the sacraments administered but also in other ways and especially when the liturgy of the hours is celebrated. [62] There Christ himself is present - in the gathered community, in the proclamation of God's word, "in the prayer and song of the Church." [63]

Sanctification of God's People

14. Our sanctification is accomplished [64] and worship is offered to God in the liturgy of the hours in such a way that an exchange or dialogue is set up between God and us, in which "God is speaking to his people ... and his people are responding to him by both song and prayer." [65]

Those taking part in the liturgy of the hours have access to holiness of the richest kind through the life-giving word of God, which in this liturgy receives great emphasis. Thus its readings are drawn from sacred Scripture, God's words in the psalms are sung in his presence, and the intercessions, prayers, and hymns are inspired by Scripture and steeped in its spirit. [66]

Hence, not only when those things are read "that are written for our instruction" (Rom 15:4), but also when the Church prays or sings, faith is deepened for those who take part and their minds are lifted up to God, in order to offer him their worship as intelligent beings and to receive his grace more plentifully. [67]

Praising God With the Church in Heaven

15. In the liturgy of the hours the Church exercises the priestly office of its Head and offers to God "without ceasing" [68] a sacrifice of praise, that is, a tribute of lips acknowledging his name. [69] This prayer is "the voice of a bride addressing her bridegroom; it is the very prayer that Christ himself, together with his Body, addresses to the Father." [70] "All who render this service are not only fulfilling a duty of the Church, but also are sharing in the greatest honor of Christ's Bride for by offering these praises to God they are standing before God's throne in the name of the Church, their Mother." [71]

16. When the Church offers praise to God in the liturgy of the hours, it unites itself with that hymn of praise sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven; [72] it also receives a foretaste of the song of praise in heaven, described by John in the Book of Revelation, the song sung continually before the throne of God and of the Lamb. Our close union with the Church in heaven is given effective voice "when we all, from every tribe and tongue and people and nation redeemed by Christ's blood (see Rv 5:9) and gathered together into the one Church, glorify the triune God with one hymn of praise." [73]

The prophets came almost to a vision of this liturgy of heaven as the victory of a day without night, of a light without darkness: "The sun will no more be your light by day, and the brightness of the moon will not shine upon you, but the Lord will be your everlasting light" (Is 60:19; see Rv 21:23 and 25). "There will be a single day, known to the Lord, not day and night, and at evening there will be light" (Zech 14:7). Already "the end of the ages has come upon us (see I Cor 10:11) and the renewal of the world has been irrevocably established and in a true sense is being anticipated in this world." [74] By faith we too are taught the meaning of our temporal life, so that we look forward with all creation to the revealing of God's children. [75] In the liturgy of the hours we proclaim this faith, we express and nourish this

hope, we share in some degree the joy of everlasting praise and of that day that knows no setting.

Petition and Intercession

17. But besides the praise of God, the Church in the liturgy of the hours expresses the prayers and desires of all the faithful; indeed, it prays to Christ, and through him to the Father, for the salvation of the whole world. [76] The Church's voice is not just its own; it is also Christ's voice, since its prayers are offered in Christ's name, that is, "through our Lord Jesus Christ," and so the Church continues to offer the prayer and petition that Christ poured out in the days of his earthly life [77] and that have therefore a unique effectiveness. The ecclesial community thus exercises a truly maternal function in bringing souls to Christ, not only by charity, good example, and works of penance but also by prayer. [78]

The concern with prayer involves those especially who have been called by a special mandate to carry out the liturgy of the hours: bishops and priests as they pray in virtue of their office for their own people and for the whole people of God; [79] other sacred ministers, and also religious. [80]

18. Those then who take part in the liturgy of the hours bring growth to God's people in a hidden but fruitful apostolate, [81] for the work of the apostolate is directed to this end, "that all who are made children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of this Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's Supper." [82]

Thus by their lives the faithful show forth and reveal to others "the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. It is of the essence of the Church to be visible yet endowed with invisible resources, eager to act yet intent on contemplation, present in this world yet not at home in it." [83]

In their turn the readings and prayers of the liturgy of the hours form a wellspring of the Christian life: the table of sacred Scripture and the writings of the saints nurture its life and prayers strengthen it. Only the Lord, without whom we can do nothing, [84] can, in response to our request, give power and increase to what we do, [85] so that we may be built up each day in the Spirit into the temple of God, [86] to the measure of Christ's fullness, [87] and receive greater strength also to bring the good news of Christ to those outside. [88]

Harmony of Mind and Voice

19. Mind and voice must be in harmony in a celebration that is worthy, attentive, and devout, if this prayer is to be made their own by those taking part and to be a source of devotion, a means of gaining God's manifold grace, a deepening of personal prayer, and an incentive to the work of the apostolate. [89] All should be intent on cooperating with God's grace, so as not to receive it in vain. Seeking Christ, penetrating ever more deeply into his mystery through prayer [90] they should offer praise and petition to God with the same mind and heart as the divine Redeemer when he prayed.

Chapter I-IV. Participants in the Liturgy of the Hours

Celebration in Common

20. The liturgy of the hours, like other liturgical services, is not a private matter but belongs to the whole Body of the Church, whose life it both expresses and affects. [91] This liturgy stands out most strikingly as an ecclesial celebration when, through the bishop surrounded by his priests and ministers, [92] the local Church celebrates it. For "in the local Church the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church is truly present and at work." [93] Such a celebration is therefore most earnestly recommended. When, in the absence of the bishop, a chapter of canons or other priests celebrate the liturgy of the hours, they should always respect the true time of day and, as far as possible, the people should take part. The same is to be said of collegiate chapters.

21. Wherever possible, other groups of the faithful should celebrate the liturgy of the hours communally in church. This especially applies to parishes - the cells of the diocese, established under their pastors, taking the place of the bishop; they "represent in some degree the visible Church established throughout the world." [94]

22. Hence, when the people are invited to the liturgy of the hours and come together in unity of heart and voice, they show forth the Church in its celebration of the mystery of Christ. [95]

23. Those in holy orders or with a special canonical mission [96] have the responsibility of initiating and directing the prayer of the community; "they should expend every effort so that those entrusted to their care may become of one mind in prayer." [97] They must therefore see to it that the people are invited, and prepared by suitable instruction, to celebrate the principal hours in common, especially on Sundays and holydays. [98] They should teach the people how to make this participation a source of genuine prayer; [99] they should therefore give the people suitable guidance in the Christian understanding of the psalms, in order to progress by degrees to a greater appreciation and more frequent use of the prayer of the Church. [100]

24. Communities of canons, monks, nuns, and other religious who celebrate the liturgy of the hours by rule or according to their constitutions, whether with the general rite or a particular rite, in whole or in part, represent in a special way the Church at prayer. They are a fuller sign of the Church as it continuously praises God with one voice and they fulfill the duty of "working," above all by prayer, "to build up and increase the whole Mystical Body of Christ, and for the good of the local Churches." [101] This is especially true of those living the contemplative life.

25. Even when having no obligation to communal celebration, all sacred ministers and all clerics living in a community or meeting together should arrange to say at least some part of the liturgy of the hours in common, particularly morning prayer and evening prayer. [102]

26. Men and women religious not bound to a common celebration, as well as members of any institute of perfection, are strongly urged to gather together, by themselves or with the people, to celebrate the liturgy of the hours or part of it.

27. Lay groups gathering for prayer, apostolic work, or any other reason are encouraged to fulfill the Church's duty, [103] by celebrating part of the liturgy of the hours. The laity must learn above all how in the liturgy they are adoring God the Father in spirit and in truth; [104] they should bear in mind that through public worship and prayer they reach all humanity and can contribute significantly to the salvation of the whole world. [105]

Finally, it is of great advantage for the family, the domestic sanctuary of the Church, not only to pray together to God but also to celebrate some parts of the liturgy of the hours as occasion offers, in order to enter more deeply into the life of the Church. [106]

Mandate to Celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours

28. Sacred ministers have the liturgy of the hours entrusted to them in such a particular way that even when the faithful are not present they are to pray it themselves with the adaptations necessary under these circumstances. The Church commissions them to celebrate the liturgy of the hours so as to ensure at least in their persons the regular carrying out of the duty of the whole community and the unceasing continuance of Christ's prayer in the Church. [107]

The bishop represents Christ in an eminent and conspicuous way and is the high priest of his flock; the life in Christ of his faithful people may be said in a sense to derive from him and depend on him. [108] He should, then, be the first of all the members of his Church in offering prayer. His prayer in the recitation of the liturgy of the hours is always made in the name of the Church and on behalf of the Church entrusted to him. [109]

United as they are with the bishop and the whole presbyterium, priests are themselves representative in a special way of Christ the Priest [110] and so share the same responsibility of praying to God for the people entrusted to them and indeed for the whole world. [111]

All these ministers fulfill the ministry of the Good Shepherd who prays for his sheep that they may have life and so be brought into perfect unity. [112] In the liturgy of the hours that the Church sets before them they are not only to find a source of devotion and a strengthening of personal prayer, [113] but must also nourish and foster pastoral missionary activity as the fruit of their contemplation to gladden the whole Church of God. [114]

29. Hence bishops, priests, and other sacred ministers, who have received from the Church the mandate to celebrate the liturgy of the hours (see no. 17), should recite the full sequence of hours each day, observing as far as possible the true time of day.

They should, first and foremost, attach due importance to those hours that are, so to speak, the two hinges of the liturgy of the hours, that is, morning prayer and evening prayer, which should not be omitted except for a serious reason.

They should faithfully pray the office of readings, which is above all a liturgical celebration of the word of God. In this way they fulfill daily a duty that is peculiarly their own, that is, of receiving the word of God into their lives, so that they may become more perfect as disciples of the Lord and experience more deeply the unfathomable riches of Christ. [115]

In order to sanctify the whole day more completely, they will also treasure the recitation of daytime prayer and night prayer, to round off the whole *Opus Dei* and to commend themselves to God before retiring.

30. It is most fitting that permanent deacons recite daily at least some part of the liturgy of the hours, to be determined by the conference of bishops. [116]

31. a. Cathedral and collegiate chapters should celebrate in choir those parts of the liturgy of the hours that are prescribed for them by the general law or by particular law.

In private recitation individual members of these chapters should include those hours that are recited in their chapter, in addition to the hours prescribed for all sacred ministers. [117]

b. Religious communities bound to the recitation of the liturgy of the hours and their individual members should celebrate the hours in keeping with their own particular law; but the prescription of no. 29 in regard to those in holy orders is to be respected.

Communities bound to choir should celebrate the whole sequence of the hours daily in choir; [118] when absent from choir their members should recite the hours in keeping with their own particular law; but the prescriptions in no. 29 are always to be respected.

32. Other religious communities and their individual members are advised to celebrate some parts of the liturgy of the hours, in accordance with their own situation, for it is the prayer of the Church and makes the whole Church, scattered throughout the world, one in heart and mind. [119] This recommendation applies also to laypersons. [120]

Structure of the Celebration

33. The structure of the liturgy of the hours follows laws of its own and incorporates in its own way elements found in other Christian celebrations. Thus it is so constructed that, after a hymn, there is always psalmody, then a long or short reading of sacred Scripture, and finally prayer of petition.

In a celebration in common and in private recitation the essential structure of this liturgy remains the same, that is, it is a conversation between God and his people. Celebration in common, however, expresses more clearly the ecclesial nature of the liturgy of the hours; it makes for active participation by all, in a way suited to each one's condition, through the acclamations, dialogue, alternating psalmody, and similar elements. It also better provides for the different literary genres that make up the liturgy of the hours. [121] Hence, whenever it is possible to have a celebration in common, with the people present and actively taking part, this kind of celebration is to be preferred to one that is individual and, as it were, private. [122] It is also advantageous to sing the office in choir and in community as opportunity offers, in accordance with the nature and function of the individual parts.

In this way the Apostle's exhortation is obeyed: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you in all its fullness, as you teach and counsel each other in all wisdom by psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing thankfully to God in your hearts" (Col 3:16; see Eph 5:19-20).

Chapter III: Different Elements in the Liturgy of the Hours

Chapter III-I. Psalms and Their Connection With Christian Prayer

100. In the liturgy of the hours the Church in large measure prays through the magnificent songs that the Old Testament authors composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The origin of these verses gives them great power to raise the mind to God, to inspire devotion, to evoke gratitude in times of favor, and to bring consolation and courage in times of trial.

101. The psalms, however, are only a foreshadowing of the fullness of time that came to pass in Christ the Lord and that is the source of the power of the Church's prayer. Hence, while

the Christian people are all agreed on the supreme value to be placed on the psalms, they can sometimes experience difficulty in making this inspired poetry their own prayer.

102. Yet the Holy Spirit, under whose inspiration the psalms were written, is always present by his grace to those believers who use them with good will. But more is necessary: the faithful must "improve their understanding of the Bible, especially of the psalms," [1] according to their individual capacity, so that they may understand how and by what method they can truly pray through the psalms.

103. The psalms are not readings or prose prayers, but poems of praise. They can on occasion be recited as readings, but from their literary genre they are properly called *Tehillim* ("songs of praise") in Hebrew and *psalmoi* ("songs to be sung to the lyre") in Greek. In fact, all the psalms have a musical quality that determines their correct style of delivery. Thus even when a psalm is recited and not sung or is said silently in private, its musical character should govern its use. A psalm does present a text to the minds of the people, but its aim is to move the heart of those singing it or listening to it and also of those accompanying it "on the lyre and harp."

104. To sing the psalms with understanding, then, is to meditate on them verse by verse, with the heart always ready to respond in the way the Holy Spirit desires. The one who inspired the psalmist will also be present to those who in faith and love are ready to receive his grace. For this reason the singing of psalms, though it demands the reverence owed to God's majesty, should be the expression of a joyful spirit and a loving heart, in keeping with their character as sacred poetry and divine song and above all with the freedom of the children of God.

105. Often the words of a psalm help us to pray with greater ease and fervor, whether in thanksgiving and joyful praise of God or in prayer for help in the throes of suffering. But difficulties may arise, especially when the psalm is not addressed directly to God. The psalmist is a poet and often addresses the people as he recalls Israel's history; sometimes he addresses others, including subrational creatures. He even represents the words as being spoken by God himself and individual people, including, as in Ps 2, God's enemies. This shows that a psalm is a different kind of prayer from a prayer or collect composed by the Church. Moreover, it is in keeping with the poetic and musical character of the psalms that they do not necessarily address God but are sung in God's presence. Thus St. Benedict's instruction: "Let us reflect on what it means to be in the sight of God and his angels, and let us so stand in his presence that our minds are in harmony with our voices." [2]

106. In praying the psalms we should open our hearts to the different attitudes they express, varying with the literary genre to which each belongs (psalms of grief, trust, gratitude, etc.) and to which biblical scholars rightly attach great importance.

107. Staying close to the meaning of the words, the person who prays the psalms looks for the significance of the text for the human life of the believer.

It is clear that each psalm was written in its own individual circumstances, which the titles given for each psalm in the Hebrew psalter are meant to indicate. But whatever its historical origin, each psalm has its own meaning, which we cannot overlook even in our own day. Though the psalms originated very many centuries ago among an Eastern people, they express accurately the pain and hope, the unhappiness and trust of people of every age and country, and sing above all of faith in God, of revelation, and of redemption.

108. Those who pray the psalms in the liturgy of the hours do so not so much in their own name as in the name of the entire Body of Christ. This consideration does away with the problem of a possible discrepancy between personal feelings and the sentiments a psalm is expressing: for example, when a person feels sad and the psalm is one of joy or when a person feels happy and the psalm is one of mourning. Such a problem is readily solved in private prayer, which allows for the choice of a psalm suited to personal feelings. The divine office, however, is not private; the cycle of psalms is public, in the name of the Church, even for those who may be reciting an hour alone. Those who pray the psalms in the name of the Church nevertheless can always find a reason for joy or sadness, for the saying of the Apostle applies in this case also: "Rejoice with the joyful and weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15). In this way human frailty, wounded by self-love, is healed in proportion to the love that makes the heart match the voice that prays the psalms. [3]

109. Those who pray the psalms in the name of the Church should be aware of their full sense (*sensus plenus*), especially their Messianic sense, which was the reason for the Church's introduction of the psalter into its prayer. This Messianic sense was fully revealed in the New Testament and indeed was affirmed publicly by Christ the Lord in person when he said to the apostles: "All that is written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44). The best-known example of this Messianic sense is the dialogue in Matthew's Gospel on the Messiah as Son of David and David's Lord, [4] where Ps 110 is interpreted as Messianic.

Following this line of thought, the Fathers of the Church saw the whole psalter as a prophecy of Christ and the Church and explained it in this sense; for the same reason the psalms have been chosen for use in the liturgy. Though somewhat contrived interpretations were at times proposed, in general the Fathers and the liturgy itself had the right to hear in the singing of the psalms the voice of Christ crying out to the Father or of the Father conversing with the Son; indeed, they also recognized in the psalms the voice of the Church, the apostles, and the martyrs. This method of interpretation also flourished in the Middle Ages; in many manuscripts of the period the Christological meaning of each psalm was set before those praying by means of the caption prefixed. A Christological meaning is by no means confined to the recognized Messianic psalms but is given also to many others. Some of these interpretations are doubtless Christological only in an accommodated sense, but they have the support of the Church's tradition.

On the great feasts especially, the choice of psalms is often based on their Christological meaning and antiphons taken from these psalms are frequently used to throw light on this meaning.

Endnotes

Chapter I

1. See Acts 1:14, 4:24, 12:5 and 12. See also Eph 5:19-21.
2. See Acts 2:1-15.
3. SC art. 83.
4. See Lk 3:21-22.
5. See Lk 6:12.
6. See Mt 14:19, 15:36; Mk 6:41, 8:7; Lk 9:16; Jn 6:11.
7. See Lk 9:28-29.
8. See Mk 7:34.
9. See Jn 11:41ff.
10. See Lk 9:18.
11. Lk 11:11.
12. See Mt 11:25ff; Lk 10:21ff.
13. See Mt 19:13.
14. See Lk 22:32.

15. See Mk 1:35, 6:46; Lk 5:16. See also Mt 4:1 and par.; Mt 14:23.
16. See Mk 1:35.
17. See Mt 14:23 and 25; Mk 6:46 and 48.
18. See Lk 6:12.
19. See Lk 4:16.
20. See Mt 21:13 and par.
21. See Mt 14:19 and par.; Mt 15:36 and par.
22. See Mt 26:26 and par.
23. See Lk 24:30.
24. See Mt 26:30 and par.
25. See Jn 12:27ff.
26. See Jn 17:1-26.
27. See Mt 26:36-44 and par.
28. See Lk 23:34 and 46; Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34.
29. See Heb 7:25.
30. Mt 5:44, 7:7, 26:41; Mk 13:33, 14:38; Lk 6:28, 10:2, 11:9, 22:40 and 46.
31. Jn 14:13ff., 15:16, 16:23ff. and 26.
32. See Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4.
33. See Lk 18:1.
34. See Lk 18:9-14.
35. See Lk 21:36; Mk 13:33.
36. See Lk 11:5-13, 18:1-8; Jn 14:13, 16:23.
37. See Mt 6:5-8, 23:14; Lk 20:47; Jn 4:23.
38. See Rom 8:15 and 26; 1 Cor 12:3; Gal 4:6; Jude 20.
39. See 2 Cor 1:20; Col 3:17.
40. See Heb 13:15.
41. See Rom 12:12; 1 Cor 7:5; Eph 6:18; Col 4:2; 1 Thes 5:17; 1 Tm 5:5; 1 Pt 4:7.
42. See 1 Tm 4:5; Jas 5:15ff.; 1 Jn 3:22, 5:14ff.
43. See Eph 5:19ff.; Heb 13:15; Rv 19:5.
44. See Col 3:17; Phil 4:6; 1 Thes 5:17; 1 Tm 2:1.
45. See Rom 8:26; Phil 4:6.
46. See Rom 15:30; 1 Tm 2:1ff.; Eph 6:18; 1 Thes 5:25; Jas 5:14 and 16.
47. See 1 Tm 2:5; Heb 8:6, 9:15, 12:24.
48. See Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18, 3:12.
49. See SC art. 83.
50. See LG no. 10.
51. Augustine, *Enarrat. in Ps.* 85, 1: CCL 39, 1176.
52. See Lk 10:21, the occasion when Jesus "rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said: 'I thank you, Father...'"
53. See Acts 2:42 Gr.
54. See Mt 6:6.
55. See SC art. 12.
56. See SC art. 83-84.
57. See SC art. 88.
58. See SC art. 94.
59. See PO no. 5.
60. CD no. 30.
61. SC art. 5.
62. See SC art. 83 and 98.
63. SC art. 7.
64. See SC art. 10.
65. SC art. 33.
66. See SC art. 24.
67. See SC art. 33.
68. 1 Thes 5:17.
69. See Heb 13:15.
70. SC art. 84.
71. SC art. 85.
72. See SC art. 83.
73. LG no. 50; SC art. 8 and 104.
74. LG no. 48.
75. See Rom 8:19.
76. See SC art. 83.
77. See Heb 5:7.
78. See PO no. 6.
79. See LG no. 41.
80. See no. 24 of this Instruction.
81. See PC no. 7.
82. SC art. 10.
83. SC art. 2.
84. See Jn 15:5.
85. See SC art. 86.
86. See Eph 2:21-22.
87. See Eph 4:13.
88. See SC art. 2.
89. See SC art. 90. *Rule of St. Benedict* ch. 19.
90. See PO no. 14; OT no. 8.
91. See SC art. 26.
92. See SC art. 41.
93. CD no. 11.
94. See art. 42. See also AA no. 10.
95. See SC art. 26 and 84.
96. See AG no. 17.
97. CD no. 15.
98. See SC art. 100.
99. See PO no. 5.
100. See nos. 100-109 of this Instruction.
101. CD no. 33; see also PC nos. 6, 7, 15; AG no. 15.
102. See SC art. 99.
103. See SC art. 100.
104. See Jn 4:23.
105. See GE no. 2; AA no. 16.
106. See AA no. 11.
107. See PO no. 13.
108. See SC art. 41; LG no. 21.
109. See LG no. 26; CD no. 15.
110. See PO no. 13.
111. See PO no. 5.
112. See Jn 10:11, 17:20 and 23.
113. See SC art. 90.
114. See LG no. 41.
115. See DV no. 25; PO no. 13.
116. See Paul VI, *Motu Proprio Sacram Diaconatus Ordinem*, 18 June 1967, no. 27.

- 117. See SCR, Instr. InterOec no. 78b.
- 118. See SC art. 95.
- 119. See Acts 4:32.
- 120. See SC art. 100.
- 121. See SC art. 26, 28-30.
- 122. See SC art. 27.

Chapter III

- 1. SC art. 90.
- 2. *Rule of St. Benedict* ch. 19.
- 3. See *Rule of St. Benedict* ch. 19.
- 4. See Mt 22:44ff.

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

This section of the Particular Directory explains the common practices of penance that we embrace, but also encourages us to do more personally. The importance of the apostolate is stressed. Finally, it specifies the most important aspects of our community life. Thus there are five “basics” of Dominican life: prayer, study, penance, apostolate, and community.

The Particular Directory of the Western Dominican Province

I. The Basics of Lay Dominican Life

C. Penance

1. We strive for conversion of heart according to the spirit and practice of the Gospel.
2. We are encouraged to continue the custom of abstaining from meat on all Fridays of the year, and fasting on the vigils of Our Lady of the Rosary (October 7), Saint Dominic (August 8) and Saint Catherine of Siena (April 29).
3. Other forms of penance may include self-discipline as a positive means to imitate Our Lord and share in His work of redemption.

D. Apostolate or Ministry

1. The example of Christ and the vision of Saint Dominic call us to be engaged in spreading the Word of God. Attentive to the call of the Spirit, we are encouraged to discern, use and develop the gifts God has given us. The ways in which we use our gifts, whether individually or communally, are as varied as our talents.
2. Sensitive to the needs of others, especially the poor and troubled, we respond to the social teachings of the Church in the political and economic environments in which we live. We commit ourselves to the four priorities of the Order: catechesis, evangelization, justice and peace, and communication.²⁰⁴

E. Community Life within a Chapter

1. The Chapter flourishes on the talents of each member and by their loving service to each member. It provides ways to grow in charity and perfection by
 - a. uniting us in our common love of God, and sharing that common love in the Eucharist, liturgical prayer, and suffrages;
 - b. learning together about God through study and reflection on Sacred Truth;

²⁰⁴ See General Chapter of Quezon City, 1977 for priorities of the Order, General Declarations, page 7.

- c. giving service to others in the Chapter, seeking their interest and well-being;
- d. binding us together in a common goal which requires cooperation and integration of talents;
- e. observing the customs and celebrations of the Order to enrich and to make joyous the lives we touch;
- f. supporting one another; helping each to grow in holiness;
- g. expressing compassion toward those in pain or sorrow, enabling us to be instruments of God's healing grace.

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR B, UNIT VI**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: COMMUNITY & APOSTOLIC LIFE

Acts of the Apostles 2:42–7; 4:32–5

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need.

E. Cachia, *The Apostolic Ideal of the Early Dominicans*²⁰⁵

THE APOSTOLIC IDEAL AND ST. DOMINIC

Although an ideal may be conceived in a moment of inspiration, it is quite natural, however, that several causes unwittingly help in its formation and that several years of preparation, sometimes even unconsciously, precedes the final decision. Such was the case with the apostolic ideal of the early Friars Preachers. Obviously there was a close connection between this ideal and St. Dominic, the founder of the Order of Preachers. The external causes that influenced St. Dominic to embrace the apostolic ideal were its attraction and its position during the twelfth century. Moreover, for several years, this ideal had its development in St. Dominic; and this is easily traced by considering the different stages in his life and experiences. These may be divided into three categories: his education and virtues which were a sort of remote preparation for his mission; his experience with the apostolic missionaries, when he was unconsciously learning about the pitfalls to be avoided for the survival of an Order, such as his, dedicated to preaching; and the gradual expansion of the Order of Preachers.

1. The Apostolic Ideal in the Times of St. Dominic

²⁰⁵ Pages 1–15. This work is translated from the French. The published translation contains numerous typographical errors, which have been corrected. The spelling has been Americanized. The footnotes have been edited for the sake of brevity; references to sources that would be of interest only to the scholar have been removed.

It was Jesus Christ who laid the foundation of the apostolic ideal. He sent forth his disciples to proclaim the doctrine that He had taught. But at the same time, he also wanted them to corroborate their doctrine by their example and therefore He sketched for them the life, they were to lead. They were to go about two by two, on foot and without gold and silver. They were also to gain their bread from those, to whom they preached, and were to be content with what was provided to them.²⁰⁶

This sort of poverty came to be styled evangelical poverty; while the program, as sketched by Jesus Christ for his disciples, quite rightly earned the name of apostolic ideal, since it was first practiced by the apostles. Two elements constituted the essence of this ideal and they are preaching, which includes the authorization to preach, and a saintly life, particularly noted for its poverty.

The apostolic ideal, however, is to be distinguished from the apostolic life. After the ascension of Jesus Christ in heaven, the responsibility of continuing His mission fell on the shoulders of the apostles. Around them there also gathered the first small band of faithful. These members of the primitive church, on account of their fervor and small number, managed to be a whole large Christian family. They led a new type of life, which is described in the acts of the Apostles.²⁰⁷ They shared all their belongings and they possessed everything in common. This sort of life was later known as the apostolic life, since it was first practiced by the faithful in the times of the apostles.

The life of the apostles and of the primitive church appealed throughout all ages to the good sense of the faithful. A return to the simplicity of the primitive church played an important part in the development of monasticism. While the application of the apostolic life to clerics, introduced by St. Augustine among his priests, gave birth to the canonical movement. It was, however, during the eleventh and twelfth century that the attraction of the apostolic ideal was most keenly felt. During this period of unrest, all sorts of upheavals faced the Church and even heresies followed in the wake of this movement.

The mission of the apostles was in reality inherited by the bishops because they alone were the descendants of the apostles in the full sense of the word. They alone, by right of office, had the duty to preach. In this office they were helped by the parish priests, by the canons and by the abbots.²⁰⁸

But the ordinary Catholic preachers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries often failed to embrace the apostolic ideal; this occurred either through negligence or through the difficulties of their position on account of which they were unable to dedicate themselves to such an activity.

Yet at the same time the faithful were keenly yearning to see this apostolic ideal in some concrete form. Hence, when the heretics burst into the gap by claiming to be the real exponents of this ideal, they attracted a great number of followers. The most active among the heretical groups of preachers were the Albigenses and the Waldenses.²⁰⁹

At the same period a return to the primitive zeal of the apostles was also having its repercussions within the Catholic Church itself. Sainly priests, on their own initiative and helped by the Popes' permission, became itinerant preachers. The chief among those who remained

²⁰⁶ Cf. Matthew X, 9-14; Mark VI, 8-11; Luke X, 1-11. The three Evangelists do not present a totally uniform picture for each one adds some peculiarity: to carry no staff (Matthew), no bread (Mark), not even a sack (Luke).

²⁰⁷ Acts IV, 32-7.

²⁰⁸ "Sed officium predicandi, id est publice docendi non habent nisi missi, id est episcopi et presbiteri in ecclesiis suis, et abbates in monasteriis suis; quibus commissa est cura animarum."

²⁰⁹ Although greatly differing among themselves in origin and doctrine both the Albigenses and the Waldenses adopted the same way of preaching and living.

faithful to the Church were: Robert of Arbrissel (d. 1117), St. Norbert, founder of Prémontré (d. 1134), Lambert of Liege (d. 1173) and Fulk of Neuilly (d. 1202). They were very active in their apostolic labors and accomplished a lot of good. But their influence was restricted to their own life-time, for none of them left his apostolic activity as an inheritance to some community.

Thus the apostolic ideal seemed to be slipping from the grasp of the Catholics and, therefore, the Church took extraordinary measures to claim it back within its ranks. The Popes themselves tried to incorporate the apostolic ideal into the Church's organism both by combating heretics through bands of apostolic missionaries and also by reconciling and granting special privileges to converted heretics.

The apostolic missions were held at different periods of the twelfth century. Generally they were under the guidance of a Cardinal and they included within their ranks some bishops and mostly Cistercian abbots. But since their activities were occasioned by circumstances and events, such as heresy in Southern France, it was rather a local and temporary measure.

Innocent III also tried to win over to the Church the several apostolic movements by permitting them to carry on their own activities within the Catholic Church and under its supervision. In this way the Humiliati were reconciled with the Church in 1201 and the same thing occurred to some Waldenses in the case of the "Poor Men" of Lyon in 1208. But again the experiment failed.

The apostolic ideal, however, was not to be denied to the true Church of Jesus Christ. Neglected by the ordinary Catholic preachers, claimed as their own prerogative by heretics and popular movements, unattained by several extraordinary and vain efforts on part of the Catholics, it was finally, firmly and permanently established in the Catholic Church by the early Friars Preachers through the genius of St. Dominic.

2. Education and Virtues of St. Dominic

The apostolic ideal with which St. Dominic was closely connected required both a high standard of knowledge and sound virtues; for an apostle is a preacher not only by word but also by deed. Knowledge, whether infused or acquired through study, is essential for preaching; while a life of virtues affords an authoritative confirmation to the teaching of a preacher. St. Dominic throughout his youth and early manhood, was gifted with both these qualities, so necessary for the fullness of the apostolic ideal.

The intellectual life of St. Dominic started when as a boy he went to reside with his uncle, the archpriest of Gumiel de Izan. His uncle had the duty of supervising the instruction of the young Dominic and as is most probable sent him to the school of the Regular Clerics of the Order of St. James of the Sword.²¹⁰ The education of a churchman was intended to lead to a life of clerical piety; for the churchman was expected to take an active part in the liturgical prayer of the Church, which abounded in biblical episodes and were based on a dogmatic line of thought. Hence when following this course, St. Dominic was instructed in grammar, ecclesiastical Latin, the reading of the Bible in Latin, and also in the rules of chanting.²¹¹

Later he joined the higher school of Palencia, which was then one of the best in Spain. He stayed in this town in which he studied the liberal arts and theology for more than five years. He

²¹⁰ This branch of the Order had the obligation of instructing the children of the knights, who constituted the Military Order of St. James of the Sword. Several of the Guzman family belonged to this Order, while Pedro Garcia, a relative of Johanna d'Aza, was one of its founder. Moreover one of its schools was quite near to Gumel d'Izan.

²¹¹ "in usu ecclesiastico."

concentrated largely on theology, because more in line with his former education and his future occupation. He was a hard worker and at the end of his studies, he must have possessed the best education, that could be acquired in Spain at that period.

Just on being ordained priest, he was claimed by Martin de Bezan, Bishop of Osma, for his own diocese; and at the instigation of Diego d’Acebes, he was installed canon of the cathedral chapter and thus he came in contact with Diego who was then the prior of the chapter and who was trying to introduce therein the Gregorian reform. For more than six years, St. Dominic shared the life of the canons with its liturgical atmosphere and canonical observances. He continued to work hard, and it is stated that he hardly ever left the canonical residence; while being thus formed in the canonical traditions, he also applied several hours to study.²¹²

Thus at the end of his early manhood, St. Dominic might be said to have been a complete and perfect cleric and although at the moment he had no intention of embracing the apostolic ideal in all its extension, intellectually he possessed all the essential qualities for undertaking such a mission. Always intended to be a cleric, he had followed an ecclesiastical course of studies; he was also a brilliant scholar, possessing the orthodox faith of the Church, and he was enkindled with a love of the liturgy and of the priesthood.

Yet it was not only intellectually that he was prepared for the apostolic ideal, for at the same time he was also paramountly endowed with all the moral qualities of an apostle. His virtues, especially his charity and zeal, could easily be judged by glancing at some episodes of his early life. Dominic was brought up by saintly parents among saintly surroundings. His first school of virtue was the family of Bl. Johanna d’Aza where he was taught the value of the supernatural. Later at Palencia, his virtues were conspicuous among his fellow students. Even among the canons at Osma, his good qualities attracted the attention of all, who knew him, for by 1201, in spite of his comparatively young age, he was already sub-prior of the cathedral chapter.²¹³

His love of God is shown by the long hours and vigils he spent in prayer, while his great charity towards his neighbor may be clearly seen from two incidents of his life. Once, during a famine at Palencia where he sold his books to help the needy; and a few years later, when he offered himself to be sold as a slave, in place of a young man, bewailed by his sister. Such charity could not but burst forth in works of zeal. His secret prayer, while canon at Osma, was that he might work for the salvation of souls; and while passing through Southern France, he once stood awake the whole night to discuss with and convert his heretical host at Toulouse.

Divine Providence was thus slowly, secretly but steadily preparing St. Dominic for the great undertaking and mission of definitely establishing the apostolic ideal within the Catholic Church by endowing him with the essential qualities of an apostle, which he was later to hand over as an inheritance to his Friars Preachers. Later Divine Providence was also to furnish him with the best opportunities of obtaining the necessary training for such a mission.

3. Experience with the Apostolic Missioners

When Bishop Diego and St. Dominic arrived in Rome in 1205, they asked the Pope to grant them permission of undertaking missionary work among the Cumans; but Innocent III did

²¹² Jordan, Libellus, MOPH, XVI, 32, no. 18. The life of St. Dominic among the canons is quite accurately described. Bl. Jordan also states that one of the favorite books of St. Dominic were the Collationes.

²¹³ Jordan, Libellus, MOPH, XVI, 32, no. 12. The reason for his election is given as the influence of his sanctity upon their canons.

not grant them their request. They turned back to Spain,²¹⁴ but on their way they stopped at Castelnaud, a small town at the gates of Montpellier.

Their arrival at this town was to be the turning point in their lives, particularly in that of St. Dominic; for it was there that they met the papal legates Arnold Amalric, Abbot of Citeaux, and his companions Peter of Castelnaud and Raoul of Fontfroide. The efforts of these papal legates to stem the heretical progress at Languedoc had met with little success. They had encountered a stiff resistance from the heretics who sneeringly pointed an accusing finger at the clergy and their scandalous way of life and at the lack of evangelical poverty in the legates themselves.²¹⁵

With a sigh of relief, they welcomed Bishop Diego, to whom, on account of his sanctity and learning, they turned for advice. And Diego was quite willing to help; he soon suggested to the legates a new way of dealing with the heretics. His plan was simple enough but it left the legates breathless at its daring novelty; in fact, they only accepted on condition that he became their leader; for the presence and authority of a bishop would shield them from any accusations of undue leanings to the heretics, while at the same time the whole responsibilities of the undertaking would thus be placed on the shoulders of Diego.²¹⁶

Diego's solution consisted in adopting the way of living of the heretical preachers, and this, in the eyes of the legates, was just playing with fire. He wanted to appeal directly to the people by preaching to them not only by words but also by example; while at the same time he intended to attack their leaders themselves in public disputes.

The apostolic missionaries were therefore to practice evangelical poverty and by doing so they would be able to cut the ground from under the heretics' feet whose chief argument would disintegrate in the face of a formidable group of dedicated and exemplary preachers ready to endure untold hardship. Hence his method was threefold: evangelical poverty of the preachers; disputes with the heretical leaders; exhortation to the people to conversion and their reconciliation with the Catholic Church.

What St. Dominic's contribution was to the formulation of this plan, is well nigh impossible to determine. He was on very intimate terms with Bishop Diego and he generally shared his views. He might also have informed the bishop of the ideas and arguments of his converted host of Toulouse. The way in which he exerted himself to carry out Diego's plan rather suggests that he had an important part in its formation. In

²¹⁴ Was Diego commissioned by the Pope to work in Languedoc or was he ordered expressly to return immediately to Osma? It is certain that the Pope ordered him to go back to Osma but there are no proofs to show that the Pope expected Diego either to stop at Languedoc or to hurry to Osma. Peter des Vaux de Camai states "preceptum ut ad sedem propriam remearet" (*Historia Albigensis*, ed. Cuerin and Lyon, Paris 1926, P. 20); while Bl. Jordan notes "reverti in Hispaniam properabat" (*Libellus*, MOPH, XVI, 35). He was not ordered by the Pope to stop at Languedoc for the legates would not have been reluctant to adopt instantly his suggestions; nor were the monks accompanying Diego intended for Languedoc; they might have been meant for the canonical reform at Osma. Nor is it likely that the Pope expected him to avoid any delays on his return to Osma, for otherwise his long sojourn in France would have amounted to sheer disobedience.

²¹⁵ Peter des Vaux de Cernai mentions only the scandalous lives of the clergy (*loc. cit.*); but Bl. Jordan also adds the expense and richness of the legates' train (*ibid.*, no. 20. p. 36). P. Mandonnet (*op. cit.* p. 307.) rightly observes that the abbots "were in no position to display the gorgeous train which the biographers of St. Dominic have been pleased to picture". Nevertheless although less rich than that of former legates-Cardinals, their way of travelling must have been inconveniently conspicuous in contrast to that of the heretics.

²¹⁶ "quasi caput totius negotii" Jordan, *Libellus*, MOPH, XVI, 37, no. 22. "Caput", because they were sheltering behind him; "quasi", because he had no official appointment from Rome. The legates even took the precaution to write to the pope and ask for the approval of Diego's plan. The answer, which was favorable, was sent to the legates on the 11th November 1206.

any case, if he was not its co-originator, he was totally attracted by its nobility. Later it completely absorbed his activities and he made it his own by the way, he adhered to its fulfillment, even when left almost single-handed.

The legates accepted the suggestion of Diego and dismissed their equipage. Diego retained with him a few clerics, among whom was St. Dominic; they were to augment the small number of apostolic missionaries. In the manner of the apostles, the band of missionaries left Montpellier to enter the district which was infested with heresy. They traveled on foot and begged their food from door to door.²¹⁷ They underwent great hardships, for their sustenance depended on what they could earn by way of alms; a way of life that fluctuated according to different circumstances. The only things they retained with them were only books, necessary for the recitation of the divine office, since all of them were clerics, or for study, or for discussions against the heretics.

The disputes against the leaders of heresy constituted the second line of attack in the offensive of the apostolic missionaries. Just as by evangelical poverty, they were trying to attract the people and to drive a wedge between them and their leaders; so by public discussions they aimed at overthrowing the leaders themselves. Disputes were held at Servian, Bezier, Carcassonne, Verfeil, Montreal, Fanjeauz and Pamier.

These discussions, like the chivalrous tournaments of the knights, sometimes lasted for a whole week. They were held in public and each side was represented by its ablest theologians, while a judge, accepted by both parties, presided at the meetings. The contenders laid knotty problems to each other which each party was asked to explain and solve, if it could; they argued and counter-argued. It was really a trial of strength in the camp of learning and the spectators often felt keen interest while sometimes enthusiasm ran very high.

The apostolic missioners had to fight against heavy odds. Their opponents were well versed in Sacred Scripture, the spectators were prejudiced against the Catholic preachers and even the judges sometimes were biased towards the heretics. Hence the apostolic missionaries employed, as their most fruitful line of argument, that of applauding the poverty of the heretics; but at the same time they exhorted them to see the unreasonableness of achieving any real good by attacks on the bishops and by a separatist movement. Then they tried to convince the heretics of their erroneous doctrine.²¹⁸

In this manner, the apostolic missionaries, with St. Dominic among them, were working very hard, when their number was suddenly increased by the arrival of twelve Cistercians Abbots, brought by Arnold, the Abbot of Citeaux. But the tenacity of the heretics, the inexperience of the Cistercians in a ministry, alien to their vocation, the small results of the hard labor, forced the abbots to return very quickly to the homely atmosphere of their monasteries. The burden again fell on the shoulders of the apostolic legates, Diego and Dominic.

After the establishment of the monastery of Prouille, Diego returned to Spain to settle the affairs of his diocese and to collect funds for the new monastery. But he died on the way. In the meantime, Peter of Castelnau was assassinated and the banner of the crusade was raised against the heretics; and the horrors of war were let loose on the country. St. Dominic continued to

²¹⁷ Cernai, *op. cit.*, pp. 21 ff; “mendicarent hostiatim panem suum.” *ibid.*, p. 47.

²¹⁸ This method scored a huge success at the first dispute which was held at Servian (cf. Cernai, *op. cit.* p. 23). It also wielded about 150 converts in the town of Montreal. Through one of these disputes the Spaniard, Durandus de Huesca, a later leader of the reconciled Waldenses, was convinced of his errors. In one of the disputes the judge was Arnold de Crampagnano, a secular cleric and sacristan of St. Anthony, who was one of the “believers” of the Waldenses.

preach around Fanjeaux and to take care of Proulle which became the rallying point of a small band of preachers under the unofficial guidance of St. Dominic.²¹⁹

It was, however, during these ten years of activity in Southern France, that St. Dominic gained invaluable experience. His ministry among the heretics enkindled still more in him the love of the apostolic ideal; while at the same time, he recognized its usefulness as a means to meet the needs of his times.

But he also perceived that a high standard of learning was required by the preachers to hold their own against the onslaught of the heretics who could cite Scripture with great facility in support of their doctrine. In this respect, the schooling of St. Dominic as a churchman stood him in good stead. Still he saw the importance of the fact that it was not only learning and preaching which counted for the success of the apostolic ideal. This ideal could not survive on preaching alone which constituted only one of its elements. The people themselves were clamoring for something more tangible from the preachers; they were asking for deeds corroborating the preachers' doctrine. Such deeds could only mean a life of poverty and mortification.

Besides this experience of the qualities, essential for an apostolic preacher, St. Dominic, by following closely the rise and fall of the groups of converted heretical preachers, also recognized the pit-falls, that were to be avoided by a congregation of preachers, embracing the apostolic ideal. They were to possess the orthodox faith of the Church and they had to have the permission which only the authorities of the Church could give.

4. Expansion of the Order of Preachers

It is impossible to determine with absolute certainty the exact time when St. Dominic decided to found his Order. He had continued to preach in Southern France as the unofficial head of a few disciples; but his followers really formed a fixed community only in 1215, when Peter of Seila and Thomas of Toulouse, two upright men of Toulouse, offered themselves and their properties to the cause of St. Dominic. Almost simultaneously the newly established community acquired official ecclesiastical approval when Fulk, Bishop of Toulouse, appointed them as official preachers of his diocese.

The ideal of the new society, under the guidance of St. Dominic, included both elements of the apostolic ideal. Its members were "to extirpate heresy, combat vice, teach the faith and instruct men in good morals";²²⁰ while they also were to "choose evangelical poverty on behalf of Christ and labor by words and example to enrich others with heavenly gifts".²²¹ Indeed "they had proposed to journey religiously and on foot and to preach the word of evangelical truths".²²²

Besides this program, as sketched in the Act of Toulouse, the new society was also intended to be composed chiefly of clerics. St. Dominic took great care that those who lacked the

²¹⁹ St. Dominic was left by Diego as head in spiritual matters, thus he was not absolute leader. In fact his companions had no tie of obedience to him. "Eis autem qui remanserunt fratrem Dominicum in spiritualium cura . . . preposuit. . ." Jordan, *Libellus*, MOPH, XVI, 39, no. 29.

²²⁰ "ad extirpandam hereticam pravitatem et vicia expellenda et fidei regulam adocendam et homines sanis moribus imbuendos, intuitum predicatorum." *Monumenta Historica*. S.P.N. Dominici, fasc. I. ed. M.H. Laurent, MOPH, XV, 66, no. 60.

²²¹ "qui pro Christo, evangelicam paupertatem eligentes, universos et singulos exemplo et doctrina donis celestibus nituntur et alaborant ditare." *Ibid.*

²²² qui in paupertate evangelica pedites religiose proposuerunt incedere et veritates evangelice verbum predicare." *loc. cit.*

necessary knowledge, should undertake the schooling of clerics.²²³ For the Church, which always and especially at that moment looked askance at the preaching of laymen, wanted only clerics to preach.

The newly formed band of preachers, we must surmise, possessed also some sort of rule or constitutions. They must have had some laws, regulating their way of living and their conduct, such as their time of rising, sleeping, attending office etc. No trace could ever be found of any document that stated that the community of Toulouse before 1216 had assumed any of the older rules.

Indeed St. Dominic, when accompanying Bishop Fulk to Rome, intended to obtain the approval of this rule of his community from the Pope. But Innocent III, knowing that the IV Lateran Council was going to enact a law prohibiting the institution of new societies, advised St. Dominic to return to Toulouse and to select some older Rule. St. Dominic consented to the Pope's suggestion, although he could have claimed that his community preceded in time the projected law, which was not yet promulgated.²²⁴

He thus returned to Toulouse to confer with his friars about the choice of a rule. He perceived that he had to shelter under the traditional cover of an approved rule and an accepted way of living. Around these factors he had to mould his new scheme, by introducing any innovations slowly and carefully, lest suspicion and the opposition of the bishops be aroused. It was also easier to obtain official approval of his program, once it had already been put in practice.

The community of St. Romans at Toulouse unhesitatingly selected as their rule, that of St. Augustine. Then they added to it several customs of the Premonstratensians²²⁵ and also took the bold step of renouncing to their estates and properties. These decisions, taken together, marked another landmark in the development of the apostolic ideal of the early Friars Preachers.

The Rule of St. Augustine was selected because it was the automatic choice of any society of clerics. St. Dominic wanted his disciples to be essentially clerics, since only clerics, after having obtained the permission of the bishops, had the right and office to preach.²²⁶ Moreover the Rule of St. Augustine contained only spiritual exhortations and recommendations and thus did not encumber them with several material obligations; on the contrary, on account of its flexibility, it left ample room for their innovations regarding study and preaching.

To the Rule of St. Augustine they added several regulations, relating to food, fasting, beddings and clothes, which they based on the Constitution of Prémontré. The Premonstratensians possessed the strictest customs among the canons regular and they suited the needs of the Dominicans, who as apostles wanted to follow a strict religious life.

Papal approval of the new religious institution was obtained on the 22nd December 1216, when Honorius III approved the Dominicans as canons, following the Rule of St. Augustine.²²⁷ Officially, therefore, they were only recognized by the Pope as canons-regular; but in reality they

²²³ He then sent them to the school of Alexander Stavensby.

²²⁴ Jordan, *Libellus MOPH*, XVI, 45-6, no. 41. The Bishops were ready to obstruct any new undertakings since all religious novelties with which the Pope had vainly toyed in order to win the heretics had failed, cf. P. Mandonnet, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-4.

²²⁵ The Premonstratensians are known as Norbertines in the United States.

²²⁶ The Rule of St. Benedict was reserved to monks who were really lay in origin and character, and who only occasionally and out of necessity undertook any preaching.

²²⁷ *MOPH*, XV, 84, no. 64; *Bullarium Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum*, ed. A. Brémond, Rome 1729, vol. I, 4. It is to be noted that the Constitution of the Dominicans were never confirmed by the Pope and thus they could be amended by the friars.

were already a religious community dedicated to preaching. Moreover they had selected evangelical preaching and had renounced their estates.

Papal confirmation of their apostolate arrived on 21st January 1217; and a year later their camp of activity was extended to the whole world. Thus the Order of St. Dominic became officially the Order of Preachers with a universal mission. Its character was then definitely sealed in 1220 at the first General Chapter at Bologna when they established their code of laws and when by giving up all their rents they decided to live on alms.

M. H. Vicaire, *The Apostolic Life*²²⁸

INTRODUCTION

THE APOSTLE

[pp. 13–16] Representations of the apostles often appear on the ancient monuments of Christianity: the mosaics of Ravenna or of Rome, Roman frescoes and cornices, the arches of Gothic portals, fifteenth-century choir stars—where they alternate with the representations of the prophets—the miniatures in medieval Books of Hours. They are pictured as ascetics in long robes with bare feet, their faces severe and surmounted by halos. Sometimes they surround and listen to Christ; sometimes they bear witness to the Messiah by the holy book which they clutch against their breast or by the particular instrument of their martyrdom. Although they are represented individually at times, more often they appear as a group, assembled for the washing of the feet or gathered together devoutly at the Last Supper. Other times they are shown in a moment of inspiration, confirmed by the apparition of the Risen Christ with his wounds, inflamed by the mission which they are receiving from Christ—as on the spandrel of the narthex of Vezelay—illuminated by the grace of Pentecost.

Do these lofty figures still convey to Christians the fullness of the message which they were charged to preach? Certainly we continue to see in them, a memorial to the life of Christ, an illustration of the Gospel, the commemoration of the foundation of the Church, the invocation of powerful protectors whose names are freely given at baptism: Peter, Paul, James, John, Philip, etc. However, the principal lesson that Christians of earlier times learned from the representation of the apostles was something quite other. The image of the apostles was for them a book in which they were eager to discover the art of the perfect life. For, in their eyes, the apostles were the models of the full Christian spirit, its living norms. Their figures helped to recall its complete formulation even to details.

Were not these apostles intimately associated in the life and death of Christ in order later to be his witnesses even to the ends of the earth? And what an intimate association “No longer do I call you servants . . . but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (Jn. 15:15). Had they not been formed slowly by Jesus himself, in the rhythm of big divine, progressive, applied pedagogy? For example, when Jesus sent them, two-by-two, to preach, he minutely described for them the way to behave in announcing the kingdom of God. It is as if he wished to accustom them, by repeated trials, to the manner in which they should speak and act after his Resurrection. He formed them into models that they might be “examples to the flock” (1 Pt. 5:3; 2 Thes. 3:9). Whence the unabashed expression of St. Paul:

²²⁸ Pages 4–5, 12–49, 54–58, 96–118. The footnotes are edited.

“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1; 4:16). Imitate the apostles? Of course! Both in their persons and by their institutions they were the formulators of the original Christian archetype in the church of Jerusalem. That is why their descendants created memory-prodding images of them.

The familiarity of the image, joined to reflection on the sacred writings, contributed to popularizing the idea that the *vita* or *conversatio apostolica*, as the texts say, was the model of the perfect life. Thus, at every step of the movement of perfection in the Church, whether in its beginnings or in its renewals, this idea appears among the reformers as a leitmotiv, the intention of observing in its fullness some forgotten or unrecognized element of the “way of life of the apostles.” From Egyptian ascetics to contemporary communities of parish priests, unnumbered hermits, canons itinerant preachers, mendicant religious, missionaries, and priests propose to rediscover this way of life at its source, in the hope of better answering to the call of God.

Surprisingly enough, the direct heirs of the apostolic ministry, the clergy, were not the ones who gave the impetus to this movement; rather, the ascetics, the anchorites, and the cenobites, were the first born of the movement toward perfection in the Church. It is particularly interesting, then, to examine how the great heralds of the monastic movement, in instituting, developing, reforming a way of life which gave promise of a fruitful future, explicitly proposed to reproduce a way of life such as Jesus had wished. It was a way of life which the apostles had accepted and delineated by their lives as well as by their words and of which a number of texts of the New Testament still pass the message on to us today.

I. THE MONKS

1. THE APOSTOLIC MODEL OF THE CHRISTIAN

[pp. 17–49] Among the texts of the New Testament which in the eyes of the monks were the apostolic sources of their ideal, the most important were the phrases of the Gospel which settled upon one or another of the apostles a command to follow. Among all these words of personal commands, none are more important than the calls, the “vocations.” The monks considered the famous “Come follow me” of Jesus to be the beginning of the *conversatio apostolica* of the Twelve. But it can be the same for others; it was not addressed only to the apostles. The rich young man also heard it: “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Mt. 19:21). To this vocation the monks, imitating those of apostolic times, also answered yes.

The Gospel also contains counsels or precepts addressed to the Twelve as a group. The accounts of the preaching mission of the apostles yield a good number of them, which will be pointed out when the canons and especially the mendicant religious are discussed. Nevertheless even the monks would occasionally seize upon them.

In the letters of St. Paul a number of phrases of the same type can be found. The apostle par excellence recommends certain attitudes or customs to which he was strongly attached. The monks paid special attention to what he had to say about manual labor. Paul’s purpose was to be independent, to owe nothing to any man. The monks saw here a fundamental element of the *vita apostolica* as they claimed to live it.

However, in all the New Testament, what impressed the monks most were the descriptions of the primitive common life found in the Acts of the Apostles. The first chapters of this book contain four passages which the exegetes designate as “summaries,” groups of parallel verses which describe the same series of attitudes in repeated strokes. The two principal ones,

which are re-echoed throughout this story of the early Christians, are these: “Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles’ feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need” (Acts 4:32-35). The second text is almost the same “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day-by-day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42-47).

These verses are the precious jewels of the first chapters of the Acts. In them we are still able to hear echoes of the Church’s origins. For good reason, then, exegetes assign them the highest importance. The monks also noticed them, examined them, and lovingly scrutinized them. For many centuries they considered these verses the special source of their ideal. Numerous texts on this point, dating from the origins of monasticism to its magnificent flowering in the twelfth century with the Cistercians could be cited. Texts from Cîteaux could be mentioned, but the attitude of Cluny at this time was the same. Evidence of this is found in a beautiful passage written by Clunisian Abbot William of Saint-Thierry (near Reims), who was later to be a disciple of St. Bernard. About 1122 he describes the history of the monastic life in this manner: “But we come to this spiritual society of which the apostle Paul spoke to the Philippians²²⁹ in praise of the regular discipline and of the sublime joy of brothers living together in unanimity. To do justice to this discipline it is necessary to return to its beginning in the time of the apostles. Since it was the apostles themselves who instituted it as their own way of life, according to the teaching of the Lord, unless it was the grace of the Holy Spirit which gave them power from above to live together in such a way that all would have but one heart and one soul, so that everything would be held in common, so that all would be continually in the temple in a spirit of harmony. Animated by a great love for this form of life instituted by the apostles, certain men wished no longer to have any other house or any other lodging than the house of God, the house of prayer. All that they did they did according to a common program, under a common rule; in the name of the Lord they lived together, possessing nothing of their own, not even their bodily strength, nor were they even masters of their own will. They lay down to sleep at the same time, they rose up together, they prayed, they sang psalms, they studied together. They showed the fixed and changeless will of being obedient to their superiors and of being entirely submissive to them. They kept their needs to a minimum and lived with very little; they had poor clothes, a mean diet, and limited everything according to a very precise rule.”

This text leaves no doubt. The monks of the twelfth century genuinely considered that they were continuing the common life preached and practiced by the apostles. But this idea flourished for eight centuries, and the affirmation, frequently renewed, of the apostolic origins of the monastic state is no vague allusion. It is a precise declaration, a reasoned conviction, resting, from the fourth century, in the eyes of its authors on two facts that they believed completely established. One was the Egyptian origin of monasticism, which no one would question. The

²²⁹ 2:1-5 (unanimity, imitation of Christ); 3:17 (imitation of Paul).

other, and this one is quite questionable, is that the Egyptian Christians lived a way of life identical to that of Jerusalem.

Eusebius of Caesarea, in his history of the Church from the beginnings to the fourth century (303–325), is responsible for the second affirmation. He was under the impression that he had discovered in the writings of Philo of Alexandria proof that the customs of life taught by the apostles to the church of Jerusalem were extended likewise to Alexandria in Egypt and even farther. In his work on the contemplative life, which dates before the year 40, Philo described a very curious institution whose inhabitants he called the “Therapeutae.” These men lived in the desert, followed an edifying common life, practiced strict poverty, held everything in common, and distributed to each according to his needs. During the period of their common life they read the books of the ancients and practiced very extended fasts, some even resolving to eat only once every three days and some only once in six days. Finally, the room in which they prayed, still following Philo, was called the *monasterion*.

Eusebius was very impressed. The Therapeutae lived exactly as the first Christians did according to the Acts of the Apostles: they practiced poverty, holding everything in common, distributing to each according to his needs. The ancient books which they read must have been the apostolic writings, such as the Epistle to the Hebrews and the letters of Paul, and of course the Gospels. Their fasts are doubtless those of the first Christians. Eusebius ends his long and minute analysis: “That Philo wrote all of this, thinking of the first heralds of the evangelical teaching and of the usages transmitted from the beginnings by the apostles, is evident to all.” Thus the apostolic life of the church in Jerusalem was extended to Africa in the time of Philo. In considering more closely the witness of Philo it becomes evident that this kind of life was instituted not only at Alexandria itself, but much farther, beyond Lake Mareotis and even in many other countries of the world. Eusebius concluded that the form of the primitive life described by the Acts of the Apostles was not established at Jerusalem alone, nor even only in Judea, but that it was far more widespread, that it reached Egypt in the time of St. Mark, and finally that it took root in other countries, probably those in which St. Paul preached. Thus a life of prayer and poverty, harmonious and communal, had existed everywhere in the primitive Church.

Eusebius did not draw his idea of this life from the life of the monks, although he did use the words “apostolic ascetics” and even “monastery.” Monasticism properly so-called did not yet exist. But a half century later the connection would be perfectly clear. St. Jerome, in chapters eight and eleven of his *De viris illustribus* (392), seized upon the information of Eusebius and of Philo on the Therapeutae and concluded: “It is evident that the Church of the first believers in Christ was indeed such as the monks now desire and strive to be. That nothing should be held as one’s own; that there should be neither rich nor poor among them; that whatever they brought with them should be shared among those who were in need; that they should give themselves to prayer and to psalms, as well as to study and to continence. Is this not how Luke portrays the believers of Jerusalem?”

Cassian, some thirty years later—he wrote between 419 and 428—did not satisfy himself merely with comparing, he claimed a definite continuity. Rereading what Eusebius had written on the origins of the church of Alexandria and on the Therapeutae, he specifies that the monks received this way of life from St. Mark, and even that they have improved upon the practices imposed by the apostles on the church of Jerusalem, or rather on the entire primitive Church. He established then the theory that would become classical and that would be found, as if by custom and often reduced to a schema, even in the bulls of the medieval popes.

From the beginning the apostles had established a communal life or apostolic life as described in the Acts for everyone in the Church. This life was extended to the whole body of the faithful including the church of Alexandria. St. Paul, however, introduced a completely disconcerting element. He taught that upon the Gentiles, who unlike the Alexandrian Jews had not been prepared to assume the rigors of the primitive life, should be imposed only the four ritual precepts of which the famous gathering called the Council of Jerusalem had spoken (Acts 15:5-29). The hierarchy, however, finally thought it fitting for all the faithful to be held only to the kind of life to which the Gentile converts had been bound. Therefore it was no longer necessary to renounce everything as was done in the beginning. In this way a form of life became common in the Church which was inferior to the way of life of the primitive Church and which put an end to the communal life. Some were not agreeable to it. The monks clung to the more perfect kind of life. Continuing the tradition of the church of Jerusalem established by the apostles, they set up definite communities, isolated from the rest of the Church, in which they preserved as a precious thing the vitality of primitive Christianity. This is what the Abbot Piammon discusses in the eighteenth conference of the *Collationum XXIV collectio* where Cassian gives an account of conferences with some of the principal ascetics or monks of the desert. And here is the conclusion of the conference: "But those who still live in the apostolic fervor [The expression "apostolic fervor" is well used! It evokes the tongues of fire which descended upon the apostles on Pentecost.] preserve the memory of this primitive perfection by going far away from their cities and from the company of those who consider illicit for themselves and for the Church of God the negligence of an easy life. Thus they went to live in the woods or in obscure places and strove to practice, privately and as if it were a particular law, the rules instituted by the apostles for the whole body of the Church. This discipline of life of which we speak is not lost among the disciples of those who separated themselves from these contagions. These men who isolated themselves from the crowd of the faithful were later called monks or 'lonely ones,' because they abstained from marriage and separated themselves from their families and from the world by the severe practice of the solitary life. They are justly called cenobites, since they drew together in the community of life."

Cassian is one of the authors most appreciated in the convents. Constantly reread by novices and monks, his conferences fashioned the medieval monastic life-and even the modern monastic life. Such a reading of history could not be sterile. The conviction of Cassian would influence subsequent monks and would play a large part in turning more than ever the eyes of those who wished to give themselves to the life of Christian perfection toward the origins of the Church, toward the great model of the apostles and of the community of the cenacle.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century Conrad of Clairvaux gathered together the Cistercian compilation that is called the Great Exordium. The prologue he gave it is a history of the monastic life down to the least detail, inspired by the text of Cassian. Similarly inspired in the first quarter of the preceding century was the polemicist who defended the monks against the canons and the secular clerics in the little work called *De vita vere apostolica*. This vision was therefore a general one.

When a William of Saint-Thierry, a St. Bernard, even an Abelard, represented their monastic life as an apostolic life, they intended to signify, just as did the monk of the fifth century, that they were continuing the exalted life prescribed by the apostles to the infant Church and practiced by them. Since many Christians, yielding to the temptation to a lower form of life infinitely less conformed to the inspiration of the Spirit who breathed upon the first faithful, had

later abandoned this apostolic life, what was the value of this conviction? Was it authentic? Did it truly correspond to reality and to the intentions of the founders of the monastic life?

2. NOSTALGIA FOR THE EARLY CHURCH

The yearning to live as the early Christians did grew out of an error of fact, namely, a false generalization of the life of Jerusalem. Eusebius made a mistake when he saw the life of the early Church in the account of the life of the Therapeutae. The Therapeutae, if they had any other existence than in the generous and utopian imagination of Philo, were probably pious ascetics of Jewish origin, lovers of philosophy, who were doubtless few in number and left no trace at all other than the account found in Eusebius. They seem to have been one of those numerous institutions created by the Jewish spirit in the full ardor of its faith. An example of this type of institution is the semimonks of Qumran, the remains of which are being exhumed along the coast of the Dead Sea and which would have remained almost totally unknown to us had not their library been accidentally discovered. The Therapeutae are very interesting since they showed the creative ardor of a segment of the Jewish faith at the time of our Lord and the religious purity of this faith. However, they are not able to provide a basis for monastic history, especially as they are represented to us by Eusebius. They were not the first Christians, nor were they the first Christian monks; they were pure Jews of a very religious bent.

Note that, regardless of the error on which Eusebius and Cassian rest a good part of their theories and which therefore somewhat confuses the historical tradition, it is indeed exact that monasticism was inspired from its beginning—not exclusively, but truly—by a desire to imitate the apostles and the first Christians.

Certainly there are elements in monasticism which are not specifically Christian but common to every effort for interior perfection. This general basis of human spirituality explains the existence of real analogies between the monastic institution and institutions far distant from it both in time and in space. On the other hand, the Egyptian beginnings of monasticism resulted in the institution inheriting a certain number of local traditions. The better Orientalists, for example Lefort, have shown that many of the secondary traits of monasticism can be explained by its Egyptian origins better than by Greek or Pythagorean origins. Finally, among the Christian inspirations of monasticism everything cannot be reduced to the imitation of the apostles. Certain biblical themes such as “the angelic life,” “prophetic hope,” “the royal road,” “abnegation,” martyrdom, have furnished to the monks who meditated on their institution elements of great fruitfulness. Nevertheless the most fundamental Christian factor which historians have discovered in the origins of monasticism is a powerful nostalgia for the early Church. The principal expression of this was the wish to take up the “apostolic life,” that is to say, the Christian mentality communicated by the apostles to the early Church and lived by them. This is not surprising if it is remembered that the early monks were convinced of the universality of the formula of the Christian life described in the Acts as pertaining to Jerusalem.

At the heart of monasticism and indeed the very stuff out of which it was created is the anchoritism of the hermits: the flight to the desert and the solitary life. The eremitical life down through the centuries was the primitive nebula from which, as stars, the institutions or movements of perfection in the Church were shaped. It can be said that in every true religious there is something of the hermit, an element often almost totally ignored, but an inclination which is always there. The eremitical life, the origin of the monastic movement, was inspired expressly by the appeal to total renunciation addressed by Christ to the apostles and through them to all of the first Christians (Mt. 19:21). The account by St. Athanasius of the conversion of

St. Anthony, one of the most ancient documents concerning the eremitical and monastic life, is significant of the whole tradition.

“One day as Anthony reflected upon why the apostles had abandoned everything at the call of Jesus to follow him and the first Christians had sold their goods to place them at the feet of the apostles for distribution to the poor and on the wonderful hope such people would have in heaven, he entered the basilica and heard in the gospel which was being read at that very moment the account of the call of the young man: ‘If you would be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and come follow me, and you shall have treasure in heaven.’” He, himself, then sold what he had and went to the desert.

As these flights to the desert became more and more common, various types of eremitical associations among the solitaries began to be organized in Egypt. In time the common life made its appearance. The powerful but unstable influence of the eremitical life then passed into an institution which gave it form and equilibrium and rendered it fruitful. This was the cenobitic life of Pachomius (about 320). But when one has recourse to the texts relevant to the substantial fortunate transformation of the flight into the desert into the community life, one again encounters the significance of the documents concerning the life of the apostles.”

The most ancient lives of St. Pachomius, written in the Coptic language, attribute to the founder the explicit intention of renewing the perfect community “according to what is written concerning the believers in the Acts of the Apostles.” The coadjutor and successor of the Saint, Horsiisi, made identical protestations according to the book that is known as his “testament.” The second successor, but direct disciple of the founder, Theodore of Tabennesi, claimed even to have heard St. Anthony, to whom he went to announce the death of his master, declare that the cenobitic institution of Pachomius surpassed his own and that the grouping of monks into a community realized truly the “apostolic way”; to such an extent that if he were not himself so aged, he would himself take up this way of the apostles. Thus Theodore could declare: “[It is by a favor] of God ... that the holy koinonia appeared [on the earth]; by [that] he made the apostolic life known to men who desire to be images of the apostles before the Lord of all forever. The apostles in effect abandoned everything and with their whole heart followed Christ After that they deserved to be seated on the twelve thrones of glory and to [judge] the twelve [tribes] of Israel.”

The connection between the apostolic Church and the cenobitic life is more clearly, and above all more abundantly expressed by Theodore, to whom we perhaps owe the stereotyped formula, “apostolic life.” Certainly it is fitting for a disciple to set down in formulas and in theories the insights of his master. But to prove that in doing this Theodore did not fundamentally modify the position of St. Pachomius, it is enough to note with the historians the primordial role that the direct inspiration of Holy Scripture or, to speak as Gennadius, his “apostolic grace” held in the work of the founder. At the same time it should be remembered that, at the very period of this foundation, Eusebius spread the idea that in Egypt, Rome, and Antioch, the first Christians following the apostles had universally undertaken a life of holy community, similar to that of Jerusalem. The theme of the invitation of the apostles no longer suggested only sensational gestures of abandoning riches and fleeing the world, as it did in the time of St. Anthony and the first anchorites; rather it provided a complete program of the perfect life, a life in community.

Such then, in its beginning, was the apostolic ideal of the movement of the perfect life in the Church. It is of little importance that this movement did not have the historic continuity of passing to monasticism from the life of the early Church. It is not even important that the

summaries of the Acts schematized to excess and risked giving a deformed picture of the life of the primitive Church as a result of a somewhat too heavyhanded exegesis. What is essential to our eyes for the moment is the notion that this scriptural schema, such as it was understood by each century in turn, has directly influenced the history of the life of perfection and especially the cenobitic life. This partially justifies Cassian. It is true that he was mistaken and betrayed tradition according to the historical facts. But it was not precisely history which concerned him. His purpose was to affirm the spiritual filiation of the ideal which flourished in his times in the monasteries to that which reigned in the apostolic church of Jerusalem—as he understood it from the text of the Acts. From this point of view he was right.

The expressions then employed to indicate the connections of the monastic movement with the apostles, with the first monks, and with the great founders of the monastic rules are characteristic. The apostles are called “authors of the monastic life,” “institutors,” “initiators.” They were considered responsible for monasticism since they had given it its stamp of authentic and original Christian life. Moreover, they were considered the original models because they were the first to teach and to practice the formulas and the fundamental institutions of the monastic life. To St. Paul the Hermit, to St. Anthony, the title of “founders” is given, because they initiated the monastic life; yet they are called also “conservators,” because by the institution of the monasteries, they prevented this spirit, the life of the apostolic Church, from disappearing totally from the world. As for St. Benedict and St. Augustine, authors of the traditional rules, they are called “particular masters” of the monastic life.

3. THE APOSTOLIC OBSERVANCE OF THE MONK

Having established the original “apostolic” inspiration of the monastic movement, it is possible now to enter into details and to explore the attitudes, the practices, the institutions which—in the course of the long history of monasticism—the masters of the monastic life have discovered. in the apostolic example. Among these the monastic profession holds the first place. Their reading of the Gospel persuaded the monks that their profession, that is to say their monastic commitment, was prefigured by the commitment of the apostles. They specify even the instant at which this was done. It was in the course of the famous proclamation of St. Peter to the Lord. “Lo, we have left everything and followed you.” The common opinion of the monastic masters held that, at that instant, St. Peter made profession in the name of all the apostles. For this reason he went on to add: “What then shall we have?” It was a profession somewhat selfish but precise. Throughout the vast monastic literature it is customary to refer to this act as the “apostolic profession.” Thus St. Bernard did not hesitate to designate the monastic profession, or rather the pre-profession which was called “the renunciation of the world,” *apostolica professio*.

The monks considered that the apostles had also left them an example of a novitiate. Our Lord himself was the Master of novices. Here is a delightful passage from Peter of Celles: “To the religious who were the twelve apostles and the seventy-two disciples Jesus taught the discipline of the cloister; ... so great was their reverence toward their Master and so great their obedience and their submission, so great their fraternal affection, that never was a breath of discord raised among them, except perhaps when they had a discussion among them to know which held the greater rank, or when they became indignant on the subject of the two brothers who asked to sit the one at the right and the other at the left hand of Jesus. But all the human frailty contained in such fragile vessels not yet sufficiently baked in the fire of the Holy Spirit the hand of the potter reshaped in correcting them. . . . They never wished to be separated from him,

and when he announced to them that he was going into Judea, Thomas said to the disciples: ‘Let us go with him, that we also might die with him.’”

Like the life of the apostles, the monk’s life had for its purpose the perfect practice of the life of charity, which is the beginning and the end of the entire Christian life. This above all Jesus accomplished by the *vita apostolica*, namely, the-possibility of living more completely “at the very wellsprings.” On this point it is important to consider the words of St. Bernard: “It is your life which makes the apostolic life present to the Church today. What does that mean? The apostles left everything and, gathered together close to the Lord, lived under his tutelage. From the fountain of the Lord they were able to draw the waters of joy, and at the very wellspring itself they drank the water of life. How fortunate the eyes of those who have seen him! But you yourself is it not very much like that for you, even though you no longer live in his presence since he is bodily absent, and you do not hear words from his mouth but from those whom he has sent? Pass on this treasure of having believed on the hearing and the faith of those sent, just as the apostles believed at sight and on the words themselves. Persevere in this state, and just as the apostles kept to the royal road of justice in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in many laborings, fasts, vigils, and other observances, strive to equal them, not in their merits but in their practices.”

The apostles gave the monks the example of a life in the élan of the Spirit, completely animated by the “apostolic fervor” which they received on Pentecost and by which they passed on the secret of receiving and radiating grace. The text of the Acts of the Apostles, immediately after mentioning the communal life, adds, “and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33). This grace manifested itself even by miracles: “And many wonders and signs were done through the apostles” (Acts 2:43). In this way a true monk, who lives in community, possesses an extraordinary grace for radiating sanctity and thus of spreading the Church abroad. He can obtain the power of a miracle worker. The biographers of the great monks and of holy founders sought to emphasize the fact that, because of their great holiness, these men, like the apostles, had received the power of working miracles. Examples are to be found in Cassian’s account of the Abbot Abraham, Gennadius’ account of St. Pachomius, or St. Gregory’s account of St. Benedict.

The monks also drew from the apostles the example of communal prayer: “And day by day, attending the temple together” (Acts 2:46). Is this not the origin of their liturgical office? Following the apostles and the primitive community, the Church has formed the custom of common recitations at fixed hours which form its official prayer. The apostles clung to this as an essential part of their ministry. Their institution of the diaconate was, as the apostles themselves declared, to “devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 4:4). The monks took their cue from the apostles: regular prayer to fulfill the precept of the Lord, “that they ought always to pray” (Lk. 18:1; 1 Thes. 5:17). Here we find the origin of the major monastic prayer.

From another point of view it is evident that the monks drew from the apostolic life the fullness of a fraternal community by holding everything in common. With regard to the ordinary necessities of life they had a common table and a common shelter. Their spiritual life was formed around common prayer and the *lectio divina*. With regard to practical activity they engaged in bodily labor and the service of their neighbor. The common development of the moral life was rooted in fraternal correction according to the precepts of the Gospel. From this sprang a variety of institutions of which the chapter of faults is one of the most fruitful. Finally, the entire group was to be dominated by a fraternal spirit: “They wished to have but one heart and one spirit.” This unanimity, the earthly fulfillment of fraternal charity as sketched in the fine touch of St. John the Evangelist, plays the role of end or purpose in monastic life. Everything

else is a means. The developments of the notion of unanimity that can be read in the spiritual writings and in the legislation of the monks are a direct echo of the Acts of the Apostles.

Would it not be entirely fitting that the charity which dominates the interior life of a community of monks should break out to illumine the exterior world in a ministry of salvation? If there is truly an Eastern tradition of monasticism, of which St. Jerome occasionally made himself the defender in the West and which rejects missionary activity for the monks, there is another tradition of which St. John Chrysostom, the Syrian monks, and the Western monastery of Lerins are the most ancient witnesses. This other tradition resolutely turns the monks toward the evangelization of the pagans, for who is more suited to the preaching of salvation than “men animated by the burning zeal of the apostolic philosophy [by which is meant the life of total renunciation]. These words of John Chrysostom can be annotated by those of St. Nilus (d. 430), his disciple: “A holy life without preaching is more useful than preaching without a holy life. But when a holy life and preaching are joined together, then one achieves the perfect image of the apostolic philosophy!” Obviously the ministry of salvation is included in the imitation of the apostles; this element is so important today that it is the only one to be clearly expressed by the adjective “apostolic,” (from which the noun “apostolate” derives) in modern languages. It is certain, however, that such was not the case during the first twelve centuries of the Church. For St. John Chrysostom himself, as for all ancient tradition, the term “apostolic” is applied essentially to the discipline of life as it was observed by the apostles and by the faithful instructed by the apostles in the early Church, the models of the perfect Christian.

It is, then, from the descriptions of the church of Jerusalem that the monks drew the fundamental discipline of their common life, apostolic poverty. But apostolic poverty was not a total absence of the means of existence, for the community itself had possessions; rather it was a renunciation of personal ownership. This epitomized, in the eyes of the monks, the rule of the apostles. As late as the eleventh century the council of Nimes stated: “For the monks live according to the rule of the apostles and follow their footsteps in practicing the common life, according as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles: they had but one heart and one soul and they held all their goods in common.”

The monks also took from the apostolic model the ideal of renunciation and of penance. Like the apostles, who abandoned everything at the word of Jesus, a monk should abandon everything. (And, notes a monastic author, he should give all that he renounces to the poor, not to his parents; a fitting rebuke to those monastic vocations which had no other purpose than to prevent excessive division of the family heritage.) They took the notion of obedience from the obedience of the apostles (“Lo, we have left everything and followed you”); likewise penance and even fasting. This is somewhat surprising. Does not the monastic tradition on this point lack precise support in the life of the apostles? It is true that St. James, according to Hegesippus, fasted intensely, that St. Paul spoke of his numerous fastings, that Jesus himself had foreseen the time after his death as a time when the apostles would fast. To these texts the monks added a number of traditions more or less apocryphal. Specifically following Eusebius, who took Philo for the dragoman of the Therapeutae, the certitude became general that the primitive Church gave itself over to fasts so harsh that it was not unusual for early Christians to fast two or three days, even for five days out of six.

Is it necessary to add certain characteristics of dress? The bare feet prescribed for the apostles by Jesus in the words of St. Matthew were respected by certain monks at least in the Orient. Modest garb was demanded by St. Paul, the narrow-cut tunic in place of the flowing robes of the Romans, a likeness to the appearance of the faithful servant proposed by Jesus as a

model to the apostles; this servant, his loins girt, was always ready to be immediately of service to his master. Even in the least details the monks took pleasure in thinking that they observed the rule of the apostles and could legitimately give to their monastic clothing the name of “apostolic habit.”

Much more important was the manual work. St. Paul was not the only apostolic proof of this in the eyes of the monks. Were not many of the apostles fishermen, and did they not return to their nets after the Resurrection? It is easy to understand the point in the Rule of St. Benedict: “Then only are they truly monks, when they live by the work of their hands, as did our fathers and the apostles.” The Rule of St. Isidore also affirms this in declaring: “All the apostles gave themselves over to corporal work.”

Finally the monks felt that they participated, according to the response given by Jesus to the “profession” of the apostles, in the “apostolic hope.” And this hope was twofold. In one sense, it was the hope of building up the Church. Jesus had promised them, in the person of the apostles, that the apostolic life, practiced with generosity, would be a source of grace for the continual growth of the Church. They thus had the certitude that the observance of their rule was a contribution to the word which led to conversions, because it was itself a preaching by example.

And in regard to God their hope was for the hundredfold. Cassian brought his celebrated conversations with the fathers of the desert to an end with a chapter on the hundredfold promised on this earth to those who empty themselves in the search for perfection. Peter of Celles preferred to consider the promise as it is fulfilled in eternity: “What shall I say of those monks who were the apostles? I would compare them to the angelic spirits with this difference that they have served him, who made himself less than the angels, when he was still clothed in our mortal condition. Yet when crowned with glory and honor by his Father, raised above the Powers and the Principalities, he is seated upon the throne of his Majesty; the apostles are themselves seated on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel and perhaps even the angels, as St Paul says (1 Cor. 6:3). This hope lives also among those who dwell in the cloister. Since their observances are the same as those of the apostles, they have received from Jesus Christ the same promise as have the apostles.”

On this point, as on the others, the monks found in the imitation of the apostles a complete guide for their lives. It is understandable that, in the midst of the twelfth century, a Benedictine chronicler, after having recopied the significant verses of the Acts of the Apostles and joining one to the other, was able to write full of enthusiasm: “What element in the sum total of our monastic observances is lacking when compared to the way of life of which we have just written? In this account can be found the hearing of the Word of God, holy communion, prayer, the living of the communal life. Here also is found contempt for riches and the distribution of material things according to the needs of each, the assiduous application to the divine office as well as to almsgiving, the common table, spiritual joy and simplicity. We also express without ceasing the divine praises and thanksgiving; we also are a congregation one in spirit and tranquil, detached from domestic affairs. In a word, all that is discovered in the rules of the fathers, all that is practiced in the customs of the monasteries, the whole complex is as clear as day in the Acts of the Apostles.” It was not in vain that the monks pondered in their hearts and in their heads what the Sacred Books in no little detail allowed them to learn of the life of the apostles. The history of monasticism, with its remarkable renewals, is to a great extent the fruit of these meditations, a blessed fruit of the Gospel of the apostles. However, these meditations, taken up again, were apt to give rise to quite different results.

[pp. 54–58] The name “canon” appears in the sixth century, about 535. It became common in the seventh century during which *clerici canonici* were mentioned. At that time it seems that the word did not designate, as was later believed, clerics faithful to the canons (“canonicals”); rather it designated those clerics who were inscribed on the “canons” or on the list of the clerics of a particular church. These two senses of the term, however, are not mutually exclusive. In fact it seems that one could define canons, as they were in the beginning, in a way that includes both senses. Such a definition would read: Canons are clerics specially conformed to the laws of the Church and particularly bound to their bishop, around whom they are grouped.

At that time the personnel which gathered around the bishop and participated in the liturgy of the various oratories and of the cathedral was numerous and of considerable variety. There were groups of priests under the authority of the archpriests; there were deaconries, or the various charitable and administrative services of the diocese, with the archdeacons; the higher clergy with their *familia*, that is to say the clerics who assisted them; the *schola cantorum* with its *primicerius*; and then the clerics of the lower orders, lectors, exorcists, acolytes; the ascetics who lived about the church and contributed significantly to its liturgical life; the devout; the more or less professional pilgrims; the penitents; finally, the monks properly so called, who were under the control of the bishop. Some elements of this vast personnel, in which monks were mixed with clerics at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh centuries, gathered in community about the cathedrals for motives which were economic as well as liturgical.

About the middle of the eighth century Bishop Chrodegang of Metz accomplished a decisive step in the development of canons. From the hands of the Bishop all the *clerici canonici* received a rule ordered to the liturgical life. This famous Rule of Chrodegang of Metz, the first truly canonical rule, appeared between 751 and 755. The evolution which, under the increasing influence of the Rule of St. Benedict, made the common life among monks a general thing and gave to monasticism a precise form had its parallel among the clerics. The monastic and canonical rules achieved distinct forms, and the personnel of the various churches ceased to be mixed. Communities achieved specialization in one category or another.

Thus began the great Carolingian movement. Charlemagne is responsible for the unification of religious institutions in Europe by which, in large part, the Church today still lives. In 816, after the death of the Emperor, Louis the Pious gave concrete form to an idea of his father by publishing a new rule, the Regula Canoniorum of Aix-la-Chapelle. He sent around delegates to whom he granted considerable authority to see to it that this rule was observed. In the ninth century numerous chapters, both cathedral and collegiate, came into existence, staffed with true canons given to the ministry and to the divine office. The character of these canonical chapters carried the deep imprint of the rules of Metz and of Aix and indirectly of monasticism. The traditional observances of the cloister were becoming stabilized. Because of the diversity of canonical communities for which it legislated, the rule of Aix imposed neither the radical renunciation of private property nor the religious vow. However, it did serve to substantially promote the full common life and strict obedience.

Thus exemplary clerics appeared in France, in Lorraine, and in Germany. They lived in community, had a common dormitory, a common refectory like the monks, and within their monastery practiced a life of observance which in certain places, for example at Hildesheim, achieved a degree of austerity which does not fall far short of that of the strictest monks.

Read for example this description from the *Fundatio Ecclesiae Hildensemensis*. “In the convent (it was after 852 at Hildesheim) the clergy consecrated themselves to the service of God in a manner so religious in its severity and so severe in its religion that the canonical state attained to the rigor of the monastic state. It goes without saying that anyone was subject to harsh reprimand who, I do not say missed, but even arrived late at choir or the table or the dormitory, unless he was excused by some inevitable necessity or by some permission granted. Those inclined to evade the yoke of scholarly discipline found in the cloister tight reins to bind them. They were required to submit for the approval of the dean their daily work of writing or memorizing the Gospel with its homily or the chant or the psalms. Thus the discipline of the cloister was stricter in this regard than that of the school. The brethren did not concern themselves with fine clothes or the pleasures of the table to which today’s clergy are so devoted; they did decorate their flesh and drape themselves with fine fabrics, but rather clothed themselves in coarse and somber material; finally they were not less familiar with the garb of the cloister than with their traveling clothes. Thus they preferred a rustic simplicity to worldly delicacies; they curtailed their dreams of human successes and looked to nothing as of greater importance than the living of the cloistered life. Enclosed exteriorly as well as interiorly in cloistered severity, they ignored the world without having denied it.”

This last trait marked the precise characteristic of the canon. The Carolingian canon did not solemnly swear to abandon the world; he lived and functioned in the world. Because he was a cleric, he was able to exercise a ministry to the faithful. At the same time he lived in a monastery. Here was one of the great periods of collegiate and cathedral canons in the Germanic empire. It was still flourishing under Pope Urban II.

II. THE MENDICANTS

[pp. 97–102] We have seen that, among the monks from the end of the fourth century, those of Syria and of St. Chrysostom had a way of understanding the apostolic life that adapted it very well for missionary evangelization. For even better reason there was a similar interpretation of it by certain clerics and bishops. This interpretation was carried to extremes by certain fanatics whose one-sidedness eventually resulted in their separation from Catholic unity and orthodoxy. When monasticism came into being, certain “apostolics” or “apotactics,” catalogued later by St. Epiphanius, seemed to have conceived as the apostolic ideal a singularly disturbed preaching activity. Later the Messalians, the Paulicians, the Bogomils of Bulgaria or of Bosnia, and eventually in the twelfth century in the West the different kinds of evangelical preachers raised up by the heretic Lombards and Albigensians followed an analogous line. All the apostolics of this tradition, however, were not dissidents. Some itinerant preachers of France, from the beginning of the twelfth century to the Poor Catholics of the first decade of the thirteenth century, a series of good Catholics, manifested the possibility of living within the Church itself an apostolic ideal entirely different from that of the monks.

The imitation of the apostles of which Diego spoke at Montpellier refers expressly to this ideal, the imitation of the itinerant life which the Twelve lived under the guidance of the Lord. The description of it is found in the Gospel, among other places in the account of the mission which Jesus confided to the Seventy-two, truly a practical exercise of preaching. “[He] sent them on ahead of him, two by-two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come” (Lk. 10:1-16, cf. 9:1-6; Mt 10:5-16; Mk. 6:7-13), and gave them on this occasion the very concrete counsel from which it is possible to draw a complete program of life. These are the essential elements:

1. A personal mission, that is to say a vocation and a mandate. Each of the apostle-preachers heard the “come follow me.” Each had received a mandate: he was sent, *missus*. The point is very important; it is precisely the mission which the heretics did not possess.

2. A ministry, an *officium*, conferred by the mandate: the preaching of the Gospel. “The kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel (Mk. 1:15).”

3. At the same time a precise and exacting way of life: total poverty. It is no longer a question of divesting oneself of one’s own goods to live henceforth without personal property but from the goods of the community; poverty is to be absolute. There is to be no property at all, neither individual nor common: “Have neither gold nor silver nor money in your belts”; do not even carry bread with you; do not have either a bag or a wallet for your journey. For daily subsistence one must depend on good will, on daily charity; “have no care for tomorrow.” Nourishment depends upon the discretion of those one meets along the way and especially upon those to whom one preaches. It is necessary to accept what is offered; there are no forbidden foods. This is an important precision which departs from the practice of the monks in this matter. One should eat what one is offered and as it is offered, lest one give pain or embarrassment to the host. Nor should one pass from one host to another. Clothing also ought to be poor, limited to one tunic. Finally the feet should be bare; St. Mark, however, allows the use of sandals. Likewise, while Luke and Matthew say that the preacher should not have even a staff, St. Mark permits one. He is then a little less austere than the other two. Here is a slight scriptural problem which in times when inspiration was understood in a fashion too material gave occasion for disputes on the Gospel.

Such then is the first part of the picture of the apostolic life; it can be summed up in two words: mendicant poverty.

4. Another element is mobility; it is necessary to travel. What a difference from the life of the Cenacle! Do not wait for men to come, but go into the city and into the villages wherever the Lord ought to be. That is to say, into the entire universe. One must go without rest, go swiftly; “Do not greet anyone on the way” (a neat Eastern touch which graphically signifies the haste of the trip). But when a destination is reached a greeting is given. However this “peace” which one gives upon arriving, if by chance those to whom it is offered are not worthy of it, returns to its author: a little apostolic economy. Finally shake the dust from your feet if anyone does not receive you, that you may owe him nothing. Thus is created the spirituality of the road. *Vos estis hospites et advenae*, you are guests and pilgrims. You are not to be settlers. From this is drawn the spirituality of the *peregrinatio pro Christo*, of becoming an exile for Christ. It was that which in the seventh century set those doughty Irishmen on the road under the guidance of St. Colombanus and caused them to cover a good part of the West, renewing Western monasticism.

5. Finally the last element, which must not be neglected. In this traveling there is an affinity for the common life. It is not the solitude of St. Paul. Two-by-two should they go. Certainly the community is not large, but it is already sufficient to permit charity, as the Fathers of the Church who comment on this text observe, for it is sufficient that there be two in order that fraternal charity may be practiced. It is by design that manual labor is not added to these elements. It is not that one never encounters it among the apostolics who devoted themselves to evangelization. It was a tradition too unanimous in the whole

history of the movement of perfection. Canons regular of the *arctior consuetudo*, for example, had considered themselves obliged to work with their hands by the *ordo monasterii* and still more by the example of St. Paul. This was true at the turn of the thirteenth century of the Humiliati of Lombardy and of the first companions of St. Francis. However, other apostolic groups, such as the Vaudois and the Catharists, clearly rejected it: work, as the Scripture says, for “the food which endures to eternal life” (Jn. 6:27). It would be a crime, they thought, for one who was consecrated to the work of the Gospel to work with his hands lest he would give part of his resources to something other than spiritual work. So strong was the conviction of these evangelists on this point that it separated them from the worker-apostles by an irreparable division.

Such is the program of the apostolic-evangelical life, so different from the apostolic life of the Cenacle, which from 1206 Dominic adopted for his own. He lived it for nine years in Languedoc, then in Spain, in France, and in Italy. In 1214 he extended it to the group of preachers who little by little grouped themselves around him. Finally, in 1215, he decided to make it the formative idea of his Order. In this, an apparently insoluble problem is encountered: it even seemed somewhat like squaring the circle.

3. THE ITINERANT IDEAL STABILIZED IN AN ORDER

[pp. 102–113] Down through the history of the Church there had been numerous itinerant evangelical preachers similar to Dominic as far as his personal ministry is concerned. At the turn of the thirteenth century a certain Fulk of Neuilly in the environs of Paris offers a remarkable example.

A special difficulty of practicing this life in the Church had become particularly prominent during the half century before the time of Dominic. This evangelical way of life had fallen into bad repute because it had become almost the monopoly of clerics in revolt against the Church (e.g., Arnaud of Brescia, Henry the Monk of Lausanne), or of participants in schismatic movements such as that of the Vaudois, or even violent heretical and anti-Catholic movements such as the Catharists. The reaction of the Church had already become general and was concretized a few months after the foundation of the Preachers in Constitution 13 of the Lateran Council (1215). There is clear evidence that, in forbidding the establishment of new religious communities, or of untried ways of serving God, the Council was particularly concerned with the new mode of the apostolic preaching life.

But that was not the principal obstacle. What had, until the thirteenth century, always prevented the establishment in a religious society of the itinerant imitation of the apostles and had made every attempt at such an establishment for a century and a half run aground was something that seemed an irresolvable conflict. It appeared evident that the wandering initiative of the apostolic preacher was incompatible with community life. It seemed impossible to reconcile personal mendicancy with the life of an institutionalized, stable convent.

The problem consisted in this, that in wishing to devote oneself to constant preaching, in delivering oneself to the spirituality of the road, it would be necessary to plan, if one wished to form a permanent fraternal body, for a home base for the preachers. It would be necessary for the preachers to have a place of rest, a place where they could be provided for in sickness or old age, and especially a place for instruction, for reflection, for work. Dominic, less than anyone else, would be willing to neglect sacred study.

Furthermore, it would be necessary to form novices in virtue and learning; it would be necessary to provide them with the spirit of their state of life and to teach them to pray and to

work. How could this stability be provided without a convent, without an organic community? The apostolics that Dominic had constantly before his mind, the Vaudois especially, rejected this sort of thing. If one were to accept the idea of a community, a house, possessions, a stable installation, what would become of the spirit of day-to-day poverty? What would become of the complete abandonment to Providence day-by-day? What would become of the complete dependence on the charity of others in any situation? St. Francis, who had also been touched by the spirit of the itinerant apostolic life after his conversion, rejected the idea of such an established base throughout his entire life. He wished a movement in which nothing would be a source of restraint, in which no one would have any kind of possession. The first Franciscans were expected to rely on chance lodgings, in caves for example, and be prepared to leave them if anyone wished to reclaim them. To have nothing and to avoid in any way sinking roots, was this not the logic of the itinerant apostolic life?

But St. Dominic was a cleric. He had the spirit of stability. As an Augustinian canon he recognized that the life of the apostles did not include only mendicant wandering but also the life of the Cenacle, a way of life for which he had full appreciation. Why should one be sacrificed to the other. And indeed the apostolic preaching ideal had, as has already been seen, an affinity for the life of community. It was necessary to go two-by-two. Did this not open a way to a solution?

Moreover, the dissident apostolics themselves, the Catharists, relied upon the support of certain institutions. The wandering "Perfect" accepted hospitality in the communities of the deacons or of the ladies of their sect. The communities of female "Perfects," who preserved the right to possess, provided also bases for the preaching of the "Perfect." St. Dominic had himself tried from 1207 to support his mendicant preaching by a center of this kind at Prouille. There he had gathered some young women who, converted and abandoned by their Catharist families, did not know which way to turn. In this way the first of Dominic's convents was established. These women received or accepted donations, and they sheltered the Preachers between their trips.

By 1215 St. Dominic no longer remained there. At this time he established community life with his brothers. He received at Toulouse a house where he took up residence. This would be the Cenacle where his novices would live, where the students he took to the capitular master of theology (his name has come down to us, Alexander Stavensby) would study, and where the fathers would be able to rest between preaching assignments. In fact the charter of the foundation of the "House of Preaching" of Toulouse, as it was called, foresaw as residing in the house brethren occupied in various ways with preparation, with regaining their strength, with recovering from illness. In order to provide for their necessities, including the purchase of books, the bishop assigned to them part of the tithes of the diocese. At the same time he conferred upon them the mission of preaching everywhere in his diocese.

The brothers imitated, then, the apostles in the totality of their life. They imitated the apostles in the house, living in it as in a cenacle. They had a common fraternal life with liturgical prayer (for the apostle who goes out and who preaches is also the one who should render praise and intercede at mass and other public prayer), and with study and repose. Then they would imitate the apostles on the road in announcing the word and confiding themselves each day to Providence. James of Vitry, who would see the first Preachers at Bologna about 1222, would describe them as "canons-Preachers." He was quite exact. From 1215, even before Innocent III, to satisfy Constitution 13 of the Lateran Council, which required Dominic to explicitly inscribe his Order in the classical formulas of the canonical tradition, Dominic had joined the itinerant life of the mendicant apostle with the life of the cenacle of the canon regular. With that he seems

to have realized the synthesis of the ancient community apostolic ideal and of the new itinerant apostolic ideal.

Yet it is necessary to look closer. The two elements do not fuse easily; their opposition is of considerable proportions. Without raising either of the incidents which in 1217 would manifest the presence of a split, it is enough to note the very different character of the two types of poverty which the Preacher ought successively to practice. On the one hand personal property was renounced but the common goods of the community were available within the convent; on the other hand one lived the life of a beggar while on the road preaching. It is known that in 1215 Dominic had accepted from the bishop as the means of subsistence for his community a sixth part of the tithes of the diocese, that is to say, the part which the canons classically reserved to the poor. The brothers were treated as poor, and that which they received was the donation of the faithful to whom they addressed the word of God. Moreover, the bishop in the charter of foundation multiplied detailed regulations in order to give this regular gift the precarious aspect of an alms. However, the fact remained that this gift was a revenue, it was regular and a fairly dependable resource. What would become, then, of the spirituality of daily abandonment to Providence which at the same time the Vaudois (shortly before converted by St. Dominic)—the Poor Catholics—practiced under his eyes with a quite different splendor?

“We have renounced forever, ‘they said in their proposed way of life sanctioned by the pope in 1208-1212,’ and we have given to the poor whatever we possess according to the counsel of the Lord. And we have decided to be poor in such a way that we would have no kind of care for the morrow and we would accept of no one gold, silver, nor anything of that sort, except clothing and nourishment for each day.”

That is why Dominic chose another way. In 1220, after having tried it at Paris and at Bologna and having discussed it at Rome where the pope accepted it, he had “conventual mendicancy” adopted at the first general chapter of the Order. Every day two of the brethren left the convent to beg from door to door, and the convent lived on what was obtained in this way. Thus the convent itself lived in the same spirit as the preacher on the road. It waited each day for what Providence would choose to send it. There have come down to us from the beginnings of the Dominican Order accounts of occurrences growing out of conventual mendicancy. One, for example, was narrated without embellishment by the procurator himself at the process of Dominic’s canonization. One day when the convent had nothing to eat this distracted procurator went to tell Dominic that it was useless to ring the bell for the meal since there was nothing to put on the table. Dominic told him to gather the brethren together anyway. They went to the table; the blessing was given, and Dominic remained in prayer. Two young men appeared at the door of the refectory, entered and placed before each of the brethren a golden brown loaf of bread which was quite sufficient for their meal. It is the famous episode, the dinner brought by angels, that Fra Angelico so often painted.

There are also stories centering around the humble mendicancy of Dominic himself. One morning in Dugliolo, a little village of northern Italy, he was going from door to door seeking alms. A man gave him a whole loaf of bread. Dominic went down on his knees to receive it. At this time he was a man well known throughout the Church. He was a friend of Pope Honorius III, of Cardinal Ugolino, and of many other prelates. He had been sent on this mission by the pope for the renewal of the north of Italy, a mission as important in the eyes of the papacy as that in which he had but recently participated against the Albigensians. This religious founder, this great servant of God, went down on his knees because a peasant gave him an entire loaf of bread.

Such is the spirit of the legislation which in May, 1220, five years after its foundation, Dominic caused to be inscribed in the first constitutions of the Preachers in four simple words: *possessiones et redditus nullatenus recipiantur* (neither property nor revenues of any sort should be accepted). There is no question of manual labor. Dominic had settled that like the Albigensians. What then remained for their subsistence other than the precarious alms of the faithful? The mendicant orders had been founded. What this means is that orders of firmly-established communities now abandoned themselves, just as traveling preachers, to daily Providence. Dominic was indeed right to give to his brothers, to vivify their exercises and to inspire their attitudes, an exemplary image of the true evangelical preacher of which the constitutions of 1220 contain such a remarkable standard.

This passage from the first constitutions of the Dominican Order gives the flavor of this crucial instant at which the two parts of the life of the apostles met and were joined. It describes the moment when, renewed, instructed, armed with the energies and qualifications acquired in the religious community, the preacher went forth to fulfill the mission confided to him by the Church: "The Brothers who are capable of it when they go forth from the convent to preach should receive from the prior a companion for the road, a companion the prior considers suitable to their character and dignity. They then receive a blessing." Then they take to the road and behave everywhere as men who seek their own salvation and that of their neighbor. They live in the perfection of the religious spirit. As men of the Gospel they follow the footsteps of their Lord, speaking with God or of God between themselves or with their neighbor, avoiding familiarity with suspect company. In thus going forth to exercise the ministry of preaching or in traveling for any other reason they should not accept nor should they carry with them gold, silver, money, or gifts of any sort except that which is necessary for their nourishment, their clothing, and other objects of necessity and books. None of those who are deputed to the ministry of preaching or of study should receive the charge or administration of temporal affairs, that they may be able more freely to dispose themselves to fulfill well the spiritual ministry confided to them. At least they should have to occupy themselves with these necessities only when no one else is available for this purpose, since there is nothing wrong with assuming a temporary care for the necessities of a particular journey.

4. THE IMITATION OF THE APOSTLES, FORM OF THE APOSTOLIC ORDER

[pp. 113–118] The apparent simplicity of the texts as well as of the foundation ought not to conceal the enormous difficulty involved in achieving the synthesis of so many disparate elements drawn from so many, independent, anachronistic historical traditions. The prehistory of the apostolic orders as well as their later history suffices to make the gravity of the problem clear.

It is difficult to avoid at first glance the impression that the founder of the first mendicant order constituted something of a discordant amalgam, an *ens per accidens*, in superimposing, perhaps as part, of his plan for competing with the heretics with whom he was doing battle, the life of a mendicant preacher on that of a contemplative canon. The latter way of life was itself an amalgam of the clerical life and the monastic life. What is one to think, for example, when one reads in the little work of Stephen of Salagnac, which has already been cited, a panegyric of St. Dominic, glorifying him for having gathered the best of Benedict, of Augustine, and of the rule of the apostles and even adding luster to all of that?

This is especially true if one considers that Dominic, in order to surmount the difficulties which this situation presented, had to produce two laws which seemed to strike at the very

solidity of his institution itself. The first of these laws was the provision for dispensation which gave to the superior the power of freeing a religious, if he judged it necessary, to further his work of study or of the salvation of souls. The second was the declaration made after his death, but expressly willed by him, that the rule should not oblige under guilt of sin but only under the penalty of the penance.

It is easy to see that there would be continual conflict from the very beginning, varying according to circumstances both physical and psychological, of the often antithetical elements gathered together in the lives of mendicant religious. It is true that conflict was not inevitable, since it must be remembered that under certain aspects these elements had some affinity for and complemented one another.

But the true answers to these doubts about the profound essential unity of the type achieved in the thirteenth century by the mendicant orders, especially by the Order of Preachers, is to be found elsewhere. If one returns to the origin and to the different steps of the foundation of St. Dominic it is possible without too much difficulty to throw light on the cause, in the strict sense of the term, of this essential unity. The creative element in the psychology of the founder was ceaseless meditation on the evangelical theme of the imitation of the apostles. It was a tenacious will to more perfectly achieve the integrity of this ideal. Pope Gregory IX, when someone spoke to him of the canonization of his friend, Dominic, said: "In him I have known a man who realized in its fullness the rule of the apostles, and I do not doubt that in heaven he will find his association with them."

Yet even as there existed a subjective cause of unity in the inspiration of the founder, there was also an objective form of unity in the purpose which he envisaged. The apostles actually existed, and the diverse activities which the monks, the canons, and the mendicants in succession sought to imitate under the name of the apostolic rule, the Twelve actually synthesized in their personal lives. In meditating upon the Scripture and returning constantly to the words of Jesus to the apostles, the mendicant religious had the means of renewing without ceasing the inspiration which brought into unity each of the six fundamental elements of their way of life: fraternal unanimity (Acts 4:32), poverty carried to the extent of seeking only day to day needs (Mt. 10:9 f., 6:34), common and public prayer (Acts 2:46, 3:1, 6:4), an intense private prayer (Acts 1:14, 2:42), indefatigable journeying (Mk. 6:6-13), and the evangelical preaching of salvation (Mt. 10:7 f.).

There was no need to abstract nor to ponder for a long time. The great figures of the apostles, sketched at the beginning of these three chapters, were presented easily to their hearts as to their imaginations, recalling them by turn without any incompatibility to each of these elements. It was not a dead text which provided the friars with a synthesis of them all, but it was an example that had been lived, indeed that is living still, the presence of transcendent leaders, whose composite images blend together in that of Jesus Christ the Master, the Savior "whose footsteps they followed as evangelical men."

Thus the only suitable denomination, even the only adequate definition of the orders of mendicant preachers, seems to be that of "apostolic orders." This expression not only has the advantage of manifesting the apostolic principle which sustained them, which had gathered together in the course of centuries the elements of their institution, and especially which provided the essential point of their unity as well as of their vital source in Holy Scripture, namely, the apostolic life.

At the end of this essay it would not have been without value to recall some of the stories from primitive Dominican sources which illustrate the traits of the evangelism of the Preachers

which flowed from their imitation of the apostles. It is not only in the simple scenes of abandonment to Providence, or of mendicancy, of charity and unanimity in the common life among the brothers, of generosity in the preaching of the Kingdom and of the peace of God, but also in the accounts of vocation, of profession, or of their last moments upon earth that the reader at each depth can perceive as a fresh and pure note the resonance of the Gospel. The life of the brethren had point and unity only in the imitation of the apostles. And that life in return throws light upon the Gospel.

As this essay comes to its end it seems that, in a special way, it has been possible to measure the fruitfulness of an evangelical theme, the theme of the imitation of the apostles down through the history of the Church. Entire sections of the history of the movement of perfection and of the history of the clergy in the Church have in some instances been brought out of the shadow as one traces this long line of light. Before such a historical study it would have been difficult to imagine all the richness of four verses of the Acts of the Apostles and a few from the Gospel on the basis of simply dissecting them philologically, even by meditating upon them. The history of the Church is the most vivid and the richest commentary that one is able to provide on the Gospel. The reality, especially when it is that of an immense cohort of authentic Christians trying to live or to relive the word of God with all generosity, exceeds the imagination of commentators however learned or believing they may be.

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

In the conclusion of the Particular Directory we are reminded that we are not bound to the Rule under pain of sin. We are also told of how a change to the Rule or Directory is to be made, something that reminds us that we are part of a larger, worldwide order.

The Particular Directory of the Western Dominican Province

IX. Conclusion

A. We embrace these obligations not as slaves under the law but as free persons under grace; no transgression of The Rule or of the Particular Directory constitutes a moral fault or sin.

B. Changes in any section of this Particular Directory must be approved by a majority of Chapters, the Provincial Council, and the Prior Provincial.

C. Petitions for changes in The Rule must have the approval of a majority of Chapters and of the Provincial Council, the Provincial Promoter and the Prior Provincial and then be submitted to the Promoter-General for his approval and that of the Master of the Order.

D. This edition of the Particular Directory replaces all that have gone before it, it abrogates any custom in any Chapter of the Province that does not conform to it.

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPTER
OF THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER
FORMATION PROGRAM
YEAR B, UNIT VII**

I. ELEMENTS OF DOMINICAN LIFE: THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

Two excerpts from the works of St. Thomas Aquinas follow. In the first he shows us how the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience are related to the end of our spiritual life, the perfect love of God. In doing so, he explains what each of these counsels is, gives reasons for embracing them, and even gives practical suggestions of how to follow them. St. Dominic embraced these counsels in the fullest form, by vowing them, as every religious does. We are called to embrace these in imitation of St. Dominic, even though we do not make vows. We must live these counsels as our state of life (e.g., as spouse and parent, as lay person, etc.) allows,²³⁰ and the practical advice St. Thomas gives is relevant for us too. The second excerpt discusses how the evangelical counsels are related to the ten commandments. We must remember that the counsels are not obligatory as the commandments are, so in a sense we go beyond the minimum (the minimal observance of the commandments) when we embrace the counsels. Nevertheless, the counsels find their perfection in the commandments, namely the perfect observance of the commandments.

*On the Perfection of the Spiritual Life*²³¹

Because certain persons not acquainted with perfection have presumed to speak nonsense about the state of perfection, it is our intention to treat of perfection and to discuss the following points: What does it mean to be perfect? Which state is a state of perfection?²³² Who can be said to be in a state of perfection? What type of work may be performed by those who adopt a state of perfection?

Chapter I. The Perfection of the Spiritual Life Consists Absolutely in Charity

²³⁰ St. Thomas says, “Now if a man observe these absolutely, this is in accordance with the counsels as absolutely proposed [i.e., the way a religious vows the counsels]. But if a man observe any one of them in a particular case, this is taking that counsel in a restricted sense, namely, as applying to that particular case. For instance, when anyone gives an alms to a poor man, not being bound so to do, he follows the counsels in that particular case. In like manner, when a man for some fixed time refrains from carnal pleasures that he may give himself to prayer, he follows the counsel for that particular time. And again, when a man follows not his will as to some deed which he might do lawfully, he follows the counsel in that particular case: for instance, if he do good to his enemies when he is not bound to, or if he forgive an injury of which he might justly seek to be avenged” *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 108, a. 4.

²³¹ Found in *An Aquinas Reader: Selections from the Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*,” edited by Mary T. Clark, pp. 499–519.

²³² This and the following questions are not treated in the chapters we are reading.

Let us begin by recognizing that there are a number of ways in which we can speak of a thing's being perfect. For our purpose we shall speak of something being perfect either absolutely or in some respect. A thing is said to be perfect absolutely when it has acquired all those attributes that its nature implies. But when it has merely developed some attribute not necessarily implied in its nature, it is said to be perfect in some respect. For example, an animal is absolutely perfect as animal, when it is not missing anything required for the fullness of animal life; say, when it has the full number and proper arrangement of its limbs, organs, and parts, when it possesses its appropriate size and all that is required for the perfect functioning of animal life. But an animal is said to be in some respect perfect when it is outstanding in something outside its nature as animal; say, its whiteness or odor or something of that sort.

In like manner, in the spiritual life a man is said to be absolutely perfect when he is perfect in that in which the spiritual life principally consists; but he is perfect in some respect in the spiritual life when he is perfect in something other than the essential constituent of the spiritual life; say, knowledge of mathematics.

Now, the spiritual life consists principally in charity in such wise that if charity be missing, a man is considered to be spiritually *nothing*, as St. Paul says: "If I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith so as to remove mountains, yet do not have charity, I am nothing" (I Co. 13: 2). The blessed Apostle John, too, declares that the spiritual life consists in charity, for he writes: "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death" (I Jn. 3: 14). Wherefore, only a person perfect in charity is absolutely perfect in the spiritual life.

Anyone perfect in some quality other than charity is said to be in some respect perfect. This is clear from the words of sacred Scripture. Thus St. Paul, writing to the Colossians, attributes perfection principally to charity, for he mentions a number of virtues: mercy, kindness, humility, and so on, but then adds: "Above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection" (Col. 3: 14). According to this doctrine, when someone is called perfect for having achieved intellectual greatness, it is not in such accomplishments that perfection lies. When St. Paul exhorts us to "be children in malice, but in sense be perfect" (I Co. 14: 20) and again in the same epistle, "be perfect in the same sense and in the same knowledge," he has not forgotten that earlier he had said that even though a person have perfect knowledge, if it be without charity, he is nothing. In the light of this doctrine, one should be careful to detect the meaning of the word "perfect" whenever a person is said to be perfect. Thus a person can be perfect "according to patience, which has a perfect work," as St. James says, or according to some other virtue. Indeed, one can be perfect in evil, as when someone is called a perfect thief or a perfect bandit. Even the Scriptures speak in this way, for it is written in Isaias (32: 6): "The heart of the fool will work iniquity to make his hypocrisy perfect."

Chapter II. Perfection Consists Both in the Love of God and in the Love of Neighbor

Since perfection consists chiefly in charity, it is easy to see in what the perfection of the spiritual life consists. For there are two precepts of charity: one pertains to loving God, the other to loving our neighbor. These two precepts are mutually related; for what must be principally loved through charity is God, the supreme good and source of man's happiness. After God we are obliged by charity to love our neighbor, to whom we are bound by special social ties due to our common vocation to happiness. What charity obliges us to love in our neighbor is this: that

together we may attain to happiness. Our Lord shows that this is the sequence of the precepts when he says (Mt. 22: 37-39): “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” The perfection of the spiritual life, therefore, consists first and principally in loving God. For this reason the Lord in speaking to Abraham says (Gen. 17: 1): “I am Almighty God: *walk* before me and be perfect.” One walks before God not with steps taken by the feet but by the desires of the mind. But secondarily the perfection of the spiritual life consists in loving one’s neighbor. Hence after Our Lord had said: “Love your enemies” and had added a number of examples regarding love of neighbor, he concluded (Mt. 5: 48): “Be ye therefore perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Chapter III. The Love of God as It Exists in God

In regard both to the love of God and to the love of neighbor, various degrees of perfection are found. The first and highest degree of loving God is found in God alone. We can understand why this should be so if we remember that love can be considered from the standpoint of the beloved and from the standpoint of the lover. I mean that the beloved should be loved with as much love as it is worthy and that the lover should love according to the maximum of which he is capable. Now, since a thing is lovable to the extent that it is good, and since the goodness of God is infinite, he is infinitely lovable. However, no creature is capable of loving God infinitely, because an infinite act is impossible to a finite power. Consequently, only God, whose power to love matches his goodness, can love himself perfectly according to the first degree of perfection.

Chapter IV. The Love of God as It Exists in the Blessed

As far as the rational creature is concerned, the only way of perfectly loving God that is open to him is from the standpoint of the one loving, i.e., to love God according to the maximum of his capacity. This is clearly expressed in the very precept of divine love. For it is said in Deuteronomy: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy *whole* heart and with thy *whole* soul and with thy *whole* strength” (Dt. 6: 15). To this the Gospel according to St. Luke adds: “and with thy whole mind” (Lk. 10: 27). This commandment is such that “heart” refers to the intention, “mind” refers to knowledge, “soul” refers to the affections and desires and “strength” refers to external performance, for all these powers and actions must be employed in loving God. But bear in mind that this commandment can be fulfilled in two ways. For since “whole” and “perfect” apply only to things that have nothing missing, God will be loved with one’s whole heart and soul and strength and mind as long as nothing in these powers ever misses being actually converted to God. This degree of love is found in the blessed and is not expected of those who are struggling heavenward. That is why St. Paul writes: “Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend” (Ph. 3: 12). These are the words of one expecting perfection when he shall have apprehended, i.e., when he shall have obtained the palm of beatitude. Since that beatitude consists in the enjoyment of God, both the intellect and the will of the rational creature will be continuously and actually always centered upon God. Indeed, it will not be an interrupted series of acts but entirely

continuous. Then the rational creature will cleave to God as to its ultimate end, the supreme truth. And since all that one does is directed to the ultimate end through one's intention and all one's acts are disposed in accordance with the ultimate end, it will come to pass that when he is in the state of eternal beatitude, the rational creature will be loving God with his whole heart as long as his intention directs every thought and every love and every desire and every action to God. He will be loving God with his whole mind, as long as his mind is always actually sunk in God by seeing him always and all else in him and by judging all things according to his truth. He will be loving God with his whole soul, as long as all his affections are borne toward loving God *continuously* and loving all else for his sake. He will be loving God with all his strength or with all his powers, as long as the motive behind all his outward actions will be the love of God. This is the second way in which the love of God is possible, and it is peculiar to the blessed.

Chapter V. The Degree of Perfection to Which All in This Life are Obligated in Order to Be Saved

In a lesser degree we love God with our whole heart and mind and soul and strength if there is nothing in our love that is not either actually or habitually referred to God. Such perfection is laid upon us by God's commandment and can be described in the following way.

First, a man must refer all to God as to his end, as the Apostle says: "Whether you eat or drink or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Co. 10: 31). One fulfills this command when he directs his life to the service of God in such a way that everything he does is virtually ordained to God, excepting, of course, what of its very nature turns one away from God, such as sin. Thus does a man love God with his whole heart.

Second, a man must bow down his intellect to God by believing what has been divinely revealed: "bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ" (2 Co. 10: 5). Thus does a man love God with his whole mind in this life.

Third, one must love God in such a way that whatever he loves, he loves in God and that he relates all his desires and affections to God. St. Paul describes it thus: "For whether we be transported in mind, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for you. For the charity of God presseth us" (2 Co. 5: 13). Thus does one love God with his whole soul

Fourth, one must love God in such a way that all his outward actions, words, and works be tempered with the love of God. St. Paul speaks of this: "Let all that you do be done in charity" (I Co. 16: 14). Thus is God loved with one's whole strength.

This, therefore, is the third kind of perfect love of God, and to it every man is obligated by a necessity of precept. The second kind is not possible to anyone in this life, unless he be both a viator and a comprehensor,²³³ as was Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Chapter VI. The Perfection of Divine Love That Falls under Counsel

After St. Paul had written: "Not as though I had already attained or were already perfect," he added: "but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend," and finally: "Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect be thus minded." From these words it is plain that even though the

²³³ "Viator" means wayfarer and refers to someone working his way toward heaven in this life. "Comprehensor" refers to those who already enjoy the beatific vision, which is the essence of being in heaven.

perfection of the blessed is not possible to us in this life, yet we ought to strive after a likeness of that perfection as far as possible. It is in this that the *perfection* of the wayfarer's life lies, and to it we are invited by the counsels. For it is plain that the human heart will tend more intensively toward one object the more it turns away from the many other things it can love. Consequently, man's spirit will be borne more perfectly toward loving God to the extent that his affections are tamed from the love of temporal things. For this reason St. Augustine declares that the hope of obtaining or of retaining temporal things is the poison of charity; whereas, the increase of charity depends on lessening cupidity, and the perfection of charity will consist in no cupidity. Therefore, all the counsels, by which we are invited to perfection, aim at the one objective of turning the spirit of a man from attraction to temporal things, so that his mind may the more freely tend to God by contemplating him, by loving him, and by fulfilling his will.

Chapter VII. The First Road to Perfection Consists in Renouncing Temporal Goods

The first temporal goods that suggest themselves for renunciation are the external goods called riches. Our Lord counsels this when he says: "If thou wouldst be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come follow me" (Mt. 19: 21).

The usefulness of this counsel will now be shown. First, we shall appeal to the evidence of the fact. For when the young man who had asked about the way of perfection heard this, he went away sad. The reason for this sadness is given by St. Jerome. He says that this youth had great possessions, i.e., thorns and thistles, which choked the flower of Our Lord's teaching. St. Chrysostom, explaining this interview between the rich young man and Our Lord, declares that those who have little and those who have much are *slowed up* in different ways because the possession of riches kindles a stronger flame and engenders a more violent type of covetousness. Moreover, St. Augustine, in an epistle to Paulinus, writes that when earthly things are loved overmuch, possessions already acquired create stronger fetters than those that are merely desired, for what caused that youth to go away sad if it was not that he had great possessions? For it is one thing not to covet what one does not yet have and another thing to lay aside what is already in one's treasure; the former are forsaken as something foreign, the latter are removed as friendly members.

Second, the usefulness of the counsel to abandon riches is manifested by the words of Our Lord that it is with difficulty that a rich man enters the kingdom of heaven. The reason, says St. Jerome, is that riches already in one's possession are difficult to despise. Our Lord did not say that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, but that it is *difficult*. To say it is difficult does not imply that it is impossible but that it is rare. But as St. Chrysostom comments, Our Lord almost goes so far as to say that it is impossible when he declares that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. From these words St. Augustine tells us the disciples took Our Lord to mean that *all those who, covet riches* are included in the term "rich man." Otherwise, knowing how few rich men there are in comparison with the great number of the poor, would they have asked: "Who then can be saved?"

From these two declarations of Our Lord it is clearly shown that those who possess riches have difficulty in entering the kingdom of heaven because, as Our Lord says elsewhere, "the solicitude of this world and the deception of riches choke the word of God and prevent it from

bearing fruit.” Indeed, for those who love riches inordinately, it is less likely for them to enter the kingdom of heaven than it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. The latter is impossible because it is contrary to nature; the former is impossible because it is contrary to divine justice, which is more powerful than all nature. From all this can be gathered the reason for Our Lord’s counsel. For counsels deal with matters that are of greater utility, as St. Paul says: “And herein I give my advice: for this is more useful to you” (2 Co. 8: 10). To gain eternal life it is more useful to spurn riches than to possess them, because the rich have difficulty in entering the kingdom of heaven due to the fact that it is difficult not to be held fast by the love of riches, and it is that which makes it impossible to enter the kingdom of heaven. Consequently, it was with an eye to our advantage that Our Lord counseled it as being more useful that riches be abandoned.

It can be objected that Matthew, Bartholomew, and Zaccheus all had riches, and yet they entered the kingdom of heaven. But St. Jerome answers that “they had ceased being rich at the time they entered.” Nevertheless, it can still be observed that since Abraham had never ceased being rich and even died amidst plenty, it would seem that according to Our Lord’s teaching Abraham was not perfect even though God had said to him: “Be perfect” (Gn. 17: 1). This question could not be settled if the perfection of the Christian life consisted in the very putting aside of riches. If it did, then anyone who possessed riches could not be perfect. But if the words of Our Lord are studied closely, he does not make perfection consist in the putting aside of riches, but he shows that such an act is a sure *way* to perfection, as his very words testify: “If thou wouldst be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor and *follow Me*.” It is in the following of Christ that perfection consists, wherefore the putting aside of riches is a *way* to perfection. Hence St. Jerome, preaching on a passage from St. Matthew, says: Because it is not enough merely to abandon riches St. Peter adds what is perfect; namely, “and we have followed thee.” Origen, too, has this to say: “If thou wouldst be perfect . . .” does not mean that at the time a person gives all his goods to the poor he becomes completely perfect; rather, from that time his concentration on God will lead him to all virtue. It can happen, therefore, that a rich man be perfect if his spirit is not trapped by riches but is totally joined to God. This was indicated in God’s word to Abraham: “Walk before me and be perfect.” By these words he showed that his perfection would consist in walking before God, i.e., in loving God to the extent of despising himself and all he loved or owned. He showed this by his willingness to immolate his son, for which God said to him: “Because thou hast done this thing and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake, I will bless thee” (Gn. 22: 16).

This should not lead anyone to suppose that the counsel of Our Lord about riches is useless, seeing that Abraham became perfect even though he was wealthy. For Our Lord did not give this counsel because the rich could not become perfect or could not enter the kingdom of heaven but because they *could not do so without difficulty*. Let us rather admire the (greatness) of Abraham’s virtue who, in spite of his riches, kept his spirit detached from them, just as Samson’s power was great in slaying his enemies with no weapon other than the jawbone of an ass. Certainly Samson’s example does not make useless the advice given to soldiers that in battle they should have arms to conquer their enemies. Neither does the example of Abraham arriving at perfection in spite of riches make useless Our Lord’s advice that those who desire perfection should abandon riches.

Such marvels are not to be carried too far, because the weak are more capable of admiring and praising them than of imitating them. Thus it is said in Ecclesiasticus 31: 8: “Blessed is the rich man that is found without blemish; and that hath not gone after gold nor put

his trust in money nor in treasures.” Herein is described a rich man of great virtue with perfect charity fixed upon God. He has contracted no stain of sin from a love of riches; his desires have not wandered after gold, nor has he put such trust in riches as to account himself better than others. Hence, St. Paul says to Timothy: “Charge the rich of this world not to be highminded nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches” (1 Tm. 6: 17). But as we advance up the scale of virtue, the higher we go the fewer is the number of the rich possessing such virtue. Wherefore it is said: “Who is he and we will praise him? For he hath done wonderful things in his life.” It is a real wonder not to sink one’s heart in the riches one possesses, and anyone who is such is without doubt proved to be perfect. Wherefore we read further: “Who hath been tried therein,” i.e., in this, that he has riches but no sin, “and has been found perfect,” as if to say, it is something rare, “and he shall have glory everlasting.” This agrees with the words of Our Lord that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

This therefore is the first way of arriving at perfection: to abandon riches and embrace poverty in order to follow Christ.

Chapter VIII. Of the Second Way of Perfection, Which Is to Give Up Bodily Pleasures and Marriage

To point out the second way of perfection let us begin with a statement of St. Augustine: “The less we love our own good, the more apt we are to cling to God.” Therefore, according to the value of the goods that a man sacrifices for the love of God we can judge the value of what leads to perfect union with God. For the first things we give up are those that are less intimate to us; hence the first things we give up are external goods, since they are separate from our nature. After that it occurs to us to give what is very close to us and to our nature. Hence Our Lord says: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk. 14: 26).

Now, one naturally wonders how we, who are commanded even to love our enemies, can now be told that we must hate our parents and relatives. But if we ponder the force of these commandments we can wisely observe both; for when anyone who is bent upon things of the flesh suggests to us what is base, we are said to love him as it were through hatred if we pay no attention to him. Similarly we must show our neighbors a holy hatred by loving them for what they are and hating whatever there is in them that blocks our way to God. For whoever is zealous for eternal things ought to enter into the cause of God by existing outside father and mother and wife and children and relatives and outside even oneself. Indeed, God is known more truly the more no one else gets in the way. For it is evident that many carnal affections distract the attention of the mind and dull its acuity. Among all human affections the human spirit is especially held fast by married love, so much so that our first parent said: “A man shall leave father and mother and cling to his wife” (Gn. 2: 24). Consequently the marriage bond is to be avoided at all costs by those tending to perfection, because this bond entangles a person in worldly cares. This is the very reason that St. Paul assigns for giving the counsel to observe continence: “He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world” (I Co. 32-33). Hence in order that a man may more freely give himself to God and adhere to him more perfectly, the second way of perfection is the perpetual observance of chastity.

Continence is in a special way adapted to obtaining perfection. For man's spirit is prevented from freely giving himself to God not only by the love of external goods but much more by the intensity of the passions. And of all the passions the most absorbing is the concupiscence of the flesh and sexual indulgence. Of this St. Augustine says: "I consider that there is nothing more calculated to cast a man's spirit down from the citadel of virtue than the blandishments of a woman and that bodily union without which a wife cannot be had, and therefore the way of continence is especially necessary to attain perfection." This way the Apostle counsels when he says: "Now, concerning virginity I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful" (1 Co. 7: 25). The usefulness of this way is shown in the Gospel according to St. Matthew. There it is recorded that when the disciples said to Christ, "If the case of a man with a wife be so, it is not expedient to marry," he answered: "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given" (Mt. 19: 10-11). This answer shows how difficult this way is. Indeed, when we consider that the ordinary virtue of men cannot persevere on this way and that it cannot be reached without a gift of God, it is no wonder that the wise man says: "I knew that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was" (Wis. 8: 21). This agrees with the words of St. Paul: "I would that all men were even as myself (i.e., in observing continence) but everyone has his own gift from God; one after this manner and another after that" (1 Co. 7: 7). But lest it be supposed that it is a gift of God that requires no effort on man's part, Our Lord hastens to exhort us to make this effort, first by an example, when he says: "There are eunuchs who have made themselves such," not by mutilation but by forestalling evil thoughts; second, by suggesting the reward: "For the kingdom of heaven." Therefore it is written in the Book of Wisdom: "The chaste generation triumpheth crowned forever, winning the reward of undefiled conflicts" (Wis. 4: 2). Third, Our Lord actually extends an invitation: "He that can take, let him take." This, says St. Jerome, is the voice of the Lord exhorting and encouraging his soldier to struggle for the reward of chastity, as though saying: "He who can fight, let him fight and overcome and be victorious."

If anyone alleges against this teaching, the example of Abraham, who was perfect, or of other just patriarchs, who did not abstain from marriage, let him hear an answer from St. Augustine. In his book, *De Bono Conjugali*, he says: "Continence is not a virtue of the body but of the soul. Virtues of the soul sometimes reveal themselves in external actions; sometimes they remain hidden in the soul. Hence just as the merit of patience was not less in John, who did not suffer, than in Peter, who did, so the merit of continence in Abraham, who begot children, was not unequal to that of John, who never married. According to the times in which they lived, both the celibacy of John and the marriage of Abraham served the purposes of Christ. Therefore, let him who is faithful in his continence say: 'I am not in the law better than Abraham; although the charity of the chaste is better than the chastity of the wed, of the two Abraham kept one in use and the other in reserve. For he lived chastely as a married man, and he could have lived chastely without marriage, but the time was not fitting. But it is easier for me not to make use of marriage, which Abraham made use of, than to make such use of it as Abraham did; and, therefore, I am better than those who through continence cannot do what I can, but I am not better than those who on account of the age in which they lived did not do what I do. For what I now do they would have done better if their times called for it.'" This answer of St. Augustine harmonized with what was said above about observing poverty. Abraham possessed such a degree of perfection that neither great possessions nor the use of marriage shook his mind from perfect love of God. But if anyone lacking this strength of mind attempted to arrive at perfection

saddled both with riches and with marriage, he would be guilty both of a presumptuous error and of making light of Our Lord's counsels.

Chapter IX. Helps to Preserving Chastity

To enter the way of continence is so arduous that Our Lord said that not all take this word but that it is obtained by the gift of God. Accordingly, it behooves anyone who desires to enter this way to avoid whatever can impede a successful journey. Immediately three obstacles to continence appear: one from the body, a second from the soul, and a third from the persons and things outside a person.

St Paul speaks of the obstacles that arise from the body when he says: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit" (Ga. 5: 17). And he lists the works of the flesh as fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, and things of this kind. This lust of the flesh is the law of which he says: "I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind" (Rm. 7: 23). The more the flesh is indulged by excess of food and by the softness of pleasures, the more this lust grows. Wherefore St. Jerome says: "The stomach that is overheated with wine quickly belches forth lust." Likewise in the Book of Proverbs we read: "A luxurious thing is wine" (Pr. 20: 1). And in the Book of Job it is said of Behemoth (through whom the devil is signified) that "he sleepeth under the shadow in the covert of the reed and in the moist places" (Jb. 40: 16). St. Gregory explains that the moist places are lustful acts. For the feet do not slip when they are planted on the dry earth, but on an oily surface they can scarcely stay put. Hence a man who cannot stand erect in righteousness is making his journey through life in moist places.

Consequently those who would enter the way of continence must chastise their flesh by abstinence from pleasures and exercise themselves by fasts and vigils and things of this sort. St. Paul gives us an example of this: "Everyone that strives for the mastery refrains himself from all things," and then adds: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection; lest perhaps when I have preached to others I myself should become a castaway" (1 Co. 9: 25, 27). In this matter St. Paul's words matched his deeds, for he wrote to the Romans: "not in rioting and in drunkenness" and added: "make no provision for the flesh in its concupiscences" (Rrn. 13: 13, 14). Well does he say "concupiscences" and not "necessities," because provision must be made for the necessities of the flesh. For that reason he writes to the Ephesians: "No man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it" (Ep. 5: 29).

The resolution to be continent runs into obstacles placed by the soul when one lingers upon impure thoughts. Hence God, speaking through the prophet, commands us: "Take away the evil of your devisings from my eyes" (Is. 1: 16). For evil devisings frequently lead to evil actions, as Micheas says: "Woe to you that devise that which is unprofitable and work evil in your beds" (Mi. 2: 1).

In the realm of evil thoughts none induces to sin as much as do thoughts that concern the pleasure of the flesh. This was known also to the philosophers, who gave two good reasons explaining the fact. The first reason is that since such pleasure is most natural to man and grows up with him from childhood, it is easy to desire it when the thought of it is in the mind. Hence Augustine says that it is not easy to think about pleasure without desiring it. The second reason is that pleasures in the concrete have more power to attract than they do when they are present in abstract speculation. For it is plain that through sustained thought we are apt to get down to particulars, so that prolonged cogitation of certain matters is apt to beget a strong desire for them.

For this reason St. Paul says to the Corinthians: “Fly from fornication” (I Co. 6: 18) because as a gloss comments: “With respect to other vices we can expect to be engaged in battle but fly from this, lest it get near, for this is the only way to overcome this evil.”

A number of remedies are effective against this obstacle. The first and chief remedy is to keep the mind occupied with prayer and the contemplation of divine things. Wherefore St. Paul says: “Be not drunk with wine wherein is luxury; but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles”—which seems to pertain to contemplation—“singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord”—which seems to refer to prayer (Ep. 5:18-20). In like vein Our Lord, speaking through the prophet, says: “For my praise I will bridle thee, lest thou shouldst perish” (Is. 48: 9). Praising God is a special bridle that keeps the soul from the distraction of sin.

The second remedy against dangers that arise from the soul is the study of the Scriptures, as St. Jerome wrote to the monk, Rusticus: “Love to study the Scriptures and you will not love the vices of the flesh.” Similarly, St. Paul has said to Timothy: “Be thou an example to the faithful in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity,” immediately adding, “till I come, attend to reading” (1 Tm. 4: 12-13).

The third remedy is to keep the soul occupied with any type of wholesome thought; hence, St. Chrysostom, explaining a certain passage of St. Matthew’s gospel, says that mutilation does not suppress temptations and bring peace, as does the bridling of one’s thoughts. This explains why St. Paul tells the Philippians: “For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if thee be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things” (Ph. 4: 8).

The fourth remedy is to avoid idleness, even if that involves bodily work, for it is written: “Idleness has been the teacher of much evil” (Eccles. 33: 29). Indeed, because idleness is an incentive to carnal vices, Ezechiel writes: “Behold this was the iniquity of Sodom, thy sister: pride, fullness of bread, and abundance and her idleness” (Ezech. 16; 49). Accordingly, St. Jerome writes to Rusticus: “Do some kind of work so that the devil will always find you occupied.”

The fifth remedy is against the concupiscence of the flesh, and it consists in enduring disturbances of the mind. In the Epistle to Rusticus, St. Jerome remounts an incident that took place in a certain monastery where, lived a youth who in spite of continual abstinence and enormous bodily toil could not extinguish the flame of concupiscence. But the abbot of the monastery helped him out of his danger by the following ruse. He ordered one of the more serious members of the community to hound this youth with insults and affronts, and after starting a quarrel, to be first to complain to the abbot; even the witnesses who were summoned took sides against the youth. Only the abbot opposed them, lest the youth be overcome with excessive sadness. After a year of this treatment the youth was asked about his previous troublesome thoughts. He replied: “Father, the community hardly leaves me a moment of peace; how can I be troubled with such thoughts?”

On the part of external things, the greatest temptations against chastity arise from gazing upon and frequent conversations with the opposite sex. Wherefore it is written in the Book of Ecclesiasticus: “Look not upon a woman that hath a mind for many, lest thou fall into her snares. Use not much the company of her that is a dancer and hearken not to her. . . . lest her beauty be a stumbling block to thee” (Ecclus. 9: 3-5). Again it is commanded: “Behold not everybody’s beauty; and tarry not among women. For from garments cometh a moth, and from a woman the iniquity of a man” (Ecclus. 42: 12-13). Wherefore, St. Jerome, writing against Vigilantius, says

the monk who knows his own feebleness and the frailty of a vessel that he might be carrying fears to stumble lest it be struck and fall and break; in like manner, let him avoid the sight of women, especially those that are young, for fear that the eye of a harlot captivate him and the beautiful form incite him to unlawful embraces.

It follows from this that as the Abbot Moses says in the *Conferences of the Fathers*: “For the sake of preserving purity of heart, seek solitude. And remember that we accept the privations, fasting, vigils, bodily labors, insufficiency of warm clothing, reading, and the product of other virtues in order that through these things we may preserve our heart from all harmful passions, for each of these things is a special rung up the ladder of the perfection of charity.” Special works of this kind are enjoined in the rule of every religious community, not because perfection principally consists in them, but because they are means to perfection. Hence, Abbot Moses continues: “Therefore, fasts, vigils, privations, meditation on Scripture, insufficient clothing and supplies are not perfection, but instruments of perfection; for the objective of this training does not lie in them, but through them one arrives at the objective.”

Do not be led astray by the claim that a man can acquire perfection without fasts and vigils and so on by appealing to the description of Our Lord given by St. Matthew: “The son of man came, eating and drinking” (Mt. 11: 19) or by alleging that Jesus’ disciples did not fast as did the Pharisees and the disciples of John. For the reason why John took no wine or strong drink is that abstinence increases merit, and that is something that no power of nature can do. Moreover, why should Our Lord, who can forgive sin, have stayed away from sinners who did not fast when he could have made them more just than those who fasted? Therefore, the disciples of Christ had no need of fasting because the presence of the bridegroom afforded them more strength than the disciples of John obtained through their fast. But it must be remembered that Our Lord also said: “the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them and then they shall fast.” Explaining this passage, St. John Chrysostom says: “To fast is not a natural cause of sadness except for those who are yet too feebly disposed; for those who desire to contemplate wisdom, fasting is a delight. As long as the disciples were weak, it was wiser to wait until they became stronger. This shows that it was not an invitation to gluttony but a recognition of their weakness.”

That fast and vigils, etc. are aids against sin and helps to perfection is expressly declared by St. Paul: “Giving no offence to any man that our ministry be not blamed; but in all things let us show ourselves as the minister of God, in much patience, in tribulation, in necessity, in distresses, in stripes, in prisons, in seditions, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity” (2 Co. 6: 3-6).

Chapter X. The Third Way of Perfection, Which Is to Abandon One’s Will

In order to attain to the perfection of charity it is necessary for man not only to forsake external goods but also in some way to forsake himself. For St. Denis in *The Divine Names* asserts that divine love produces ecstasy, i.e., it puts one outside of oneself by not allowing a man to be fixed upon self but upon that which is loved. St. Paul proposes himself as an example of this: “I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me,” (Ga. 2: 20), as though he regarded his life not his own but Christ’s, for he despised what was his own in order to cleave entirely to Christ. He was aware that others, too, were like him, for he writes: “You are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3: 3). Others he exhorts to strive after this, saying: “Christ died for all

that they also who live may not now live to themselves but unto him who died for them and rose again” (2 Co. 5: 15). All this rests upon the teaching of Our Lord, who after declaring, “If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters,” and then, as though adding something very important continues, “yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk. 14: 26). Our Lord teaches the same thing in the Gospel according to St. Matthew: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mt. 16: 24).

This salutary self-denial and charitable hatred of self is partly necessary to salvation—indeed, it is found in all the just—and partly the crown of perfection. For as the aforementioned teaching of St. Denis points out, it is of the very nature of divine love that the lover be fixed not on self but on the beloved. Hence, this salutary self-denial and charitable hatred will vary with each degree of divine love. As was already pointed out, it is necessary for salvation to love God in such a way as to make him the end of one’s intention and to accept nothing that is contrary to the love of God. Consequently, both hatred and self-denial are necessary for salvation as St. Gregory says: “We have forsaken and abandoned ourselves when we avoid what pertains to the old life and strive to fulfill what the call of the new life demands.” In another place he writes: “We hate our life properly when we do not acquiesce to its carnal desires, when we bridle its appetites and struggle against its inclinations to pleasure.” On the other hand, perfection requires that the love of God prompt a man to abandon even what was lawful so that he may more freely give himself to God. Hatred and self-denial on this level pertain to perfection. For just as the words: “If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor” lay no necessity upon anyone but leave the matter up to one’s will, so when Jesus says: “If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me,” he does not force anyone, because he does not say “willy-nilly, you must do this.” Similarly, Our Lord said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father . . .” and immediately added: “For which of you having a mind to build a tower does not first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary whether he have the wherewithal to finish it?” (Lk. 14: 28). St. Gregory explains this by saying that “because lofty precepts were being given, he uses a comparison about building a tower.” Farther on, St. Gregory continues: “The rich man who went away sad after hearing that he must do more than keep the commandments is an example of one who could not pay the expense of building.”

From the above it is clear that these matters pertain in some way to the counsel to perfection. This counsel was fulfilled most perfectly by the martyrs, of whom St. Augustine says that no one gives as much as the one who gives himself. The martyrs of Christ, however, are the ones who in a sense hated the present life for the sake of Christ by denying themselves; because, as St. John Chrysostom says: “He that denies another, for example, his own brother or his servant or someone else, will not come to his assistance even though he sees him being whipped or ill-treated. In like manner Christ wants us not to spare our body even though it be scourged or maltreated.” And lest you suppose that self-denial should go no farther than enduring misuse and contumely, Our Lord said: “And let him take up his cross and follow me,” to show that self-denial goes as far as enduring death, even the shameful death of the cross. Such self-denial is entirely perfect because for the love of God the martyrs forsook their own lives, the lives for which men labor to acquire temporal things, the lives for which a person will sacrifice everything else. For a man would prefer to lose all his wealth and friends and the health of his being and even undergo slavery rather than lose his life. Even in war it is thought to be a gesture of kindness to spare the lives of the vanquished and make them slaves. Hence, Satan said to the Lord: “Skin for skin and all that a man hath he will give for his life” (Jb. 2: 4).

The more we naturally love something, the more perfect it is to sacrifice it for Christ. Now, nothing is more loved by man than the freedom of his own will. For through his will a man is master of others; through it he can use and enjoy things; and through it he is even master of his own actions. Hence just as a man, when he forsakes riches or his loved ones, denies them; so when he gives up the right to choose according to his own will through which he is master of himself, he truly denies himself. Next to death there is nothing more naturally disagreeable to man than servitude; indeed, next to dying for another, the greatest benefit that a person can confer is to become his slave. This is implied in the words of young Tobias to the angel: "If I should give myself to be thy servant, I should not make a worthy return for thy care" (Th. 9: 2).

Now, some abandon this freedom of will on one or another point when they make a vow to do or to omit this or that. For a vow lays a type of necessity upon the one who vows so that he no longer can lawfully do what previously was lawful; rather, he is bound by some necessity to fulfill the vow. Hence David says: "I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered" (Ps. 65: 13); again, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, we are told: "If thou hast made a vow to God, make haste to pay; for a faithless and foolish promise is an abomination to him" (Ecc. 5: 3).

Others sacrifice the freedom of their will totally, by subjecting themselves to others for the love of God through the vow of obedience, of which we have the chief example in Christ. Of him St. Paul writes: "As by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just" (Rm. 5: 19), and to the Philippians he says: "Christ humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Ph. 2: 8). This obedience of Christ consisted in the denial of his own will; hence, he prayed: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Mt. 26: 39). Again, according to St. John, he said: "I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me" (Jn. 6: 38). Thus Christ has given us an example that just as he denied his own human will by subjecting it to the divine will, so we should submit our will totally to God and to men who are set over us as the ministers of God. Wherefore St. Paul says: "Obey your prelates and be subject to them" (Heb. 13: 17).

Summa theologiae II-II, q. 184, a. 3

Whether, in this life, perfection consists in the observance of the commandments or of the counsels?

Objection 1. It would seem that, in this life, perfection consists in the observance not of the commandments but of the counsels. For our Lord said (Mt. 19:21): "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all [Vulg.: "what"] thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come, follow Me." Now this is a counsel. Therefore perfection regards the counsels and not the precepts.

Objection 2. Further, all are bound to the observance of the commandments, since this is necessary for salvation. Therefore, if the perfection of the Christian life consists in observing the commandments, it follows that perfection is necessary for salvation, and that all are bound thereto; and this is evidently false.

Objection 3. Further, the perfection of the Christian life is gauged according to charity, as stated above. Now the perfection of charity, seemingly, does not consist in the observance of the

commandments, since the perfection of charity is preceded both by its increase and by its beginning, as Augustine says (*Super Canonic. Joan. Tract. ix*). But the beginning of charity cannot precede the observance of the commandments, since according to Jn. 14:23, “If any one love Me, he will keep My word.” Therefore the perfection of life regards not the commandments but the counsels.

On the contrary, It is written (Dt. 6:5): “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart,” and (Lev. 19:18): “Thou shalt love thy neighbor [Vulg.: “friend”] as thyself”; and these are the commandments of which our Lord said (Mt. 22:40): “On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.” Now the perfection of charity, in respect of which the Christian life is said to be perfect, consists in our loving God with our whole heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. Therefore it would seem that perfection consists in the observance of the precepts.

I answer that, Perfection is said to consist in a thing in two ways: in one way, primarily and essentially; in another, secondarily and accidentally. Primarily and essentially the perfection of the Christian life consists in charity, principally as to the love of God, secondarily as to the love of our neighbor, both of which are the matter of the chief commandments of the Divine law, as stated above. Now the love of God and of our neighbor is not commanded according to a measure, so that what is in excess of the measure be a matter of counsel. This is evident from the very form of the commandment, pointing, as it does, to perfection—for instance in the words, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart”: since “the whole” is the same as “the perfect,” according to the Philosopher (*Phys. iii, 6*), and in the words, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” since every one loves himself most. The reason of this is that “the end of the commandment is charity,” according to the Apostle (1 Tim. 1:5); and the end is not subject to a measure, but only such things as are directed to the end, as the Philosopher observes (*Polit. i, 3*); thus a physician does not measure the amount of his healing, but how much medicine or diet he shall employ for the purpose of healing. Consequently it is evident that perfection consists essentially in the observance of the commandments; wherefore Augustine says (*De Perf. Justit. viii*): “Why then should not this perfection be prescribed to man, although no man has it in this life?”

Secondarily and instrumentally, however, perfection consists in the observance of the counsels, all of which, like the commandments, are directed to charity; yet not in the same way. For the commandments, other than the precepts of charity, are directed to the removal of things contrary to charity, with which, namely, charity is incompatible, whereas the counsels are directed to the removal of things that hinder the act of charity, and yet are not contrary to charity, such as marriage, the occupation of worldly business, and so forth. Hence Augustine says (*Enchiridion cxxi*): “Whatever things God commands, for instance, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery,’ and whatever are not commanded, yet suggested by a special counsel, for instance, ‘It is good for a man not to touch a woman,’ are then done aright when they are referred to the love of God, and of our neighbor for God’s sake, both in this world and in the world to come.” Hence it is that in the Conferences of the Fathers (*Coll. i, cap. vii*) the abbot Moses says: “Fastings, watchings, meditating on the Scriptures, penury and loss of all one’s wealth, these are not perfection but means to perfection, since not in them does the school of perfection find its end, but through them it achieves its end,” and he had already said that “we endeavor to ascend by these steps to the perfection of charity.”

Reply to Objection 1. In this saying of our Lord something is indicated as being the way to perfection by the words, “Go, sell all thou hast, and give to the poor”; and something else is added wherein perfection consists, when He said, “And follow Me.” Hence Jerome in his commentary on Mt. 19:27, says that “since it is not enough merely to leave, Peter added that which is perfect: ‘And have followed Thee’”; and Ambrose, commenting on Lk. 5:27, “Follow Me,” says: “He commands him to follow, not with steps of the body, but with devotion of the soul, which is the effect of charity.” Wherefore it is evident from the very way of speaking that the counsels are means of attaining to perfection, since it is thus expressed: “If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell,” etc., as though He said: “By so doing thou shalt accomplish this end.”

Reply to Objection 2. As Augustine says (*De Perf. Justit.* viii) “the perfection of charity is prescribed to man in this life, because one runs not right unless one knows whither to run. And how shall we know this if no commandment declares it to us?” And since that which is a matter of precept can be fulfilled variously, one does not break a commandment through not fulfilling it in the best way, but it is enough to fulfil it in any way whatever. Now the perfection of Divine love is a matter of precept for all without exception, so that even the perfection of heaven is not excepted from this precept, as Augustine says (*De Perf. Justit.* viii [Cf. *De Spir. et Lit.* XXXVI]), and one escapes transgressing the precept, in whatever measure one attains to the perfection of Divine love. The lowest degree of Divine love is to love nothing more than God, or contrary to God, or equally with God, and whoever fails from this degree of perfection nowise fulfils the precept. There is another degree of the Divine love, which cannot be fulfilled so long as we are on the way, as stated above, and it is evident that to fail from this is not to be a transgressor of the precept; and in like manner one does not transgress the precept, if one does not attain to the intermediate degrees of perfection, provided one attain to the lowest.

Reply to Objection 3. Just as man has a certain perfection of his nature as soon as he is born, which perfection belongs to the very essence of his species, while there is another perfection which he acquires by growth, so again there is a perfection of charity which belongs to the very essence of charity, namely that man love God above all things, and love nothing contrary to God, while there is another perfection of charity even in this life, whereto a man attains by a kind of spiritual growth, for instance when a man refrains even from lawful things, in order more freely to give himself to the service of God.

II. PRACTICES OF DOMINICAN LIFE

As mentioned in the section of the Particular Directory on prayer, suffrages for the dead “have been a hallowed tradition since Saint Dominic founded the order.” Here we read of the particular suffrages that the Directory specifies.

The Particular Directory of the Western Dominican Province

Appendix A: Suffrages

1. Prayers for the deceased have been a hallowed tradition since Saint Dominic founded the Order. Members are expected to:
 - a. say daily an Our Father, a Hail Mary and Eternal Rest for the deceased members of the

Order;

- b. offer at least three Masses a year for all deceased Dominicans;
- c. have a Mass offered and/or say five decades of the Rosary on the death of a Chapter member;
- d. commemorate all the faithful departed in a special way on
 - February 7, for the deceased parents of all Dominicans,
 - September 5, for the deceased benefactors of the Order,
 - November 2, for all souls,
 - November 8, for all deceased Dominicans.

2. Upon the death of a member, the Chapter is expected to:

- a. receive from the Moderator / Prior / Prioress notice of the death;
- b. attend the funeral Mass and recite the appropriate Hour of the Office of the Dead as a Chapter, if possible;
- c. have a Mass offered as soon as possible for the deceased member;
- d. recite the appropriate Hour of the Office of the Dead, at the first meeting following the death of a member.

APPENDIX

Latin Texts of St. Thomas

Unit A1: St. Dominic and the Psalms

*In omni opere suo dedit confessionem sancto,
et excelso in verbo gloriae. Eccli. 47.*

Verba haec dicuntur de David ad litteram; et satis convenienter assumuntur ad ostendendum causam hujus operis. In quibus ostenditur quadruplex causa hujus: scilicet materia, modus, seu forma; finis et agens. Materia est universalis: quia cum singuli libri canonicae Scripturae speciales materias habeant, hic liber generalem habet totius theologiae: et hoc est quod dicit dionysius 3 Lib. Caelest.

Hierar.: divinarum odarum, idest Psalmorum, sacram Scripturam intendere, est, sacras et divinas operationes universas decantare. Unde signatur materia in hoc quod dicit: in omni opere, quia de omni opere Dei tractat. Est autem quadruplex opus Dei: scilicet creationis: Gen. 1 cap.: requievit Deus die septimo ab omni opere etc.. Gubernationis: joan. 5: pater meus usque modo operatur etc.. Reparationis: joan. 4: meus cibus est ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me, ut perficiam opus ejus. Glorificationis: Eccl. 42: gloria domini plenum est opus ejus. Et de his omnibus complete in hac doctrina tractatur. Primo de opere creationis: Psal. 8: videbo caelos tuos, opera digitorum tuorum. Secundo gubernationis: quia omnes historiae veteris testamenti tanguntur in hoc libro: Psal. 77: aperiam in parabolis os meum etc.. Tertio reparationis, quantum ad caput, scilicet christum et quantum ad omnes effectus gratiae: Psal. 3: ego dormivi et somnum etc.. Omnia enim quae ad fidem incarnationis pertinent, sic dilucide traduntur in hoc opere, ut fere videatur evangelium, et non prophetia. Quarto est opus glorificationis: Psal. 149: exultabunt sancti in gloria etc.. Et haec est ratio, quare magis frequentatur Psalterium in ecclesia, quia continet totam Scripturam. Vel secundum Glossam, ad dandam nobis spem divinae misericordiae: quia cum peccasset David, tamen per poenitentiam est reparatus.

Materia ergo universalis est, quia omne opus. Et quia hoc ad christum spectat: Coloss. 1: in ipso complacuit omnem plenitudinem divinitatis inhabitare; ideo materia hujus libri est christus et membra ejus.

Modus seu forma in sacra Scriptura multiplex invenitur.

Narrativus: eccles. 42: nonne Deus fecit sanctos suos enarrare omnia mirabilia sua? et hoc in historialibus libris invenitur. Admonitorius et exhortatorius et praeceptivus: ad titum 2: haec loquere et exhortare. Argue cum omni imperio. Tim. 2: hoc commoneo, testificans coram Deo etc.. Hic modus invenitur in lege, prophetis, et libris Salomonis. Disputativus: et hoc in job et in apostolo: job 13: disputare cum Deo cupio. Deprecativus vel laudativus: et hoc invenitur in isto libro: quia quidquid in aliis libris praedictis modis dicitur, hic ponitur per modum laudis et orationis: infra Ps. 9: confitebor tibi domine etc. Narrabo etc.. Et ideo dicit, dedit confessionem, quia per modum confitendi loquitur. Et hinc sumitur ratio tituli qui est, incipit liber hymnorum, seu soliloquiorum prophetae David de christo. Hymnus est laus Dei cum cantico. Canticum autem exultatio mentis de aeternis habita, prorumpens in vocem. Docet ergo laudare Deum cum exultatione.

Soliloquium est collocutio hominis cum Deo singulariter, vel secum tantum, quia hoc convenit laudanti et oranti. Hujus Scripturae finis est oratio, quae est elevatio mentis in Deum.

Damascenus Lib. 3: oratio est ascensus intellectus in Deum: Psal. 148: elevatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum. Sed quatuor modis anima elevatur in Deum: scilicet ad admirandum celsitudinem potestatis ipsius: isa. 40: levate in excelsum oculos vestros, et videte quis creavit

haec: Psal. 103: quam mirabilia sunt opera tua domine: et haec est elevatio fidei. Secundo elevatur mens ad tendendum in excellentiam aeternae beatitudinis: job 2: levare poteris faciem tuam absque macula, eris stabilis et non timebis: miseriae quoque oblivisceris, et quasi fulgor meridianus consurget tibi: et haec est elevatio spei. Tertio elevatur mens ad inhaerendum divinae bonitati et sanctitati: isa. 51: elevare, consurge hierusalem etc. Et haec est elevatio caritatis. Quarto elevatur mens ad imitandum divinam justitiam in opere: Thren. 3, levemus corda nostra cum manibus ad Deum in caelos: et haec est elevatio justitiae.

Et iste quadruplex modus insinuatur, cum dicit, sancto et excelso: quia duo ultimi modi elevationis pertinent ad hoc quod dicit, sancto; duo primi ad hoc quod dicit, excelso. Et quod hic sit finis Scripturae hujus, habetur in Psalmis.

Primo de excelso Psal. 112: a solis ortu, et post, excelsus super omnes etc.. Secundo de sancto: Psal. 95: confiteantur nomini tuo magno, quoniam terribile et sanctum Est. Ideo Gregorius 1 hom.

Dicit super Ezech. Quod vox psalmodiae, si cum intentione cordis agitur, omnipotenti Deo per eam ad cor iter paratur, ut intentae animae aut prophetiae mysteria, aut gratiam compunctionis infundat.

Finis ergo est, ut anima jungatur Deo, sicut sancto et excelso.

Auctor autem hujus operis significatur ibi, in verbo gloriae. Notandum autem, quod aliud est in sacra Scriptura, et aliud in aliis scientiis. Nam aliae scientiae sunt per rationem humanam editae, haec autem Scriptura per instinctum inspirationis divinae: 2 Petr. 1: non enim voluntate humana allata est prophetia, sed spiritu sancto inspirati locuti sunt etc.. Et ideo lingua hominis se habet in Scriptura sacra, sicut lingua pueri dicentis verba quae alius ministrat: Psal. 44: lingua mea calamus, et 2 Reg. 23: spiritus domini locutus est per me, et sermo ejus per linguam meam. Et ideo dicit, in verbo domini, vel gloriae, quae per revelationem dicuntur. Unde 3 Reg. 20: percute me in sermone domini, idest in revelatione divina.

Et potest dici haec Scriptura verbum gloriae quatuor modis: quia quadrupliciter se habet ad gloriam: scilicet quantum ad causam a qua fluit, quia a verbo glorioso Dei haec doctrina emanavit: 2 Petr. 1: voce delapsa hujuscemodi a magnifica gloria: hic est filius meus dilectus etc.. Quantum ad continentiam, quia in isto libro gloria Dei continetur quam annunciat: Ps. 96: annunciate inter gentes gloriam ejus. Quantum ad modum emanationis: gloria enim idem est quod claritas: et revelatio hujus prophetiae gloriosa fuit, quia aperta. Triplex est enim modus prophetiae. Per sensibiles res: Dan. 5: apparuerunt digiti, quasi hominis scribentis etc. Rex aspicebat articulos manus scribentis. Per similitudines imaginarias, sicut patet de somnio Pharaonis et interpretatione facta per Joseph, genes. 41: isa. 6: vidi dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum etc.. Per ipsius veritatis manifestationem. Et talis modus prophetiae convenit Danieli, qui solius spiritus sancti instinctu sine omni exteriori adminiculo suam edidit prophetiam. Alii namque prophetae, sicut dicit Augustinus, per quasdam rerum imagines atque verborum tegumenta, scilicet per somnia et visiones, facta et dicta prophetaverunt: sed iste, nude doctus fuit de veritate. Unde 2 Reg. 22, cum diceret David: spiritus domini locutus est etc.. Statim addidit, sicut lux aurorae oriente sole mane absque nubibus rutilat. Sol est spiritus sanctus illuminans corda prophetarum, qui quandoque sub nubibus apparet, quandoque per duos modos praedictos prophetis illucet, quandoque sine nubibus, sicut hic. Et ad hoc adduci potest quod dicitur 2 Reg. 6: quam gloriosus fuit hodie rex Israel, discooperiens se ante ancillas servorum suorum, et nudatus Est. Et quia per eam nos invitat ad gloriam. Psal. 115: gloria haec est omnibus sanctis ejus, bene praemittitur, quam gloriosus etc.. Patet ergo materia hujus operis, quia de omni opere domini. Modus, quia deprecativus et laudativus.

Finis, quia ut elevati jungamur excelso et sancto.

Auctor, quia ipse spiritus sanctus hoc revelans.

Sed antequam ad litteram veniamus circa hunc librum, tria in generali consideranda sunt. Primo de translatione hujus operis. Secundo de modo exponendi. Tertio de ejus distinctione.

Translationes sunt tres. Una a principio ecclesiae terrenae tempore apostolorum, et haec vitiata erat tempore Hieronymi propter scriptores. Unde ad preces Damasi Papae Hieronymus Psalterium correxit, et hoc legitur in Italia. Sed quia haec translatio discordabat a Graeco, transtulit rursus Hieronymus ad preces Paulae de Graeco in Latinum, et hoc Damasus Papa fecit cantari in francia, et concordat de verbo ad verbum cum Graeco. Post quidam sophronius aliquando disputans cum Judaeis, cum dicerent Judaei aliqua non sic se habere, sicut ex secunda translatione Psalterii introduxerat, dictus sophronius rogavit Hieronymum, ut Psalterium de Hebraeo in Latinum transferret. Cujus petitioni annuit Hieronymus: quae translatio concordat omnino cum Hebraeo, sed non cantatur in aliqua ecclesia; habetur tamen a multis.

Circa modum exponendi sciendum est, quod tam in Psalterio quam in aliis prophetiis exponendis evitare debemus unum errorem damnatum in quinta synodo. Theodorus enim Mopsuestenus dixit, quod in sacra Scriptura et prophetiis nihil expresse dicitur de christo, sed de quibusdam aliis rebus, sed adaptaverunt christo: sicut illud psalm. 21: diviserunt sibi vestimenta mea etc., non de christo, sed ad litteram dicitur de David. Hic autem modus damnatus est in illo Concilio: et qui asserit sic exponendas Scripturas, haeticus Est. Beatus ergo Hieronymus super Ezech. Tradidit nobis unam regulam quam servabimus in Psalmis: scilicet quod sic sunt exponendi de rebus gestis, ut figurantibus aliquid de christo vel ecclesia. Ut enim dicitur 1 Cor. 10: omnia in figura contingebant illis. Prophetiae autem aliquando dicuntur de rebus quae tunc temporis erant, sed non principaliter dicuntur de eis, sed in quantum figura sunt futurorum: et ideo spiritus sanctus ordinavit quod quando talia dicuntur, inserantur quaedam quae excedunt conditionem illius rei gestae, ut animus eleveatur ad figuratum. Sicut in Daniele multa dicuntur de Anthioco in figuram Antichristi: unde ibi quaedam leguntur quae non sunt in eo completa, implebuntur autem in Antichristo; sicut etiam aliqua de regno David et Salomonis leguntur, quae non erant implenda in talium hominum regno, sed impleta fuere in regno christi, in cujus figura dicta sunt: sicut Psal. 71: Deus judicium etc. Qui est secundum titulum de regno David et Salomonis; et aliquid ponit in eo quod excedit facultatem ipsius, scilicet, orietur in diebus ejus justitia et abundantia pacis, donec auferatur luna: et iterum, dominabitur a mari usque ad mare, et a flumine usque ad terminos etc.. Exponitur ergo Psalmus iste de regno Salomonis, in quantum est figura regni christi, in quo omnia complebuntur ibi dicta.

Distinctio ejus in prima est quod sunt centum quinquaginta Psalmi; et competit mysterio, quia componitur numerus iste ex 70 et 80. Per 7 a quo denominatur 70 significatur decursus hujus temporis quod peragitur septem diebus; per 8 vero a quo denominatur 80, status futurae vitae. Octava enim secundum Glossam est resurgentium; et significat quod in hoc libro tractantur ea quae pertinent ad decursum praesentis vitae, et ad gloriam futurae. Item per septem significatur vetus testamentum. Patres namque veteris testamenti septenario serviebant: observabant enim septimum diem, septimam septimanam, septimum mensem, et septimum annum septimae decadis, qui dicitur jubilaus. Per octo vero significatur novum testamentum: celebramus enim diem octavum, scilicet diem dominicum propter solemnitatem dominicae resurrectionis: et in hoc libro complentur mysteria veteris et novi testamenti. Secunda distinctio est secundum quosdam, qui dicebant quod Psalterium dividitur in quinque libros, per quinque Psalmorum distinctiones, quae fiunt per fiat fiat: et hoc in Graeco, ubi Hebraeus habet amen, amen. Et in hoc notatur finis libri cujuslibet secundum eos: et hoc est primo in psalm. 40: beatus qui intelligit. Item in 71:

Deus iudicium tuum. Item in 88: misericordias domini. Item in 106, scilicet in secundo: confitemini: et sunt quinque libri. Sed haec distinctio non est apud Hebraeos, sed pro uno libro habetur. Act. 1: sicut scriptum est in libro Psalmorum 68: fiat commoratio etc.. Quod autem dicit, fiat, fiat, vel amen, amen, non refertur ad finem libri, quia in aliis libris multoties hoc ponitur, nec est finis libri. Tertia distinctio est, quia Psalmi distinguuntur in tres quinquagenas; et haec distinctio comprehendit triplicem statum populi fidelis: scilicet statum poenitentiae: et ad hunc ordinatur prima quinquagena, quae finitur in miserere mei Deus, qui est Psalmus poenitentiae. Secunda iustitiae: et haec consistit in iudicio, et finitur in Psal. 100: misericordiam et iudicium. Tertia laudem gloriae concludit aeternae; et ideo finitur: omnis spiritus laudat dominum. Sed circa ordinem Psalmorum sciendum est, quod Psalmi quidam tangunt historias, sed non sunt ordinati secundum ordinem historiae. Nam diligam te domine, pertinet ad historiam Saulis, sed domine quid multiplicati sunt, ad historiam pertinet Absalonis; et haec est posterior: unde aliquid aliud significant praeter historiam tantum. Prima ergo quinquagena pertinet ad statum poenitentiae, et ideo figuraliter tractatur in ea de tribulationibus et impugnationibus David, et liberatione ejus. Et ut divisio fiat secundum litteram, David in regno suo existens, contra duplicem impugnationem vel persecutionem orat. Primo contra eam quae fuit contra totum populum Dei: et hoc in quinta decade: Psal. 41: quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontem aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus. Universaliter autem justus in persona sua dupliciter affligitur: quandoque a temporaliter persequentibus, quandoque ab aliquibus injuste viventibus: 2 Petr. 2: animam iusti iniquis operibus cruciabant: Ps. 118: defectio tenuit me etc.. Et ideo primo ponit Psalmos pertinentes ad primam persecutionem David, secundum quod significat aliquid contra christum et ecclesiam. Secundo ad secundam tribulationem pertinentes, in quarta decade: Ps. 31: beati quorum remissae sunt iniquitates. Item David in regno suo existens duplicem tribulationem passus est: quia a specialibus personis, et a toto populo. Primo ergo ponuntur Psalmi contra personam. Secundo Psalmi in quibus orat contra secundam: et hoc in tertia decade, scilicet Deus Deus. A specialibus autem personis duabus persecutionem passus est: scilicet ab Absalone, et a Saule. Et per hoc significatur persecutio quam sancti patiuntur, vel a domesticis, vel ab extraneis: sic christus passus est a Juda, et a Judaeis. Primo ergo ponuntur Psalmi contra primum. Secundo contra secundum: et hoc in secunda decade: Psal. 11: salvum me fac domine, quoniam defecit sanctus, quoniam diminutae sunt veritates a filiis hominum. Primo ergo agendum est de prima decade, in qua praemittitur Psalmus iste, scilicet beatus vir etc.

Unit A6: Growth in Prayer

Summa theologiae II-II, q. 83, a. 12

Ad duodecimum sic proceditur. Videtur quod oratio non debeat esse vocalis.

Oratio enim, sicut ex dictis patet, principaliter Deo porrigitur. Deus autem locutionem cordis cognoscit. Frustra igitur vocalis oratio adhibetur.

Praeterea, per orationem mens hominis debet in Deum ascendere, ut dictum est. Sed voces retrahunt homines ab ascensu contemplationis in Deum, sicut et alia sensibilia. Ergo in oratione non est vocibus utendum.

Praeterea, oratio debet offerri Deo in occulto, secundum illud Matth. VI, *Tu autem cum oraveris, intra in cubiculum, et clauso ostio, ora Patrem tuum in abscondito*. Sed per vocem oratio publicatur. Ergo non debet oratio esse vocalis.

Sed contra est quod dicitur in Psalm., *voce mea ad dominum clamavi, voce mea ad dominum deprecatus sum*.

Respondeo dicendum quod duplex est oratio, communis, et singularis. Communis quidem oratio est quae per ministros ecclesiae in persona totius fidelis populi Deo offertur. Et ideo oportet quod talis oratio innotescat toti populo, pro quo profertur. Quod non posset fieri nisi esset vocalis. Et ideo rationabiliter institutum est ut ministri ecclesiae huiusmodi orationes etiam alta voce pronuntient, ut ad notitiam omnium possit pervenire. Oratio vero singularis est quae offertur a singulari persona cuiuscumque sive pro se sive pro aliis orantis. Et de huiusmodi orationis necessitate non est quod sit vocalis. Adiungitur tamen vox tali orationi triplici ratione. Primo quidem, ad excitandum interiorem devotionem, qua mens orantis elevetur in Deum. Quia per exteriora signa, sive vocum sive etiam aliquorum factorum, movetur mens hominis et secundum apprehensionem, et per consequens secundum affectionem. Unde Augustinus dicit, *Ad Probam*, quod “verbis et aliis signis ad augendum sanctum desiderium nos ipsos acius excitamus.” Et ideo in singulari oratione tantum est vocibus et huiusmodi signis utendum quantum proficit ad excitandum interius mentem. Si vero mens per hoc distrahatur, vel qualitercumque impediatur, est a talibus cessandum. Quod praecipue contingit in illis quorum mens sine huiusmodi signis est sufficienter ad devotionem parata. Unde Psalmista dicebat, *tibi dixit cor meum, exquisivit te facies mea*; et de Anna legitur, I Reg. I, quod *loquebatur in corde suo*. Secundo, adiungitur vocalis oratio quasi ad redditionem debiti, ut scilicet homo Deo serviat secundum totum illud quod ex Deo habet, id est non solum mente, sed etiam corpore. Quod praecipue competit orationi secundum quod est satisfactoria. Unde dicitur Osee ult., *omnem aufer iniquitatem, et accipe bonum, et reddemus vitulos labiorum nostrorum*. Tertio, adiungitur vocalis oratio ex quadam redundantia ab anima in corpus ex vehementi affectione, secundum illud Psalm., *laetatum est cor meum, et exultavit lingua mea*.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod vocalis oratio non profertur ad hoc quod aliquid ignotum Deo manifestetur, sed ad hoc quod mens orantis vel aliorum excitetur in Deum.

Ad secundum dicendum quod verba ad aliud pertinentia distrahunt mentem, et impediunt devotionem orantis. Sed verba significantia aliquid ad devotionem pertinens excitant mentes, praecipue minus devotas.

Ad tertium dicendum quod, sicut Chrysostomus dicit, *super Matth.*, “eo proposito dominus vetat in conventu orare ut a conventu videatur. Unde orans nihil novum facere debet quod aspiciant homines, vel clamando vel pectus percutiendo vel manus expandendo.” Nec tamen, ut Augustinus dicit, in libro *De serm. Dom.*, “In monte, videri ab hominibus nefas est, sed ideo haec agere ut ab hominibus videaris.”

Summa theologiae II-II, q. 83, a. 13

Ad tertiumdecimum sic proceditur. Videtur quod de necessitate orationis sit quod sit attenda.

Dicitur enim Ioan. IV, *spiritus est Deus, et eos qui adorant eum, in spiritu et veritate adorare oportet*. Sed oratio non est in spiritu si non sit attenda. Ergo de necessitate orationis est quod sit attenda.

Praeterea, oratio est ascensus intellectus in Deum. Sed quando oratio non est attenda, intellectus non ascendit in Deum. Ergo de necessitate orationis est quod sit attenda.

Praeterea, de necessitate orationis est quod careat omni peccato. Sed non est absque peccato quod aliquis orando evagationem mentis patiat, videtur eum deridere Deum, sicut et si alicui homini loqueretur et non attenderet ad ea quae ipse proferret. Unde Basilius dicit, “est divinum auxilium implorandum non remisse, nec mente huc illuc evagante, eo quod talis non

solum non impetrabit quod petit, sed et magis Deum irritabit.” Ergo de necessitate orationis esse videtur quod sit attenda.

Sed contra est quod etiam sancti viri quandoque orantes evagationem mentis patiuntur, secundum illud Psalm., *cor meum dereliquit me*.

Respondeo dicendum quod quaestio haec praecipue locum habet in oratione vocali. Circa quam sciendum est quod necessarium dicitur aliquid dupliciter. Uno modo, per quod melius pervenitur ad finem. Et sic attentio absolute orationi necessaria est. Alio modo dicitur aliquid necessarium sine quo res non potest consequi suum effectum. Est autem triplex effectus orationis. Primus quidem communis omnibus actibus caritate informatis, quod est mereri. Et ad hunc effectum non ex necessitate requiritur quod attentio adsit orationi per totum, sed vis primae intentionis qua aliquis ad orandum accedit, reddit totam orationem meritoriam, sicut in aliis meritoriis actibus accidit. Secundus autem effectus orationis est ei proprius, quod est impetrare. Et ad hunc etiam effectum sufficit prima intentio, quam Deus principaliter attendit. Si autem prima intentio desit, oratio nec meritoria est nec impetrativa, “illam enim orationem Deus non audit cui ille qui orat non intendit,” ut Gregorius dicit. Tertius autem effectus orationis est quem praesentialiter efficit, scilicet quaedam spiritualis refectio mentis. Et ad hoc de necessitate requiritur in oratione attentio. Unde dicitur I Cor. XIV, *si orem lingua, mens mea sine fructu est*. Sciendum tamen quod est triplex attentio quae orationi vocali potest adhiberi. Una quidem qua attenditur ad verba, ne quis in eis erret. Secunda qua attenditur ad sensum verborum. Tertia qua attenditur ad finem orationis, scilicet ad Deum et ad rem pro qua oratur, quae quidem est maxime necessaria. Et hanc etiam possunt habere idiotae. Et quandoque intantum abundat haec intentio, qua mens fertur in Deum, ut etiam omnium aliorum mens obliviscatur, sicut dicit Hugo de Sancto Victore.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod in spiritu et veritate orat qui ex instinctu spiritus ad orandum accedit, etiam si ex aliqua infirmitate mens postmodum evagetur.

Ad secundum dicendum quod mens humana, propter infirmitatem naturae, diu in alto stare non potest, pondere enim infirmitatis humanae deprimitur anima ad inferiora. Et ideo contingit quod quando mens orantis ascendit in Deum per contemplationem, subito evagetur ex quadam infirmitate.

Ad tertium dicendum quod si quis ex proposito in oratione mente evagetur, hoc peccatum est, et impedit orationis fructum. Et contra hoc Augustinus dicit, in *Regula*, “Psalmis et hymnis cum oratis Deum, hoc versetur in corde quod profertur in ore.” Evagatio vero mentis quae fit praeter propositum, orationis fructum non tollit. Unde Basilius dicit, “Si vero, debilitatus a peccato, fixe nequis orare, quantumcumque potes teipsum cohibeas, et Deus ignoscit, eo quod non ex negligentia, sed ex fragilitate non potes, ut oportet, assistere coram eo.”

Unit B3: Veritas: Study

Ad Vitam Sapienter Instituendam

Concede mihi, misericors Deus, quae tibi placita sunt ardentem concupiscere, prudenter investigare, veraciter agnoscere, et perfecte adimplere ad laudem et gloriam nominis tui. Ordina, Deus meus, statum meum, et quod a me requiris ut faciam, tribue ut sciam; et da exequi sicut oportet et expedit animae meae. Da mihi, Domine Deus meus, inter prospera et adversa non deficere, ut in illis non extollar, et in istis non deprimar: de nullo gaudeam vel doleam nisi quod ducat ad te vel abducat a te. Nulli placere appetam, vel displicere timeam nisi tibi. Vilescent

mihi, Domine, omnia transitoria, et cara mihi sint omnia tua. Taedeat me gaudii quod est sine te, nec aliud cupiam quod est extra te. Delectet me, Domine, labor qui est pro te; et taediosa sit mihi omnis quies quae est sine te. Frequenter da mihi, Domine, cor ad te dirigere, et in defectione mea cum emendationis proposito dolendo pensare. Fac me, Domine Deus, obedientem sine contradictione, pauperem sine defectione, castum sine corruptione, patientem sine murmuratione, humilem sine fictione, et hilarem sine dissolutione, tristem sine dejectione, maturum sine gravitate, agilem sine levitate, timentem te sine desperatione, veracem sine duplicitate, operantem bona sine praesumptione, proximum corripere sine elatione, ipsum aedificare verbo et exemplo sine simulatione. Da mihi, Domine Deus, cor pervigil quod nulla abducat a te curiosa cogitatio. Da nobile quod nulla deorsum trahat indigna affectio. Da rectum quod nulla seorsum obliquet sinistra intentio. Da firmum quod nulla frangat tribulatio. Da liberum quod nulla sibi vindicet violenta affectio. Largire mihi, Domine Deus meus, intellectum te cognoscentem, diligentiam te quaerentem, sapientiam te invenientem, conversationem tibi placentem, perseverantiam fidenter te expectantem, et fiduciam te finaliter amplectentem: tuis poenis hic affligi per poenitentiam, tuis beneficiis in via uti per gratiam, tuis gaudiis in primis in patria perfrui per gloriam. Qui vivis et regnas Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Ante Studium

Creator ineffabilis, qui de thesauris sapientiae tuae tres Angelorum hierarchias designasti, et eas super caelum empyreum miro ordine collocasti, atque universi partes elegantissime disposuisti, tu, inquam, qui verus es fons luminis et sapientiae diceris, atque supereminens principium: infundere digneris super intellectus mei tenebras tuae radium charitatis, duplices, in quibus natus sum, a me removens tenebras, peccatum, scilicet, et ignorantiam.

Tu, qui linguas infantium facis disertas, linguam meam erudias, atque in labiis meis gratiam tuae benedictionis infundas. Da mihi intelligendi acumen, retinendi capacitatem, addiscendi modum et facilitatem, interpretandi sublimitatem, loquendi gratiam copiosam; ingressum instruas, progressum dirigas, egressum compleas. Tu qui es verus Deus et homo. Qui vivis etc..

Unit B7: The Evangelical Counsels

On the Perfection of the Spiritual Life, cc. 1–10

Quae sit auctoris intentio.

Quoniam quidam perfectionis ignari, de perfectionis statu vana quaedam dicere praesumpserunt, propositum nostrae intentionis est de perfectione tractare: quid sit esse perfectum, qualiter perfectio acquiratur, quis perfectionis status, et quae competant assummentibus perfectionis statum.

Capitulus 1

Quod perfectio spiritualis vitae simpliciter attenditur secundum caritatem.

Primum igitur considerare oportet, quod perfectum multipliciter dicitur.

Est enim aliquid simpliciter perfectum; aliquid vero dicitur perfectum secundum quid.

Simpliciter quidem perfectum est quod attingit ad finem eius quod ei competit secundum propriam rationem; secundum quid autem perfectum dici potest quod attingit ad finem alicuius eorum quae concomitantur propriam rationem: sicut animal simpliciter dicitur esse perfectum, quando ad hunc finem perducitur ut nihil ei desit ex his quae integritatem animalis vitae constituunt: puta cum nihil ei deficit ex numero et dispositione membrorum, et debita corporis quantitate, et virtutibus quibus operationes animalis vitae perficiuntur; secundum quid autem

perfectum animal potest dici si sit perfectum in aliquo concomitanti, puta si sit perfectum in albedine, aut in odore, aut in aliquo huiusmodi. Sic igitur et in spirituali vita simpliciter quidem homo perfectus dicitur ratione eius in quo principaliter spiritualis vita consistit; sed secundum quid perfectus dici potest ratione cuiuscumque quod spirituali vitae adiungitur. Consistit autem principaliter spiritualis vita in caritate: quam qui non habet, nihil esse spiritualiter reputatur: unde apostolus I Cor. XIII, 2, dicit: *si habuero prophetiam, et noverim mysteria omnia et omnem scientiam, et si habuero omnem fidem, ita ut montes transferam, caritatem autem non habuero, nihil sum*. Beatus etiam Ioannes apostolus totam spiritualem vitam in dilectione consistere asserit, dicens I Ioan. III, 14: *nos scimus quoniam translati sumus de morte in vitam, quoniam diligimus fratres. Qui non diligit, manet in morte*. Simpliciter igitur in spirituali vita perfectus est qui est in caritate perfectus; secundum quid autem perfectus dici potest, secundum quodcumque quod spirituali vitae adiungitur: quod evidenter ex verbis sacrae Scripturae ostendi potest. Apostolus enim ad Col. III, 14, perfectionem principaliter caritati attribuit: enumeratis enim multis virtutibus, scilicet misericordia, benignitate humilitate, etc., subdit: *super omnia haec caritatem habete, quae est vinculum perfectionis*. Sed et secundum intellectus cognitionem aliqui dicuntur esse perfecti. Dicit enim idem apostolus, I ad Cor. XIV 20: *malitia parvuli estote; sensibus autem perfecti*: et alibi in eadem epistola (cap. I, 10): *sitis perfecti in eodem sensu et in eadem scientia*: cum tamen, sicut dictum est, quantumcumque quis habeat perfectam scientiam, sine caritate nihil esse iudicetur. Sic etiam et perfectus aliquis dici potest et *secundum patientiam, quae opus perfectum habet*, ut Iacobus dicit, et secundum quascumque alias virtutes. Nec hoc debet mirum videri: quia etiam in malis aliquis dicitur esse perfectus, sicut dicitur aliquis perfectus fur aut latro: et hoc etiam modo loquendi interdum Scriptura utitur: dicitur enim Isai. XXXII, 6: *cor stulti faciet iniquitatem, ut perficiat simulationem*.

Capitulus 2

Quod perfectio attenditur tam secundum dilectionem Dei quam secundum dilectionem proximi. Perfectione igitur circa caritatem principaliter considerata, plane accipi potest in quo perfectio spiritualis vitae consistat. Sunt enim duo praecepta caritatis: quorum unum pertinet ad dilectionem Dei, aliud ad dilectionem proximi. Quae quidem duo praecepta ordinem quendam ad invicem habent secundum ordinem caritatis. Nam id quod principaliter caritate diligendum est, est summum bonum, quod nos beatos facit, scilicet Deus; secundario vero diligendus ex caritate est proximus, qui nobis quodam sociali iure coniungitur in beatitudinis participatione: unde hoc est quod in proximo ex caritate debemus diligere, ut simul ad beatitudinem perveniamus. Hunc autem ordinem praeceptorum caritatis dominus in evangelio Matth. XXII, 37, ostendit dicens: *Diliges dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et in tota anima tua, et in tota mente tua. Hoc est maximum et primum mandatum. Secundum autem simile est huic: diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum*. Primo ergo et principaliter consistit spiritualis vitae perfectio in dilectione Dei: unde dominus ad Abraham loquens dicit, Gen. XVII 1: *Ego Deus omnipotens; ambula coram me, et esto perfectus*. Ambulatur autem coram Deo non passibus corporis, sed affectibus mentis. Secundario vero consistit spiritualis vitae perfectio in proximi dilectione: unde dominus cum dixisset Matth. V, 44: *diligite inimicos vestros*, et plura subiunxisset quae ad dilectionem proximi pertinent, concludit in fine: *estote ergo perfecti, sicut et pater vester caelestis perfectus est*.

Capitulus 3

De perfectione divinae dilectionis, quae soli Deo convenit.

In utraque autem dilectione multiplex perfectionis gradus invenitur. Et quantum ad dilectionem Dei pertinet, primus et summus perfectionis gradus divinae dilectionis convenit soli Deo. Qui quidem modus consideratur et ex parte diligibilis et ex parte diligentis: dico autem ex parte diligibilis, ut scilicet aliquid tantum diligatur quantum diligibile est. Ex parte vero diligentis, ut aliquid diligatur secundum totam facultatem diligentis. Cum autem unumquodque sit diligibile, secundum quod est bonum: bonitas Dei cum sit infinita, infinite diligibilis est. Infinite autem diligere nulla creatura potest, quia nullius virtutis finitae potest esse actus infinitus. Solus ergo Deus, cuius est tanta virtus in diligendo quanta est bonitas eius, se ipsum perfecte diligere potest secundum primum perfectionis modum.

Capitulus 4

De perfectione divinae dilectionis, quae convenit comprehensoribus.

Creaturae igitur rationali hic solus modus perfecte Deum diligendi possibilis est qui sumitur ex parte diligentis: ut scilicet secundum totam suam virtutem creatura rationalis diligat Deum: unde et in ipso divinae dilectionis praecepto hoc manifeste exprimitur. Dicitur enim Deut. VI, 5: diliges dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota fortitudine tua; sed Luc. X, 27, additur: et ex omni mente tua: ut cor referatur ad intentionem, mens ad cognitionem, anima ad affectionem, fortitudo ad executionem. Haec enim omnia in Dei dilectione sunt expendenda. Considerandum est autem, quod hoc dupliciter impleri contingit. Cum enim totum et perfectum sit cui nihil deest, ex toto corde et anima, fortitudine et mente Deus diligetur, si nihil in his omnibus nobis desit quin totum actualiter convertatur in Deum. Sed hic perfectae dilectionis modus non est viatorum, sed comprehensorum. Unde apostolus ad Philip. III, 12, dicit: non quod iam acceperim, aut iam perfectus sim; sequor autem si quo modo comprehendam; quasi tunc perfectionem expectans, cum ad comprehensionem pervenerit, beatitudinis palmam accipiens. Comprehensionem autem accipit non secundum quod importat inclusionem aut terminationem comprehensi, sic enim Deus incomprehensibilis est omni creaturae; sed secundum quod comprehensio importat consecutionem eius quod aliquis insequendo quaesivit. In illa enim caelesti beatitudine semper actualiter intellectus et voluntas creaturae rationalis in Deum fertur, cum in divina fruitione illa beatitudo consistat. Beatitudo autem non est in habitu, sed in actu. Et quia Deo creatura rationalis inhaerebit tanquam ultimo fini, qui est veritas summa; in finem autem ultimum omnia per intentionem referuntur, et secundum regulam ultimi finis omnia exequenda disponuntur; consequens est quod in illa beatitudinis perfectione creatura rationalis diligit Deum ex toto corde, dum tota eius intentio feretur in Deum ex omnibus quae cogitat, amat, aut agit; ex tota mente, dum semper actualiter mens eius feretur in Deum, ipsum semper videns, et omnia in ipso et secundum eius veritatem de omnibus iudicans; ex tota anima, dum tota affectio eius ad Deum diligendum feretur continue, et propter ipsum omnia diliguntur; ex tota fortitudine vel ex omnibus viribus, dum omnium exteriorum actuum ratio erit Dei dilectio. Hic est ergo secundus perfectae dilectionis divinae modus, qui est beatorum.

Capitulus 5

DE PERFECTIONE DIVINAE DILECTIONIS, QVAE IN STATU HUIUS VIAE EST DE NECESSITATE SALUTIS

Alio vero modo ex toto corde, mente, anima et fortitudine Deum diligimus si nihil nobis desit ad divinam dilectionem, quod actu vel habitu in Deum non referamus; et haec divinae dilectionis perfectio datur homini in praecepto. Primo quidem ut homo omnia in Deum referat sicut in

finem, sicut apostolus dicit I Cor. X, 31: sive manducatis sive bibitis vel aliquid aliud facitis, omnia in gloriam Dei facite: quod quidem impletur cum aliquis vitam suam ad Dei servitium ordinat, et per consequens omnia quae propter se ipsum agit, virtualiter ordinantur in Deum, nisi sint talia quae a Deo abducant, sicut peccata: et sic Deum diligit homo ex toto corde. Secundo, ut intellectum suum homo Deo subiiciat, ea credens quae divinitus traduntur, secundum illud apostoli II cor. X, 5: in captivatem redigentes omnem intellectum in obsequium christi: et sic Deus diligitur ex tota mente. Tertio, ut quaecumque homo amat, in Deo amet, et universaliter omnem suam affectionem ad Dei dilectionem referat: unde apostolus dicebat in II ad Cor. V 13 - 14: sive mente excedimus, Deo; sive sobrii sumus, vobis; caritas enim christi urget nos: et sic Deus ex tota anima diligitur. Quarto, ut omnia exteriora nostra, verba et opera ex divina caritate deriventur, secundum illud apostoli I ad Cor. Ult. 14: omnia vestra in caritate fiant; et sic Deus ex tota fortitudine diligitur. Hic est ergo tertius perfectae divinae dilectionis modus, ad quem omnes ex necessitate praecepti obligantur. Secundus vero modus nulli est possibilis in hac vita, nisi simul fuerit viator et comprehensor, ut dominus iesus christus.

Capitulus 6

De perfectione divinae dilectionis quae cadit sub consilio.

Sed cum apostolus dixisset: non quod iam comprehenderim, aut perfectus sim, subdit: sequor autem, si quo modo comprehendam; et postmodum subdit: quicumque ergo perfecti sumus, hoc sentiamus. Ex quibus verbis manifeste accipitur quod etsi comprehensorum perfectio non sit nobis possibilis in hac vita, aemulari tamen debemus ut in similitudinem perfectionis illius, quantum possibile est, nos trahamus: et in hoc perfectio huius vitae consistit, ad quam per consilia invitamur. Manifestum namque est quod humanum cor tanto intensius in aliquid unum fertur, quanto magis a multis revocatur. Sic igitur tanto perfectius animus hominis ad Deum diligendum fertur, quanto magis ab affectu temporalium removetur. Unde Augustinus dicit in libro LXXXIII quaestionum quod venenum caritatis est cupiditas temporalium rerum, augmentum vero eius est cupiditatis diminutio; perfectio vero nulla cupiditas. Omnia igitur consilia, quibus ad perfectionem invitamur, ad hoc pertinent ut animus hominis ab affectu temporalium avertatur, ut sic liberius mens tendat in Deum, contemplando, amando, et eius voluntatem implendo.

Capitulus 7

De prima perfectionis via quae est per dimissionem temporalium.

Inter temporalia vero bona primo relinquenda occurrunt bona extrinseca, quae divitiae nuncupantur; et hoc dominus consulit Matth. XIX, 21, dicens: si vis perfectus esse, vade, et vende omnia quae habes, et da pauperibus; et habebis thesaurum in caelo: et veni, sequere me: cuius consilii utilitas consequenter ostenditur. Primo quidem per evidentiam facti. Nam cum adolescens, qui de via perfectionis quaesierat hoc audisset, abiit tristis. Causaque tristitiae, ut Ieronymus dicit super Matth., redditur: erat enim habens multas possessiones, idest spinas, et tribulos, quae sementem dominicam suffocaverunt. Et chrysostomus idem exponens dicit quod: non similiter detinentur qui pauca habent, et qui multis abundant: quoniam adiectio divitiarum maiorem accendit flammam, et violentior fit cupido. Augustinus etiam dicit in Epist. Ad Paulinum et thesiam, quod terrena diliguntur artius adepta, quam concupita constringant; nam unde iuvenis ille tristis discessit, nisi quia magnas habebat divitias? aliud est enim nolle incorporare quae desunt, aliud iam incorporata divellere. Illa enim velut extranea repudiantur, ista velut membra praeceduntur. Secundo vero utilitas praedicti consilii manifestatur per domini

verba quae subdidit: quia dives difficile intrabit in regnum caelorum. Ut enim Ieronimus dicit, quia divitiae habitae difficile contemnuntur. Non dixit: impossibile est divitem intrare in regnum caelorum, sed difficile: ubi difficile ponitur, non impossibilitas praetenditur, sed raritas demonstratur. Et, sicut chrysostomus dicit super Matth., procedit ulterius dominus ad ostendendum quod est impossibile, dicens: facilius est camelum per foramen acus transire, quam divitem intrare in regnum caelorum. Ex quibus verbis, ut Augustinus dicit in Lib. De quaest. Evang., discipuli adverterunt, omnes qui divitias cupiunt, in divitum haberi numero: alioquin cum pauci sint divites in comparatione multitudinis pauperum, non quaesivissent discipuli: quis ergo poterit salvus esse? ex quibus duabus domini sententiis aperte ostenditur, quod divitias possidentes difficile intrant in regnum caelorum: quia, sicut ipse dominus alibi dicit, sollicitudo saeculi istius et fallacia divitiarum suffocat verbum Dei, et sine fructu efficitur. Eos vero qui divitias inordinate amant, impossibile est intrare in regnum caelorum, multo magis quam ad litteram camelum per foramen acus transire: hoc enim est impossibile, quia repugnat naturae; illud vero, quia repugnat divinae iustitiae, quae est virtuosior omni natura creata. Ex his ergo manifeste apparet ratio divini consilii: consilium enim datur de eo quod est utilius, secundum illud apostoli II ad Cor. VIII, 10: consilium in hoc do: hoc enim utile est. Utilius autem est ad vitam aeternam consequendam divitias abiicere quam eas possidere: quia possidentes divitias difficile intrant in regnum caelorum, eo quod difficile sit affectum divitiis possessis non alligari; quod iam facit impossibilitatem intrandi in regnum caelorum. Salubriter ergo dominus consuluit tanquam utilius, ut divitiae relinquuntur. Sed potest aliquis contra praemissa obicere quia matthaeus et zachaeus divitias habuerunt, et tamen in regnum caelorum intraverunt. Sed hoc Hieronymus solvens dicit: considerandum est quod eo tempore quo intraverunt, divites esse desierant. Sed cum Abraham nunquam dives esse desierit, quin potius in divitiis fuerit mortuus, et eas in morte reliquerit filiis, ut in Genesi legitur; videtur secundum praedicta non fuisse perfectus; cum tamen ad eum dominus dixerit, Gen. XVII, 1: esto perfectus. Quae quidem quaestio solvi non posset, si perfectio christianae vitae in ipsa dimissione divitiarum consisteret. Sequeretur enim quod qui divitias possidet, non possit esse perfectus. Sed si verba domini diligenter considerentur, non in ipsa divitiarum dimissione perfectionem posuit; sed hoc ostendit esse quasi quandam perfectionis viam, ut ipse modus loquendi ostendit, cum dicitur: si vis perfectus esse, vade, et vende omnia quae habes, et da pauperibus, et sequere me: quasi in sequela christi consistat perfectio, dimissio vero divitiarum sit perfectionis via: unde Hieronymus dicit super Matth.: quia non sufficit tantum relinquere, iungit Petrus quod perfectum est: et secuti sumus te. Origenes etiam in eodem loco dicit, quod hoc quod dicitur: si vis perfectus esse etc., non sic intelligitur ut in ipso tempore quo tradiderit bona sua pauperibus, fiat omnino perfectus; sed ex illa die incipiet speculatio Dei adducere eum ad omnes virtutes. Potest ergo contingere quod aliquis divitias possidens perfectionem habeat, caritate perfecta Deo inhaerens; et hoc modo Abraham divitias possidens perfectus fuit, non quidem habens animum divitiis irretitum, sed totaliter Deo coniunctum: et hoc significant verba domini dicentis ad eum: ambula coram me, et esto perfectus: quasi in hoc eius perfectionem esse ostendens quod coram Deo ambulaverit, eum perfecte amando usque ad contemptum sui et omnium suorum; quod maxime in immolatione filii demonstravit: unde ei dictum est: quia fecisti rem hanc, et non pepercisti filio tuo propter me, benedicam tibi. Gen. XXII, 16. Si quis vero ex hoc arguere velit inutile esse consilium domini de divitiis dimittendis, quia Abraham divitias possidens fuit perfectus, ad hoc iam patet responsio ex praedictis. Non enim dominus ea ratione hoc dedit consilium quasi divites perfecti esse non possint, aut intrare in regnum caelorum; sed quia non de facili possunt. Magna ergo virtus fuit Abrahae quod etiam divitias possidens, a divitiis liberum animum habuit; sicut

magna virtus fuit Samson, qui absque armis cum sola mandibula asinae multos hostes prostravit: nec tamen inutiliter consilium datur militi, ut ad bellum procedens assumat arma ad hostes vincendos. Nec ergo inutiliter datur consilium perfectionem desiderantibus ut dimittant divitias, quia in divitiis Abraham potuit esse perfectus. Facta enim mirabilia non sunt ad consequentiam trahenda: quia infirmi ea magis mirari et laudare possunt quam imitari: unde et in Eccli. Dicitur XXXI 8: beatus est dives qui inventus est sine macula, et qui post aurum non abiit, nec speravit in pecunia et thesauris. Magnae enim virtutis dives esse ostenditur, et perfecta caritate fixus in Deo, qui ex affectu divitiarum maculam peccati non trahit, qui post aurum concupiscendo non vadit, nec de divitiis confidendo per superbiam super alios se extollit: unde apostolus I ad Tim. Ult. Dicit: divitibus huius saeculi praecipe non altum sapere, nec sperare in incerto divitiarum. Sed quanto divitis taliter instituti maior est beatitudo et virtus, tanto talium divitum minor est numerus: unde sequitur: quis est hic, et laudabimus eum? fecit enim mirabilia in vita sua. Vere enim mirabilia facit qui in divitiis vivens divitiis affluentibus cor non apponit: et si quis talis est, absque dubio probatur perfectus: unde sequitur: quis est probatus in illo, idest in hoc quod absque macula divitias habeat, et perfectus inventus est? quasi dicat: rarus. Et hoc erit illi in gloriam aeternam: quod consonat verbis domini dicentis, quod difficile dives intrabit in regnum caelorum. Haec est ergo prima via perveniendi ad perfectionem, ut aliquis studio sequendi christum, dimissis divitiis paupertatem sectetur.

Capitulus 8

De secunda perfectionis via, quae est per abdicationem carnalium affectuum et matrimonii.

Ut autem secundam perfectionis viam convenientius ostendamus, accipiendum est verbum Augustini, qui dicit in 12 de Trin.: tanto magis inhaeretur Deo, quanto minus diligitur proprium. Secundum igitur ordinem priorum bonorum quae homo propter Deum contemnit, est attendendus ordo eorum quibus ad perfectam Dei inhaesionem pervenitur. Prius enim relinquenda occurrunt quae minus nobis coniuncta existunt: unde in primo loco occurrit ad perfectionem tendentibus exteriora bona relinquere, quae a nostra natura sunt separata. Post haec vero relinquenda occurrunt ea quae nobis naturae communiione et affinitatis cuiusque necessitate coniunguntur. Unde dominus dicit, Luc. XIV, 26: si quis venerit ad me, et non odit patrem suum et matrem et uxorem et filios et fratres et sorores... Non potest meus esse discipulus. Sed percunctare libet, ut Gregorius dicit, quomodo parentes et carnales amicos praecipimur odisse, qui iubemur et inimicos diligere. Sed si vim praecepti perpendimus, utrumque agere per discretionem valemus... Quasi enim per odium diligitur qui carnaliter sapiens dum prava nobis ingerit, non auditur. Sic enim exhibere proximis nostris odii discretionem debemus: ut in eis et diligamus quod sunt, et habeamus odio quod in Dei nobis itinere obsistunt. Quisquis enim iam aeterna concupiscit, in eam quam aggreditur causam Dei, extra patrem, extra matrem, extra uxorem, extra filios, extra cognatos, extra semetipsum fieri debet; ut eo verius cognoscat Deum, quo in eius causa neminem cognoscit. Manifestum namque est quod carnales affectus intentionem mentis diverberant, eiusque aciem obscurant. Inter ceteras autem proximorum necessitudines maxime affectu coniugali humanus animus irretitur; intantum quod, sicut dicitur Gen. II, 24, ex ore primi parentis, relinquet homo patrem et matrem, et adhaerebit uxori suae: et ideo ad perfectionem tendentibus maxime coniugale vinculum est vitandum, quia per hoc homo maxime curis saecularibus implicatur. Et hanc causam apostolus assignat sui consilii, quod dederat de continentia servanda, dicens I ad Cor. VII, 32: qui sine uxore est sollicitus est quae sunt domini, quomodo placeat Deo; qui autem cum uxore est, sollicitus est quae sunt mundi. Ut ergo homo liberius Deo vacet, eique perfectius inhaereat, secunda ad perfectionem via est

perpetua observatio castitatis. Habet autem et hoc continentiae bonum aliam idoneitatem ad perfectionem adipiscendam. Impeditur enim animus hominis ne libere Deo possit vacare, non solum ex amore exteriorum rerum, sed multo magis ex interiorum passionum impulsu. Inter omnes autem interiores passiones maxime rationem absorbet concupiscentia carnis, et venereorum usus: unde Augustinus dicit in I Lib. Soliloquiorum: nihil esse sentio quod magis ex arce deiciat animum virilem, quam blandimenta feminae, corporumque ille contactus, sine quo uxor haberi non potest. Et ideo continentiae via est maxime necessaria ad perfectionem consequendam: quam quidem viam apostolus consulit I ad Cor. VII, 25: de virginibus praeceptum domini non habeo; consilium autem do tanquam misericordiam consecutus... Ut sim fidelis. Huius autem viae utilitas ostenditur Matth. XIX, 10: ubi cum discipuli christo dicerent: si ita est causa hominis: cum uxore, non expedit nubere, dominus respondit: non omnes capiunt verbum istud, sed quibus datum Est. In quo arduitatem huius viae ostendit: et quia ab eius consecutione deficit hominum virtus communis; et quia ad eam non nisi dono Dei pervenitur: unde dicitur Sap. VIII, 21: scivi, quoniam aliter non possum esse continens, nisi Deus det: et hoc ipsum erat summa sapientia scire cuius esset hoc donum. Cui consonat quod apostolus dicit I Cor. VII, 7: volo omnes homines esse sicut me ipsum qui continentiam servo: sed unusquisque proprium habet donum a Deo, alius quidem sic, alius vero sic: ubi aperte continentiae bonum dono Dei adscribitur. Sed ne rursus aliquis ad hoc donum consequendum secundum suas vires conari negligat, dominus ad hoc hortatur consequenter. Et primo quidem exemplo, cum dicit: sunt eunuchi qui se ipsos castraverunt, non membrorum abscissione, ut chrysostomus dicit, sed malarum cogitationum interemptione; et deinde invitat proponens praemium, cum subdit: propter regnum caelorum; quia dicitur Sap. IV, 2: casta generatio... In perpetuum coronata triumphat, incoinquinatorum certaminum praemium vincens: et ultimo hortatur verbo, cum dicit, qui potest capere capiat: quae, ut Hieronymus dicit: hortantis domini vox est, et milites suos ad pudicitiae praemium concitantis, quasi, qui potest pugnare, pugnet et superet ac triumphet. Si quis autem obiectionem moveat de Abraham qui perfectus fuit, et aliis iustis antiquis a matrimonio non abstinentibus; patet responsio per hoc quod Augustinus dicit in Lib. De bono coniugali: continentia non corporis, sed animi virtus est. Virtutes autem animi aliquando in opere manifestantur, aliquando in habitu latent. Quocirca sicut non est impar meritum patientiae in Petro, qui passus est, et in iohanne, qui passus non est; sic non impar meritum est continentiae in iohanne, qui nullas expertus est nuptias, et in Abraham, qui filios generavit. Et illius enim caelibatus et illius connubium pro temporum distributione christo militaverunt. Dicat ergo fidelis continens: ego quidem non sum melior quam Abraham; sed melior est castitas caelibum quam castitas nuptiarum; quarum Abraham unam habuit in usu, ambas in habitu: caste quippe coniugaliter vixit. Esse autem castus sine coniugio potuit, sed tunc non oportuit. Ego vero facilius non utor nuptiis, quibus est usus Abraham, quam sic uterer nuptiis quemadmodum est usus Abraham; et ideo melior sum illis qui per animi incontinentiam non possunt quod ego; non illis qui propter temporis differentiam non fecerunt quod ego. Quod enim ego nunc ago, melius illi egissent, si tunc agendum esset; quod autem illi egerunt, sic ego non agerem, etiamsi nunc agendum esset. Haec autem Augustini solutio concordat cum eo quod supra dictum est de observantia paupertatis. Tantam enim virtutem perfectionis habebat in mente, ut nec propter temporalium possessionem nec propter usum coniugii mens eius deficeret a perfecta dilectione ad Deum. Si quis tamen eandem mentis virtutem non habens, cum possessione divitiarum et usu coniugii ad perfectionem pervenire contenderet, praesumptuose convinceretur errare, domini consilia parvipendens.

Capitulus 9

De his quibus homo iuvatur ad continentiam servandam.

Quia igitur per continentiae viam incedere tam arduum est, ut iuxta verbum domini, non omnes hoc capiant, sed Dei dono habeatur: per hanc viam incedere volentibus sic agere oportet ut ea devitent quibus a prosecutione huius itineris impediri possent. Triplex autem esse impedimentum continentiae apparet. Primum quidem ex parte corporis; secundum ex parte animae; tertium ex parte exteriorum personarum vel rerum. Ex parte quidem proprii corporis: quia, sicut apostolus dicit ad gal. V, 17, caro concupiscit adversus spiritum. Cuius carnis opera ibidem esse dicuntur fornicatio, immunditia, impudicitia et cetera huiusmodi. Haec autem concupiscentia carnis est lex de qua dicit rom. VII, 23: video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae. Quanto autem caro magis fovetur per ciborum affluentiam et deliciarum molliem, tanto huiusmodi concupiscentia magis crescit: unde Hieronymus dicit: venter mero aestuans cito despumat in libidinem: et Prov. XX 1: luxuriosa res est vinum; et iob XL, 16, dicitur de behemoth per quem diabolus significatur: sub umbra dormit in secreto calami in locis humentibus: quod exponens Gregorius 33 Moral. Dicit: loca humentia sunt opera voluptuosa. Pes quippe in arida terra non labitur, fixus vero in lubrica vix tenetur. In locis ergo humentibus iter vitae praesentis faciunt qui in hac ad iustitiam recti stare non possunt. Oportet igitur continentiae viam assumptibus, carnem propriam, abstractis deliciis, vigiliis et ieiuniis et huiusmodi exercitiis castigare. Cuius rei exemplum apostolus nobis ostendit, I ad Cor. IX, 25, dicens: omnis qui in agone contendit, ab omnibus se abstinet: et post modica subdit: castigo corpus meum et in servitutem redigo, ne, forte cum aliis praedicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar: et quod opere perfecit, verbo docuit: dicit enim ad Rom. XIII, 13, cum praemisisset: non in cubilibus et impudiciis: et carnis, inquit, curam ne feceritis in desideriiis. Recte autem dicit in desideriiis, idest ad voluptatem: quia ad necessitatem naturae carni cura est impendenda: unde idem apostolus dicit ad Eph. V 29: nemo carnem suam unquam odio habuit, sed nutrit, et fovet eam. Ex parte autem animae propositum continentiae impeditur, dum lascivis cogitationibus aliquis immoratur; unde dominus per prophetam dicit, Isai. I, 16: auferte malum cogitationum vestrarum ab oculis meis. Malae enim cogitationes plerumque ad male faciendum inducunt; unde dicitur Mich. II, 1: vae qui cogitatis inutile: et statim subditur: et operamini malum in cubilibus vestris. Inter ceteras tamen cogitationes malas magis ad peccandum inclinant cogitationes de delectationibus carnis. Cuius ratio etiam secundum philosophorum doctrinam duplex assignari potest. Una quidem quia, cum talis delectatio sit homini connaturalis, et a iuventute connutrita, facile in ipsam appetitus fertur, cum eam cogitatio proponit. Unde philosophus dicit 2 ethic. Quod delectationem diiudicare non possumus de facili quin accipiamus eam. Secunda ratio est, quia, ut idem dicit in 3 ethic., delectabilia in particulari sunt magis voluntaria quam in universali. Manifestum est autem quod per moram cogitationis ad particularia quaeque descendimus: unde per cogitationem diuturnam maxime libido provocatur: et propter hoc apostolus I ad Cor., VI, 18, dicit: fugite fornicationem: quia, ut Glossa ibidem dicit, cum aliis vitiis potest expectari conflictus; sed hanc fugite, ne approximatis, quia non aliter melius potest vinci. Contra igitur huiusmodi continentiae impedimentum multiplex remedium invenitur. Quorum primum et praecipuum est ut mens circa contemplationem divinorum et orationem occupetur; unde apostolus dicit ad Ephes. V, 18: nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria; sed impleamini spiritu sancto, loquentes vobismet ipsis in Psalmis et hymnis et canticis spiritualibus: quod ad contemplationem pertinere videtur: cantantes et psallentes in cordibus vestris domino: quod ad orationem videtur pertinere. Hinc dominus per prophetam dicit, Isai. XLVIII, 9: laude mea infrenabo te, ne intereas. Est enim quoddam frenum animam ab interitu peccati retrahens laus

divina. Secundum remedium est studium Scripturarum, secundum illud Hieronymi ad rusticum monachum: ama Scripturarum studia, et carnis vitia non amabis. Unde apostolus cum dixisset timotheo, I Tim. IV 12: exemplum esto fidelium in verbo, in conversatione, in caritate, in fide, in castitate; statim subdit: dum venio, attende lectioni. Tertium remedium est quibuscumque bonis cogitationibus animum occupare: unde chrysostomus dicit super matthaeum quod abscissio membri non ita comprimit tentationes et tranquillitatem facit, ut cogitationis frenum: unde apostolus ad philipp. IV, 8, dicit: de cetero, fratres, quaecumque sunt vera, quaecumque pudica, quaecumque iusta, quaecumque sancta, quaecumque amabilia, quaecumque bonae famae; si qua virtus, si qua laus disciplinae, haec cogitate. Quartum remedium est ut homo ab otio desistens et in corporalibus laboribus se ipsum exerceat: dicitur enim eccli. XXXIII, 29: multam malitiam docuit otiositas. Et specialiter otium est vitiorum carnalium incentivum: unde dicitur Ez. XVI, 49: haec fuit iniquitas sodomae sororis tuae, superbia, saturitas panis et abundantia et otium ipsius. Et ideo Hieronymus ad rusticum monachum scribens dicit: fac aliquid operis, ut semper te diabolus inveniatur occupatum. Quintum remedium adhibetur contra carnis concupiscentiam etiam per aliquas animi perturbationes: unde Hieronymus refert in eadem Epist., quod in quodam coenobio quidam adolescens nulla operis magnitudine flammam poterat carnis extinguere; eum periclitantem pater monasterii hac arte servavit. Imposito cuidam viro gravi ut iurgiis atque conviciis insectaretur hominem, et post irrogatam iniuriam primus veniret ad quaerimonias, vocati testes pro eo loquebantur qui contumeliam fecerat. Solus pater monasterii defensionem suam opponebat, ne abundanti tristitia frater absorberetur. Ita annus ductus est, quo expleto interrogatus adolescens super cogitationibus pristinis, respondit: Papae, vivere me non licet, et fornicari libet? p ex parte autem exteriorum rerum propositum continentiae impeditur per aspectum et frequentia colloquia mulierum et earum consortia: unde dicitur Eccli. IX, 9: propter speciem mulieris multi perierunt: et ex hoc concupiscentia quasi ignis exardescit: et postea subditur: colloquium illius quasi ignis exardescit. Et ideo contra hoc est adhibendum remedium quod ibidem dicitur: ne respicias mulierem multivolam ne forte incidas in laqueos illius: cum saltatrice ne assiduus sis, nec audias illam, ne forte pereas in efficacia illius: et eccli. XLII, 12, dicitur: omni homini noli intendere in specie, et in medio mulierum noli commorari. De vestimentis enim procedit tinea, et a muliere iniquitas viri. Unde Hieronymus contra vigilantium scribens dicit, quod monachus sciens imbecillitatem suam, et vas fragile quod portat, timet offendere ne impingat et corruat, atque frangatur; unde et mulierum, et maxime adolescentularum, vitat aspectum, ne eum capiat oculus meretricis, ne forma pulcherrima ad illicitos ducat amplexus. Ex quo patet quod, sicut abbas Moyses dicit in collationibus patrum, pro puritate cordis servanda, solitudo sectanda est, ac ieiuniorum inedia, vigiliis, labores corporis, nuditatem, lectionem, ceterasque virtutes debere nos suscipere noverimus; ut scilicet per illas ab universis passionibus noxiis illaesum parare cor nostrum, et conservare possimus, et ad perfectionem caritatis istis gradibus innitendo conscendere. Ob hoc igitur in religionibus sunt huiusmodi opera instituta: non quia in ipsis principaliter consistat perfectio: sed quia his quasi quibusdam instrumentis ad perfectionem pervenitur. Unde post pauca ibidem subditur: igitur ieiunia, vigiliae, meditatio Scripturarum, nuditas ac privatio omnium facultatum, non perfectio, sed perfectionis instrumenta sunt; quia non in ipsis consistit disciplinae finis, sed per illa pervenitur ad finem. Si quis autem obiiciat, quod absque ieiunio, vigiliis et huiusmodi exercitiis potest homo perfectionem acquirere, praesertim cum de domino dicatur Matth. XI, 19: venit filius hominis manducans et bibens, sui que discipuli non ieiunarent, quemadmodum discipuli ioannis et Pharisei; ad hoc respondetur in glosa quod ioannes vinum et siceram non bibit, quia abstinentia indiget cui nulla est potentia naturae. Deus autem, qui peccata potest condonare, cur a

peccatoribus manducantibus declinaret, quos ieiunantibus poterat facere fortiores? p discipuli ergo christi non habebant opus ieiunio, quia praesentia sponsi illis fortitudinem dabat maiorem quam discipuli ioannis per ieiunium haberent: unde dominus ibidem dicit: venient dies quando auferetur ab eis sponsus, et tunc ieiunabunt: quod exponens chrysostomus dicit: ieiunium triste est non naturaliter, sed his qui sunt imbecillius dispositi; his enim qui sapientiam contemplari desiderant, delectabile est; quia ergo discipuli imbecilles erant, non erat tempus tristia introducendi quousque firmarentur: per quod monstratur quod non gulae erat quod fiebat, sed dispensationis cuiusdam. Quod autem huiusmodi exercitia expediant ad vitanda peccata et perfectionem consequendam, apostolus expresse ostendit II ad Cor. VI, 3, dicens: nemini dantes ullam offensionem, ut non vituperetur ministerium nostrum; sed in omnibus exhibeamus nosmet ipsos in multa patientia, in necessitatibus, in angustiis, in plagis, in carceribus, in seditionibus, in laboribus, in vigiliis, in ieiuniis, in castitate.

Capitulus 10

De tertia perfectionis via quae est per abrenuntiationem propriae voluntatis.

Non solum autem necessarium est ad perfectionem caritatis consequendam, quod homo exteriora abiciat, sed etiam quodammodo se ipsum derelinquat. Dicit enim dionysius, 4 cap. De divinis nominibus, quod divinus amor est extasim faciens, id est hominem extra se ipsum ponens, non sinens hominem sui ipsius esse, sed eius quod amatur: cuius rei exemplum in se ipso demonstravit apostolus dicens ad Gal. II, 20: vivo ego, iam non ego, vivit vero in me christus, quasi suam vitam non suam aestimans, sed christi: quia quod proprium sibi erat contemnens, totus christo inhaerebat. Hoc etiam in quibusdam esse completum ostendit, cum dicit ad Col. III, 3: mortui estis, et vita vestra abscondita est cum christo in Deo. Exhortatur etiam alios ut ad hoc perveniant, cum dicit II ad Cor. V, 15. Pro omnibus mortuus est christus: ut et qui vivunt, iam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est. Et ideo, ut habetur Luc. XIV, 26, postquam dixerat: si quis venit ad me et non odit patrem suum et matrem et uxorem et filios et fratres et sorores: tanquam aliquid maius addens subdit: adhuc autem et animam suam; non potest meus esse discipulus. Hoc etiam idem dominus docet Matth. XVI 24 dicens: si quis vult post me venire, abneget semet ipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me. Huius autem salubris abnegationis et caritativi odii observatio partim quidem necessaria est ad salutem et omnibus qui salvantur communis; partim autem ad perfectionis pertinet complementum. Ut enim ex supraposita dionysii auctoritate apparet, de ratione divini amoris est ut amans non sui ipsius remaneat, sed amati. Secundum ergo divini amoris gradum necesse est et odium et abnegationem praedictam distingui. Est autem necessarium ad salutem ut homo sic Deum diligat ut in eo finem suae intentionis ponat, nihilque admittat quod contrarium divinae dilectioni existat; et ideo consequenter et odium et abnegatio sui ipsius est de necessitate salutis, cum, ut Gregorius dicit in omelia, vitamur quod per vetustatem fuimus, et ad hoc nitimur quod per novitatem vocamur; et sic nosmet ipsos relinquimus et abnegamus. Et sicut in alia omelia dicit: tunc bene animam nostram odimus, cum eius carnalibus desideriis non acquiescimus, cum eius appetitum frangimus et eius voluptatibus reluctamur. Ad perfectionem vero pertinet ut homo propter intentionem divini amoris etiam ea abiiciat quibus licite uti posset, ut per hoc liberius Deo vacet. Secundum hunc ergo modum etiam consequens est ut et odium et abnegatio sui ipsius ad perfectionem pertineat. Unde ex ipso modo loquendi apparet haec a domino proposita esse quasi ad perfectionem pertineant. Sicut enim dicit Matth. XIX, 21: si vis perfectus esse, vade et vende omnia quae habes, non necessitatem imponens, sed voluntati relinquens: ita dicit: si quis vult post me venire, abneget semet ipsum. Quod chrysostomus exponens dicit: non coactivum facit

sermonem: non enim dicit: si vos volueritis et non volueritis, oportet hoc vos pati. Similiter cum dixisset: si quis venit ad me, et non odit patrem suum etc. Postmodum subdit: quis enim ex vobis volens aedificare turrem, (non) computat sumptus qui necessarii sunt, si habeat ad perficiendum? quod exponens Gregorius in homil. Dicit: quia sublimia praecepta data sunt, protinus comparatio aedificandae sublimitatis adiungitur; et post pauca dicit: istos sumptus dives ille habere non potuit qui, cum praecepta relinquendi omnia audisset, tristis abscessit. Ex quibus patet hoc ad perfectionis consilium secundum aliquem modum pertinere. Hoc autem consilium perfectissime martyres impleverunt: de quibus Augustinus dicit in sermone de martyribus quod nulli tantum impendunt, quantum qui se ipsos impendunt. Martyres ergo sunt qui vitam praesentem propter christum quodammodo odio habuerunt, abnegantes se ipsos: quia, ut chrysostomus dicit super Matth., qui negat alium, vel fratrem, vel famulum, vel quemcumque, etsi flagellatum viderit et quaecumque patientem, non assistit, non adiuvat; ita vult corpori nostro nos non ignoscere; ut etsi flagellaverint, vel quodcumque aliud fecerint, corpori non parcamus. Et ne aestimes quod usque ad verba tantum et contumelias oportet abnegare se ipsum; ostendit quod oportet abnegare se ipsum usque ad mortem etiam turpissimam, scilicet crucis; unde sequitur: et tollat crucem suam. Hoc autem perfectissimum ideo diximus, quia martyres illud propter Deum contemnunt, scilicet propriam vitam, propter quam omnia temporalia quaeruntur; et cuius conservatio, etiam cum omnium aliorum amissione, omnibus aliis praefertur. Magis enim homo vult et divitias perdere et amicos, adhuc autem corporis infirmitati succumbere, et in servitutem redigi, quam vita privari; unde hoc beneficium victis a victoribus praestatur, ut vitae parcentes conservent servituti subiectos. Unde Satan ad dominum dixit, ut legitur iob II 4: pellem pro pelle, et cuncta quae habet homo, dabit pro anima sua, idest pro corporali vita servanda. Inter alia vero quanto aliquid magis naturaliter amatur, tanto perfectius contemnitur propter christum. Nihil autem est homini amabilius libertate propriae voluntatis. Per hanc enim homo est et aliorum dominus, per hanc aliis uti vel frui potest, per hanc etiam suis actibus dominatur. Unde, sicut homo dimittens divitias, vel personas coniunctas, eas abnegat; ita deserens propriae voluntatis arbitrium, per quod ipse sui dominus est, se ipsum abnegare invenitur. Nihilque est quod homo naturali affectu magis refugiat quam servitutem: unde et nihil posset homo pro alio amplius impendere post hoc quod se ipsum in mortem pro eo traderet, quam quod se servituti eius subiugaret: unde, ut dicitur tob. IX, 2, tobias iunior dixit ad Angelum: si me ipsum tradam tibi servum, non ero condignus providentiae tuae. Huius autem voluntatis libertatem aliqui sibi propter Deum particulariter adimunt, dum quodcumque particulare votum emittunt de quocumque faciendo vel non faciendo. Per votum enim necessitas quaedam voventi imponitur, ut id de cetero non liceat quod prius licebat; sed quadam necessitate constringitur ad reddendum quod vovit: unde in Psal. Lxv, 15, dicitur: reddam tibi vota mea, quae distinxerunt labia mea; et Eccl. V 3 dicitur: si quid vovisti Deo, ne moreris reddere: displicet enim ei infidelis et stulta promissio. Aliqui vero libertati propriae voluntatis totaliter abrenuntiant, se propter Deum aliis subiicientes per obedientiae votum. Cuius quidem obedientiae exemplum praecipuum in christo habemus, de quo apostolus dicit Rom. V, 19: sicut per inobedientiam unius hominis peccatores constituti sunt multi, ita et per unius hominis obedientiam iusti constituentur multi. Quam quidem obedientiam apostolus manifestat ad philipp. II, 8, dicens: humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem. Haec autem obedientia in abrenuntiatione propriae voluntatis consistit: unde ipse dicebat Matth. XXVI 39: mi pater, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste; verumtamen non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu vis; et Ioan. VI, 38, dicit: descendi de caelo, non ut faciam voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem eius qui misit me. In quo nobis dedit exemplum, ut sicut ipse suam voluntatem humanam abnegabat supponendo eam divinae, ita et nos nostram voluntatem Deo totaliter

supponamus, et hominibus qui nobis praeponuntur tanquam Dei ministri. Unde apostolus dicit ad Hebr. Ult.: obedite praepositis vestris, et subiaccete eis.

Summa theologiae II-II, q. 184, a. 3

Ad tertium sic proceditur. Videtur quod perfectio viae non consistit in praeceptis, sed in consiliis.

Dicit enim dominus, Matth. XIX, si vis perfectus esse, vade et vende omnia quae habes et da pauperibus, et veni, sequere me. Sed istud est consilium. Ergo perfectio attenditur secundum consilia, et non secundum praecepta.

Praeterea, ad observantiam praeceptorum omnes tenentur, cum sint de necessitate salutis. Si ergo perfectio christianae vitae consistat in praeceptis, sequitur quod perfectio sit de necessitate salutis, et quod omnes ad eam teneantur. Quod patet esse falsum.

Praeterea, perfectio christianae vitae attenditur secundum caritatem, ut dictum est. Sed perfectio caritatis non videtur consistere in observantia praeceptorum, quia perfectionem caritatis praecedat et augmentum et inchoatio ipsius, ut patet per Augustinum, super canonicam Ioan.; non autem potest caritas inchoari ante observationem praeceptorum, quia, ut dicitur Ioan. XIV, si quis diligit me, sermonem meum servabit. Ergo perfectio vitae non attenditur secundum praecepta, sed secundum consilia.

Sed contra est quod dicitur Deut. VI, diliges dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo. Et Levit. XIX dicitur, diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum.

Haec autem sunt duo praecepta de quibus dominus dicit, Matth. XXII in his duobus praeceptis pendet lex et prophetae. Perfectio autem caritatis, secundum quam dicitur vita christiana esse perfecta, attenditur secundum hoc quod Deum ex toto corde diligamus et proximum sicut nos ipsos. Ergo videtur quod perfectio consistat in observantia praeceptorum.

Respondeo dicendum quod perfectio dicitur in aliquo consistere dupliciter, uno modo, per se et essentialiter; alio modo, secundario et accidentaliter. Per se quidem et essentialiter consistit perfectio christianae vitae in caritate, principaliter quidem secundum dilectionem Dei, secundario autem secundum dilectionem proximi, de quibus dantur praecepta principalia divinae legis, ut dictum est. Non autem dilectio Dei et proximi cadit sub praecepto secundum aliquam mensuram, ita quod id quod est plus sub consilio remaneat, ut patet ex ipsa forma praecepti, quae perfectionem demonstrat, ut cum dicitur, diliges dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, totum enim et perfectum idem sunt, secundum philosophum, in III physic.; et cum dicitur, diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum, unusquisque enim seipsum maxime diligit. Et hoc ideo est quia finis praecepti caritas est, ut apostolus dicit, I ad Tim. I, in fine autem non adhibetur aliqua mensura, sed solum in his quae sunt ad finem, ut philosophus dicit, in I polit.; sicut medicus non adhibet mensuram quantum sanet, sed quanta medicina vel diaeta utatur ad sanandum. Et sic patet quod perfectio essentialiter consistit in praeceptis. Unde Augustinus dicit, in libro de perfectione iustitiae, cur ergo non praeciperetur homini ista perfectio, quamvis eam in hac vita nemo habeat? secundario autem et instrumentaliter perfectio consistit in consiliis. Quae omnia, sicut et praecepta, ordinantur ad caritatem, sed aliter et aliter. Nam praecepta alia ordinantur ad removendum ea quae sunt caritati contraria, cum quibus scilicet caritas esse non potest, consilia autem ordinantur ad removendum impedimenta actus caritatis, quae tamen caritati non contrariantur, sicut est matrimonium, occupatio negotiorum saecularium, et alia huiusmodi. Unde Augustinus dicit, in enchirid., quaecumque mandat Deus, ex quibus unum est, non moechaberis; et quaecumque non iubentur, sed speciali consilio monentur, ex quibus unum est, bonum est homini mulierem non tangere, tunc recte fiunt cum referuntur ad diligendum deum et proximum

propter Deum, et in hoc saeculo et in futuro. Et inde est quod in collationibus patrum dicit abbas Moyses, ieiunia, vigiliae, meditatio Scripturarum, nuditas ac privatio omnium facultatum, non perfectio, sed perfectionis instrumenta sunt quia non in ipsis consistit disciplinae illius finis, sed per illa pervenitur ad finem. Et supra praemisit quod ad perfectionem caritatis istis gradibus conscendere nitimur.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod in illis verbis domini aliquid ponitur quasi via ad perfectionem, hoc scilicet quod dicitur, vade et vende omnia quae habes et da pauperibus, aliud autem subditur in quo perfectio consistit, scilicet quod dicit, et sequere me. Unde Hieronymus dicit, super Matth., quod quia non sufficit tantum relinquere, Petrus iungit quod perfectum est, idest, secuti sumus te. Ambrosius autem, super illud Luc. V, sequere me, dicit, sequi iubet non corporis gressu, sed mentis affectu, quod fit per caritatem. Et ideo ex ipso modo loquendi apparet quod consilia sunt quaedam instrumenta perveniendi ad perfectionem, dum dicitur, si vis perfectus esse, vade et vende etc., quasi dicat, hoc faciendo ad hunc finem pervenies.

Ad secundum dicendum quod, sicut Augustinus dicit, in libro de perfect. Iustit., perfectio caritatis homini in hac vita praecipitur, quia recte non curritur si quo currendum est nesciatur. Quomodo autem sciretur, si nullis praeceptis ostenderetur? cum autem id quod cadit sub praecepto diversimode possit impleri, non efficitur transgressor praecepti aliquis ex hoc quod non optimo modo implet, sed sufficit quod quocumque modo impleat illud. Perfectio autem divinae dilectionis universaliter quidem cadit sub praecepto, ita quod etiam perfectio patriae non excluditur ab illo praecepto, ut Augustinus dicit, sed transgressionem praecepti evadit qui quocumque modo perfectionem divinae dilectionis attingit. Est aut infimus divinae dilectionis gradus ut nihil supra eum, aut contra eum, aut aequaliter ei diligatur, a quo gradu perfectionis qui deficit, nullo modo implet praeceptum. Est autem aliquis gradus perfectae dilectionis qui non potest impleri in via, ut dictum est, a quo qui deficit, manifestum est quod non est transgressor praecepti. Et similiter non est transgressor praecepti qui non attingit ad medios perfectionis gradus, dummodo attingat ad infimum.

Ad tertium dicendum quod, sicut homo habet quandam perfectionem suae naturae statim cum nascitur, quae pertinet ad rationem speciei, est autem alia perfectio ad quam per augmentum adducitur, ita etiam est quaedam perfectio caritatis pertinens ad ipsam speciem caritatis, ut scilicet Deus super omnia diligatur et nihil contra eum ametur; est autem alia perfectio caritatis, etiam in hac vita, ad quam aliquis per aliquod spirituale augmentum pervenit, ut puta cum homo etiam a rebus licitis abstinet, ut liberius divinis obsequiis vacet.