

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

St. Thomas Aquinas

Part I: Chapters 1-7

translated by

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Magi Books, Inc., Albany, N.Y.

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Part II: Chapters 8-21

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INTRODUCTION

St. Thomas' commentary on the Gospel of St. John is unique among his many writings on Sacred Scripture. It is the work of a master theologian, delivered at the University of Paris, then the intellectual center in Christendom, when Thomas was at the height of his fame and apostolic zeal for souls. A fourteenth-century list of Thomas' writings notes that this commentary is a *reportatio* by Reginald of Piperno and adds "better than which none can be found." 🗨️

A *reportatio* is a verbal report of an actual lecture taken down by a scribe or student in the course of actual delivery. In this case the scribe was the faithful Friar Reginald of Piperno, who had been the “constant companion,” or socius, for the last fifteen years of Thomas’ short but busy life. The Italian Province of Dominicans wisely provided Thomas with this kind of personal secretary and general factotum after he returned from Paris as a Master in Sacred Theology in 1260. 🗨️

A *reportatio* is not exactly a dictation in our sense of the term; it is more like a student’s notebook in shorthand containing basically the gist of what is being said, but usually with varying numbers of verbal omissions and inaccuracies. But this commentary is more than a mere scribal report. It was in fact “corrected” by Thomas himself—if we are to believe Tolomeo of Lucca, one of Thomas’ early biographers and confreres—before the commentary went into circulation through copies made by hand, the customary mode of publication before the era of the printing press. More than that: according to Bernard Gui, another confrere and early biographer, Thomas himself wrote out in full the commentary on the first five chapters of John (and hence this section ought to be considered an authentic *expositio*, or authoritative version), while the rest of it survived in the hand of Reginald, corrected by Thomas.

This commentary was very popular in the Middle Ages, and it ranks among the best of Thomas’ work as a master theologian and saintly man of faith. It was read not only by theologians searching for the truth, but also by preachers and pious men and women desiring solid food for meditation and fervent prayer. Scattered throughout the world there still exist thirty-three complete and thirteen incomplete manuscript copies of this work, attesting to its considerable popularity before the age of printing. Innumerable copies of this work have no doubt been lost or destroyed in the tumult of centuries following the Middle Ages.

This detailed commentary is St. Thomas’ personal response to the Word of God Incarnate as described in the sublime words of John “the Divine.” For St. Thomas, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob spoke to his chosen people through the mouth of prophets in the long course of salvation history, “But when the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the Law and to enable us to be adopted as sons” (Gal 4:4-5). This Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, is the total manifestation of the Father, the Eternal Word made flesh. There is nothing left unsaid in the Word; the Father’s love is complete in the love the Son bears for the Father and for us. Christ’s whole life, his passion, death, and resurrection, are the praise and glory of the Father “through the working of the Holy Spirit.” “You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (Jn 14:11). “Whatever you ask for in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified

in the Son" (Jn 14:13). Christ's "food" was to do the will of his Father in all things, thus glorifying the Father in Jesus.

One of St. Thomas' basic theological principles is that everything Jesus Christ did and said was for our instruction and imitation. Thus the sanctity of our lives is the on-going praise and glory of the Father, through the Son, by the working of the Holy Spirit. The very being of the Father is the unqualified affirmation of love for the Son and *for us*, in the Son. "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8). This love elicits from us an unreserved affirmation of love for God and neighbor, by which God is glorified and resplendent in us. The whole of our happiness is this eternal "glory" in tasting and seeing that the Lord is good (see Ps 34:8). This commentary is St. Thomas' tasting and seeing the goodness of Jesus, the Word Incarnate, embodied in the tender words of St. John, the "beloved disciple," who leaned on the breast of the Savior at the Last Supper.

Thomas brought to his writing of this commentary on John all the resources at his disposal—which were considerable—especially the riches of the whole Patristic teaching of the "Saints" (the *sancti Doctores*), the wealth of a living tradition in the Roman Church contained in its teaching, laws, liturgy, and the living Spirit, as well as fidelity to the infallible norms of the Holy See.

In an address to students and professors of the "Angelicum" (now the Pontifical University of St. Thomas in Rome) given on January 14, 1958, Pope Pius XII extolled the virtues of its patron, the Angelic Doctor, who serves as a divinely inspired guide in both philosophy and theology. 💬

Pope Pius spoke especially of St. Thomas' own studies as a norm for every student of the religious disciplines. Just as St. Thomas diligently explored and studied the Bible as the font and life-spring of all theological studies, so too should the modern student find in biblical studies the source of his theological development. As St. Thomas himself assures us, "[sacred doctrine] uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures properly and of necessity in its investigations ... for our faith is founded on the Revelation made to the Apostles and Prophets, who wrote the canonical books, but not on revelation (if such there be) made to other teachers." 💬

In this conviction Thomas developed all his own theology. That is to say, the "complement" to Thomas' speculations and synthesis are to be found in his commentaries on the books of the Old and New Testaments, especially those on the Epistles of St. Paul.

In the opinion of those most expert to judge, Thomas' commentaries on Scripture

"shine with such solidity, subtlety, and precision that they can be numbered among his greatest theological works," and are to be esteemed as such. "Wherefore, if anyone should neglect them, he is scarcely to be said to clearly and fully enjoy a familiarity and knowledge of the holy Angelic Doctor." The significant fact is not that Pius XII emphasized the importance of studying Thomas' biblical commentaries to Dominicans, who had made their special prerogative the teaching of "speculative Thomistic theology" and the pursuit of contemplative prayer. The significant fact is that Pius XII expressed these sentiments shortly before his death and fifteen years after one of his most important encyclicals, *Divino afflante spiritu* (30 Sept. 1943), the basic charter of all Catholic biblical studies in our day, leading to the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei verbum*, of the Second Vatican Council (18 Nov. 1965). In other words, the enormous advances of modern biblical studies do not automatically nullify the importance of St. Thomas' commentaries on the Sacred Text.

St. Thomas' commentaries on the Sacred Text are typically *medieval*, that is, they lack the unction, colloquialism, and engaging informality of Patristic commentaries (which were largely homilies), and the technical and sometimes journalistic resources of modern commentaries, explanations, and paraphrases. In other words, it is easier to read St. Augustine's commentary on John than it is to read St. Thomas' or that of any other medieval writer addressing students in the "schools" of Paris and elsewhere. The big difference is between Patristic and Monastic commentaries, which were largely homiletic, pastoral, personal, and mystical, on the one hand, and Scholastic commentaries aimed at teaching students in the university or *studium* the literal meaning of the text. The style of medieval Scholastic commentaries is rather formal, literal, student-orientated and bookish. This style often makes such commentaries difficult for a modern reader to follow, and to some extent hinders him from deriving the greatest benefit for his mind and heart. At first glance such a "commentary"—with its definitions, divisions, arguments footnotes and concern for the orthodox meaning of the sacred message—may seem like searching for a needle in a haystack. But in the case of Thomas' commentaries the reader may be confident that his efforts at discovering that needle will prove to be both intellectually and spiritually rewarding; once discovered, it will be valued as "the pearl of great price" (Mt 13:46).

In this introduction I hope to show the historical context of this particular commentary and to indicate some aids to a fruitful study of it.

First of all, this work is a biblical commentary by a master in a medieval university. In the Middle Ages, the Bible and the Bible alone was the official basis for the teaching of theology by fully qualified masters in the major universities of

Europe. In fact, one could say with some justification that the ultimate goal of all medieval education was an understanding of the Bible for those who pursued the full course in the Faculty of Theology. Such an understanding was the nature of sacred theology (*fides quaerens intellectum*, "faith seeking understanding"). It was the source of all preaching of the Word of God, and it was the inexhaustible font of living water for the spiritual life. In order to reach such a lofty goal, much preparation was required. First, tools had to be acquired as a means of such study. This was the role of a good liberal arts education and the acquisition of philosophy, "the handmaid of theology." The study of the liberal arts and the acquisition of philosophy were functions of the Arts Faculty in the university or *studium*. Approximately eight years were devoted by medieval students to acquiring these tools—roughly equivalent to our four years of high school and four years of college. After the full course had been completed in "the humanities," the young man, generally in his mid-twenties, would begin his study of the Sacred Text, having already heard many sermons in Church and having received much instruction at home. His study of the Sacred Text began with *listening* and *reading*.

In the Middle Ages, a personal copy of the Bible was relatively rare, certainly outside university circles. Every copy of the Bible was written out by hand on parchment, a writing surface made from carefully treated skins of sheep. Such a copy was extremely expensive and hard to come by. Although every student of theology tried desperately to obtain a personal copy, most people had to rely on hearing the Word read to them and recollecting from memory the actual words of the Bible. For that reason the beginner in theology would *listen* to older students and the master (professor). One of the older students, the bachelor of theology, read aloud and paraphrased a particular book of the Bible. This bachelor was called a "Cursor Biblicus," a "runner through" the actual words of the Bible, who did this to acquaint himself and his hearers with the inspired words.

A splendid example of the work of such a "runner" is St. Thomas' commentary on Isaiah; it is the work of a *cursor* and not that of a master. Only a master could expound the text with authority and confidence; the bachelor merely skimmed through it as a runner would skim over the course in a race. A higher ranking bachelor devoted his energies mainly to explaining the official theological handbook, the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (d. 1160). These *Sentences* were a systematic collection of Patristic teachings, arranged in four books following the order of the Apostles' Creed. This bachelor was called the *bachalarius Sententiarum*, a "Bachelor of the *Sentences*." After listening to others for about four years, the young student of theology would himself become a bachelor and perform certain duties under a particular master, his main professor of theology.

Every university in the Middle Ages had a limited number of chairs, or

professorships, for the masters to occupy. At the time of St. Thomas, there were twelve chairs of theology at the University of Paris, the Dominicans having two of them. Before occupying one of these chairs, the student had to have devoted many long years to study and actual discussions, or “disputations,” in the university. He had to be at least thirty-five years old before meriting the title of “Master of the Sacred Page” and the right to expound the Bible in an authoritative manner as a true theologian, professionally qualified.

St. Thomas was twice professor of theology at Paris—a fact most unusual in itself. There were very few such cases where a fully fledged master would return to his old chair, thus preventing a new master from occupying it. But the intellectual, social, and religious climate in Paris at that time demanded the return of Thomas to the center of all theological learning in Europe. The new mendicant Orders (mainly Dominicans and Franciscans) were again being attacked by secular (i.e., diocesan) masters of theology, and their right to teach, preach, and beg was challenged by some of the most powerful voices in Europe. The center of this controversy was the University of Paris, where the very existence of Dominicans and Franciscans was under fire. At the climax of this renewed attack, the second in the history of the Dominican Order, St. Thomas was recalled to Paris by the Master General of the Dominican Order, Blessed John of Vercelli. Thomas arrived in Paris with his companion Reginald in the cold winter of 1269 after the academic term had begun. Immediately Thomas took upon himself the duties of a master in theology, namely, lecturing on a carefully chosen book of the Bible, presiding at academic “disputations” and resolving the question under discussion, and preaching to the university crowd. At the same time, he was composing the Second Part of his *Summa theologiae*, which he had begun in Rome two years earlier, and dictating a number of literal commentaries on various works of Aristotle for young masters in arts, that is, teachers in the Faculty of Arts, whose duty it was to expound the text of Aristotle. During the two and a half years Thomas spent at Paris the second time, he successfully defended the rights of mendicants to teach, preach, and flourish. During this same Parisian regency he lectured on the Gospel of St. John.

These lectures on John would have been lost to posterity had not the faithful Reginald taken notes, which were later “corrected” by Thomas himself. The reason Thomas “corrected” Reginald’s transcription was that a wealthy secular (i.e., diocesan) student wanted a copy for himself. This student was Adenulf of Anagni, an Italian cleric, provost of Saint-Omer (since 1264), later master in theology (1282-85), and canon of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Adenulf, a student of Thomas during the years 1269-72, offered a considerable amount of money to have a professional scribe make a copy of this remarkable commentary for himself. Without Adenulf’s enthusiasm and money, the “lectures” (*lecturae*) on John would have remained a simple report, or *reportatio*. If it had not been for

Reginald, apparently, these lectures would have gone completely from history. But the fact is that we do have at hand the acute mind of Thomas Aquinas, a master theologian and saint, on the Gospel of St. John. This commentary reflects the mind of Thomas at its peak, but before he composed the Third Part of the *Summa* dealing with Christ, the Sacraments, and the Church. It is a scholastic analysis of St. John's remarkable testimony of the Good News of Salvation, namely, that the Word became flesh, died for our salvation, and is now risen from the dead to come again as our merciful judge.

Earlier, at the request of his intimate friend Pope Urban IV, Thomas had compiled a continuous gloss on all four Gospels, which he had collated from the Latin and Greek Fathers of the Church. Frequently he even instigated new translations of Greek sources, as he himself confessed in the prologue. This continuous gloss, popularly called the *Catena Aurea*, or "Golden Chain," was not finished when Urban died in 1264. But Thomas continued his labors on the gloss, which he completed in 1267 and dedicated to Cardinal Annibaldo d'Annibaldi, Thomas' close friend and former pupil at Paris. The intense labor on the Gospel of John for the *Catena* molded the mind of Thomas in his personal understanding of the Sacred Text of John. St. John's Gospel is very difficult to understand. Unlike the Synoptic writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, St. John's Gospel is a carefully devised presentation of his personal understanding of the sacred doctrine taught by Jesus, on whose breast he reclined at the Last Supper. John was always known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." For St. Thomas, John, the Son of Zebedee, the author of this Gospel, was a virgin, whose appropriate symbol is the eagle soaring in the heights of contemplation. Thomas' detailed study of the Latin and Greek Fathers, needed to complete his Gloss on John, prepared him to shed his own light on the text when the opportune moment arrived. That moment arrived when Thomas returned to Paris for the second time (1269-72) at the age of about forty-four, full of strength and vigor.

But his is a typical medieval commentary because, unlike Patristic, monastic, and modern commentaries on John, it utilizes certain techniques familiar to all in the Middle Ages, but strange to us today. First of all, it is a theological commentary concerned with penetrating the literal sense of the words recorded, and seeing through the literal sense to the spiritual. The medieval university theologian was primarily concerned with the literal sense of scripture, that is, with the sacred message intended by the human and divine author. It is therefore primarily concerned with "the theological teaching" of the Bible. St. Thomas did not have at his disposal the infinitely varied techniques of modern biblical scholarship. He knew almost nothing about biblical and near-eastern languages, archeology, philology, comparative religion, and the historical method. If he had, he would most certainly have used them. In the Encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* (30 Sept. 1943), Pope Pius XII urged the importance of textual criticism, biblical and

oriental languages, archeology, profane and sacred history, as well as form criticism and the demands of a sound historical method. 🗨️

He noted with the Angelic Doctor that "in Scripture divine things are presented to us in the manner which is in common use amongst men." 🗨️

The Bible is the Word of God in the words of men, and this manner of speaking in various ages to various people must be carefully studied with all the auxiliary sciences. But even after all this has been tended to, there is still "the theological doctrine" contained in the Sacred Books. The modern exegete should use every means available to discover and explain "the literal sense and especially the theological." 🗨️

It is this "theological sense" (*sensus theologicus*), expounded by St. Thomas in his commentary, that is most fruitful for our meditation, prayer, and preaching the Word of God today.

The literal sense, as St. Thomas teaches, is the objective, formal, and direct meaning intended by the words in the sacred and inspired text. 🗨️

The author of these words is both God and man, since the Bible is "the inspired Word of God." Modern biblical techniques, of course, were unknown to Thomas. All he had was his personal copy of the Latin Vulgate (which was not a critical edition), the familiar teaching of all the Latin and Greek Fathers known to him, his own prayerful reflection on the text, and his native genius attentive to the Spirit of God and to the text. Among the human means Thomas had at his disposal were grammar, logic, and Aristotelian philosophy. The literal (or historical) sense was in principle the only basis of theological thought and discussion. The spiritual sense only enlarged, or extended, the basic literal sense. By "spiritual sense" we do not mean the pious, personal, private, and subjective sense a reader might derive from a prayerful reading of the text. Rather, the "spiritual sense" is the enlarged reality "intended" by person, place, or thing signified in the literal, as when the brazen serpent raised by Moses in the desert is taken to signify Christ's crucifixion as the divine means of healing mankind, or when the paschal lamb is taken to signify Christ who was sacrificed for our sins. The "spiritual sense" is the enlarged sense "intended" by a given symbol in the plan of divine providence.

Since only God as the author of all things can make one symbol significant of another reality, the Bible is the only book that can contain a "spiritual sense" as it was understood by medieval theologians. Consequently only the sacred author himself can inform us of the existence of such a sense. We could never know that

one reality is to be taken as a symbol of another reality unless the Sacred Author so informs us in the literal sense. For example, the author of the Book of Numbers (21:19) explains how Moses was directed to make a brazen "serpent" and set it up as a sign; whoever was bitten by one of the fiery serpents and "looked at the sign" that Moses had set up was saved from death. But it is John (3:14 15) who explains that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up that whoever believes in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." The significance of Old Testament texts is declared by the sacred writer when he explains Christ's actions as being "in fulfillment of the Scriptures." Similarly St. Paul frequently reveals the "spiritual sense" of the Law and Prophets by declaring the Christian fulfillment in Jesus.

There were three kinds of spiritual sense recognized by medieval theologians: the allegorical, the moral, and the anagogical. 🗨️

When anything in the Old Testament was taken to signify something in the New Testament, this sense was called allegorical. Under this sense would be included all those figures, persons, and events as symbolic of Jesus and his life and death on earth. When anything in the life of Jesus is taken as a model for our life, we call this the moral sense. Under this sense would be included all those virtues presented to us for our imitation of Christ. When anything in the Scriptures is taken to signify something in the eternal kingdom hereafter, for example, "the new Jerusalem," we call this the anagogical sense. Thus the "spiritual sense" of a passage was taken to be an objective meaning intended by the sacred author, the Holy Spirit. This, of course, presupposes that the authors of the New Testament were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Whatever personal message one may derive from reading the Bible prayerfully and thoughtfully is purely personal and beyond the science of theology as the study of God's message to mankind. The personal message is most significant for the reader, but this personal significance must be carefully controlled by objective theological norms such as the Christian faith, sacred doctrine, the constant teaching of the Church, and a prayerful listening to the Holy Spirit.

The most difficult technique of medieval commentators for us to comprehend is the use of logic and the "scholastic method." Aristotelian logic is the most significant technique contained in the scholastic method. The purpose of the scholastic method was to instill "scientific" knowledge through (1) definition, (2) division, and (3) demonstration, or demonstrative proof. These techniques (or *modi sciendi*) were taken for granted by every medieval theologian as the best means of learning the truth about anything. It was a method of teaching, the *via docendi*, which was an imitation of the "way of discovery" (*via inveniendi* or *inventionis*). The goal of all education is truth. The goal of theological education

is an understanding of the doctrines of revelation, the *sacra doctrina*. 

It is faith seeking understanding (*fides quaerens intellectum*), as St. Anselm puts it, The scholastic method, in a sense, is artificial and humanly contrived by means of logic. In the Middle Ages the scholastic method was thought to be the best way of learning everything from A to Z. An example of this method of learning is embedded in Thomas' commentary on John's Gospel. It cannot be eliminated. Therefore it depends on us moderns to bend a little by trying to see through it, and not be put off by it. Always one will find definitions, divisions, and proofs in all medieval commentaries, whether they be on Aristotle, Boethius, or the Bible.

The Scholastics had a penchant for *order*; where none existed, one was imposed. Heeding the words of Aristotle that "it belongs to the wise man to order," they thought the prerogative of a good teacher was to order all things well, setting out the message, or truth to be conveyed, in an orderly and fitting way. 

This is why the first thing one notices when reading a medieval commentary is the *division*, or the ordering of the whole into parts. The least one can perceive is a beginning, a middle, and an end. But more than not, one can usually perceive some orderly procedure in the middle.

Modern biblical scholars usually see in, St. John's Gospel a prologue (1:1-14), a middle (cc. 1-20), and an epilogue (c. 21). They then proceed to divide the middle into the Book of Signs (cc. 1-12) and the Book of Glory (cc. 13-20). St. Thomas also divides the Gospel into roughly these two parts, but he considers chapter 12 as belonging to the Book of Glory, because the chapter opens "six days before Passover" with the anointing of the feet of Jesus for his burial (12:1 - 11), continues on to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem (12:12-19), builds to the coming of the Greeks (12:20-22), and the long discourse of Jesus in which he cries out, "Father, glorify your name" (12:28). In any case, it is particularly in this second part that Thomas had to use his ingenuity to resolve the discrepancies between John and the Synoptics. The Synoptics compress the public life of Jesus into one year with the one tragic journey of Jesus up to Jerusalem, where he is crucified and dies, to be raised up on the third day. John extends the public life of Jesus into three years with the final year ending in his passion, death, and resurrection. St. Thomas is very much concerned with the literal, or historical, sense of the narrative, especially as concerns the passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord. Throughout the whole exposition of the narrative, Thomas relied heavily on the interpretation of the Fathers of the Church, both Latin and Greek. He quotes the authority of St. Augustine 373 times, St. John Chrysostom 217 times, and Origen 95 times. It is an exposition that relies heavily on the tradition of the Church and on his own prayerful theological reflections.

In the commentary on St. John's Gospel, Thomas is concerned not only with the literal sense, which for him is of Prime importance and concern, but also with the spiritual sense, as explained above. More than the other Evangelists, John reveals the "fulfillment of the Scriptures," that is, concern with the prophecies and symbols of the Old Law. Christ's own prophetic words and actions are seen by John to be a foreshadowing of the passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord by which we are all saved. Above all, for St. Thomas, John is the Evangelist of the divinity of Jesus, "the Word made flesh." He says, "While the other Evangelists treat principally of the mysteries of the humanity of Christ, John, especially and above all, makes known the divinity of Christ in his Gospel" (Prologue). Thomas, following the lead of St. Jerome, thought that John wrote his Gospel after the other three Gospels had been written, in order to refute new heresies that had arisen concerning the divinity of Christ. Following Jerome, Thomas singled out the Ebionites (whose founder Thomas erroneously thought to have been "Ebion")—and Cerinthus, a Gnostic heretic who flourished around 100 A.D., as among those who denied the divinity of Christ. Even St. Irenaeus (*Adv. haer.*, III, 11) asserts that St. John wrote his Gospel to refute Cerinthus. Thus, St. Thomas observes in his Prologue, while John did not pass over the mysteries of Christ's humanity, he especially conveys the divinity of Christ in his Gospel. In this commentary, therefore, Thomas repeatedly refutes the heresies of Apollinaris, Arius, the Arians, Ebionites, Eutyches, the Manichees, Nestorius, Pelagius, the Pelagians, and Sabellius - all of which plagued the Church in the first five centuries of its existence. For Thomas these heresies were not merely false doctrines irrelevant to the modern Christian, but vital guidelines to the purity of the Christian faith, the orthodox teaching of the living Church.

Earlier in his career, Thomas had been asked by the archbishop of Palermo to write a short work that could be memorized, dealing with the articles of faith "from the Creed of the Fathers" (i.e., the Apostles' Creed) and also the basic errors concerning them; the archbishop apparently asked also for the same presentation for all the sacraments of the Church. 🗨️

Thomas complied with this request in a most remarkable treatise in two parts: *De articulis fidei* and *De ecclesiae sacramentis*. 🗨️

The wide popularity of this treatise is attested to by the 277 extant manuscripts of this work. The six articles pertaining to the divinity of Christ and the six pertaining to his humanity are set forth, and all the errors concerning the twelve articles of the Creed are briefly named and refuted. Although the sacraments of the Church are implicit in the fourth article of the Creed, they are discussed separately in the second part of the treatise, because the archbishop explicitly asked for a special discussion of the sacraments and the heresies concerning

them. Thomas' knowledge of the various heresies in the history of the Church is most remarkable. All of these same heresies are again discussed in his commentary on John's Gospel. That is why St. Thomas says in the Prologue, "[This Gospel] refutes all heresies." The numerous heresies of the past ought to be of great concern to the modern Christian so that he may avoid all taint of them in his own, personal belief. A conscious affirmation of belief in the truth of revealed teaching that developed in the living Church guided by the Spirit of Christ can bring us into a deeper and more meaningful awareness of being united with the Eternal Truth. In this commentary, Thomas is concerned above all with bolstering the faith of the hearer or reader, or, as he put it, "to confirm the Catholic Truth."

In other words, there are four goals Thomas aimed to achieve in his commentary on St. John:

1. determination of the literal, or historical, sense of the narrative;
2. explanation of the spiritual sense as found in the Old Testament (allegorical sense), the goals of our own life in imitating Jesus (moral sense), and life of the "kingdom" here and hereafter (anagogical sense);
3. refutation of all error through the testimony of the inspired Word of God;
4. confirmation of the true Catholic Faith given to us by God through his Church, the Body of Christ.

These are the same goals Thomas had set for himself in composing the *Catena Aurea*, particularly in the *Catena* on John's Gospel, which was composed only four or five years earlier. 🗨️

There are four outstanding features that will be noticed as one studies the commentary of Thomas on the Gospel of John. First, Thomas had an extraordinary knowledge of the whole Bible. It has been said, not without likelihood, that Thomas memorized the entire Bible during the year he was confined to his family castle at Roccasecca, 1244-45. This is not at all difficult to believe. His memory was far superior to any man-made concordance of the Bible. Thomas always saw the *unity* of divine revelation. It was the unity of *sacra doctrina* as a single "science." 🗨️

The "orthodox" teaching of Christ, Son of the Living God, cannot be anything but *one*. Because of this unity, Thomas could use any one part of Sacred Scripture to explain and illumine any other part. Thus Thomas could use the teaching of St. Paul and the Psalms to explain the text of John. This use of one part of revelation to illumine another has been aptly called "the analogy of faith" (*secundum rationem fidei*, as St. Paul says in Romans 12:6). 🗨️

Second, Thomas had an unusual knowledge of the Latin and Greek Fathers of the Church. This knowledge, no doubt aided by his work on the *Catena Aurea*, is brought to bear on every difficult question or obscure passage in John, even when it is a question of chronology, geography, Jewish customs, or language. The medieval mind associated words, quotations and parallels with uncanny facility, always trying to find the best pertinent quotation from the proper authorities (*auctoritates*). Great weight, sometimes of probative value, was always given to the recognized *auctoritates*, which, in theology were always the Bible and the *sancti*, meaning recognized or canonized Doctors of the Church, who were the *regula fidei* ("the rule of faith"), the "norms" of Christian belief. Thomas' knowledge of these Doctors was prodigious. The contemporaries of Thomas relied heavily on all available works of the Latin Fathers, especially those of St. Augustine. But, as has been pointed out earlier, Thomas not only accepted the eminent authority of St. Augustine, but also had a wealth of Greek sources from which to draw, including the early Ecumenical Councils of the Church, whose *Acts* were largely neglected or forgotten in the Latin Middle Ages. 🗨️

Third, Thomas was, after all, an outstanding theologian for any season. His theology was not only biblical and patristic, but also logical and philosophical. While he absorbed and refined the philosophy of Aristotle, newly translated from the Greek, he never put this philosophy ahead of his Catholic faith. Rather he used that philosophy *in obsequium fidei* (Phil 2:17), as a "handmaid of theology." His comprehension of Aristotle and his use of the scholastic method are among the glories of the Middle Ages. In St. Thomas we find an exceptionally gifted mind carefully honed to human perfection by self-discipline, long study, and clear thinking. This was natural talent, ranked by many as a true genius, brought to the highest human perfection by the grace of God.

Finally, Friar Thomas d'Aquino was a saint, one of the great saints in the Latin Church. A basic principle of Thomas' theology is that "grace perfects nature"; that is, the grace of God never destroys or replaces nature, but builds upon it. For St. Thomas, there is in divine providence a certain kind of proportion between God's gifts of nature and his gifts of grace. Even when we accept this principle with all the necessary qualifications needed, we can readily see that in the mind and heart of St. Thomas, God's grace abundantly perfected an already great man. Not only did Thomas meditate prayerfully on the Sacred Scriptures, but he drew from them substantial nourishment for his soul. This process of enrichment can be seen conspicuously in the commentary on John, particularly the section dealing with the "Last Discourse" of Jesus to his disciples at the Last Supper, collected in "the sayings of Jesus" in chapters 14 to 17. Here Thomas' discussion of the Son's procession from the Father while being consubstantially one with the Father, is precise, illuminating, and brilliant; the mission of the Holy Spirit from the Father

and from the Son (*Filioque*) is clearly demonstrated against the Greek Orthodox who used this question as one of the many issues that separated them from Rome, initially in the ninth, and decisively in the eleventh century. But above all, the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the hearts of the faithful is alive and vital; the extraordinary love Jesus had for his faithful disciples is movingly real and dynamic. In this commentary on John we have all the elements of a real masterpiece of its kind in medieval literature.

St. Thomas was very much impressed by the force and absolute veracity of the Gospel proclaimed by John: "This disciple is the one who vouches for these things and has written them down, and we know that his testimony is true" (Jn 21:24). St. Thomas comments that the Evangelist makes this statement "in the person of the whole Church (*in persona totius Ecclesiae*) from whom this Gospel is received [by us]." The Evangelist himself knows the veracity of his narrative, and even St. Paul condemns those who would preach a gospel other than the one he had received (see Gal 1:9). The firmness and stability of our Christian faith is the authority of God speaking through Evangelists, Apostles and other authors of the canonical Books of Scripture. Their testimony leaves us without any doubt as to our faith, because "the Canonical Scriptures alone are the rule of faith." 

This *sola scriptura* of which St. Thomas speaks is far different from the *sola scriptura* ("only the Bible") of the Reformers. This battle cry was made famous by Luther, who insisted that what is not contained in the Bible is not "of faith." But Luther and Thomas (or any other medieval theologian) meant two different things by the word *Bible*, or *Sacred Scriptures*. For Luther and the Reformers the Bible was thought of as a finished, edited, and (by then) printed collection, while Thomas and the medieval theologians meant the Sacred Word *together with* the gloss of the Fathers, liturgy, and the living Church. The Reformers thought of "The Bible" completely devoid of a history and a historical context, devoid of transmission and development; in short, they thought of "The Bible" distinct from the Church. Thus in the face of this misunderstanding, the Council of Trent spoke as *though* there were two sources of our faith: "the written books and the unwritten traditions." 

But even this manner of speaking was a concession to a false dichotomy that was historically conditioned. The Second Vatican Council, however, described these two sources" more traditionally as a single mirror (*veluti speculum sunt*) reflecting both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. 

Historically speaking, the revelation given by God and received by the chosen people was prior to any scriptural document. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were given the message of salvation long before there was any question of a written

Torah. Christ's message of salvation was accepted by the Apostles, disciples, and early Christians for a quarter of a century before the first fraction of the New Testament was written—and this by St. Paul (1 Thessalonians, probably at the beginning of 52 A.D.). We must always remember that the Canon of the New Testament was not established as an inspired unit until 382 A.D., at the earliest. That is, the living Church existed long before the New Testament was "written," and it existed for 350 years before the present books were collected into an exclusive and canonical unity. For this reason, St. Thomas could speak of the "whole Church from whom this Gospel is received."

Finally, a word should be said in aid of a fruitful reading of St. Thomas' commentary on John. Although the pericope or section commented upon in every "Lecture" is printed in full at the head of the commentary, it would be best to procure a second copy of the whole text and read the particular chapter in full before proceeding to the comment. It is of utmost importance to follow the *divisions* of the text made by St. Thomas and always keep the context well in view. The lemmata, or phrases commented upon, are clearly set off from the comment by the printer. Unless the particular lemma is constantly related to the context as a whole, one can easily get lost in the forest of words, cross references, and quotations. Since *order* and *division* are such important elements in the scholastic method, these must be continuously related to the *whole*, whether it be a collection of chapters, an individual chapter, part of a chapter, a parable, narrative, pericope, or sentence. Those who wish to obtain the greatest understanding of the Sacred Text might well augment the study of St. Thomas' "theological sense" of John with a modern commentary, such as the outstanding commentary by Father Raymond Brown in the Anchor Bible (2 vols.).

For the fruitful reading of St. Thomas' commentary on John, we should further note that throughout the long history of the Church, listeners and readers of the Sacred Text have always been encouraged to prepare their minds and souls for a fruitful reception of the Word. The Word of God, like the seed in the parable (Lk 8:15), needs to be received in "good ground" in order to yield fruit a hundredfold. The reception of anything, according to the ancient philosophers, depends on the condition of the receiver. The Word of God is Spirit (Jn 6:63), and only the Holy Spirit can prepare the soul for fruitful reception of the Word. In the solemn proclamation of the Gospel in the Liturgy of the Word, the Church prays for the Deacon that the Lord be in his heart and on his lips in order to announce the Holy Gospel of Peace. 🗨️

Preparing one's mind and heart by prayer and recollection is of greatest importance for the reception of God's message for us. This message is directed primarily to us as God's chosen people, the pilgrim Church on earth, and through the Church to us as individuals beloved by God and "purchased at a great

price" (1 Cor 6:20). The message of salvation is addressed to us individually and collectively, and we both individually and collectively must attune our minds and hearts to the Spirit. "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you" (Jn 14:26). The Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts through the Scriptures, inspired and animated by him. The Scriptures as a spiritual resource cannot be dissociated from personal prayer and cultivation of our sacramental life in the Church. Being receptive is the important thing as we begin our study.

Finally, the power of reading or hearing the Sacred Scriptures is so great that it actually forgives sins. Apart from "the Sacraments of the faith" (*sacramenta fidei*), it is one of the many ways by which our many sins are forgiven. The Fathers of the Church have always listed—along with almsgiving, contrition, and good works—the special efficacy of reading the Scriptures for the forgiveness of sins. The new liturgy of the Mass prompted by the Second Vatican Council still retains the ancient prayer: "May the words of the Gospel wipe away our sins." The humble and contrite reading of any part of the Scriptures wipes away sin because the power of the Word is the power of God, who alone can forgive sins. Thus we should always approach the Scriptures with a "humble and contrite heart." The Psalmist declares, "A contrite and humbled heart, O God, you will not despise" (Ps 50:19). God always answers a humble and contrite heart in order to glorify himself in us, just as the Father is always glorified in the Son. "Whatever you ask for in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (Qn 14:13). This "glory" of the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit is sometimes called the indwelling of the Trinity within our souls. It is the "conformity" of our whole being to the Father through the Word animated by the Spirit. In this conformity of our innermost being with the splendor of God lies the whole perfection of the Christian life. In this perfection consists the glory and splendor of God himself. This union of one's deepest self and the innermost being of God is the answer to the prayer of Jesus to the Father: "That they may be one, as we also are one" (Jn 17:11).

From this it follows that the study of St. Thomas' commentary on St. John's Gospel is richly rewarding in healing our wounds and leading us to greater union with the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose message of salvation is here proclaimed by "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn 20:2). For our guide we can have none better than the Angelic Doctor, whom Jesus loved.

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PROLOGUE

I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the whole house was full of his majesty, and the things that were under him filled the temple. (Is 6:1)

1 These are the words of a contemplative, and if we regard them as spoken by John the Evangelist they apply quite well to showing the nature of this Gospel. For as Augustine says in his work, *On the Agreement of the Evangelists*: "The other Evangelists instruct us in their Gospels on the active life; but John in his Gospel instructs us also on the contemplative life."

The contemplation of John is described above in three ways, in keeping with the threefold manner in which he contemplated the Lord Jesus. It is described as high, full, and perfect. It is high: **I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne**; it is full: **and the whole house was full of his majesty**; and it was perfect: **and the things that were under him filled the temple**.

2 As to the first, we must understand that the Height and sublimity of contemplation consists most of all in the contemplation and knowledge of God. "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things" (Is 40:26). A man lifts up his eyes on high when he sees and contemplates the Creator of all things. Now since John rose above whatever had been created—mountains, heavens, angels—and reached the Creator of all, as Augustine says, it is clear that his contemplation was most high. Thus, **I saw the Lord**. And because, as John himself says below (12:41), "Isaiah said this because he had seen his glory," that is, the glory of Christ, "and spoke of him," the Lord **seated on a high and lofty throne** is Christ.

Now a fourfold height is indicated in this contemplation of John. A height of authority; hence he says, **I saw the Lord**. A height of eternity; when he says, seated. One of dignity, or nobility of nature; so he says, **on a high throne**. And a height of incomprehensible truth; when he says, lofty. It is in these four ways that the early philosophers arrived at the knowledge of God.

3 Some attained to a knowledge of God through his authority, and this is the most efficacious way. For we see the things in nature acting for an end, and attaining to ends which are both useful and certain. And since they lack intelligence, they are unable to direct themselves, but must be directed and moved by one directing them, and who possesses an intellect. Thus it is that the movement of the things of nature toward a certain end indicates the existence of

something higher by which the things of nature are directed to an end and governed. And so, since the whole course of nature advances to an end in an orderly way and is directed, we have to posit something higher which directs and governs them as Lord; and this is God. This authority in governing is shown to be in the Word of God when he says, Lord. Thus the Psalm (88:10) says: "You rule the power of the sea, and you still the swelling of its waves," as though saying: You are the Lord and govern all things. John shows that he knows this about the Word when he says below (1:11), "He came unto his own," i.e., to the world, since the whole universe is his own.

4 Others came to a knowledge of God from his eternity. They saw that whatever was in things was changeable, and that the more noble something is in the grades of being, so much the less it has of mutability. For example, the lower bodies are mutable both as to their substance and to place, while the heavenly bodies, which are more noble, are immutable in substance and change only with respect to place. We can clearly conclude from this that the first principle of all things, which is supreme and more noble, is changeless and eternal. The prophet suggests this eternity of the Word when he says, **seated**, i.e., presiding without any change and eternally. "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Ps 44:7); "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb 13:8). John points to this eternity when he says below (1:1), "In the beginning was the Word."

5 Still others came to a knowledge of God from the dignity of God; and these were the Platonists. They noted that everything which is something by participation is reduced to what is the same thing by essence, as to the first and highest. Thus, all things which are fiery by participation are reduced to fire, which is such by its essence. And so since all things which exist participate in existence (*esse*) and are beings by participation, there must necessarily be at the summit of all things something which is existence (*esse*) by its essence, i.e., whose essence is its existence. And this is God, who is the most sufficient, the most eminent, and the most perfect cause of the whole of existence, from, whom all things that are participate existence (*esse*). This dignity is shown in the words, **on a high throne**, which, according to Denis, refer to the divine nature. "The Lord is high above all nations" (Ps 112:4). John shows us this dignity when he says below (1:1), "the Word was God," with "Word" as subject and "God" as the predicate.

6 Yet others arrived at a knowledge of God from the incomprehensibility of truth. All the truth which our intellect is able to grasp is finite, since according to Augustine, "everything that is known is bounded by the comprehension of the one knowing"; and if it is bounded, it is determined and particularized. Therefore, the first and supreme Truth, which surpasses every intellect, must necessarily be incomprehensible and infinite; and this is God. [fence the Psalm (8:2) says, "Your greatness is above the heavens," i.e., above every created intellect, angelic and

human. The Apostle says this in the words, "He dwells in unapproachable light" (1 Tim 6:16). This incomprehensibility of Truth is shown to us in the word, **lofty**, that is, above all the knowledge of the created intellect. John implies this incomprehensibility to us when he says below (1:18), "No one has ever seen God."

Thus, the contemplation of John was high as regards authority, eternity, dignity, and the incomprehensibility of the Word. And John has passed on this contemplation to us in his Gospel.

7 John's contemplation was also full. Now contemplation is full when someone is able to consider all the effects of a cause in the cause itself, that is, when he knows not only the essence of the cause, but also its power, according as it can extend out to many things. Of this flowing outward we read, "It overflows with wisdom, like the Pishon, and like the Tigris in the days of the new fruits" (Sir 25:35); "The river of God is full with water," since the divine wisdom has depth in relation to its knowledge of all things (Ps 65:9). "With you from the beginning is wisdom, who knows your works" (Wis 9:9).

Since John the Evangelist was raised up to the contemplation of the nature of the divine Word and of his essence when he said, "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God," he immediately tells us of the power of the Word as it extends to all things, saying, "Through him all things came into being." Thus his contemplation was full. And so after the prophet had **said, I saw the Lord seated**, he added something about his power, **and the whole house was full of his majesty**, that is, the whole fullness of things and of the universe is from the majesty and power of God, through whom all things were made, and by whose light all the men coming into this world are enlightened. "The earth and its fullness are the Lord's" (Ps 23:1).

8 The contemplation of John was also perfect. For contemplation is perfect when the one contemplating is led and raised to the height of the thing contemplated. Should he remain at a lower level, then no matter how high the things which he might contemplate, the contemplation would not be perfect. So in order that it be perfect it is necessary that it rise and attain the end of the thing contemplated, adhering and assenting by affection and understanding to the truth contemplated. Job (37:16) says, "Do you not know the path of the clouds," that is, the contemplation of those preaching, "how perfect they are?" inasmuch as they adhere firmly by affection and understanding to contemplating the highest truth.

Since John not only taught how Christ Jesus, the Word of God, is God, raised

above all things, and how all things were made through him, but also that we are sanctified by him and adhere to him by the grace which he pours into us, he says below (1:16), "Of his fullness we have all received - indeed, grace in return for grace." It is therefore apparent that his contemplation is perfect. This perfection is shown in the addition, **and the things that were under him filled the temple**. For "the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor 11:3). The things that are under Christ are the sacraments of his humanity, through which the faithful are filled with the fullness of grace. In this way, then, **the things that were under him filled the temple**, i.e., the faithful, who are the holy temple of God (1 Cor 3:17) insofar as through the sacraments of his humanity all the faithful of Christ receive from the fullness of his grace.

The contemplation of John was thus full, high, and perfect.

9 We should note, however, that these three characteristics of contemplation belong to the different sciences in different ways. The perfection of contemplation is found in Moral Science, which is concerned with the ultimate end. The fullness of contemplation is possessed by Natural Science, which considers things as proceeding from God. Among the physical [natural] sciences, the height of contemplation is found in Metaphysics. But the Gospel of John contains all together what the above sciences have in a divided way, and so it is most perfect.

10 In this way then, from what has been said, we can understand the matter of this Gospel. For while the other Evangelists treat principally of the mysteries of the humanity of Christ, John, especially and above all, makes known the divinity of Christ in his Gospel, as we saw above. Still, he does not ignore the mysteries of his humanity. He did this because, after the other Evangelists had written their Gospels, heresies had arisen concerning the divinity of Christ, to the effect that Christ was purely and simply a man, as Ebion and Cerinthus falsely thought. And so John the Evangelist, who had drawn the truth about the divinity of the Word from the very fountain-head of the divine breast, wrote this Gospel at the request of the faithful. And in it he gives us the doctrine of the divinity of Christ and refutes all heresies.

The order of this Gospel is clear from the above. For John first shows us **the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne**, when he says below (1:1), "In the beginning was the Word." He shows secondly how **the house was full of his majesty**, when he says, "through him all things came into being" (1:3). Thirdly, he shows how the **things that were under him filled the temple**, when he says, "the Word was made flesh" (1:14). The end of this Gospel is also clear, and it is that the faithful become the temple of God, and become filled with the majesty of God; and so John says below (20:31), "These things are written so

that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.”

The matter of this Gospel, the knowledge of the divinity of the Word, is clear, as well as its order and end.

11 Then follows the condition of the author, who is described above in four ways: as to his name, his virtue, his symbol, and his privilege. He is described as to name as John, the author of this Gospel. “John” is interpreted as “in whom is grace,” since the secrets of the divinity cannot be seen except by those who have the grace of God within themselves. “No one knows the deep things of God but the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:11).

As concerns his virtue, John **saw the Lord seated**, because he was a virgin; for it is fitting that such persons see the Lord: “Blessed are the pure in heart” (Mt 5:8).

He is described as to his symbol, for John is symbolized by an eagle. The other three Evangelists, concerned with those things which Christ did in his flesh, are symbolized by animals which walk on the earth, namely, by a man, a bull calf, and a lion. But John flies like an eagle above the cloud of human weakness and looks upon the light of unchanging truth with the most lofty and firm eyes of the heart. And gazing on the very deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which he is equal to the Father, he has striven in this Gospel to confide this above all, to the extent that he believed was sufficient for all. Concerning this flight of John it says in Job (39:27): “Will the eagle,” that is, John, “fly up at your command?” And further on it says, “His eyes look far away,” because the Word of God is seen in the bosom of the Father by the eye of the mind.

John is described as to privilege since, among the other disciples of the Lord, John was more loved by Christ. Without mentioning his own name John refers to himself below (21:20) as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” And because secrets are revealed to friends, “I have called you friends because everything I have heard from my father I have made known to you” (below 15:15), Jesus confided his secrets in a special way to that disciple who was specially loved. Thus it says in Job (36:32): “From the savage,” that is, the proud, “he hides his light,” that is, Christ hides the truth of his divinity, “and shows his friend,” that is, John, “that it belongs to him,” since it is John who sees the light of the Incarnate Word more excellently and expresses it to us, saying “He was the true light” (below 1:19).

Now the matter, order, end and author of this Gospel of the blessed John are clear.

1

LECTURE I

- 1 In the beginning was the Word;
and the Word was with God;
and the Word was God.
- 2 He was in the beginning with God.

23 John the Evangelist, as already indicated, makes it his principal object to show the divinity of the Incarnate Word. Accordingly, his Gospel is divided into two parts. In the first he states the divinity of Christ; in the second he shows it by the things Christ did in the flesh (2:1). In regard to the first, he does two things. First he shows the divinity of Christ; secondly he sets forth the manner in which Christ's divinity is made known to us (1:14). Concerning the first he does two things. First he treats of the divinity of Christ; secondly of the incarnation of the Word of God (1:6).

Because there are two items to be considered in each thing, namely, its existence and its operation or power, first he treats the existence of the Word as to his divine nature; secondly of his power or operation (1:3). In regard to the first he does four things. First he shows when the Word was: **In the beginning was the Word**; secondly where he was: **and the Word was with God**; thirdly what he was: **and the Word was God**; fourthly, in what way he was: **He was in the beginning with God**. The first two pertain to the inquiry "whether something exists"; the second two pertain to the inquiry "what something is."

24 With respect to the first of these four we must examine the meaning of the statement, **In the beginning was the Word**. And here three things present themselves for careful study according to the three parts of this statement. First it is necessary to investigate the name Word; secondly the phrase **in the beginning**; thirdly the meaning of the Word **was in the beginning**.

25 To understand the name **Word** we should note that according to the Philosopher [*On Interpretation* 16a3] vocal sounds are signs of the affections that exist in our soul. It is customary in Scripture for the things signified to be themselves called by the names of their signs, as in the statement, "And the rock

was Christ" (1 Cor 10:4). It is fitting that what is within our soul, and which is signified by our external word, be called a "word." But whether the name "word" belongs first to the exterior vocal sound or to the conception in our mind, is not our concern at present. However, it is obvious that what is signified by the vocal sound, as existing interiorly in the soul, exists prior to the vocal expression inasmuch as it is its actual cause. Therefore if we wish to grasp the meaning of the interior word, we must first look at the meaning of that which is exteriorly expressed in words.

Now there are three things in our intellect: the intellectual power itself, the species of the thing understood (and this species is its form, being to the intellect what the species of a color is to the eye), and thirdly the very activity of the intellect, which is to understand. But none of these is what is signified by the exterior vocal word: for the name "stone" does not signify the substance of the intellect because this is not what the one naming intends; nor does it signify the species, which is that by which the intellect understands, since this also is not the intention of the one naming; nor does it signify the act itself of understanding since to understand is not an action proceeding to the exterior from the one understanding, but an action remaining within. Therefore, that is properly called an interior word which the one understanding forms when understanding.

Now the intellect forms two things, according to its two operations. According to its operation which is called "the understanding of indivisibles," it forms a definition; while according to its operation by which it unites and separates, it forms an enunciation or something of that sort. Hence, what is thus formed and expressed by the operation of the intellect, whether by defining or enunciating, is what the exterior vocal sound signifies. So the Philosopher says that the notion (ratio) which a name signifies is a definition. Hence, what is thus expressed, i.e., formed in the soul, is called an interior word. Consequently it is compared to the intellect, not as that by which the intellect understands, but as that in which it understands, because it is in what is thus expressed and formed that it sees the nature of the thing understood. Thus we have the meaning of the name "word."

Secondly, from what has been said we are able to understand that a word is always something that proceeds from an intellect existing in act; and furthermore, that a word is always a notion (ratio) and likeness of the thing understood. So if the one understanding and the thing understood are the same, then the word is a notion and likeness of the intellect from which it proceeds. On the other hand, if the one understanding is other than the thing understood, then the word is not a likeness and notion of the one understanding but of the thing understood, as the conception which one has of a stone is a likeness of only the stone. But when the intellect understands itself, its word is a likeness and notion of the intellect. And so Augustine (*On the Trinity* IX, 5) sees a likeness of the

Trinity in the Soul insofar as the mind understands itself, but not insofar as it understands other things.

It is clear then that it is necessary to have a word in any intellectual nature, for it is of the very nature of understanding that the intellect in understanding should form something. Now what is formed is called a word, and so it follows that in every being which understands there must be a word.

However, intellectual natures are of three kinds: human, angelic and divine; and so there are three kinds of words. The human word, about which it is said in the Psalm (13:1): "The fool said in his heart, 'There is no God.' " The angelic word, about which it is said in Zechariah (1:9), and in many places in Sacred Scripture, "And the angel said to me." The third is the divine word, of which Genesis (1:3) says, "And God said, 'Let there be light.' " So when the Evangelist says, **In the beginning was the Word**, we cannot understand this as a human or angelic word, because both these words have been made since man and angel have a cause and principle of their existence and operation, and the word of a man or an angel cannot exist before they do. The word the Evangelist had in mind he shows by saying that this word was not made, since all things were made by it. Therefore, the word about which John speaks here is the Word of God.

26 We should note that this Word differs from our own word in three ways. The first difference, according to Augustine, is that our word is formable before being formed, for when I wish to conceive the notion of a stone, I must arrive at it by reasoning. And so it is in all other things that are understood by us, with the sole possible exception of the first principles which, since they are known in a simple manner, are known at once without any discourse of reason. So as long as the intellect, in so reasoning, casts about this way and that, the formation is not yet complete. It is only when it has conceived the notion of the thing perfectly that for the first time it has the notion of the complete thing and a word. Thus in our mind there is both a "cogitation," meaning the discourse involved in an investigation, and a word, which is formed according to a perfect contemplation of the truth. So our word is first in potency before it is in act. But the Word of God is always in act. In consequence, the term "cogitation" does not properly speaking apply to the Word of God. For Augustine says (*On the Trinity* XV): "The Word of God is spoken of in such a way that cogitation is not included, lest anything changeable be supposed in God." Anselm was speaking improperly when he said: "For the supreme Spirit to speak is for him to look at something while cogitating."

27 The second difference is that our word is imperfect, but the divine Word is most perfect. For since we cannot express all our conceptions in one word, we must form many imperfect words through which we separately express all that is

in our knowledge. But it is not that way with God. For since he understands both himself and everything else through his essence, by one act, the single divine Word is expressive of all that is in God, not only of the Persons but also of creatures; otherwise it would be imperfect. So Augustine says: "If there were less in the Word than is contained in the knowledge of the One speaking it, the Word would be imperfect; but it is obvious that it is most perfect; therefore, it is only one." "God speaks once" (Jb 33:14).

28 The third difference is that our word is not of the same nature as we; but the divine Word is of the same nature as God. And therefore it is something that subsists in the divine nature. For the understood notion which the intellect is seen to form about some thing has only an intelligible existence in our soul. Now in our soul, to understand is not the same as the nature of the soul, because our soul is not its own operation. Consequently, the word which our intellect forms is not of the essence of our soul, but is an accident of it. But in God, to understand and to be are the same; and so the Word of the divine intellect is not an accident but belongs to its nature. Thus it must be subsistent, because whatever is in the nature of God is God. Thus Damascene says that God is a substantial Word, and a hypostasis, but our words are concepts in our mind.

29 From the above it is clear that the Word, properly speaking, is always understood as a Person in the Divinity, since it implies only something expressed, by the one understanding; also, that in the Divinity the Word is the likeness of that from which it issues; and that it is co-eternal with that from which it issues, since it was not first formable before being formed, but was always in act; and that it is equal to the Father, since it is perfect and expressive of the whole being of the Father; and that it is co-essential and consubstantial with the Father, since it is his substance.

It is also clear that since in every nature that which issues forth and has a likeness to the nature from which it issues is called a son, and since this Word issues forth in a likeness and identity to the nature from which it issues, it is suitably and appropriately called a "Son," and its production is called a generation.

So now the first point is clear, the meaning of the **term Word**.

30 There are four questions on this point, two of them from Chrysostom. The first is: Why did John the Evangelist omit the Father and begin at once with the Son, saying, **In the beginning was the Word?**

There are two answers to this. One is that the Father was known to everyone in the Old Testament, although not under the aspect of Father, but as God; but the

Son was not known. And so in the New Testament, which is concerned with our knowledge of the Word, he begins with the Word or Son.

The other answer is that we are brought to know the Father through the Son: "Father, I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given to me" (below 17:6). And so wishing to lead the faithful to a knowledge of the Father, the Evangelist fittingly began with the Son, at once adding something about the Father when he says, **and the Word was with God.**

31 The second question is also from Chrysostom. Why did he say **Word** and not "Son," since, as we have said, the Word proceeds as Son?

There are also two answers to this. First, because "son" means something begotten, and when we hear of the generation of the Son, someone might suppose that this generation is the kind he can comprehend, that is, a material and changeable generation. Thus he did not say "Son," but **Word**, which signifies an intelligible proceeding, so that it would not be understood as a material and changeable generation. And so in showing that the Son is born of the Father in an unchangeable way, he eliminates a faulty conjecture by using the name **Word.**

The second answer is this. The Evangelist was about to consider the Word as having come to manifest the Father. But since the idea of manifesting is implied better in the name "Word" than in the name "Son," he preferred to use the name **Word.**

32 The third question is raised by Augustine in his book *Eighty-three Questions*; and it is this. In Greek, where we have "Word," they have "Logos"; now since "Logos" signifies in Latin both "notion" and "word" [i.e., *ratio et verbum*], why did the translators render it as "word" and not "notion," since a notion is something interior just as a word is?

I answer that "notion" [ratio], properly speaking, names a conception of the mind precisely as in the mind, even if through it nothing exterior comes to be; but "word" signifies a reference to something exterior. And so because the Evangelist, when he said "Logos," intended to signify not only a reference to the Son's existence in the Father, but also the operative power of the Son, by which, through him, all things were made, our predecessors preferred to translate it "Word," which implies a reference to something exterior, rather than "notion" which implies merely a concept of the mind.

33 The fourth question is from Origen, and is this. In many passages, Scripture, when speaking of the Word of God, does not simply call him the Word, but adds

"of God," saying, "the Word of God," or "of the Lord": "The Word of God on high is the foundation of wisdom" (Sir 1:5); "His name is the Word of God" (Rv 19:13). Why then did the Evangelist, when speaking here of the Word of God, not say, "In the beginning was the Word of God," but said **In the beginning was the Word?**

I answer that although there are many participated truths, there is just one absolute Truth, which is Truth by its very essence, that is, the divine act of being (*esse*); and by this Truth all words are words. Similarly, there is one absolute Wisdom elevated above all things, that is, the divine Wisdom, by participating in which all wise persons are wise. Further, there is one absolute Word, by participating in which all persons having a word are called speakers. Now this is the divine Word which of itself is the Word elevated above all words. So in order that the Evangelist might signify this supereminence of the divine Word, he pointed out this Word to us absolutely without any addition.

And because the Greeks, when they wished to signify something separate and elevated above everything else, did this by affixing the article to the name (as the Platonists, wishing to signify the separated substances, such as the separated good or the separated man, called them the good *per se*, or man *per se*), so the Evangelist, wishing to signify the separation and elevation of that Word above all things, affixed an article to the name "Logos," so that if it were stated in Latin we would say "*the* Word."

34 Secondly, we must consider the meaning of the phrase, **In the beginning.** We must note that according to Origen, the word *principium* has many meanings [such as "principle," "source," or "beginning"]. Since the word *principium* implies a certain order of one thing to another, one can find a *principium* in all those things which have an order. First of all, order is found in quantified things; and so there is a principle of number and lengths, as for example, a line. Second, order is found in time; and so we speak of a "beginning" of time, or of duration. Third, order is found in learning; and this in two ways: as to nature, and as to ourselves, and in both cases we can speak of a "beginning": "By this time you ought to be teachers" (Heb 5:12). As to nature, in Christian doctrine the beginning and principle of our wisdom is Christ, inasmuch as he is the Wisdom and Word of God, i.e., in his divinity. But as to ourselves, the beginning is Christ himself inasmuch as the Word has become flesh, i.e., by his incarnation. Fourth, in order is found in the production of a thing. In this perspective there can be a *principium* on the part of the thing generated, that is, the first part of the thing generated or made; as we say that the foundation is the beginning of a house. Another *principium* is on the part of the generator, and in this perspective there are three "principles": of intention, which is the purpose, which motivates the agent; of reason, which is the idea in the mind of the maker; and of execution,

which is the operative faculty. Considering these various ways of using the term, we now ask how *principium* is used here when it says, **In the beginning was the Word.**

35 We should note that this word can be taken in three ways. In one way so that *principium* is understood as the Person of the Son, who is the principle of creatures by reason of his active power acting with wisdom, which is the conception of the things that are brought into existence. Hence we read: "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24). And so the Lord said about himself: "I am the *principium* who also speaks to you" (below 8:25). Taking *principium* in this way, we should understand the statement, **In the beginning was the Word**, as though he were saying, "The Word was in the Son," so that the sense would be: The Word himself is the *principium*, principle, in the sense in which life is said to be "in" God, when this life is not something other than God.

And this is the explanation of Origen. And so the Evangelist says **In the beginning** here in order, as Chrysostom says, to show at the very outset the divinity of the Word by asserting that he is a principle because, as determining all, a principle is most honored.

36 In a second way *principium* can be understood as the Person of the Father, who is the principle not only of creatures, but of every divine process. It is taken this way in, "Yours is princely power (*principium*) in the day of your birth" (Ps 110:3). In this second way one reads **In the beginning was the Word** as though it means, "The Son was in the Father." This is Augustine's understanding of it, as well as Origen's. The Son, however, is said to be in the Father because both have the same essence. Since the Son is his own essence, then the Son is in whomsoever the Son's essence is. Since, therefore, the essence of the Son is in the Father by consubstantiality, it is fitting that the Son be in the Father. Hence it says below (14:10): "I am in the Father and the Father is in me."

37 In a third way, *principium* can be taken for the beginning of duration, so that the sense of **In the beginning was the Word** is that the Word was before all things, as Augustine explains it. According to Basil and Hilary, this phrase shows the eternity of the Word.

The phrase **In the beginning was the Word** shows that no matter which beginning of duration is taken, whether of temporal things which is time, or of aeviternal things which is the aeon, or of the whole world or any imagined span of time reaching back for many ages, at that beginning the Word already was. Hence Hilary says (*On the Trinity* VII): "Go back season by season, skip over the

centuries, take away ages. Set down whatever you want as the beginning in your opinion: the Word already was." And this is what Proverbs (8:23) says: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before he made anything." But what is prior to the beginning of duration is eternal.

38 And thus the first explanation asserts the causality of the Word; the second explanation affirms the consubstantiality of the Word with the Father, who utters the Word; and the third explanation affirms the co-eternity of the Word.

39 Now we should consider that it says that the Word was (*erat*), which is stated in the past imperfect tense. This tense is most appropriate for designating eternal things if we consider the nature of time and of the things that exist in time. For what is future is not yet in act; but what is at present is in act, and by the fact that it is in act what is present is not described as having been. Now the past perfect tense indicates that something has existed, has already come to an end, and has now ceased to be. The past imperfect tense, on the other hand, indicates that something has been, has not yet come to an end, nor has ceased to be, but still endures. Thus, whenever John mentions eternal things he expressly says "was" (*erat*, past imperfect tense), but when he refers to anything temporal he says "has been" (*fuit*, past perfect tense), as will be clear later.

But so far as concerns the notion of the present, the best way to designate eternity is the present tense, which indicates that some thing is in act, and this is always the characteristic of eternal things. And so it says in Exodus (3:14): "I am who am." And Augustine says: "He alone truly is whose being does not know a past and a future.

40 We should also note that this verb was, according to the Gloss, is not understood here as indicating temporal changes, as other verbs do, but as signifying the existence of a thing. Thus it is also called a substantive verb.

41 Someone may ask how the Word can be co-eternal with the Father since he is begotten by the Father: for a human son, born from a human father, is subsequent to his father.

I answer that there are three reasons why an originative principle is prior in duration to that which derives from that principle. First of all, if the originative principle of anything precedes in time the action by which it produces the thing of which it is the principle; thus a man does not begin to write as soon as he exists, and so he precedes his writing in time. Secondly, if an action is successive; consequently, even if the action should happen to begin at the same time as the agent, the termination of the action is nevertheless subsequent to the agent.

Thus, as soon as fire has been generated in a lower region, it begins to ascend; but the fire exists before it has ascended, because the motion by which it tends upward requires some time. Thirdly, by the fact that sometimes the beginning of a thing depends on the will of its principle, just as the beginning of a creature's coming-to-be depends on the will of God, such that God existed before any creature.

Yet none of these three is found in the generation of the divine Word. God did not first exist and then begin to generate the Word: for since the generation of the Word is nothing other than an intelligible conception, it would follow that God would be understanding in potency before understanding in act, which is impossible. Again, it is impossible that the generation of the Word involve succession: for then the divine Word would be unformed before it was formed (as happens in us who form words by "cogitating"), which is false, as was said. Again, we cannot say that the Father pre-established a beginning of duration for his Son by his own will, because God the Father does not generate the Son by his will, as the Arians held, but naturally: for God the Father, understanding himself, conceives the Word; and so God the Father did not exist prior to the Son.

An example of this, to a limited degree, appears in fire and in the brightness issuing from it: for this brightness issues naturally and without succession from the fire. Again, if the fire were eternal, its brightness would be coeternal with it. This is why the Son is called the brightness of the Father: "the brightness of his glory" (Heb 1:3). But this example lacks an illustration of the identity of nature. And so we call him Son, although in human sonship we do not find coeternity: for we must attain our knowledge of divine things from many likenesses in material things, for one likeness is not enough.

The Council of Ephesus says that the Son always coexists with the Father: for "brightness" indicates his unchangeability, "birth" points to the Word himself, but the name "Son" suggests his consubstantiality.

42 And so we give the Son various names to express his perfection, which cannot be expressed by one name. We call him "Son" to show that he is of the same nature as the Father; we call him "image" to show that he is not unlike the Father in any way; we call him "brightness" to show that he is coeternal; and he is called the "Word" to show that he is begotten in an immaterial manner.

43 Then the Evangelist says, **and the Word was with God**, which is the second clause in his account. The first thing to consider is the meaning of the two words which did not appear in the first clause, that is, **God**, and **with**; for we have already explained the meanings of "Word," and "beginning." Let us continue

carefully by examining these two new words, and to better understand the explanation of this second clause, we must say something about the meaning of each so far as it is relevant to our purpose.

44 At the outset, we should note that the name "God" signifies the divinity concretely and as inherent in a subject, while the name "deity" signifies the divinity in the abstract and absolutely. Thus the name "deity" cannot naturally and by its mode of signifying stand for a [divine] person, but only for the [divine] nature. But the name "God" can, by its natural mode of signifying, stand for any one of the [divine] persons, just as the name "man" stands for any individual (*suppositum*) possessing humanity. Therefore, whenever the truth of a statement or its predicate requires that the name "God" stand for the person, then it stands for the person, as when we say, "God begets God." Thus, when it says here that **the Word was with God**, it is necessary that God stand for the person of the Father, because the preposition **with** signifies the distinction of the Word, which is said to be **with God**. And although this preposition signifies a distinction in person, it does not signify a distinction in nature, since the nature of the Father and of the Son is the same. Consequently, the Evangelist wished to signify the person of the Father when he said God.

45 Here we should note that the preposition **with** signifies a certain union of the thing signified by its grammatical antecedent to the thing signified by its grammatical object, just as the preposition "in" does. However, there is a difference, because the preposition "in" signifies a certain intrinsic union, whereas the preposition **with** implies in a certain way an extrinsic union. And we state both in divine matters, namely, that the Son is *in* the Father and *with* the Father. Here the intrinsic union pertains to consubstantiality, but the extrinsic union (if we may use such an expression, since "extrinsic" is improperly employed in divine matters) refers only to a personal distinction, because the Son is distinguished from the Father by origin alone. And so these two words designate both a consubstantiality in nature and distinction in person: consubstantiality inasmuch as a certain union is implied; but distinction, inasmuch as a certain otherness is signified as was said above.

The preposition "in," as was said, principally signifies consubstantiality, as implying an intrinsic union and, by way of consequence, a distinction of persons, inasmuch as every preposition is transitive. The preposition "with" principally signifies a personal distinction, but also a consubstantiality inasmuch as it signifies a certain extrinsic, so to speak, union. For these reasons the Evangelist specifically used here the preposition "with" in order to express the distinction of the person of the Son from the Father, saying, **and the Word was with God**, that is, the Son was with the Father as one person with another.

46 We should note further that this preposition **with** has four meanings, and these eliminate four objections. First, the preposition with signifies the subsistence of its antecedent, because things that do not subsist of themselves are not properly said to be "with" another; thus we do not say that a color is with a body, and the same applies to other things that do not subsist of themselves. But things that do subsist of themselves are properly said to be "with" another; thus we say that a man is with a man, and a stone with a stone.

Secondly, it signifies authority in its grammatical object. For we do not, properly speaking, say that a king is with a soldier, but that the soldier is with the king. Thirdly, it asserts a distinction. For it is not proper to say that a person is with himself but rather that one man is with another. Fourthly, it signifies a certain union and fellowship. For when some person is said to be with another, it suggests to us that there is some social union between them.

Considering these four conditions implied in the meaning of this preposition **with**, the Evangelist quite appropriately joins to the first clause, **In the beginning was the Word**, this second clause, **and the Word was with God**. For if we omit one of the three explanations of, **In the beginning was the Word** (namely, the one in which *principium* was understood as the Son), certain heretics make a twofold objection against each of the other explanations (namely, the one in which *principium* means the same as "before all things," and the one in which it is understood as the Father). Thus there are four objections, and we can answer these by the four conditions indicated by this preposition **with**.

47 The first of these objections is this. You say that the Word was in the beginning, i.e., before all things. But before all things there was nothing. So if before all things there was nothing, where then was the Word? This objection arises due to the imaginings of those who think that whatever exists is somewhere and in some place. But this is rejected by John when he says, **with God**, which indicates the union mentioned in the last four conditions. So, according to Basil, the meaning is this: Where was the Word? The answer is: **with God**; not in some place, since he is unsurroundable, but he is with the Father, who is not enclosed by any place.

48 The second objection against the same explanation is this. You say that the Word was in the beginning, i.e., before all things. But whatever exists before all things appears to proceed from no one, since that from which something proceeds seems to be prior to that which proceeds from it. Therefore, the Word does not proceed from another. This objection is rejected when he says, **the Word was with God**, taking "with" according to its second condition, as

implying authority in what is causing. So the meaning, according to Hilary, is this: From whom is the Word if he exists before all things? The Evangelist answers: **the Word was with God**, i.e., although the Word has no beginning of duration, still he does not lack a *principium* or author, for he was with God as his author.

49 The third objection, directed to the explanation in which *principium* is understood as the Father, is this. You say that **In the beginning was the Word**, i.e., the Son was in the Father. But that which is in something does not seem to be subsistent, as a hypostasis; just as the whiteness in a body does not subsist. This objection is solved by the statement, **the Word was with God**, taking “with” in its first condition, as implying the subsistence of its grammatical antecedent. So according to Chrysostom, the meaning is this: **In the beginning was the Word**, not as an accident, but he was **with God**, as subsisting, and a divine hypostasis.

50 The fourth objection, against the same explanation, is this. You say that the Word was in the beginning, i.e., in the Father. But whatever is in something is not distinct from it. So the Son is not distinct from the Father. This objection is answered by the statement, **and the Word was with God**, taking “with” in its third condition, as indicating distinction. Thus the meaning, according to Alcuin and Bede, is this: **The Word was with God**, and he was with the Father by a consubstantiality of nature, while still being “with” him through a distinction in person.

51 And so, **and the Word was with God**, indicates: the union of the Word with the Father in nature, according to Basil; their distinction in person, according to Alcuin and Bede; the subsistence of the Word in the divine nature, according to Chrysostom; and the authorship of the Father in relation to the Word, according to Hilary.

52 We should also note, according to Origen, that **the Word was with God** shows that the Son has always been with the Father. For in the Old Testament it says that the word of the Lord “came” to Jeremiah or to someone else, as is plain in many passages of sacred Scripture. But it does not say that the word of the Lord was “with” Jeremiah or anyone else, because the word “comes” to those who begin to have the word after not having it. Thus the Evangelist did not say that the Word “came” to the Father, but was “with” the Father, because, given the Father, the Word was with him.

53 Then he says, **and the Word was God**. This is the third clause in John’s account, and it follows most appropriately considering the order of teaching. For since John had said both *when* and *where* the Word was, it remained to inquire

what the Word was, that is, **the Word was God**, taking "Word" as the subject, and "God" as the predicate.

54 But since one should first inquire what a thing is before investigating where and when it is, it seems that John violated this order by discussing these latter first.

Origen answers this by saying that the Word of God is with man and with God in different ways. The Word is with man as perfecting him, because it is through him that man becomes wise and good: "She makes friends of God and prophets" (Wis 7:27). But the Word is not with God as though the Father were perfected and enlightened by him. Rather, the Word is with God as receiving natural divinity from him, who utters the Word, and from whom he has it that he is the same God with him. And so, since the Word was with God by origin, it was necessary to show first that the Word was in the Father and with the Father before showing that the Word was God.

55 This clause also enables us to answer two objections which arise from the foregoing. The first is based on the name "Word," and is this. You say that **In the beginning was the Word**, and that the Word was with God. Now it is obvious that "word" is generally understood to signify a vocal sound and the statement of something necessary, a manifesting of thoughts. But these words pass away and do not subsist. Accordingly, someone could think that the Evangelist was speaking of a word like these.

According to Hilary and Augustine, this question is sufficiently answered by the above account. Augustine says (Homily I *On John*) that it is obvious that in this passage "Word" cannot be understood as a statement because, since a statement is in motion and passes away, it could not be said that **In the beginning was the Word**, if this Word were something passing away and in motion. The same thing is clear from **and the Word was with God**: for to be "in" another is not the same as to be "with" another. Our word, since it does not subsist, is not "with" us, but "in" us; but the Word of God is subsistent, and therefore "with" God. And so the Evangelist expressly says, and the Word was with God. To entirely remove the ground of the objection, he adds the nature and being of the Word, saying, **and the Word was God**.

56 The other question comes from his saying, **with God**. For since "with" indicates a distinction, it could be thought that **the Word was with God**, i.e., the Father, as distinct from him in nature. So to exclude this he adds at once the consubstantiality of the Word with the Father, saying, **and the Word was God**. As if to say: the Word is not separated from the Father by a diversity of nature,

because the Word itself is God.

57 Note also the special way of signifying, since he says, **the Word was God**, using "God" absolutely to show that he is not God in the same way in which the name of the deity is given to a creature in Sacred Scripture. For a creature sometimes shares this name with some added qualification, as when it says, "I have appointed you the God of Pharaoh" (Ex 7:1), in order to indicate that he was not God absolutely or by nature, because he was appointed the god of someone in a qualified sense. Again, it says in the Psalm (81:6): "I said, 'You are gods.'" —as if to say: in my opinion, but not in reality. Thus the Word is called God absolutely because he is God by his own essence, and not by participation, as men and angels are.

58 We should note that Origen disgracefully misunderstood this clause, led astray by the Greek manner of speaking. It is the custom among the Greeks to put the article before every name in order to indicate a distinction. In the Greek version of John's Gospel the name "Word" in the statement, **In the beginning was the Word**, and also the name "God" in the statement, **and the Word was with God**, are prefixed by the article, so as to read "the Word" and "the God," in order to indicate the eminence and distinction of the Word from other words, and the principality of the Father in the divinity. But in the statement, **the Word was God**, the article is not prefixed to the noun "God," which stands for the person of the Son. Because of this Origen blasphemed that the Word, although he was Word by essence, was not God by essence, but is called God by participation; while the Father alone is God by essence. And so he held that the Son is inferior to the Father.

59 Chrysostom proves that this is not true, because if the article used with the name "God" implied the superiority of the Father in respect to the Son, it would never be used with the name "God" when it is used as a predicate of another, but only when it is predicated of the Father. Further, whenever said of the Father, it would be accompanied by the article. However, we find the opposite to be the case in two statements of the Apostle, who calls Christ "God," using the article. For in Titus (2:13) he says, "the coming of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ," where "God" stands for the Son, and in the Greek the article is used. Therefore, Christ is the great God. Again he says (Rom 9:5): "Christ, who is God over all things, blessed forever," and again the article is used with "God" in the Greek. Further, in 1 John (5:20) it says: "That we may be in his true Son, Jesus Christ; he is the true God and eternal life." Thus, Christ is not God by participation, but truly God. And so the theory of Origen is clearly false.

Chrysostom gives us the reason why the Evangelist did not use the article with the name "God," namely, because he had already mentioned God twice using the

article, and so it was not necessary to repeat it a third time, but it was implied. Or, a better reason would be that "God" is used here as the predicate and is taken formally. And it is not the custom for the article to accompany names used as predicates, since the article indicates separation. But if "God" were used here as the subject, it could stand for any of the persons, as the Son or the Holy Spirit; then, no doubt, the article would be used in the Greek.

60 Then he says, **He was in the beginning with God**. This is the fourth clause and is introduced because of the preceding clause. For from the Evangelist's statement that **the Word was God**, two false interpretations could be held by those who misunderstand. One of these is by the pagans, who acknowledge many and different gods, and say that their wills are in opposition. For example, those who put out the fable of Jupiter fighting with Saturn; or as the Manicheans, who have two contrary principles of nature. The Lord said against this error (Dt 6:4): "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."

Since the Evangelist had said, **the Word was with God; and the Word was God**, they could adduce this in support of their error by understanding the God with whom the Word is to be one [God], and the Word to be another, having another, or contrary, will to the former; and this is against the law of the Gospel. And so to exclude this he says, **He was in the beginning with God**, as if to say, according to Hilary: I say that the Word is God, not as if he has a distinct divinity, but he is with God, that is, in the one same nature in which lie is. Further, lest his statement, **and the Word was God**, be taken to mean that the Word has an opposed will, he added that the Word **was in the beginning with God**, namely, the Father; not as divided from him or opposed, but having an identity of nature with him and a harmony of will. This union comes about by the sharing of the divine nature in the three persons, and by the bond of the natural love of the Father and the Son.

61 The Arians were able to draw out another error from the above. They think that the Son is less than the Father because it says below (14:28): "The Father is greater than I" And they say the Father is greater than the Son both as to eternity and as to divinity of nature. And so to exclude this the Evangelist added: **He was in the beginning with God**. For Arius admits the first clause, **In the beginning was the Word**, but he will not admit that *principium* should be taken for the Father, but rather for the beginning of creatures. So he says that the Word was in the beginning of creatures, and consequently is in no sense coeternal with the Father. But this is excluded, according to Chrysostom, by this clause, **He was in the beginning**, not of creatures, but **in the beginning with God**, i.e., whenever God existed. For the Father was never alone without the Son or Word, but He, that is, the Word, was always **with God**.

62 Again, Arius admits that the Word was God, but nevertheless inferior to the Father. This is excluded by what follows. For there are two attributes proper to the great God which Arius attributed solely to God the Father, that is, eternity and omnipotence. So in whomever these two attributes are found, he is the great God, than whom none is greater. But the Evangelist attributes these two to the Word. Therefore, the Word is the great God and not inferior. He says the Word is eternal when he states, **He was in the beginning with God**, i.e., the Word was with God from eternity, and not only in the beginning of creatures (as Arius held) , but with God, receiving being and divinity from him. Further, he attributes omnipotence to the Word when he adds, **Through him all things came into being**.

63 Origen gives a rather beautiful explanation of this clause, **He was in the beginning with God**, when he says that it is not separate from the first three, but is in a certain sense their epilogue. For the Evangelist, after he had indicated that truth was the Son's and was about to describe his power, in a way gathers together in a summary form, in this fourth clause, what he had said in the first three. For in saying He, he understands the third clause; by adding **was in the beginning**, he recalls the first clause; and by adding **with God**, he recalls the second, so that we do not think that the Word which was in the beginning is different than the Word which was God; but this Word which was God **was in the beginning with God**.

64 If one considers these four propositions well, he will find that they clearly destroy all the errors of the heretics and of the philosophers. For some heretics, as Ebion and Cerinthus, said that Christ did not exist before the Blessed Virgin, but took from her the beginning of his being and duration; for they held that he was a mere man, who had merited divinity by his good works. Photinus and Paul of Samosata, following them, said the same thing. But the Evangelist excludes their errors saying, **In the beginning was the Word**, i.e., before all things, and in the Father from eternity. Thus he did not derive his beginning from the Virgin.

Sabellius, on the other hand, although he admitted that the God who took flesh did not receive his beginning from the Virgin, but existed from eternity, still said that the person of the Father, who existed from eternity, was not distinct from the person of the Son, who took flesh from the Virgin. He maintained that the Father and Son were the same person; and so he failed to distinguish the trinity of persons in the deity. The Evangelist says against this error, **and the Word was with God**, i.e., the Son was with the Father, as one person with another.

Eunomius declared that the Son is entirely unlike the Father. The Evangelist rejects this when he says, **and the Word was God**. Finally, Arius said that the

Son was less than the Father. The Evangelist excludes this by saying, **He was in the beginning with God**, as was explained above.

65 These words also exclude the errors of the philosophers. For some of the ancient philosophers, namely, the natural philosophers, maintained that the world did not come from any intellect or through some purpose, but by chance. Consequently, they did not place at the beginning as the cause of things a reason or intellect, but only matter in flux; for example, atoms, as Democritus thought, or other material principles of this kind as different philosophers maintained. Against these the Evangelist says, **In the beginning was the Word**, from whom, and not from chance, things derive their beginning.

Plato, however, thought that the Ideas of all the things that were made were subsistent, i.e., existing separately in their own natures; and material things exist by participating in these. For example, he thought men existed through the separated Idea of man, which he called Man *per se*. So lest you suppose, as did Plato, that this Idea through which all things were made be Ideas separated from God, the Evangelist adds, **and the Word was with God**.

Other Platonists, as Chrysostom relates, maintained that God the Father was most eminent and first, but under him they placed a certain mind in which there were the likenesses and ideas of all things. So lest you think that the Word was with the Father in such a way as to be under him and less than he, the Evangelist adds, **and the Word was God**.

Aristotle, however, thought that the ideas of all things are in God, and that in God, the intellect, the one understanding, and what is understood, are the same. Nevertheless, he thought that the world is coeternal with him. Against this the Evangelist says, He, the Word alone, was **in the beginning with God**, in such a way that He does not exclude another person, but only another coeternal nature.

66 Note the difference in what has been said between John and the other Evangelists: how he began his Gospel on a loftier plane than they. They announced Christ the Son of God born in time: "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem" (Mt 2:1); but John presents him existing from eternity: **In the beginning was the Word**. They show him suddenly appearing among men: "Now you dismiss your servant, O Lord, in peace, according to your word; because my eyes have seen your salvation" (Lk 2:29); but John says that he always existed with the Father: and the Word was with God. The others show him as a man: "They gave glory to God who had given such authority to men" (Mt 9:8); but John says that he is God: and the Word was God. The others say he lives with men: "While living in Galilee, Jesus said to them" (Mt 17:21);

but John says that he has always been with the Father: **He was in the beginning with God.**

67 Note also how the Evangelist designedly uses the word *was (erat)* to show that the Word of God transcends all times: present, past and future. It is as though he were saying: He was beyond time: present, past and future, as the Gloss says.

LECTURE 2

3 All things were made through him,
and without him nothing was made.
What was made 4a in him was life.

68 After the Evangelist has told of the existence and nature of the Divine Word, so far as it can be told by man, he then shows the might of his power. First, he shows his power with respect to all things that come into existence. Secondly, with respect to man. As to the first, he uses three clauses; and we will not distinguish these at present because they will be distinguished in different ways according to the different explanations given by the saints.

69 The first clause, **All things were made through him**, is used to show three things concerning the Word. First, according to Chrysostom, to show the equality of the Word to the Father. For as stated earlier, the error of Arius was rejected by the Evangelist when he showed the coeternity of the Son with the Father by saying, "He was in the beginning with God." Here he excludes the same error when he shows the omnipotence of the Son, saying, **All things were made through him**. For to be the principle of all the things that are made is proper to the great omnipotent God, as the Psalm (134:6) says, "Whatever the Lord wills he does, in heaven and on earth." Thus the Word, through whom all things were made, is God, great and coequal to the Father.

70 Secondly, according to Hilary, this clause is used to show the coeternity of the Word with the Father. For since someone might understand the earlier statement, "In the beginning was the Word," as referring to the beginning of creatures, i.e., that before there were any creatures there was a time in which the Word did not exist, the Evangelist rejects this by saying, **All things were made through him**. For if all things were made through the Word, then time was also. From this we can form the following argument: If all time was made through him, there was no time before him or with him, because before all these, he was. Therefore

they [the Son and the Father] are eternally coeternal.

71 Thirdly, according to Augustine, this clause is used to show the consubstantiality of the Word with the Father. For if all things were made through the Word, the Word himself cannot be said to have been made; because, if made, he was made through some Word, since all things were made through the Word. Consequently, there would have been another Word through whom was made the Word of whom the Evangelist is speaking. This Word, through whom all things are made, we call the only begotten Son of God, because he is neither made nor is he a creature. And if he is not a creature, it is necessary to say that he is of the same substance with the Father, since every substance other than the divine essence is made. But a substance that is not a creature is God. And so the Word, through whom all things were made, is consubstantial with the Father, since he is neither made, nor is he a creature.

72 And so in saying **All things were made through him**, you have, according to Chrysostom, the equality of the Word with the Father; the coeternity of the Word with the Father, according to Hilary; and the consubstantiality of the Word with the Father, according to Augustine.

73 Here we must guard against three errors. First, the error of Valentine. He understood **All things were made through him** to mean that the Word proffered to the Creator the cause of his creating the world; so that all things were made through the Word as if the Father's creating the world came from the Word. This leads to the position of those who said that God created the world because of some exterior cause; and this is contrary to Proverbs (16:4), "The Lord made all things for himself." The reason this is an error is that, as Origen says, if the Word had been a cause to the Creator by offering him the material for making things, he would not have said, **All things were made through him**, but on the contrary, that all things were made through the Creator by the Word.

74 Secondly, we must avoid the error of Origen. He said that the Holy Spirit was included among all the things made through the Word; from which it follows that he is a creature. And this is what Origen thought. This is heretical and blasphemous, since the Holy Spirit has the same glory and substance and dignity as the Father and the Son, according to the words of Matthew (28:19), "Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." And, "There are three who give testimony' in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one" (I Jn 5:7). Thus when the Evangelist says, **All things were made through him**, one should not understand "all things" absolutely, but in the realm of creatures and of things made. As if to say: All things that were made, were made through him. Otherwise, if "all things" were taken absolutely, it would follow that the Father

and the Holy Spirit were made through him; and this is blasphemous. Consequently, neither the Father nor anything substantial with the Father was made through the Word.

75 Thirdly, we must avoid another of Origen's errors. For he said that all things were made through the Word as something is made by a greater through a lesser, as if the Son were inferior to, and an instrument of, the Father. But it is clear from many places in Scripture that the preposition "through" (*per*) does not signify inferiority in the thing which is its grammatical object, i.e., in the Son or Word. For the Apostle says, "God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son" (1 Cor 1:9). If he "through" whom something is done has a superior, then the Father has a superior. But this is false. Therefore, the preposition "through" does not signify any inferiority in the Son when all things are said to have been made through him.

76 To explain this point further, we should note that when something is said to be made through someone, the preposition "through" (*per*) denotes some sort of causality in its object with respect to an operation; but not always the same kind of causality. For since an operation, according to our manner of signifying, is considered to be medial between the one acting and the thing produced, the operation itself can be regarded in two ways. In one way, as issuing from the one operating, who is the cause of the action itself; in another way, as terminated in the thing produced. Accordingly, the preposition "through" sometimes signifies the cause of the operation insofar as it issues from the one operating: but sometimes as terminated in the thing which is produced. It signifies the cause of the operation as issuing from the one operating when the object of the preposition is either the efficient or formal cause why the one operating is operating. For example, we have a formal cause when fire is heating through heat; for heat is the formal cause of the fire's heating. We have a movent or efficient cause in cases where secondary agents act through primary agents; as when I say that the bailiff acts through the king, because the king is the efficient cause of the bailiff's acting. This is the way Valentine understood that all things were made through the Word: as though the Word were the cause of the maker's production of all things. The preposition "through" implies the causality of the operation as terminated in the thing produced when what is signified through that causality is not the cause which operates, but the cause of the operation precisely as terminated in the thing produced. So when I say, "The carpenter is making a bench through [by means of] a hatchet," the hatchet is not the cause of the carpenter's operating; but we do say that it is the cause of the bench's being made by the one acting.

And so when it says that **All things were made through him**, if the "through" denotes the efficient or movent cause, causing the Father to act, then in this

sense the Father does nothing through the Son, but he does all things through himself, as has been said. But if the "through" denotes a formal cause, as when the Father operates through his wisdom, which is his essence, he operates through his wisdom as he operates through his essence. And because the wisdom and power of the Father are attributed to the Son, as when we say, "Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24), then by appropriation we say that the Father does all things through the Son, i.e., through his wisdom. And so Augustine says that the phrase "from whom all things," is appropriated to the Father; "through whom all things," is appropriated to the Son; and "in whom all things," is appropriated to the Holy Spirit. But if the "through" denotes causality from the standpoint of the thing produced, then the statement, "The Father does all things through the Son," is not [mere] appropriation but proper to the Word, because the fact that he is a cause of creatures is had from someone else, namely the Father, from whom he has being.

However, it does not follow from this that the Word is the instrument of the Father, although whatever is moved by another to effect something partakes of the nature of an instrument. For when I say that someone works through a power received from another, this can be understood in two ways. In one way, as meaning that the power of the giver and of the receiver is numerically one and the same power; and in this way the one operating through a power received from another is not inferior but equal to the one from whom he receives it. Therefore, since the same power which the Father has he gives to the Son, through which the Son works, when it is said that "the Father works through the Son," one should not on that account say that the Son is inferior to the Father or is his instrument. This would be the case, rather, in those who receive from another not the same power, but another and created one. And so it is plain that neither the Holy Spirit nor the Son are causes of the Father's working, and that neither is the minister or instrument of the Father, as Origen raved.

77 If we carefully consider the words, **All things were made through him**, we can clearly see that the Evangelist spoke with the utmost exactitude. For whoever makes something must preconceive it in his wisdom, which is the form and pattern of the thing made: as the form preconceived in the mind of an artisan is the pattern of the cabinet to be made. So, God makes nothing except through the conception of his intellect, which is an eternally conceived wisdom, that is, the Word of God, and the Son of God. Accordingly, it is impossible that he should make anything except through the Son. And so Augustine says, in *The Trinity*, that the Word is the art full of the living patterns of all things. Thus it is clear that all things which the Father makes, he makes through him.

78 It should be remarked that, according to Chrysostom, all the things which Moses enumerates individually in God's production of things, saying, "And God

said, 'Let there be light'" (Gn 1:3) and so forth, all these the Evangelist transcends and embraces in one phrase, saying, **All things were made through him**. The reason is that Moses wished to teach the emanation of creatures from God; hence he enumerated them one by one. But John, hastening toward loftier things, intends in this book to lead us specifically to a knowledge of the Creator himself.

79 Then he says, **and without him nothing was made**. This is the second clause which some have distorted, as Augustine says in his work, *The Nature of the Good*. Because of John's manner of speaking here, they believed that he was using "nothing" in an affirmative sense; as though nothing was something which was made without the Word. And so they claimed that this clause was added by the Evangelist in order to exclude something which was not made by the Word. They say that the Evangelist, having said that **All things were made through him**, added **and without him nothing was made**. It was as if to say: I say that all things were made through him in such a way that still something was made without him, that is, the "nothing".

80 Three heresies came from this. First, that of Valentine. He affirmed, as Origen says, a multitude of principles, and taught that from them came thirty eras. The first principles he postulates are two: the Deep, which he calls God the Father, and Silence. And from these proceed ten eras. But from the Deep and from Silence, he says, there are two other principles, Mind and Truth; and from these issued eight eras. Then from Mind and Truth, there are two other principles, Word and Life; and from these issued twelve eras; thus making a total of thirty. Finally, from the Word and Life there proceeded in time, the man Christ and the Church. In this way Valentine affirmed many eras previous to the issuing forth of the Word. And so he said that because the Evangelist had stated that **all things were made through him**, then, lest anyone think that those previous eras had been effected through the Word, he added, **and without him nothing was made**, i.e., all the preceding eras and all that had existed in them. All of these John calls "nothing," because they transcend human reason and cannot be grasped by the mind.

81 The second error to arise from this was that of Manichaeus, who affirmed two opposing principles: one is the source of incorruptible things, and the other of corruptible things. He said that after John had stated that **All things were made through him**, then, lest it be thought that the Word is the cause of corruptible things, he immediately added, **and without him nothing was made**, i.e., things subject to corruption, which are called "nothing" because their being consists in being continually transformed into nothing.

82 The third error is that of those who claim that by "nothing" we should

understand the devil, according to Job (18:15), "May the companions of him who is not dwell in his house." And so they say that all things except the devil were made through the Word. In this way they explain, **without him nothing was made**, that is, the devil.

83 All these three errors, arising as they do from the same source, namely, taking "nothing" in a positive sense, are excluded by the fact that "nothing" is not used here in an affirmative, but in a merely negative sense: the sense being that all things were made through the Word in such a way that there is nothing participating in existence that was not made through him.

84 Perhaps someone will object and say that it was superfluous to add this clause, if it is to be understood negatively, on the ground that the Evangelist, in stating that **All things were made through him**, seems to have already said adequately enough that there is not something that was not made through the Word.

The answer to this is that, according to many expositors, this clause was added in many ways for a number of reasons. One of these reasons is, according to Chrysostom, so that no one reading the Old Testament and finding only visible things listed by Moses in the creation of things, would think that these were the only things made through the Word. And so after he had said, **All things were made through him**, namely, those that Moses listed, the Evangelist then added, **and without him nothing was made**, as though he were saying: None of the things which exist, whether visible or invisible, was made without the Word. Indeed, the Apostle also speaks in this way (Col 1:16), saying that all things, visible and invisible, were created in Christ; and here the Apostle makes specific mention of invisible things because Moses had made no express mention of them on account of the lack of erudition of that people, who could not be raised above the things of sense.

Chrysostom also gives another reason why this clause was added. For someone reading in the Gospels of the many signs and miracles worked by Christ, such as, "The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed" (Mt 11:5), might believe that in saying, **All things were made through him**, John meant that only the things mentioned in those Gospels, and nothing else, were made through him. So lest anyone suspect this, the Evangelist adds, **and without him nothing was made**. As if to say: Not only all the things contained in the Gospels were made through him, but none of the things that were made, was made without him. And so, according to Chrysostom, this clause is added to bring out his total causality, and serves, as it were, to complete his previous statement.

85 According to Hilary, however, this clause is introduced to show that the Word has operative power from another. For since the Evangelist had said, **All things were made through him**, it might be supposed that the Father is excluded from all causality. For that reason he added, **and without him nothing was made**. As if to say: All things were made through him, but in such a way that the Father made all things with him. For "without him" is equivalent to saying, "not alone," so that the meaning is: It is not he alone through whom all things were made, but he is the other one without whom nothing was made. It is as if he said: **Without him**, with another working, i.e., with the Father, **nothing was made**, as it says, "I was with him forming all things" (Prv 8:30).

86 In a certain homily attributed to Origen, and which begins, "The spiritual voice of the eagle," we find another rather beautiful exposition. It says there that the Greek has *thoris* where the Latin has *sine* (without). Now *thoris* is the same as "outside" or "outside of." It is as if he had said: **All things were made through him** in such a way that outside him **nothing was made**. And so he says this to show that all things are conserved through the Word and in the Word, as stated in Hebrews (1:3), "He sustains all things by his powerful word." Now there are certain things that do not need their producer except to bring them into existence, since after they have been produced they are able to subsist without any further activity on the part of the producer. For example, a house needs a builder if it is to come into existence, but it continues to exist without any further action on the part of the builder. So lest anyone suppose that all things were made through the Word in such a way that he is merely the cause of their production and not of their continuation in existence, the Evangelist added, **and without him nothing was made**, i.e., nothing was made outside of him, because he encompasses all things, preserving them.

87 This clause is also explained by Augustine and Origen and several others in such a way that "nothing" indicates sin. Accordingly, because **All things were made through him** might be interpreted as including evil and sin, he added, **and without him nothing**, i.e., sin, **was made**. For just as art is not the principle or cause of the defects in its products, but is through itself the cause of their perfection and form, so the Word, who is the art of the Father, full of living archetypes, is not the cause of any evil or disarrangement in things, particularly of the evil of sin, which carries the full notion of evil. The *per se* cause of this evil is the will of the creature, either a man or an angel, freely declining from the end to which it is ordained by its nature. One who can act in virtue of his art but purposely violates it, is the cause of the defects occurring in his works, not by reason of his art, but by reason of his will. So in such cases, his art is not the source or cause of the defects, but his will is. Consequently, evil is a defect of the will and not of any art. And so to the extent that it is such [i.e., a defect], it is nothing.

88 So then, this clause is added to show the universal causality of the Word, according to Chrysostom; his association with the Father, according to Hilary; the power of the Word in the preserving of things, according to Origen; and finally, the purity of his causality, because he is so the cause of good as not to be the cause of sin, according to Augustine, Origen, and a number of others.

89 Then he says, **What was made in him was life**; and this is the third clause. Here we must avoid the false interpretation of Manichaeus, who was led by this to maintain that everything that exists is alive: for example, stones, wood, men, and anything else in the world. He understood the clause this way: **What was made in him**, comma, **was life**. But it was not life unless alive. Therefore, whatever was made in him is alive. He also claimed that "in him" is the same as saying "through him," since very often in Scripture "in him" and "through him" are interchangeable, as in "in him and through him all things were created" (Col 1:16). However, our present explanation shows that this interpretation is false.

90 There are, nevertheless, a number of ways to explain it without error. In that homily, "The spiritual voice," we find this explanation: **What was made in him**, i.e., through him, **was life**, not in each thing itself, but in its cause. For in the case of all things that are caused, it is always true that effects, whether produced by nature or by will, exist in their causes, not according to their own existence, but according to the power of their appropriate cause. Thus, lower effects are in the sun as in their cause, not according to their respective existences but according to the power of the sun. Therefore, since the cause of all effects produced by God is a certain life and an art full of living archetypes, for this reason **What was made in him**, i.e., through him, **was life**, in its cause, i.e., in God.

91 Augustine reads this another way, as: **What was made**, comma, **in him was life**. For things can be considered in two ways: as they are in themselves, and as they are in the Word. If they are considered as they are in themselves, then it is not true that all things are life or even alive, but some lack life and some are alive. For example, the earth was made and metals were made, but none is life, none is living; animals and men were made, and these, considered in themselves, are not life, but merely living. Yet considered as they are in the Word, they are not merely living, but also life. For the archetypes which exist spiritually in the wisdom of God, and through which things were made by the Word, are life, just as a chest made by an artisan is in itself neither alive nor life, yet the exemplar of the chest in the artisan's mind prior to the existence of the chest is in some sense living, insofar as it has an intellectual existence in the mind of the artisan. Nevertheless it is not life, because it is neither in his essence nor is it his existence through the act of understanding of the artisan. But in God,

his act of understanding is his life and his essence. And so whatever is in God is not only living, but is life itself, because whatever is in God is his essence. Hence the creature in God is the creating essence. Thus, if things are considered as they are in the Word, they are life. This is explained in another place.

92 Origen, commenting on John, gives another reading, thus: **That which was made in him; and then, was life.** Here we should note that some things are said of the Son of God as such; for example, that he is God, omnipotent, and the like. And some things are said of him in relation to ourselves; for example, we say he is Savior and Redeemer. Some things are said in both ways, such as wisdom and justice. Now in all things said absolutely and of the Son as such, it is not said that he was "made", for example, we do not say that the Son was made God or omnipotent. But in things said in reference to us, or in both ways, the notion of being made can be used, as in, "God made him [Jesus Christ] our wisdom, our justice, our sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor 1:30). And so, although he was always wisdom and justice in himself, yet it can be said that he was newly made justice and wisdom for us.

And so Origen, explaining it along these lines, says that although in himself the Son is life, yet he was made life for us by the fact that he gave us life, as is said, "Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will come to life" (1 Cor 15:22). And so he says "the Word that was made" life for us **in himself was life**, so that after a time he could become life for us; and so he immediately adds, **and that life was the light of men.**

93 Hilary reads the clause differently, thus: **And without him was made nothing, which was made in him**, and later it says, **he was life.** For he says (*The Trinity* II) that when the Evangelist says **without him nothing was made**, one might be perplexed and ask whether there are still other things made by him, that were not made through him, although not without him, but with respect to which he was associated with the maker; and this clause is added to correct the aforesaid error. Therefore lest this be so understood, when the Evangelist says, **All things were made through him**, he adds, **and without him nothing was made**, which was made, in him, that is, through him; and the reason for this is that **he was life.**

For it is plain that all things are said to have been made through the Word inasmuch as the Word, who proceeds from the Father, is God. But let us suppose that some father has a son who does not perfectly exercise the operations of a man, but reaches such a state gradually. In that case the father will do many things, not through the son, yet not without [having] him. Since, therefore, the Son of God has from all eternity the same life that the Father has—"Just as the Father possesses life in himself, so has he granted it to the Son to have life in

himself" (below 5:26)—one cannot say that God the Father, although he made nothing without the Son, nevertheless made some things not through him, because he was life. For in living things which participate life, it can happen that imperfect life precedes perfect life; but in *per se* life, which does not participate life but is simply and absolutely life, there can be no imperfection at all. Accordingly, because the Word is *per se* life, there was never imperfect life in him, but always perfect life. And so in such a way that nothing was made without him that was not also made in him, i.e., through him.

94 Chrysostom has a different reading and punctuation, thus: **And without him was made nothing that was made.** The reason for this is that someone might believe that the Holy Spirit was made through the Word. So to exclude this, the Evangelist says, **that was made**, because the Holy Spirit is not something that is made. And afterward follows, **In him was life**, which is introduced for two reasons. First, to show that after the creation of all things his causality was indefectible not only with respect to the things already produced, but also with respect to things yet to be produced. As if to say: **In him was life**, by which he could not only produce all things, but which has an unfailing flow and a causality for producing things continually without undergoing any change, being a living fountain which is not diminished in spite of its continuous outflow; whereas collected water, that is not living [i.e., running] water, is diminished when it flows out, and is used up. So the Psalm (35:10) says, "With you is the fountain of life." The second reason is to show that things are governed by the Word. For since **In him was life**, this shows that he produced things by his intellect and will, not by a necessity of his nature, and that he governs the things he made. "The Word of God is living" (Heb 4:12).

Chrysostom is held in such esteem by the Greeks in his explanations that they admit no other where he expounded anything in Holy Scripture. For this reason, this passage in all the Greek works is found to be punctuated exactly as Chrysostom did, namely, **And without him was made nothing that was made.**

LECTURE 3

4b And that life was the light of men.
5 And the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.

95 Above, the Evangelist described the power of the Word insofar as he brought

all things into existence; here he describes his power as it is related to men, saying that this Word is a light to men. First, he introduces a certain light to us (v 4b); secondly, the light's irradiation (v 5a); thirdly, participation in the light (v 5b). This whole section may be explained in two ways: first, according to the influx of natural knowledge; secondly, according to participation in grace.

As to the first point he says, **And that life was the light of men.**

96 Here we should note first that, according to Augustine and many others, light is more properly said of spiritual things than of sensible things. Ambrose, however, thinks that brightness is said metaphorically of God. But this is not a great issue, for in whatever way the name "light" is used, it implies a manifestation, whether that manifesting concerns intelligible or sensible things. If we compare sensible and intelligible manifestation, then, according to the nature of things, light is found first in spiritual things. But for us, who give names to things on the basis of their properties as known to us, light is discovered first in sensible things, because we first used this name to signify sensible light before intelligible light; although as to power, light belongs to spiritual things in a prior and truer way than to sensible things.

97 To clarify the statement, **And that life was the light of men**, we should remark that there are many grades of life. For some things live, but do so without light, because they have no knowledge; for example, plants. Hence their life is not light. Other things both live and know, but their knowledge, since it is on the sense level, is concerned only with individual and material things, as is the case with the brutes. So they have both life and a certain light. But they do not have the light of men, who live, and know, not only truths, but also the very nature of truth itself. Such are rational creatures, to whom not only this or that are made manifest, but truth itself, which can be manifested and is manifestive to all.

And so the Evangelist, speaking of the Word, not only says that he is life but also **light**, lest anyone suppose he means life without knowledge. And he says that he is the **light of men**, lest anyone suppose he meant only sensible knowledge, such as exists in the brutes.

98 But since he is also the light of angels, why did he say, of men? Two answers have been given to this. Chrysostom says that the Evangelist intended in this Gospel to give us a knowledge of the Word precisely as directed to the salvation of men and therefore refers, in keeping with his aim, more to men than to angels. Origen, however, says that participation in this light pertains to men insofar as they have a rational nature; accordingly, when the Evangelist says, **the light of men**, he wants us to understand every rational nature.

99 We also see from this the perfection and dignity of this life, because it is intellectual or rational. For whereas all things that in some way move themselves are called living, only those that perfectly move themselves are said to have perfect life; and among lower creatures only man moves himself, properly speaking, and perfectly. For although other things are moved by themselves by some inner principle, that inner principle is nevertheless not open to opposite alternatives; hence they are not moved freely but from necessity. As a result, those things that are moved by such a principle are more truly made to act than act themselves. But man, since he is master of his act, moves himself freely to all that he wills. Consequently, man has perfect life, as does every intellectual nature. And so the life of the Word, which is the light of men, is perfect life.

100 We find a fitting order in the above. For in the natural order of things, existence is first; and the Evangelist implies this in his first statement, **In the beginning was the Word**. Secondly, comes life; and this is mentioned next, **In him was life**. Thirdly comes understanding; and that is mentioned next; **And that life was the light of men**. And, according to Origen, he fittingly attributes light to life because light can be attributed only to the living.

101 We should note that light can be related in two ways to what is living: as an object and as something in which they participate, as is clear in external sight. For the eyes know external light as an object, but if they are to see it, they must participate in an inner light by which the eyes are adapted and disposed for seeing the external light. And so his statement, **And that life was the light of men**, can be understood in two ways. First, that the **light of men** is taken as an object that man alone can look upon, because the rational creature alone can see it, since he alone is capable of the vision of God who "teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and enlightens us more than the birds of the air" Jb 35:11); for although other animals may know certain things that are true, nevertheless, man alone knows the nature itself of truth.

The **light of men** can also be taken as a light in which we participate. For we would never be able to look upon the Word and light itself except through a participation in it; and this participation is in man and is the superior part of our soul, i.e., the intellectual light, about which the Psalm (4:7) says, "The light of your countenance, O Lord, is marked upon us," i.e., of your Son, who is your face, by whom you are manifested.

102 Having introduced a certain light, the Evangelist now considers its irradiation, saying, And the light shines in the darkness. This can be explained in two ways, according to the two meanings of "darkness."

First, we might take "darkness" as a natural defect, that of the created mind. For the mind is to that light of which the Evangelist speaks here as air is to the light of the sun; because, although air is receptive of the light of the sun, considered in itself it is a darkness. According to this the meaning is: the light, i.e., that life which is the light of men, shines in the darkness, i.e., in created souls and minds, by always shedding its light on all. "On a man from whom the light is hidden" (Jb 3:23).

And the darkness did not overcome it, i.e., enclose it [i.e., intellectually]. For to overcome something [*comprehendere*, to overcome, to comprehend, to seize or apprehend, and so forth], is to enclose and understand its boundaries. As Augustine says, to reach God with the mind is a great happiness; but to overcome [comprehend] him is impossible. And so, the darkness did not overcome it. "Behold, God is great, exceeding our knowledge" (Jb 36:26); "Great in counsel, incomprehensible in thought" as Jeremiah (32:19) says. This explanation is found in that homily which begins, "The spiritual voice of the eagle."

103 We can explain this passage in another way by taking "darkness" as Augustine does, for the natural lack of wisdom in man, which is called a darkness. "And I saw that wisdom excells folly as much as light excells knowledge" (Ecc 2:13). Someone is without wisdom, therefore, because he lacks the light of divine wisdom. Consequently, just as the minds of the wise are lucid by reason of a participation in that divine light and wisdom, so by the lack of it they are darkness. Now the fact that some are darkness is not due to a defect in that light, since on its part it shines in the darkness and radiates upon all. Rather, the foolish are 'without that light because **the darkness did not overcome it**, i.e., they did not apprehend it, not being able to attain a participation in it due to their foolishness; after having been lifted up, they did not persevere. "From the savage," i.e., from the proud, "he hides his light," i.e., the light of wisdom, "and shows his friend that it belongs to him, and that he may approach it" (Jb 36:32); "They did not know the way to wisdom, nor did they remember her paths" (Bar 3:23).

Although some minds are darkness, i.e., they lack savory and lucid wisdom, nevertheless no man is in such darkness as to be completely devoid of divine light, because whatever truth is known by anyone is due to a participation in that light which shines in the darkness; for every truth, no matter by whom it is spoken, comes from the Holy Spirit. Yet the darkness, i.e., men in darkness, did not overcome it, apprehend it in truth. This is the way, [i.e., with respect to the natural influx of knowledge] that Origen and Augustine explain this clause.

104 Starting from **And that life was the light of men**, we can explain this in

another way, according to the influx of grace, since we are illuminated by Christ.

After he had considered the creation of things through the Word, the Evangelist considers here the restoration of the rational creature through Christ, saying, **And that life**, of the Word, was the **light of** men, i.e., of all men in general, and not only of the Jews. For the Son of God assumed flesh and came into the world to illumine all men with grace and truth. "I came into the world for this, to testify to the truth" (below 18:37); "As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world" (below 9:5). So he does not say, "the light of the Jews," because although previously he had been known only in Judea, he later became known to the world. "I have given you as a light to the nations, that you might be my salvation to the ends of the earth" (Is 49:6).

It was fitting to join light and life by saying, **And that life was the light of men**, in order to show that these two have come to us through Christ: life, through a participation in grace, "Grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ" (below 1:17); and light, by a knowledge of truth and wisdom.

105 According to this explanation, **the light shines in the darkness**, can be expounded in three ways, in the light of the three meanings of "darkness."

In one way, we can take "darkness" for punishment. For any sadness and suffering of heart can be called a darkness, just as any joy can be called a light. "When I sit in darkness and in suffering the Lord is my light," i.e., my joy and consolation (Mi 7:8). And so Origen says: In this explanation, **the light shines in the darkness**, is Christ coming into the world, having a body capable of suffering and without sin, but "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3). The light is in the flesh, that is, the flesh of Christ, which is called a darkness insofar as it has a likeness to sinful flesh. As if to say: The light, i.e., the Word of God, veiled about by the darkness of the flesh, shines on the world; "I will cover the sun with a cloud" (Ez 32:7).

106 Secondly, we can take "darkness" to mean the devils, as in Ephesians (6:12), "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness." Looked at this way he says, **the light**, i.e., the Son of God, **shines in the darkness**, i.e., has descended into the world where darkness, i.e., the devils, hold sway: "Now the prince of this world will be cast out" (below 12:31). **And the darkness**, i.e., the devils, **did not overcome it**, i.e., were unable to obscure him by their temptations, as is plain in Matthew (c 4)

107 Thirdly, we can take "darkness" for the error or ignorance which filled the

whole world before the coming of Christ, "You were at one time darkness" (Eph 5:8). And so he says that **the light**, i.e., the incarnate Word of God, **shines in the darkness**, i.e., upon the men of the world, who are blinded by the darkness or error and ignorance. "To enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Lk 1:79), "The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light" (Is 9:2).

And the darkness did not overcome it, i.e., did not overcome him. For in spite of the number of men darkened by sin, blinded by envy, shadowed over by pride, who have struggled against Christ (as is plain from the Gospel) by upbraiding him, heaping insults and calumnies upon him, and finally killing him, nevertheless they did not overcome it, i.e., gain the victory of so obscuring him that his brightness would not shine throughout the whole world. Wisdom (7:30) says, "Compared to light, she takes precedence, for night supplants it, but wisdom," that is, the incarnate Son of God, "is not overcome by wickedness," that is, of the Jews and of heretics, because it says, "She gave him the prize for his stern struggle that he might know that wisdom is mightier than all else" (Wis 10:12).

LECTURE 4

6 There was a man sent by God, whose name was John.

7 He came as a witness, that he might bear witness to the light, so that through him all men might believe. 8 He was not the light, but [he came] in order to bear witness to the light.

108 Above, the Evangelist considered the divinity of the Word; here he begins to consider the incarnation of the Word. And he does two things concerning this: first, he treats of the witness to the incarnate Word, or the precursor; secondly, of the coming of the Word (1:9). As to the first, he does two things: first, he describes the precursor who comes to bear witness; secondly, he shows that he was incapable of the work of our salvation (1:8).

He describes the precursor in four ways. First, according to his nature, **There was a man**. Secondly, as to his authority, **sent by God**. Thirdly, as to his suitability for the office, **whose name was John**. Fourthly, as to the dignity of his office, **He came as a witness**.

109 We should note with respect to the first that, as soon as the Evangelist begins speaking of something temporal, he changes his manner of speech. When

speaking above of eternal things, he used the word "was" (*erat*), which is the past imperfect tense; and this indicates that eternal things are without end. But now, when he is speaking of temporal things, he uses "was" (*fuit*, i.e., "has been"); this indicates temporal things as having taken place in the past and coming to an end there.

110 And so he says, **There was a man** (*Fuit homo*). This excludes at the very start the incorrect opinion of certain heretics who were in error on the condition or nature of John. They believed that John was an angel in nature, basing themselves on the words of the Lord, "I send my messenger [in Greek, *angelos*] before you, who will prepare your way" (Mt 11:10); and the same thing is found in Mark (1:2). But the Evangelist rejects this, saying, **There was a man** by nature, not an angel. "The nature of man is known, and that he cannot contend in judgment with one who is stronger than himself" (Ecc 6:10).

Now it "is fitting that a man be sent to men, for men are more easily drawn to a man, since he is like themselves. So in Hebrews (7:28) it says, "The law appoints men, who have weakness, priests." God could have governed men through angels, but he preferred men so that we could be more instructed by their example. And so John was a man, and not an angel.

11 1 John is described by his authority when it says, sent by God. Indeed, although John was not an angel in nature, he was so by his office, because he was sent by God. For the distinctive office of angels is that they are sent by God and are messengers of God. "All are ministering spirits, sent to serve" (Heb 1:14). Hence it is that "angel" means "messenger." And so men who are sent by God to announce something can be called angels. "Haggai the messenger of the Lord" (Hag 1:13).

If someone is to bear witness to God, it is necessary that he be sent by God. "How can they preach unless they are sent?" as is said in Romans (10:15). And since they are sent by God, they seek the things of Jesus Christ, not their own. "We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:5). On the other hand, one who sends himself, and is not sent by God, seeks his own things or those of man, and not the things of Christ. And so he says here, **There was a man sent by God**, so that we would understand that John proclaimed something divine, not human.

112 Note that there are three ways in which we see men sent by God. First, by an inward inspiration. "And now the Lord God has sent me, and his spirit" (Is 48:16). As if to say: I have been sent by God through an inward inspiration of the spirit. Secondly, by an expressed and clear command, perceived by the bodily

senses or the imagination. Isaiah was also sent in this way; and so he says, "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me'" (Is 6:8). Thirdly, by the order of a prelate, who acts in the place of God in this matter. "I have pardoned in the person of Christ for your sake" as it says in 2 Corinthians (2:10). This is why those who are sent by a prelate are sent by God, as Barnabas and Timothy were sent by the Apostle.

When it is said here, **There was a man sent by God**, we should understand that he was sent by God through an inward inspiration, or perhaps even by an outward command. "He who sent me to baptize with water had said to me: 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit'" (below 1:33).

113 We should not understand, **There was a man sent by God**, as some heretics did, who believed that from the very beginning human souls were created without bodies along with the angels, and that one's soul is sent into the body when he is born, and that John was sent to life, i.e., his soul was sent to a body. Rather, we should understand that he was sent by God to baptize and preach.

114 John's fitness is given when he says, **whose name was John**. One must be qualified for the office of bearing witness, because unless a witness is qualified, then no matter in what way he is sent by another, his testimony is not acceptable. Now a man becomes qualified by the grace, of God. "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor 15:10); "who has made us fit ministers of a new covenant" (2 Cor 3:6). So, the Evangelist appropriately implies the precursor's fitness from his name when he says, **whose name was John**, which is interpreted, "in whom is grace."

This name was not given to him meaninglessly, but by divine preordination and before he was born, as is clear from Luke (1:13), "You will name him John," as the angel said to Zechariah. Hence he can say what is said in Isaiah (49:1), "The Lord called me from the womb"; "He who will be, his name is already called" (Ecc 6:10). The Evangelist also indicates this from his manner of speaking, when he says was, as to God's preordination.

115 Then he is described by the dignity of his office. First, his office is mentioned. Secondly, the reason for his office, **to bear witness to the light**.

116 Now his office is to bear witness; hence he says, **He came as a witness**.

Here it should be remarked that God makes men, and everything else he makes, for himself. "The Lord made all things for himself" (Prv 16:4). Not, indeed, to add anything to himself, since he has no need of our good, but so that his goodness might be made manifest in all of the things made by him, in that "his eternal power and divinity are clearly seen, being understood through the things that are made"(Rom 1:20). Thus, each creature is made as a witness to God in so far as each creature is a certain witness of the divine goodness. So, the vastness of creation is a witness to God's power and omnipotence; and its beauty is a witness to the divine wisdom. But certain men are ordained by God in a special way, so that they bear witness to God not only naturally by their existence, but also spiritually by their good works. Hence all holy men are witnesses to God inasmuch as God is glorified among men by their good works. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5:16). But those who not only share in God's gifts in themselves by acting well through the grace of God, but also spread them to others by their teaching, influencing and encouraging others, are in a more special way witnesses to God. "Everyone who calls upon my name, I have created for my glory" (Is 43:7). And so John came as a witness in order to spread to others the gifts of God and to proclaim his praise.

117 This office of John, that of bearing witness, is very great, because no one can testify about something except in the manner in which he has shared in it. "We know of what we speak, and we bear witness of what we see" (below 3:11). Hence, to bear witness to divine truth indicates a knowledge of that truth. So Christ also had this office: "I have come into the world for this, to testify to the truth" (below 18:37). But Christ testifies in one way and John in another. Christ bears witness as the light who comprehends all things, indeed, as the existing light itself. John bears witness only as participating in that light. And so Christ gives testimony in a perfect manner and perfectly manifests the truth, while John and other holy men give testimony in so far as they have a share of divine truth. John's office, therefore, is great both because of his participation in the divine light and because of a likeness to Christ, who carried out this office. "I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and a commander of the nations" (Is 55:4).

118 The purpose of this office is given when he says, **that he might bear witness to the light**. Here we should understand that there are two reasons for bearing witness about something. One reason can be on the part of the thing with which the witness is concerned; for example, if there is some doubt or uncertainty about that thing. The other is on the part of those who hear it; if they are hard of heart and slow to believe. John came as a witness, not because of the thing about which he bore witness, for it was light. Hence he says, **bear witness to the light**, i.e., not to something obscure, but to something clear. He came, therefore, to bear witness on account of those to whom he testified, **so**

that through him (i.e., John) **all men might believe**. For as light is not only visible in itself and of itself, but through it all else can be seen, so the Word of God is not only light in himself, but he makes known all things that are known. For since a thing is made known and understood through its form, and all forms exist through the Word, who is the art full of living forms, the Word is light not only in himself, but as making known all things; "all that appears is light" (Eph 5:13).

And so it was fitting for the Evangelist to call the Son "light," because he came as "a revealing light to the Gentiles" (Lk 2:32). Above, he called the Son of God the Word, by which the Father expresses himself and every creature. Now since he is, properly speaking, the light of men, and the Evangelist is considering him here as coming to accomplish the salvation of men, he fittingly interrupts the use of the name "Word" when speaking of the Son, and says, "light."

119 But if that light is adequate of itself to make known all things, and not only itself, what need does it have of any witness? This was the objection of the Manichaeans, who wanted to destroy the Old Testament. Consequently, the saints gave many reasons, against their opinion, why Christ wanted to have the testimony of the prophets.

Origen gives three reasons. The first is that God wanted to have certain witnesses, not because he needed their testimony, but to ennoble those whom he appointed witnesses. Thus we see in the order of the universe that God produces certain effects by means of intermediate causes, not because he himself is unable to produce them without these intermediaries, but he deigns to confer on them the dignity of causality because he wishes to ennoble these intermediate causes. Similarly, even though God could have enlightened all men by himself and lead them to a knowledge of himself, yet to preserve due order in things and to ennoble certain men, he willed that divine knowledge reach men through certain other men. "'You are my witnesses,' says the Lord" (Is 43:10).

A second reason is that Christ was a light to the world through his miracles. Yet, because they were performed in time, they passed away with time and did not reach everyone. But the words of the prophets, preserved in Scripture, could reach not only those present, but could also reach those to come after. Hence the Lord willed that men come to a knowledge of the Word through the testimony of the prophets, in order that not only those present, but also men yet to come, might be enlightened about him. So it says expressly, **so that through him all men might believe**, i.e., not only those present, but also future generations.

The third reason is that not all men are in the same condition, and all are not led

or disposed to a knowledge of the truth in the same way. For some are brought to a knowledge of the truth by signs and miracles; others are brought more by wisdom. "The Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek wisdom" (1 Cor 1:22). And so the Lord, in order to show the path of salvation to all, willed both ways to be open. i.e., the way of signs and the way of wisdom, so that those who would not be brought to the path of salvation by the miracles of the Old and New Testaments, might be brought to a knowledge of the truth by the path of wisdom, as in the prophets and other books of Sacred Scripture.

A fourth reason, given by Chrysostom, is that certain men of weak understanding are unable to grasp the truth and knowledge of God by themselves. And so the Lord chose to come down to them and to enlighten certain men before others about divine matters, so that these others might obtain from them in a human way the knowledge of divine things they could not reach by themselves. And so he says, that **through him all men might believe**. As if to say: he came as a witness, not for the sake of the light, but for the sake of men, so **that through him all men might believe**. And so it is plain that the testimonies of the prophets are fitting and proper, and should be received as something needed by us for the knowledge of the truth.

120 He says believe, because there are two ways of participating in the divine light. One is the perfect participation which is present in glory, "In your light, we shall see the light" (Ps 35:10). The other is imperfect and is acquired through faith, since he came as a witness. Of these two ways it is said, "Now we see through a mirror, in an obscure manner, but then we shall see face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). And in the same place we find, "Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known." Among these two ways, the first is the way of participation through faith, because through it we are brought to vision. So in Isaiah (7:9) where our version has, "If you do not believe, you will not persist," another version has, "If you do not believe, you will not understand." "All of us, gazing on the Lord's glory with unveiled faces, are being transformed from glory to glory into his very image," which we have lost (2 Cor 3:18). "From the glory of faith to the glory of vision," as a Gloss says.

And so he says, **that through him all men might believe**, not as though all would see him perfectly at once, but first they would believe through faith, and later enjoy him through vision in heaven.

121 He says through him, to show that John is different than Christ. For Christ came so that all might believe in him. "He who believes in me, as Scripture says, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water" (below 7:38). John, on the other hand, **came that all men might believe**, not in him, but in Christ **through him**.

One may object that not all have believed. So if John came to that all might believe through him, he failed. I answer that both on the part of God, who sent John, and of John, who came, the method used is adequate to bring all to the truth. But on the **part** of those "who have fixed their eyes on the ground" (Ps 16:11), and refused to see the light, there was a failure, because all did not believe.

122 Now although John, of whom so much has been said, even including that he was sent by God, is an eminent person, his coming is not sufficient to save men, because the salvation of man lies in participating in the light. If John had been the light, his coming would have sufficed to save men; but he was not the light. So he says, **he was not the light**. Consequently, a light was needed that would suffice to save men.

Or, we could look at it another way. John came to bear witness to the light. Now it is the custom that the one who testifies is of greater authority than the one for whom he bears witness. So, lest John be considered to have greater authority than Christ, the Evangelist says, he was **not the light, but he came in order to bear witness to the light**. For he bears witness not because he is greater, but because he is better known, even though he is not as great.

123 There is a difficulty about his saying, he was not the light. Conflicting with this is, "You were at one time darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" (Eph 5:8); and "You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:14). Therefore, John and the apostles and all good men are a light.

I answer that some say that John was not the light, because this belongs to God alone. But if "light" is taken without the article, then John and all holy men were made lights. The meaning is this: the Son of God is light by his very essence; but John and all the saints are light by participation. So, because John participated in the true light, it was fitting that he bear witness to the light; for fire is better exhibited by something afire than by anything else, and color by something colored.

LECTURE 5

9 He [the Word] was the true light,
which enlightens every man coming into this world.
10 He was in the world, and through him the world was made,

and the world did not know him.

124 Above, the Evangelist considered the precursor and his witness to the incarnate Word; in the present section he considers the incarnate Word himself. As to this he does three things. First, he shows why it was necessary for the Word to come. Secondly, the benefit we received from the coming of the Word (1:11). And thirdly, the way he came (1:14).

The necessity for the Word's coming is seen to be the lack of divine knowledge in the world. He points out this need for his coming when he says, "For this was I born, and I came into the world for this, to testify to the truth" (below 18:37). To indicate this lack of divine knowledge, the Evangelist does two things. First, he shows that this lack does not pertain to God or the Word. Secondly, that it does pertain to men (v 10b).

He shows in three ways that there was no defect in God or in the Word that prevented men from knowing God and from being enlightened by the Word. First, from the efficacy of the divine light itself, because **He was the true light, which enlightens every man coming into this world.** Secondly, from the presence of the divine light, because **He was in the world.** Thirdly, from the obviousness of the light, because **through him the world was made.** So the lack of divine knowledge in the world was not due to the Word, because it is sufficient. First, he shows the nature of this efficiency, that is, **He was the true light.** Secondly, its very efficiency, **which enlightens every man.**

125 The divine Word is efficacious in enlightening because **He was the true light.** How the Word is light, and how he is the light of men need not be discussed again, because it was sufficiently explained above. What we must discuss at present is how he is the true light. To explain this, we should note that in Scripture the "true" is contrasted with three things. Sometimes it is contrasted with the false, as in "Put an end to lying, and let everyone speak the truth" (Eph 4:25). Sometimes it is contrasted with what is figurative, as in "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ" (below 1:17), because the truth of the figures contained in the law was fulfilled by Christ. Sometimes it is contrasted with what is something by participation, as in "that we may be in his true Son" (1 Jn 5:20), who is not his Son by participation.

Before the Word came there was in the world a certain light which the philosophers prided themselves on having; but this was a false light, because as is said, "They became stultified in their speculations, and their foolish hearts were darkened; claiming to be wise, they became fools" (Rom 1:21); "Every man is made foolish by his knowledge" (Jer 10:14). There was another light from the

teaching of the law which the Jews boasted of having; but this was a symbolic light, "The law has a shadow of the good things to come, not the image itself of them" (Heb 10:1). There was also a certain light in the angels and in holy men in so far as they knew God in a more special way by grace; but this was a participated light, "Upon whom does his light not shine?" (Jb 25:3), which is like saying: Whoever shine, shine to the extent that they participate in his light, i.e., God's light.

But the Word of God was not a false light, nor a symbolic light, nor a participated light, but the true light, i.e., light by his essence. Therefore he says, **He was the true light.**

126 This excludes two errors. First, that of Photinus, who believed that Christ derived his beginning from the Virgin. So, lest anyone suppose this, the Evangelist, speaking of the incarnation of the Word, says, **He was the true light**, i.e., eternally, not only before the Virgin, but before every creature. This also excludes the error of Arius and Origen; they said that Christ was not true God, but God by participation. If this were so, he could not be the true light, as the Evangelist says here, and as in "God is light" (1 Jn 1:5), i.e., not by participation, but **the true light**. So if the Word was the true light, it is plain that he is true God. Now it is clear how the divine Word is effective in causing divine knowledge.

127 The effectiveness or efficiency of the Word lies in the fact that he **enlightens every man coming into this world**. For everything which is what it is by participation is derived from that which is such by its essence; just as everything afire is so by participation in fire, which is fire by its very essence. Then since the Word is the true light by his very essence, then everything that shines must do so through him, insofar as it participates in him. And so he **enlightens every man coming into this world**.

128 To understand this, we should know that "world" is taken in three ways in Scripture. Sometimes, from the point of view of its creation, as when the Evangelist says here, "through him the world was made" (v 10). Sometimes, from the point of view of its perfection, which it reaches through Christ, as in "God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5:19). And sometimes it is taken from the point of view of its perversity, as in "The whole world lies under the power of the evil one" (1 Jn 5:19).

On the other hand, "enlightenment" or "being enlightened" by the Word is taken in two ways. First, in relation to the light of natural knowledge, as in "The light of your countenance, O Lord, is marked upon us" (Ps 4:7). Secondly, as the light of

grace, "Be enlightened, O Jerusalem" (Is 60:1).

129 With these two sets of distinctions in mind, it is easy to solve a difficulty which arises here. For when the Evangelist says, he **enlightens every man**, this seems to be false, because there are still many in darkness in the world. However, if we bear in mind these distinctions and take "world" from the standpoint of its creation, and "enlighten" as referring to the light of natural reason, the statement of the Evangelist is beyond reproach. For all men coming into this visible world are enlightened by the light of natural knowledge through participating in this true light, which is the source of all the light of natural knowledge participated in by men.

When the Evangelist speaks of **man coming into this world**, he does not mean that men had lived for a certain time outside the world and then came into the world, since this is contrary to the teaching of the Apostle in Romans (9:11), "When the children were not yet born nor had they done anything good or evil." Therefore, since they had done nothing before they were born, it is plain that the soul does not exist prior to its union with the body. He refers to **every man coming into this world**, to show that men are enlightened by God with respect to that according to which they came into the world, i.e., with respect to the intellect, which is something external [to the world]. For man is constituted of a twofold nature, bodily and intellectual. According to his bodily or sensible nature, man is enlightened by a bodily and sensible light; but according to his soul and intellectual nature, he is enlightened by an intellectual and spiritual light. Now man does not come into this world according to his bodily nature, but under this aspect, he is from the world. His intellectual nature is derived from a source external to the world, as has been said, i.e., from God through creation; as in "Until all flesh returns to its origin, and the spirit is directed to God, who made it" (Ecc 12:7). For these reasons, when the Evangelist speaks of **every man coming into this world**, he is showing that this enlightenment refers to what is from without, that is, the intellect.

130 If we understand "enlightenment" with respect to the light of grace, then **he enlightens every man** may be explained in three ways. The first way is by Origen in his homily, "The great eagle," and is this. "World" is understood from the point of view of its perfection, which man attains by his reconciliation through Christ. And so we have, he enlightens every man coming, by faith, into this world, i.e., this spiritual world, that is, the Church, which has been enlightened by the light of grace.

Chrysostom explains it another way. He takes "world" under the aspect of creation. Then the sense is: He **enlightens**, i.e., the Word does, in so far as it depends on him, because he fails no one, but rather "wants all men to be saved,

and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4); **every man coming**, i. e., who is born into this sensible world. If anyone is not enlightened, it is due to himself, because he turns from the light that enlightens.

Augustine explains it a third way. For him, "every" has a restricted application, so that the sense is: He **enlightens every man coming into this world**, not every man universally, but every man who is enlightened, since no one is enlightened except by the Word. According to Augustine, the Evangelist says, **coming into this world**, in order to give the reason why man needs to be enlightened, and he is taking "world" from the point of view of its perversity and defect. It is as though he were saying: Man needs to be enlightened because he is coming into this world which is darkened by perversity and defects and is full of ignorance. (This followed the spiritual world of the first man.) As Luke says (1:79), "To enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

131 The above statement refutes the error of the Manichaeans, who think that men were created in the world from an opposing principle, i.e., the devil. For if man were a creature of the devil when coming into this world, he would not be enlightened by God or by the Word, for "Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8).

132 So it is clear, from the efficacy of the divine Word, that the lack of knowledge in men is not due to the Word, because he is effective in enlightening all, being **the true light, which enlightens every man coming into this world**.

But so you do not suppose this lack arose from the withdrawal or absence of the true light, the Evangelist rules this out adding, **He was in the world**. A comparable statement is found in "He is not far from any one of us," that is, God, "for in him we live, and move, and are" (Acts 17:28). It is as though the Evangelist were saying: The divine Word is effective and is at hand in order to enlighten us.

133 We should remark that something is said to be "in the world" in three ways. In one way, by being contained, as a thing in place exists in a place: "They are in the world" (below 17:11). In another way, as a part in a whole; for a part of the world is said to be in the world even though it is not in a place. For example, supernatural substances, although not in the world as in a place, are nevertheless in it as parts: "God ... who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them" (Ps 145:6). But the true light was not in the world in either of these ways, because that light is neither localized nor is it a part of the universe. Indeed, if we can speak this way, the entire universe is in a certain sense a part, since it participates in a partial way in his goodness.

Accordingly, the true light was in the world in a third way, i.e., as an efficient and preserving cause: "I fill heaven and earth" as said in Jeremiah (23:24). However, there is a difference between the way the Word acts and causes all things and the way in which other agents act. For other agents act as existing externally: since they do not act except by moving and altering a thing qualitatively in some way with respect to its exterior, they work from without. But God acts in all things from within, because he acts by creating. Now to create is to give existence (*esse*) to the thing created. So, since *esse* is innermost in each thing, God, who by acting gives *esse* acts in things from within. Hence God was in the world as one giving *esse* to the world.

134 It is customary to say that God is in all things by his essence, presence and power. To understand what this means, we should know that someone is said to be by his power in all the things that are subject to his power; as a king is said to be in the entire kingdom subject to him, by his power. He is not there, however, by presence or essence., Someone is said to be by presence in all the things that are within his range of vision; as a king is said to be in his house by presence. And someone is said to be by essence in those things in which his substance is; as a king is in one determinate place.

Now we say that God is everywhere by his power, since all things are subject to his power: "If I ascend into heaven, you are there.... If I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the furthest part of the sea, even there your hand will lead me, and your right hand will hold me" (Ps 138:8). He is also everywhere by his presence, because "all things are bare and open to his eyes," as is said in Hebrews (4:13). He is present everywhere by his essence, because his essence is innermost in all things. For every agent, as acting, has to be immediately joined to its effect, because mover and moved must be together. Now God is the maker and preserver of all things with respect to the *esse* of each. Hence, since the *esse* of a thing is innermost in that thing, it is plain that God, by his essence, through which he creates all things, is in all things.

135 It should be noted that the Evangelist significantly uses the word "was," when he says, **He was in the world**, showing that from the beginning of creation he was always in the world, causing and preserving all things; because if God for even a moment were to withhold his power from the things he established, all would return to nothing and cease to be. Hence Origen uses an apt example to show this, when he says that as a human vocal sound is to a human word conceived in the mind, so is, the creature to the divine Word; for as our vocal sound is the effect of the word conceived in our mind, so the creature is the effect of the Word conceived in the divine mind. "For he spoke, and they were created" (Ps 148:5). Hence, just as we notice that as soon as our inner

word vanishes, the sensible vocal sound also ceases, so, if the power of the divine Word were withdrawn from things, all of them would immediately cease to be at that moment. And this is because he is "sustaining all things by his powerful word" (Heb 1:3).

136 So it is plain that a lack of divine knowledge in minds is not due to the absence of the Word, because **He was in the world**; nor is it due to the invisibility or concealment of the Word, because he has produced a work in which his likeness is clearly reflected, that is, the world: "For from the greatness and beauty of creatures, their creator can be seen accordingly" (Wis 13:5), and "The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood through the things that are made" (Rom 1:20). And so the Evangelist at once adds, **and through him the world was made**, in order that that light might be manifested in it. For as a work of art manifests the art of the artisan, so the whole world is nothing else than a certain representation of the divine wisdom conceived within the mind of the Father, "He poured her [wisdom] out upon all his works," as is said in Sirach (1:10).

Now it is clear that the lack of divine knowledge is not due to the Word, because he is efficacious, being **the true light**; and he is at hand, since he **was in the world**; and he is knowable, since **through him the world was made**.

137 The Evangelist indicates the source of this lack when he says, **and the world did not know him**. As if to say: It is not due to him, but to the world, who did not know him.

He says him in the singular, because earlier he had called the Word not only the "light of men," but also "God"; and so when he says him, he means God. Again, he uses "world" for man. For the angels knew him by their understanding, and the elements by their obeying him; but **the world**, i.e., man, who lives in the world, **did not know him**.

138 We attribute this lack of divine knowledge either to the nature of man or to his guilt. To his nature, indeed, because although all the aforesaid aids were given to man to lead him to the knowledge of God, human reason in itself lacks this knowledge. "Man beholds him from afar" (Jb 36:25), and immediately after, "God is great beyond our knowledge." But if some have known him, this was not insofar as they were in the world, but above the world; and the kind for whom the world was not worthy, because **the world did not know him**. Hence if they mentally perceived anything eternal, that was insofar as they were not of this world.

But if this lack is attributed to man's guilt, then the phrase, **the world did not know him**, is a kind of reason why God was not known by man; in this sense **world** is taken for inordinate lovers of the world. It is as though it said, **The world did not know him**, because they were lovers of the world. For the love of the world, as Augustine says, is what chiefly withdraws us from the knowledge of God, because "Love of the world makes one an enemy to God" (Jas 4:4); "The sensual man does not perceive the things that pertain to the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:14).

139 From this we can answer the question of the Gentiles who futilely ask this: If it is only recently that the Son of God is set before the world as the Savior of men, does it not seem that before that time he scorned human nature? We should say to them that he did not scorn the world but was always in the world, and on his part is knowable by men; but it was due to their own fault that some have not known him, because they were lovers of the world.

140 We should also note that the Evangelist speaks of the incarnation of the Word to show that the incarnate Word and that which "was in the beginning with God," and God, are the same. He repeats what he had said of him earlier. For above he had said he [the Word] "was the light of men"; here he says he was **the true light**. Above, he said that "all things were made through him"; here he says that through him the world was made. Earlier he had said, "without him nothing was made," i.e., according to one explanation, he conserves all things; here he says, he was in the world, creating and conserving the world and all things. There he had said, "the darkness did not overcome it"; here he says, **the world did not know him**. And so, all he says after he was the **true light**, is an explanation of what he had said before.

141 We can gather three reasons from the above why God willed to become incarnate. One is because of the perversity of human nature which, because of its own malice, had been darkened by vices and the obscurity of its own ignorance. And so he said before, the darkness did not overcome it. Therefore, God came in the flesh so that the darkness might apprehend the light, i.e., obtain a knowledge of it. "The people who walked in darkness saw a great light" (Is 9:2).

The second reason is that the testimony of the prophets was not enough. For the prophets came and John had come; but they were not able to give sufficient enlightenment, because **he was not the light**. And so, after the prophecies of the prophets and the coming of John, it was necessary that the light itself come and give the world a knowledge of itself. And this is what the Apostle says: "In past times, God spoke in many ways and degrees to our fathers through the prophets; in these days he has spoken to us in his Son" as we find in Hebrews (1:1). "We have the prophetic message, to which you do well to give attention,

until the day dawns" (2 Pt 1:19).

The third reason is because of the shortcomings of creatures. For creatures were not sufficient to lead to a knowledge of the Creator; hence he says, **through him the world was made, and the world did not know him**. Thus it was necessary that the Creator himself come into the world in the flesh, and be known through himself. And this is what the Apostle says: "Since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God by its wisdom, it pleased God to save those who believe by the foolishness of our preaching" (1 Cor 1:21).

LECTURE 6

11 He came unto his own, and his own did not receive him;
12 but whoever received him, he gave them power to become
the sons of God, to all who believe in his name,
13 who are born not from blood, nor from the desires of the flesh,
nor from man's willing it, but from God.

142 Having given the necessity for the incarnation of the Word, the Evangelist then shows the advantage men gained from that incarnation. First, he shows the coming of the light (v 11); secondly, its reception by men (v 11b); thirdly, the fruit brought by the coming of the light (v 12).

143 He shows that the light which was present in the world and evident, i.e., disclosed by its effect, was nevertheless not known by the world. Hence, he came unto his own, in order to be known. The Evangelist says, **unto his own**, i.e., to things that were his own, which he had made. And he says this so that you do not think that when he says, he came, he means a local motion in the sense that he came as though ceasing to be where he previously was and newly beginning to be where he formerly had not been. He came where he already was. "I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world," as said below (16:28).

He came, I say, unto his own, i.e., to Judea, according to some, because it was in a special way his own. "In Judea God is known" (Ps 75:1); "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel" (Is 5:7). But it is better to say, unto his own, i.e., into the world created by him. "The earth is the Lord's" (Ps 23:1).

144 But if he was previously in the world, how could he come into the world? I answer that "coming to some place" is understood in two ways. First, that someone comes where he absolutely had not been before. Or, secondly, that

someone begins to be in a new way where he was before. For example, a king, who up to a certain time was in a city of his kingdom by his power and later visits it in person, is said to have come where he previously was: for he comes by his substance where previously he was present only by his power. It was in this way that the Son of God came into the world and yet was in the world. For he was there, indeed, by his essence, power and presence, but he came by assuming flesh. He was there invisibly, and he came in order to be visible.

145 Then when he says, **and his own did not receive him**, we have the reception given him by men, who reacted in different ways. For some did receive him, but these were not his own; hence he says, **his own did not receive him**. "His own" are men, because they were formed by him. "The Lord God formed man" (Gn 2:7); "Know that the Lord is God: he made us" (Ps 99:3). And he made them to his own image, "Let us make man to our image" (Gn 1:26).

But it is better to say, **his own**, i.e., the Jews, **did not receive him**, through faith by believing, and by showing honor to him. "I have come in the name of my Father, and you do not receive me" (below 5:43), and "I honor my Father and you have dishonored me" (below 8:49). Now the Jews are his own because they were chosen by him to be his special people. "The Lord chose you to be his special people" (Dt 26:18). They are his own because related according to the flesh, "from whom is Christ, according to the flesh," as said in Romans (9:3). They are also his own because enriched by his kindness, "I have reared and brought up sons" (Is 1:2). But although the Jews were his own, they did not receive him.

146 However, there were not lacking those who did receive him. Hence he adds, **but whoever received him**. The Evangelist uses this manner of speaking, saying, but whoever, to indicate that the deliverance would be more extensive than the promise, which had been made only to his own, i.e., to the Jews. "The Lord is our law giver, the Lord is our king; he will save us" (Is 33:22). But this deliverance was not only for his own, but for **whoever received him**, i.e., whoever believe in him. "For I say that Christ was a minister to the circumcised, for the sake of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom 15:8). The Gentiles, however, [are delivered] by his mercy, because they were received through his mercy.

147 He says, whoever, to show that God's grace is given without distinction to all who receive Christ. "The grace of the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon the Gentiles"(Acts 10:45). And not only to free men, but to slaves as well; not only to men, but to women also. "In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, Jew or Greek, the circumcised or uncircumcised" (Gal 3:28).

148 Then when he says, he gave them power to become the sons of God, we have the fruit of his coming. First, he mentions the grandeur of the fruit, for he gave them power. Secondly, he shows to whom it is given, **to all who believe**. Thirdly, he indicates the way it is given, **not from blood**, and so forth.

149 The fruit of the coming of the Son of God is great, because by it men are made sons of God. "God sent his Son made from a woman ... so that we might receive our adoption as sons" (Gal 4:5). And it was fitting that we, who are sons of God by the fact that we are made like the Son, should be reformed through the Son.

150 So he says, **he gave them power to become the sons of God**. To understand this we should remark that men become sons of God by being made like God. Hence men are sons of God according to a threefold likeness to God. First, by the infusion of grace; hence anyone having sanctifying grace is made a son of God. "You did not receive the spirit of slavery ... but the spirit of adoption as sons," as said in Romans (8:15). "Because you are sons of God, God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts" (Gal 4:6).

Secondly, we are like God by the perfection of our actions, because one who acts justly is a son: "Love your enemies ... so that you may be the children of your Father" (Mt 5:44).

Thirdly, we are made like God by the attainment of glory. The glory of the soul by the light of glory, "When he appears we shall be like him" (1 Jn 3:2); and the glory of the body, "He will reform our lowly body" (Phil 3:21). Of these two it is said in Romans (8:23), "We are waiting for our adoption as sons of God."

151 If we take the power to become the sons of God as referring to the perfection of our actions and the attainment of glory, the statement offers no difficulty. For then when he says, he gave them power, he is referring to the power of grace; and when a man possesses this, he can perform works of perfection and attain glory, since "The grace of God is eternal life" (Rom 6:23). According to this way we have, he gave them, to those who received him, power, i.e., the infusion of grace, to become the sons of God, by acting well and acquiring glory.

152 But if this statement refers to the infusion of grace, then his saying, **he gave them power**, gives rise to a difficulty. And this is because it is not in our power to be made sons of God, since it is not in our power to possess grace. We can understand, he gave them power, as a power of nature; but this does not seem to be true since the infusion of grace is above our nature. Or we can understand

it as the power of grace, and then to have grace is to have power to **become the sons of God**. And in this sense he did not give them power to become sons of God, but to be sons of God.

153 The answer to this is that when grace is given to an adult, his justification requires an act of consent by a movement of his free will. So, because it is in the power of men to consent and not to consent, **he gave them power**. However, he gives this power of accepting grace in two ways: by preparing it, and by offering it to him. For just as one who writes a book and offers it to a man to read is said to give the power to read it, so Christ, through whom grace was produced (as will be said below), and who "accomplished salvation on the earth" (Ps 73:12), **gave us power to become the sons of God** by offering grace.

154 Yet this is not sufficient since even free will, if it is to be moved to receive grace, needs the help of divine grace, not indeed habitual grace, but moving grace. For this reason, secondly, he gives power by moving the free will of man to consent to the reception of grace, as in "Convert us to yourself, O Lord," by moving our will to your love, "and we will be converted" (Lam 5:21). And in this sense we speak of an interior call, of which it is said, "Those whom he called," by inwardly moving the will to consent to grace, "he justified," by infusing grace (Rom 8:3).

155 Since by this grace man has the power of maintaining himself in the divine sonship, one may read these words in another way. He gave them, i.e., those who receive him, **power to become the sons of God**, i.e., the grace by which they are able to be maintained in the divine sonship. "Everyone who is born from God does not sin, but the grace of God," through which we are reborn as children of God, "preserves him" (1 Jn 5:18).

156 Thus, **he gave them power to become the sons of God**, through sanctifying grace, through the perfection of their actions, and through the attainment of glory; and he did this by preparing this grace, moving their wills, and preserving this grace.

157 Then when he says, **to all who believe in his name**, he shows those on whom the fruit of his coming is conferred. We can understand this in two ways: either as explaining what was said before, or as qualifying it. We can regard it as explaining as the Evangelist had said, whoever received him, and now to show what it is to receive him, he adds by way of explanation, **who believe in his name**. It is as though he were saying: To receive him is to believe in him, because it is through faith that Christ dwells in your hearts, as in "that Christ may

dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:17). Therefore, they **received him, who believe in his name.**

158 Origen regards this as a qualifying statement, in his homily, "The spiritual voice." In this sense, many receive Christ, declaring that they are Christians, but they are not sons of God, because they do not truly believe in his name; for they propose false dogmas about Christ by taking away something from his divinity or humanity, as in "Every spirit that denies Christ is not from God" (1 Jn 4:3). And so the Evangelist says, as though contracting his meaning, **he gave them, i.e.,** those who receive him by faith, **power to become the sons of God,** to those, however, **who believe in his name, i.e.,** who keep the name of Christ whole, in such a way as not to lessen anything of the divinity or humanity of Christ.

159 We can also refer this to formed faith, in the sense that to all, that is, **he gave power to become the sons of God, who believe in his name, i.e.,** those who do the works of salvation through a faith formed by charity. For those who have only an unformed faith do not believe in his name because they do not work unto salvation.

However, the first exposition, which is taken as explaining what preceded, is better.

160 Then when he says, **who are born not from blood,** he shows the way in which so great a fruit is conferred on men. For since he had said that the fruit of the light's coming is the power given to men to become the sons of God, then to forestall the supposition that they are born through a material generation he says, **not from blood.** And although the word "blood" (*sanguis*) has no plural in Latin, but does in Greek, the translator [from Greek into Latin] ignored a rule of grammar in order to teach the truth more perfectly. So he does not say, "from blood," in the Latin manner, but "from bloods" (*ex sanguinibus*). This indicates whatever is generated from blood, serving as the matter in carnal generation. According to the Philosopher [*On the Generation of Animals*, 1, c 18, 726a26-8], "semen is a residue derived from useful nourishment in its final form." So "blood" indicates either the seed of the male or the menses of the female.

The cause moving to the carnal act is the will of those coming together, the man and the woman. For although the act of the generative power as such is not subject to the will, the preliminaries to it are subject to the will. So he says, **nor from the desires of the flesh,** referring to the woman; **nor from man's willing it,** as from an efficient cause; **but from God.** It is as though he were saying: They became sons of God, not carnally, but spiritually.

According to Augustine, “flesh” is taken here for the woman, because as the flesh obeys the spirit, so woman should obey man. Adam (Gn 2:23) said of the woman, “This, at last, is bone of my bones.” And note, according to Augustine, that just as the possessions of a household are wasted away if the woman rules and the man is subject, so a man is wasted away when the flesh rules the spirit. For this reason the Apostle says, “We are not debtors to the flesh, so that we should live according to the flesh” (Rom 8:12). Concerning the manner of this carnal generation, we read, “In the womb of my mother I was molded into flesh” (Wis 7:1).

161 Or, we might say that the moving force to carnal generation is twofold: the intellectual appetite on the one hand, that is, the will; and on the other hand, the sense appetite, which is concupiscence. So, to indicate the material cause he says, **not from blood**. To indicate the efficient cause, in respect to concupiscence, he says, **nor from the desires of the flesh** [*ex voluntate carnis*, literally, “from the will of the flesh”], even though the concupiscence of the flesh is improperly called a “will” in the sense of Galatians (5:17), “The flesh lusts against the spirit.” Finally, to indicate the intellectual appetite he says, **nor from man’s willing it**. So, the generation of the sons of God is not carnal but spiritual, because they were born **from God**. “Every one who is born from God conquers the world” (1 Jn 5:4).

162 Note, however, that this preposition *de* (“of,” or “from”), always signifies a material cause as well as an efficient and even a consubstantial cause. Thus we say a blacksmith makes a knife *de ferro* (“from” iron), and a father generates his son *de seipso* (“from” himself), because something of his concurs somehow in begetting. But the preposition *a* (“by”) always signifies a moving cause. The preposition *ex* (“from,” or “by”)—[in the sense of “out of” or “by reason of”]—is taken as something common, since it implies an efficient as well as a material cause, although not a consubstantial cause.

Consequently, since only the Son of God, who is the Word, is “*of*” (*de*) the substance of the Father and indeed is one substance with the Father, while the saints, who are adopted sons, are not of his substance, the Evangelist uses the preposition *ex*, saying of others that they are born **from God** (*ex Deo*), but of the natural Son, he says that he is born of the Father (*de Patre*).

163 Note also that in the light of our last exposition of carnal generation, we can discern the difference between carnal and spiritual generation. For since the former is from blood, it is carnal; but the latter, because it is not from blood, is spiritual. “What is born from flesh is itself flesh; and what is born from Spirit is itself spirit” (below 3:6). Again, because material generation is from the desires of the flesh, i.e., from concupiscence, it is unclean and begets children who are

sinners: "We were by nature children of wrath" as it says in Ephesians (2:3). Again, because the former is **from man's willing it**, that is, from man, it makes children of men; but the latter, because it is from God, makes children of God.

164 But if he intends to refer his statement, **he gave them power**, to baptism, in virtue of which we are reborn as sons of God, we can detect in his words the order of baptism: that is, the first thing required is faith, as shown in the case of catechumens, who must first be instructed about the faith so that they may believe in his name; then through baptism they are reborn, not carnally from blood, but spiritually from God.

LECTURE 7

14a And the Word was made flesh, and made his dwelling among us.

165 Having explained the necessity for the Word's coming in the flesh as well as the benefits this conferred, the Evangelist now shows the way he came (v 14a). He thus resumes the thread with his earlier statement, **he came unto his own**. As if to say: The Word of God came unto his own. But lest anyone suppose that he came by changing his location, he shows the manner in which he came, that is, by an incarnation. For he came in the manner in which he was sent by the Father, by whom he was sent, i.e., he was made flesh. "God sent his Son made from a woman" (Gal 4:4). And Augustine says about this that "He was sent in the manner in which he was made."

According to Chrysostom, however, he is here continuing the earlier statement, **he gave them power to become the sons of God**. As if to say: If you wonder how he was able to give this power to men, i.e., that they become sons of God, the Evangelist answers: because **the Word was made flesh**, he made it possible for us to be made sons of God. "God sent his Son ... so that we might receive our adoption as sons" (Gal 4:5).

But according to Augustine, he is continuing the earlier statement, **who are born from God**. For since it seemed a hard saying that men be born from God, then, as though arguing in support of this and to produce belief in the existence of the Word, the Evangelist adds something which seems less seemly, namely, that **the Word was made flesh**. As if to say: Do not wonder if men are born from God, because **the Word was made flesh**, i.e., God became man.

166 It should be noted that this statement, **the Word was made flesh**, has

been misinterpreted by some and made the occasion of error. For certain ones have presumed that the Word became flesh in the sense that he or something of him was turned into flesh, as when flour is made into bread, and air becomes fire. One of these was Eutyches, who postulated a mixture of natures in Christ, saying that in him the nature of God and of man was the same. We can clearly see that this is false because, as was said above, "the Word was God." Now God is immutable, as is said, "I am the Lord, and I do not change" (Mal 3:6). Hence in no way can it be said that he was turned into another nature. Therefore, one must say in opposition to **Eutyches, the Word was made flesh**, i.e., the Word assumed flesh, but not in the sense that the Word himself is that flesh. It is as if we were to say: "The man became white," not that he is that whiteness, but that he attained whiteness.

167 There were others who, although they believed that the Word was not changed into flesh but assumed it, nevertheless said that he assumed flesh without a soul; for if he had assumed flesh with a soul, the Evangelist would have said, "the Word was made flesh with a soul." This was the error of Arius, who said that there was no soul in Christ, but that the Word of God was there in place of a soul.

The falsity of this opinion is obvious, both because it is in conflict with Sacred Scripture, which often mentions the soul of Christ, as: "My soul is sad, even to the point of death" (Mt 26:38), and because certain affections of the soul are observed in Christ which can not possibly exist in the Word of God or in flesh alone: "He began to be sorrowful and troubled" (Mt 26:37). Also, God cannot be the form of a body. Nor can an angel be united to a body as its form, since an angel, according to its very nature, is separated from body, whereas a soul is united to a body as its form. Consequently, the Word of God cannot be the form of a body.

Furthermore, it is plain that flesh does not acquire the specific nature of flesh except through its soul. This is shown by the fact that when the soul has withdrawn from the body of a man or a cow, the flesh of the man or the cow is called flesh only in an equivocal sense. So if the Word did not assume flesh with a soul, it is obvious that he did not assume flesh. **But the Word was made flesh**; therefore, he assumed flesh with a soul.

168 And there were others who, influenced by this, said that the Word did indeed assume flesh with a soul, but this soul was only a sensitive soul, not an intellectual one; the Word took the place of the intellectual soul in Christ's body. This was the error of Apollinaris. He followed Arius for a time, but later in the face of the [scriptural] authorities cited above, was forced to admit a soul in Christ which could be the subject of these emotions. But he said this soul lacked

reason and intellect, and that in the man Christ their place was taken by the Word.

This too is obviously false, because it conflicts with the authority of Sacred Scripture in which certain things are said of Christ that cannot be found in his divinity, nor in a sensitive soul, nor in flesh alone; for example, that Christ marvelled, as in Matthew (8:10). For to marvel or wonder is a state which arises in a rational and intellectual soul when a desire arises to know the hidden cause of an observed effect. Therefore, just as sadness compels one to place a sensitive element in the soul of Christ, against Arius, so marvelling or amazement forces one to admit, against Apollinaris, an intellectual element in Christ.

The same conclusion can be reached by reason. For as there is no flesh without a soul, so there is no human flesh without a human soul, which is an intellectual soul. So if the Word assumed flesh which was animated with a merely sensitive soul to the exclusion of a rational soul, he did not assume human flesh; consequently, one could not say: "God became man."

Besides, the Word assumed human nature in order to repair it. Therefore, he repaired what he assumed. But if he did not assume a rational soul, he would not have repaired it. Consequently, no fruit would have accrued to us from the incarnation of the Word; and this is false. **Therefore, the Word was made flesh**, i.e., assumed flesh which was animated by a rational soul.

169 But you may say: If the Word did assume flesh with such a soul, why did the Evangelist not mention "rational soul," instead of only "flesh," saying, **the Word was made flesh**? I answer that the Evangelist had four reasons for doing this.

First, to show the truth of the incarnation against the Manichaeans, who said that the Word did not assume true flesh, but only imaginary flesh, since it would not have been becoming for the Word of the good God to assume flesh, which they regarded as a creature of the devil. And so to exclude this the Evangelist made special mention of the flesh, just as Christ showed the truth of the resurrection to the disciples when they took him for a spirit, saying: "A spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have" (Lk 24:39).

Secondly, to show the greatness of God's kindness to us. For it is evident that the rational soul has a greater conformity to God than does flesh, and that it would have been a great sign of compassion if the Word had assumed a human soul, as being conformed to himself. But to assume flesh too, which is something far removed from the simplicity of his nature, was a sign of a much greater, indeed, of an incomprehensible compassion. As the Apostle says (1 Tim 3:16): "Obviously

great is the mystery of godliness which appeared in the flesh." And so to indicate this, the Evangelist mentioned only flesh.

Thirdly, to demonstrate the truth and uniqueness of the union in Christ. For God is indeed united to other holy men, but only with respect to their soul; so it is said: "She [wisdom] passes into holy souls, making them friends of God and prophets" (Wis 7:27). But that the Word of God is united to flesh is unique to Christ, according to the Psalmist: "I am alone until I pass" (Ps 140:10). "Gold cannot equal it" (Jb 28:17). So the Evangelist, wishing to show the uniqueness of the union in Christ, mentioned only the flesh, saying, **the Word was made flesh.**

Fourthly, to suggest its relevance to man's restoration. For man was weak because of the flesh. And thus the Evangelist, wishing to suggest that the coming of the Word was suited to the task of our restoration, made special mention of the flesh in order to show that the weak flesh was repaired by the flesh of the Word. And this is what the Apostle says: "The law was powerless because it was weakened by the flesh. God, sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and in reparation for sin, condemned sin in his flesh" (Rom 8:3).

170 A question arises as to why the Evangelist did not say that the Word assumed flesh, but rather that **the Word was made flesh.** I answer that he did this to exclude the error of Nestorius. He said that in Christ there were two persons and two sons, [one being the Son of God] the other being the son of the Virgin. Thus he did not admit that the Blessed Virgin was the mother of God.

But if this were so, it would mean that God did not become man, for one particular *suppositum* cannot be predicated of another. Accordingly, if the person or *suppositum* of the Word is different than the person or *suppositum* of the man, in Christ, then what the Evangelist says is not true, namely, **the Word was made flesh.** For a thing is made or becomes something in order to be it; if, then, the Word is not man, it could not be said that the Word became man. And so the Evangelist expressly said was made, and not "assumed," to show that the union of the Word to flesh is not such as was the "lifting up" of the prophets, who were not "taken up" into a unity of person, but for the prophetic act. This union is such as would truly make God man and man God, i.e., that God would be man.

171 There were some, too, who, misunderstanding the manner of the incarnation, did indeed admit that the aforesaid assumption was terminated at a oneness of person, acknowledging in God one person of God and man. But they said that in him there were two hypostases, i.e., two *supposita*; one of a human nature, created and non-eternal, and the other of the divine nature, non-created

and eternal. This is the first opinion presented in the *Sentences* (III, d6).

According to this opinion the proposition, "God was made man and man was made God," is not true. Consequently, this opinion was condemned as heretical by the Fifth Council, where it is said: "If anyone shall assert one person and two hypostases in the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." And so the Evangelist, to exclude any assumption not terminated at a oneness of person, says, was made.

172 If you ask how the Word is man, it must be said that he is man in the way that anyone is, man, namely, as having human nature. Not that the Word is human nature itself, but he is a divine *suppositum* united to a human nature. The statement, **the Word was made flesh**, does not indicate any change in the Word, but only in the nature newly assumed into the oneness of a divine person. **And the Word was made flesh** through a union to flesh. Now a union is a relation. And relations newly said of God with respect to creatures do not imply a change on the side of God, but on the side of the creature relating in a new way to God.

173 Now follows, **and made his dwelling among us**. This is distinguished in two ways from what went before. The first consists in stating that above the Evangelist dealt with the incarnation of the Word when he said, **the Word was made flesh**; but now he touches on the manner of the incarnation, saying, **and made his dwelling among us**. For according to Chrysostom and Hilary, by the Evangelist saying **the Word was made flesh**, someone might think that he was converted into flesh and that there are not two distinct natures in Christ, but only one nature compounded from the human and divine natures. And so the Evangelist, excluding this, added, **and made his dwelling among us**, i.e., in our nature, yet so as to remain distinct in his own. For what is converted into something does not remain distinct in its nature from that into which it is converted.

Furthermore, something which is not distinct from another does not dwell in it, because to dwell implies a distinction between the dweller and that in which it dwells. But the Word dwelt in our nature; therefore, he is distinct in nature from it. And so, inasmuch as human nature was distinct from the nature of the Word in Christ, the former is called the dwelling place and temple of the divinity, according to John (2:21): "But he spoke of the temple of his body."

174 Now although what is said here by these holy men is orthodox, care must be taken to avoid the reproach which some receive for this. For the early doctors and saints were so intent upon refuting the emerging errors concerning the faith

that they seemed meanwhile to fall into the opposite ones. For example, Augustine, speaking against the Manichaeans, who destroyed the freedom of the will, disputed in such terms that he seemed to have fallen into the heresy of Pelagius. Along these lines, John the Evangelist added, **and made his dwelling among us**, so that we would not think there was a mingling or transformation of natures in Christ because he had said, **the Word was made flesh**.

Nestorius misunderstood this phrase, **and made his dwelling among us**, and said that the Son of God was united to man in such a way that there was not one person of God and of man. For he held that the Word was united to human nature only by an indwelling through grace. From this, however, it follows that the Son of God is not man.

175 To clarify this we should know that we can consider two things in Christ: his nature and person. In Christ there is a distinction in nature, but not in person, which is one and the same in the two natures, since the human nature in Christ was assumed into a oneness of person. Therefore, the indwelling which the saints speak of must be referred to the nature, so as to say, he **made his dwelling among us**, i.e., the nature of the Word inhabited our nature; not according to the hypostasis or person, which is the same for both natures in Christ.

176 The blasphemy of Nestorius is further refuted by the authority of Sacred Scripture. For the Apostle calls the union of God and man an emptying, saying of the Son of God: "He, being in the form of God ... emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil 2:6). Clearly, God is not said to empty himself insofar as he dwells in the rational creature by grace, because then the Father and the Holy Spirit would be emptying themselves, since they too are said to dwell in man through grace: for Christ, speaking of himself and of the Father says, "We will come to him and make our home with him" (below 14:23); and of the Holy Spirit the Apostle says: "The Spirit of God dwells in us" (1 Cor 3:16).

Furthermore, if Christ was not God as to his person, he would have been most presumptuous to say: "I and the Father are one" (below 10:30), and "Before Abraham came to be, I am," as is said below (8:58). Now "I" refers to the person of the speaker. And the one who was speaking was a man, who, as one with the Father, existed before Abraham.

177 However, another connection [besides that given in 173] with what went before is possible, by saying that above he dealt with the incarnation of the Word, but that now he is treating the manner of life of the incarnate Word, saying, he **made his dwelling among us**, i.e., he lived on familiar terms with us apostles. Peter alludes to this when he says, "During all the time that the Lord

Jesus came and went among us" (Acts 1:21). "Afterwards, he was seen on earth" (Bar 3:38).

178 The Evangelist added this for two reasons. First, to show the marvelous likeness of the Word to men, among whom he lived in such a way as to seem one of them. For he not only willed to be like men in nature, but also in living with them on close terms without sin, in order to draw to himself men won over by the charm of his way of life.

Secondly, to show the truthfulness of his [the Evangelist's] statements. For the Evangelist had already said many great things about the Word, and was yet to mention more wonderful things about him; and so that his testimony would be more credible he took as a proof of his truthfulness the fact that he had lived with Christ, saying, he **made his dwelling among us**. As if to say: I can well bear witness to him, because I lived on close terms with him. "We tell you ... what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes" (1 Jn 1:1); "God raised him up on the third day, and granted that he be seen, not by all the people, but by witnesses preordained by God," that is, "to us who ate and drank with him" (Acts 10:40).

LECTURE 8

14b And we have seen his glory,
the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

179 Having set forth the incarnation of the Word, the Evangelist then begins to give the evidence for the incarnate Word. He does two things about this. First, he shows the ways in which the incarnate Word was made known. Secondly, he clarifies each way, below (1:16). Now the incarnate Word was made known to the apostles in two ways: first of all, they obtained knowledge of him by what they saw; secondly, by what they heard of the testimony of John the Baptist. So first, he states what they saw about the Word; secondly, what they heard from John (v 15).

He states three things about the Word. First, the manifestation of his glory; hence he says, **we have seen his glory**. Secondly, the uniqueness of his glory, when he adds, as **of the Only Begotten**. Thirdly, the precise nature of this glory, because **full of grace and truth**.

180 **And we have seen his glory**, can be connected in three ways with what went before. First, it can be taken as an argument for his having said, **the Word was made flesh**. As if to say: I hold and know that the Word of God was incarnate because I and the other apostles have seen his glory. "We know of what we speak, and we bear witness of what we see" (below 3:11). "We tell you ... what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes" (1 Jn 1:1).

181 Secondly, according to Chrysostom, the connection is made by taking this statement as expressing many benefits. As if to say: The incarnation of the Word not only conferred on us the benefit of becoming sons of God, but also the good of seeing his glory. For dull and feeble eyes cannot see the light of the sun; but they can see it when it shines in a cloud or on some opaque body. Now before the incarnation of the Word, human minds were incapable of seeing the divine light in itself, the light which enlightens every rational nature. And so, in order that it might be more easily seen and contemplated by us, he covered it with the cloud of our flesh: "They looked towards the desert, and saw the glory of the Lord in a cloud" (Ex 16:10), i.e., the Word of God in the flesh.

182 According to Augustine, however, the connection refers to the gift of grace. For the failure of the spiritual eyes of men to contemplate the divine light is due not only to their natural limitations but also to the defects incurred by sin: "Fire," that is, of concupiscence, "fell on them, and they did not see the sun," of justice (Ps 57:9). Hence in order that the divine light might be seen by us, he healed our eyes, making an eye salve of his flesh, so that with the salve of his flesh the Word might heal our eyes, weakened by the concupiscence of the flesh. And this is why just after saying, **the Word was made flesh**, he says, **we have seen his glory**. To indicate this the Lord made clay from his saliva and spread the clay upon the eyes of the man born blind (below 9:6). For clay is from the earth, but saliva comes from the head. Similarly, in the person of Christ, his human nature was assumed from the earth; but the incarnate Word is from the head, i.e., from God the Father. So, when this clay was spread on the eyes of men, **we saw his glory**.

183 This is the glory of the Word Moses longed to see, saying, "Show me your glory" (Ex 32:18). But he did not deserve to see it; indeed, he was answered by the Lord: "You shall see my back" (Ex 33:23), i.e., shadows and figures. But the apostles saw his brightness: "All of us, gazing on the Lord's glory with unveiled faces, are being transformed from glory to glory into his very image" (2 Cor 3:18). For Moses and the other prophets saw in an obscure manner and in figures the glory of the Word that was to be manifested to the world at the end of their times; hence the Apostle says: "Now we see through a mirror, in an obscure manner, but then face to face" in 1 Corinthians (13:12); and below (12:41), "Isaiah said this when he saw his glory." But the apostles saw the very

brilliance of the Word through his bodily presence: "All of us, gazing on the Lord's glory," and so forth (2 Cor 3:18); "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see. For many kings and prophets desired to see what you see, and did not see it" (Lk 10:23).

184 Then when he says, **the glory as of the Only Begotten**, he shows the uniqueness of his glory. For since it is written of certain men that they were in glory, as of Moses it says that "his face shone" (Ex 34:29), or was "horned," according to another text, someone might say that from the fact that they saw him [Jesus] in glory, it should not be said that the Word of God was made flesh. But the Evangelist excludes this when he says, **the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father**. As if to say: His glory is not like the glory of an angel, or of Moses, or Elijah, or Elisha, or anything like that. but **the glory as of the Only Begotten**; for as it is said, "He [Jesus] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses" (Heb 3:3); "Who among the sons of God is like God?" (Ps 88:7).

185 The word as, according to Gregory, is used to express the fact. But according to Chrysostom, it expresses the manner of the fact: as if someone were to see a king approaching in great glory and being asked by another to describe the king he saw, he could, if he wanted to be brief, express the grandeur of his glory in one word, and say that he approached "as" a king, i.e., as became a king. So too, here, the Evangelist, as though asked by someone to describe the glory of the Word which he had seen, and being unable to fully express it, said that it was "as" of the Only Begotten of the Father, i.e., such as became the Only Begotten of God.

186 The uniqueness of the glory of the Word is brought out in four ways. First, in the testimony which the Father gave to the Son. For John was one of the three who had seen Christ transfigured on the mountain and heard the , voice of the Father saying: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 17:5). Of this glory it is said, "He received honor and glory from God the Father ... 'This is my beloved Son'" (2 Pt 1:17)

Secondly, it is brought out by the service of the angels. For prior to the incarnation of Christ, men were subject to the angels. But after it, angels ministered, as subjects, to Christ. "Angels came and ministered to him" (Mt 4:11).

Thirdly, it is brought out by the submission of nature. For all nature obeyed Christ and heeded his slightest command, as something established by him, because "All things were made through him" (above 1:3). This is something granted neither to angels nor to any creature, but to the incarnate Word alone. And this is what we read, "What kind of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey

him?" (Mt 8:27).

Fourthly, we see it in the way he taught and acted. For Moses and the other prophets gave commands to men and taught them not on their own authority, but on the authority of God. So they said: "The Lord says this"; and "The Lord spoke to Moses." But Christ speaks as the Lord, and as one having power, i.e., by reason of his own power. Hence he says, "I say to you" (Mt 5:22). This is the reason why, at the end of the Sermon on the Mountain, it is said that he taught as one "having authority" (Mt 7:29). Furthermore, other holy men worked miracles, but not by their own power. But Christ worked them by his own power. In these ways, then, the glory of the Word is unique.

187 Note that sometimes in Scripture we call Christ the Only Begotten, as here, and below (1 :18): "it is the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, who has made him known." At other times we call him the First-born: "When he brings the Firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all the angels of God adore him' " (Heb 1:6). The reason for this is that just as it belongs to the whole Blessed Trinity to be God, so it belongs to the Word of God to be God Begotten. Sometimes, too, he is called God according to what he is in himself; and in this way he alone is uniquely God by his own essence. It is in this way that we say there is but one God: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord your God is one" (Dt 6:4). At times, we even apply the name of deity to others, insofar as a certain likeness of the divinity is given to men; in this sense we speak of many gods: "Indeed, there are many gods and many lords" (1 Cor 8:5).

Along these lines, if we consider what is proper to the Son as Begotten, and consider the way in which this sonship is attributed to him, that is, through nature, we say that he is the Only Begotten of God: because, since he alone is naturally begotten by the Father, the Begotten of the Father is one only. But if we consider the Son, insofar as sonship is conferred on others through a likeness to him, then there are many sons of God through participation. And because they are called sons of God by a likeness to him, he is called the First-born of all. "Those whom he foreknew, he predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the First-born of many brothers" (Rom 8:29).

So, Christ is called the Only Begotten of God by nature; but he is called the First-born insofar as from his natural sonship, by means of a certain likeness and participation, a sonship is granted to many.

188 Then when he says, **full of grace and truth**, he determines the glory of the Word. As if to say: His glory is such that he is full of grace and divinity. Now these words can be applied to Christ in three ways.

First, from the point of view of union. For grace is given to someone so that he might be united to God through it. So he who is most perfectly united to God is full of grace. Now some are joined to God by participating in a natural likeness: "Let us make man to our image and likeness" (Gn 1:26). Some are joined by faith: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:17). And others are united by charity, because "He who abides in love abides in God" (1 Jn 4:16). But all these ways are partial: because one is not perfectly united to God by participating a natural likeness; nor is God seen as he is by faith; nor is he loved to the extent that he is lovable by charity—for since he is the infinite Good, his loveliness is infinite, and the love of no creature is able to love this infinitely. And so these unions are not full.

But in Christ, in whom human nature is united to the divinity in the unity of a *suppositum*, we find a full and perfect union with God. The reason for this is that this union was such that all the acts not only of his divine but also of his human nature were acts of the *suppositum* [or person]. So he was **full of grace** insofar he did not receive any special gratuitous gift from God, but that he should be God himself. "He gave him," i.e., God the Father gave to the Son, "a name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9). "He was foreordained to be the Son of God in power" (Rom 1:4). He was also **full of truth**, because the human nature in Christ attained to the divine truth itself, that is, that this man should be the divine Truth itself. In other men we find many participated truths, insofar as the First Truth gleams back into their minds through many likenesses; but Christ is Truth itself. Thus it is said: "In whom all the treasures of wisdom are hidden" (Col 2:3).

189 Secondly, these words can be applied in relation to the perfection of his soul. Then he is said to be **full of grace and truth** inasmuch as in his soul there was the fulness of all graces without measure: "God does not bestow the Spirit in fractions," as we read below (3:34). Yet it was given in fractions to all rational creatures, both angels and men. For according to Augustine, just as there is one sense common to all the parts of the body, namely, the sense of touch, while all the senses are found in the head, so in Christ, who is the head of every rational creature (and in a special way of the saints who are united to him by faith and charity), all virtues and graces and gifts are found superabundantly; but in others, i.e., the saints, we find participations of the graces and gifts, although there is a gift common to all the saints, and that is charity. We read about this fulness of Christ's grace: "There shall come forth a shoot out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall spring up out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of piety" (Is 11:1).

Further, Christ was also **full of truth** because his precious and blessed soul

knew every truth, human and divine, from the instant of his conception. And so Peter said to him, "You know all things" (below 21:17). And the Psalm (88:25) says: "My truth," i.e., the knowledge of every truth, "and my mercy," i.e., the fulness of all graces, "shall be with him."

190 In a third way these words can be explained in relation to his dignity as head, i.e., inasmuch as Christ is the head of the Church. In this way it is his prerogative to communicate grace to others, both by producing virtue in the minds of men through the inpouring of grace and by meriting, through his teaching and works and the sufferings of his death, superabundant grace for an infinite number of worlds, if there were such. Therefore, he is **full of grace** insofar as he conferred perfect justice upon us. We could not acquire this perfect justice through the law, which was infirm and could make no one just or bring anyone to perfection. As we read: "The law was powerless because it was weakened by the flesh. God, sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and in reparation for sin, condemned sin in his flesh" (Rom 8:3).

Again, he was **full of truth** insofar as he fulfilled the figures of the Old Law and the promises made to the fathers. "Christ was a minister to the circumcised to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom 15:8); "All the promises of God are fulfilled in him" (2 Cor 1:20).

Further, he is said to be **full of grace** because his teaching and manner of life were most gracious. "Grace is poured out upon your lips" (Ps 44:3). And so it is said, "All the people came to him early in the morning," i.e., in the morning they were eager to come (Lk 21:38). He was **full of truth**, because he did not teach in enigmas and figures, nor gloss over the vices of men, but preached the truth to all, openly and without deception. As it says below: "Now you are speaking plainly" (16:29).

LECTURE 9

15 John bore witness to him, and he cried out saying:
"This is the one of whom I said:
'He who comes after me, ranks ahead of me,
because he existed before me.'"

191 Having given the evidence by which the Word was made known to the apostles by sight, the Evangelist then presents the evidence by which the Word was made known to persons other than the apostles by their hearing the

testimony of John. He does three things about this. First, the witness is presented. Secondly, his manner of testifying is indicated. Thirdly, his testimony is given.

192 So he says: We indeed have seen his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father. But we are not believed, perhaps because we are held in suspicion. So let his witness come forth, that is, John the Baptist, who bears witness to Christ. He is a faithful witness who will not lie: "A faithful witness will not lie" (Prv 14:5), "You sent [messengers] to John, and he bore witness to the truth" (below 5:33). John gives his testimony here and fulfills his office with perseverance because he came as a witness. As Proverbs (12:19) says, "Truthful lips endure forever."

193 Then when he says, **John bore witness to him, and he cried out**, he describes the way he bore witness, that is, it was with a cry. So he says, **he cried out**, i.e., freely without fear. "Cry out in a loud voice.... Say to the cities of Judah: Here is your God" (Is 40:9). He cried out ardently and with great fervor, because it is said, "His word burned like a torch" (Si 48:1); "Seraphim cried one to another" (Is 6:3), which is expressive of a more interior eagerness of spirit. The use of a cry shows that the statements of the witness are not made to a few in figurative language or secretly, but that a truth is being declared openly and publicly, and told not to a few but to many. "Cry out, and do not stop" (Is 58:1).

194 Then he adds his testimony. And he does two things. First, he shows that his testimony was continuous. Secondly, he describes the person to whom he bore witness.

195 The testimony of the Baptist was continuous because he bore witness to him not only once but many times, and even before Christ had come to him. And so he says, **This is the one of whom I said**, i.e., before I saw him in the flesh I bore witness to him. "And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High" (Lk 1:76). He pointed him out both as present and when about to come. And his testimony is certain because he not only predicted that he would come, but pointed him out when he was present, saying, **Look! There is the Lamb of God**. This implies that Christ was physically present to John; for he had often come to John before being baptized.

196 Then he describes the one to whom he bore witness, saying, **He who comes after me, ranks ahead of me**. Here we should note that John does not at once preach to his disciples that Christ is the Son of God, but he draws them little by little to higher things: first, by preferring Christ to himself, even though John had such a great reputation and authority as to be considered the Christ or

one of the great prophets. Now he compares Christ to himself: first, with regard to the order of their preaching; secondly, as to the order of dignity; and thirdly, as to the time of their existence.

197 With respect to the order of their preaching, John preceded Christ as a servant precedes his master, and as a soldier his king, or as the morning star the sun: "See, I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me" (Mal 3:1). So, He comes after me, in being known to men, through my preaching. Observe that **comes** is in the present tense, became in Greek the present participle is used.

Now John preceded Christ for two reasons. First, according to Chrysostom, because John was a blood relation of Christ according to the flesh: "your relative, Elizabeth" (Lk 1.36). Therefore, had he borne witness to Christ after knowing him, his testimony might have been open to question; accordingly, John came preaching before he was acquainted with Christ, in order that his testimony might have more force. Hence he says, "And I did not know him! And yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptizing with water" (below 1:31).

Secondly, John preceded Christ because in things that pass into act from potency, the imperfect is naturally prior to the perfect; hence it is said in 1 Corinthians (15:46): "The spiritual is not first, but the animal." Accordingly, the perfect doctrine of Christ should have been preceded by the less perfect teaching of John, which was in a certain manner midway between the doctrine of the law and the prophets (which announced the coming of Christ from afar), and the doctrine of Christ, which was clear and plainly made Christ known.

198 He [John] compares him to himself with respect to dignity when he says, he **ranks ahead of me** [*ante me factus est*, literally, he "was made before me"]. It should be noted that it is from this text that the Arians took occasion for their error. For they said that "He who comes after me," is to be understood of Christ as to the flesh he assumed, but what follows, "was made before me," can only be understood of the Word of God, who existed before the flesh; and for this reason Christ as the Word was made, and was not coeternal with the Father.

According to Chrysostom, however, this exposition is stupid, because if it were true, the Baptist would not have said, he "was made before me, because he existed before me," since no one is unaware that if he was before him, he was made before him. He rather would have said the opposite: "He was before me, because he was made before me." And so, according to Chrysostom, these words should be taken as referring to his [Christ's] dignity, that is, he was preferred to me and placed ahead of me. It is as though he said: Although Jesus came to

preach after me, he was made more worthy than I both in eminence of authority and in the repute of men: "Gold will not be equal to it" (Jb 28:17). Or alternatively: he is preferred **ahead of me**, that is, before my eyes, as the Gloss says and as the Greek text reads. As if to say: Before my eyes, i.e., in my sight, because he came into my view and was recognized.

199 He compares him to himself with respect to their duration, saying, **because he existed before me**. As if to say: He was God from all eternity, I am a frail man of time. And therefore, even though I came to preach ahead of him, yet it was fitting that he rank before me in the reputation and opinion of men, because he preceded all things by his eternity: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb 13:8). "Before Abraham came to be, I am," as we read below (8:58).

If we understand this passage as saying that he "was made before me," it can be explained as referring to the order of time according to the flesh. For in the instant of his conception Christ was perfect God and perfect man, having a rational soul perfected by the virtues, and a body possessed of all its distinctive features, except that it lacked perfect size: "A woman shall enclose a man," i.e., a perfect man (Jer 31:22). Now it is evident that Christ was conceived as a perfect man before John was born; consequently he says that he "was made before me," because he was a perfect man before I came forth from the womb.

LECTURE10

16 Of his fullness we have all received—indeed, grace upon grace;
17 because, while the law was given through Moses,
grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.

200 He follows with, **Of his fullness we have all received** words and those that follow to (v 19), "This is the testimony of John," are taken in two ways. According to Origen, these are the words of John the Baptist and are added by him to support what he had said previously. It is as though he said: Truly, **he existed before me**, because **of his fullness**, i.e., of his grace, not only I but all, including the prophets and patriarchs, **have received**, because all had the grace they possessed by faith in the incarnate Word. According to this explanation, John the Baptist began weaving the story of the incarnation at, "John bore witness to him" (v 15).

But according to Augustine and Chrysostom, the words from "John bore witness

to him" (v 15), are those of John the Evangelist. And they are connected with the previous words, "full of grace and truth," as though he were saying: Above, the Evangelist gave the evidence for the Word which was learned through sight and by hearing, but here he explains each. First, how he was made known to the apostles through sight, which was tantamount to receiving the evidence from Christ. Secondly, how John bore witness to him, at "This is the testimony of John" (v 19). As to the first he does two **things**. First, he shows that Christ is the origin, as a fountain, of every spiritual grace. Secondly, he shows that grace is dispensed to us through him and from him.

201 He says first of all: We know from our own experience that we have seen him full of grace and truth, because **of his fullness we have all received**. Now one fullness is that of sufficiency, by which one is able to perform acts that are meritorious and excellent, as in the case of Stephen. Again, there is a fullness of superabundance, by which the Blessed Virgin excels all the saints because of the eminence and abundance of her merits. Further, there is a fullness of efficiency and overflow, which belongs only to the man Christ as the author of grace. For although the Blessed Virgin superabounds her grace into us, it is never as authoress of grace. But grace flowed over from her soul into her body: for through the grace of the Holy Spirit, not only was the mind of the Virgin perfectly united to God by love, but her womb was supernaturally impregnated by the Holy Spirit. And so after Gabriel said, "Hail, full of grace," he refers at once to the fullness of her womb, adding, "the Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28). And so the Evangelist, in order to show this unique fullness of efficiency and overflow in Christ, said, **Of his fullness we have all received**, i.e., all the apostles and patriarchs and prophets and just men who have existed, do now exist, and will exist, and even all the angels.

202 Note that the preposition *de* [of, from] sometimes signifies efficiency, i.e., an originative cause, as when it is said that a ray is or proceeds "from" the sun. In this way it signifies the efficiency of grace in Christ, i.e., authorship, because the fullness of grace in Christ is the cause of all graces that are in intellectual creatures. "Come to me, all you who desire me, and be filled with my fruits," that is to say, share in the fullness of those fruits which come from me (Si 24:26).

But sometimes this preposition *de* signifies consubstantiality, as when it is said that the Son is "of" the Father [*de Patre*]. In this usage, the fullness of Christ is the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from him, consubstantial with him in nature, in power and in majesty. For although the habitual gifts in the soul of Christ are other than those in us, nevertheless it is one and the same Holy Spirit who is in him and who fills all those to be sanctified. "One and the same Spirit produces all these" (1 Cor 12:11); "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" (Jl 2:28); "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him" (Rom 8:9).

For the unity of the Holy Spirit produces unity in the Church: "The Spirit of the Lord filled the whole world" (Wis 1:7).

In a third way, the preposition *de* [of, from] can signify a portion, as when we say "take 'from' this bread or wine [*de hoc pane, vel vino*]," i.e., take a portion and not the whole. Taken in this way it signifies that those who take a part derive it from the fullness. For he [Christ] received all the gifts of the Holy Spirit without measure, according to a perfect fullness; but we participate through him some portion of his fullness; and this is according to the measure which God grants to each. "Grace has been given to each of us according to the degree to which Christ gives it" (Eph 4:7).

203 Then when he says, **grace upon grace**, he shows the distribution of graces into us through Christ. Here he does two things. First, he shows that we receive grace from Christ, as its author. Secondly, that we receive wisdom from him (1:18). As to the first he does two things. First, he shows that we have received of his fullness. Secondly, our need to receive it.

204 First, he says that we have received of the fullness of Christ what is described as **grace upon grace**. In the light of what is said, we are forced to understand that of his fullness we have received grace, and that upon that grace we have received another. Accordingly, we must see what that first grace is upon which we have received a second one, and also what that second grace is.

According to Chrysostom, the first grace, which was received by the whole human race, was the grace of the Old Testament received in the law. And this was indeed a great grace: "I will give you a good gift" (Prv 4:2). For it was a great benefit for idolatrous men to receive precepts from God, and a true knowledge of the one true God. "What is the advantage of being a Jew, or the benefit of circumcision? It is great in every way. First indeed, because the words of God were entrusted to them" (Rom 3:1). Upon that grace, then, which was first, we have received a second far better. "He will follow grace with grace" (Zec 4:7).

But was not the first grace sufficient? I answer that it was not, because the law gives only a knowledge of sin, but does not take it away. "The law brought nothing to perfection" (Heb 7:19). Hence it was necessary that another grace come that would take away sin and reconcile one with God.

205 And so he says, **because, while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ**. Here the Evangelist ranks Christ above Moses the lawgiver, whom the Baptist ranked above himself. Now

Moses was regarded as the greatest of the prophets: "There did not arise again in Israel a prophet like Moses" (Dt 34:10). But he ranks Christ above Moses in excellence. In dignity of works, **because the law was given through Moses**; and between these two, the One excels the other as the reality excels the symbol and the truth the shadow: "The law had a shadow of the good things to come" (Heb 10:1). Further, Christ excels him in the way he works, because the law was given by Moses as by one proclaiming it, but not originating it; for "The Lord alone is our lawgiver" (Is 33:22). But **grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ**, as through the Lord and Author of truth and grace, as was explained above.

206 According to Augustine, however, the first grace is justifying and prevenient grace, which is not given to us because of our works: "If it is by grace, it is not now by works" (Rom 11:6). Upon that grace, then, which is imperfect, we have received another grace which is perfect, i.e., the grace of eternal life. And although eternal life is in some way acquired by merits, nevertheless, because the principle of meriting in everyone is prevenient grace, eternal life is called a grace: "The grace of God is eternal life" (Rom 6:23). To be brief, whatever grace is added to prevenient grace, the whole is called **grace upon grace**.

The need for this second grace arises from the insufficiency of the law, which showed what was to be done and what avoided; but it gave no help to fulfill what was commanded. Indeed, what seemed to have been directed to life was the occasion for producing death. Hence the Apostle says that the law was a minister of death: "If the ministry that condemned had glory, the ministry that justifies has much more glory" (2 Cor 3:9). Also, it promised the help of grace but did not fulfill, because "The law brought nothing to perfection" (Heb 7:19). Again, it prefigured the truth of the new grace by its sacrifices and ceremonies; indeed, its very rites proclaimed that it was a figure. Hence it was necessary that Christ come, who by his own death would destroy other deaths and grant the help of new grace, in order that we might both fulfill his precepts with ease and joy, and die to our sins and our old way of life: "Our old self was crucified with him" (Rom 6:6), and in order that the truth of the figures contained in the law might be revealed and the promises made to the fathers be fulfilled.

This can be explained in another way: **truth has come through Jesus Christ**, as to the wisdom and truth which was hidden for centuries, and which he openly taught when he came into the world: "I came into the world for this, to testify to the truth," as we read below (18:37).

207 But if Christ is the Truth, as it says below (14:6), how did truth come [i.e., come to be, be made] through him, because nothing can make itself? I answer that by his essence he is the uncreated Truth, which is eternal and not made, but

is begotten of the Father; but all created truths were made through him, and these are certain participations and reflections of the first Truth, which shines out in those souls who are holy.

LECTURE 11

18 No one has ever seen God;
it is the Only Begotten Son,
who is in the bosom of the Father,
who has made him known.

208 Above, the Evangelist showed how the apostles received grace from Christ as its author; here he shows how they received it from him as a teacher. About this he does three things. First, he shows the need for this teaching. Secondly, the competency of the teacher. Thirdly, the teaching itself.

209 The need for this teaching arose from the lack of wisdom among men, which the Evangelist implies by alluding to the ignorance concerning God which prevailed among men, saying: **No one has ever seen God**. And he does this fittingly, for wisdom consists properly in the knowledge of God and of divine things. Hence Augustine says that wisdom is the knowledge of divine things, as science is the knowledge of human things.

2 10 But this statement of the Evangelist, **No one has ever seen God**, seems to contradict many passages of divine Scripture. For it is said in Isaiah (6:1): "I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne." And about the same is found in 2 Samuel (6:2). Again in Matthew (5:8), the Lord says: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." If someone were to answer this last statement by saying that it is true that in the past no one has seen God, but will see him in the future, as the Lord promises, the Apostle would exclude this, saying, "He dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see" (1 Tim 6:16).

Because the Apostle says, "no man has seen," someone might say that if he cannot be seen by men, then at least he can be seen by angels; especially since God says, "Their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father" (Mt 18:10). But it cannot be taken in this way either, because it is said, "The sons of the resurrection will be like the angels of God in heaven" (Mt 22:30). If, therefore, the angels see God in heaven, then it is plain that the sons of the resurrection also see him: "When he appears we shall be like him, and we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2).

211 How then are we to understand what the Evangelist says: **No one has ever seen God**? To understand it we must know that God is said to be seen in three ways. First, through a created substitute presented to the bodily sight; as Abraham is believed to have seen God when he saw three [men] and adored one (Gn 18). He adored one because he recognized the mystery of the Trinity in the three, whom he first thought to be men, and later believed to be angels. In a second way, through a representation in the imagination; and in this way Isaiah saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne. Many visions of this sort are recorded in the Scriptures. In a third way, he is seen through an intelligible species abstracted from material things; and in this way he is seen by those who, considering the greatness of creatures, see with their intellect the greatness of the Creator, as it is said: "From the greatness and beauty of creatures, their Creator can be seen accordingly" (Wis 13:5); "The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood through the things that are made," as found in Romans (1:20). In another way, God is seen through a certain spiritual light infused by God into spiritual minds during contemplation; and this is the way Jacob saw God face to face, as it says in Genesis (32:30). According to Gregory, this vision came about through his lofty contemplation.

But the vision of the divine essence is not attained by any of the above visions: for no created species, whether it be that by which an external sense is informed, or by which the imagination is informed, or by which the intellect is informed, is representative of the divine essence as it is. Now man knows as to its essence only what the species he has in his intellect represents as it is. Therefore, the vision of the divine essence is not attained through any species.

The reason why no created species can represent the divine essence is plain: for nothing finite can represent the infinite as it is; but every created species is finite; therefore [it cannot represent the infinite as it is]. Further, God is his own *esse*; and therefore his wisdom and greatness and anything else are the same. But all those cannot be represented through one created thing. Therefore, the knowledge by which God is seen through creatures is not a knowledge of his essence, but a knowledge that is dark and mirrored, and from afar. "Everyone sees him," in one of the above ways, "from afar" (Jb 36:25), because we do not know what God is by all these acts of knowing, but what he is not, or that he is. Hence Denis says, in his *Mystical Theology*, that the perfect way in which God is known in this present life is by taking away all creatures and every thing understood by us.

212 There have been some who said that the divine essence will never be seen by any created intellect, and that it is seen neither by the angels nor by the blessed. But this statement is shown to be false and heretical in three ways, First,

because it is contrary to the authority of divine Scripture: "We shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2); "This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (below 17:3). Secondly, because the brightness of God is the same as his substance; for he does not give forth light by participating in light, but through himself. And thirdly, because it is impossible for anyone to attain perfect happiness except in the vision of the divine essence. This is because the natural desire of the intellect is to understand and know the causes of all the effects that it knows; but this desire cannot be fulfilled unless it understands and knows the first universal cause of all things, which is a cause that is not composed of cause and effect, as second causes are. Therefore, to take away the possibility of the vision of the divine essence by man is to fake away happiness itself. Therefore, in order for the created intellect to be happy, it is necessary that the divine essence be seen. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8).

213 Three things should be noted about the vision of the divine essence. First, it will never be seen with a bodily eye, either by sense or imagination, since only sensible bodily things are perceived by the senses, and God is not bodily: "God is spirit" (below 4:24). Secondly, that as long as the human intellect is in the body it cannot see God, because it is weighed down by the body so that it cannot attain the summit of contemplation. So it is that the more a soul is free of passions and is purged from affections for earthly things, the higher it rises in the contemplation of truth and tastes how sweet the Lord is. Now the highest degree of contemplation is to see God through his essence; and so as long as a man lives in a body which is necessarily subject to many passions, he cannot see God through his essence. "Man will not see me and live" (Ex 33:20). Therefore, if the human intellect is to see the divine essence it must wholly depart from the body: either by death, as the Apostle says, "We would prefer to be absent from the body and present with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8); or by being wholly abstracted by rapture from the senses of the body, as is mentioned of Paul in 2 Corinthians (12:3).

Thirdly, no created intellect (however abstracted, either by death, or separated from the body) which does see the divine essence, can comprehend it in any way. And so it is commonly said that although the whole divine essence is seen by the blessed, since it is most simple and has no parts, yet it is not wholly seen, because this would be to comprehend it. For "wholly" implies a certain mode. But any mode of God is the divine essence. Hence one who does not see him wholly does not comprehend him. For one is properly said to comprehend a thing through knowledge when he knows that thing to the extent that it is knowable in itself; otherwise, although he may know it, he does not comprehend it. For example, one who knows this proposition, "A triangle has three angles equal to two right angles," by a dialectical syllogism, does not know it as well as it is

knowable in itself; thus he does not know it wholly. But one who knows this by a demonstrative syllogism does know it wholly. For each thing is knowable to the extent that it has being and truth; while one is a knower according to his amount of cognitive power. Now a created intellectual substance is finite; hence it knows in a finite way. And since God is infinite in power and being, and as a consequence is infinitely knowable, he cannot be known by any created intellect to the degree that he is knowable. And thus he remains incomprehensible to every created intellect. "Behold, God is great, exceeding our knowledge" (Jb 36:26). He alone contemplates himself comprehensively, because his power to know is as great as his entity in being. "O most mighty, great, powerful, your name is Lord of hosts, great in counsel, incomprehensible in thought" (Jer 32:18).

214 Using the above explanations, we can understand, **No one has ever seen God**. First, No one, i.e, no man, has seen God, that is, the divine essence, with the eye of the body or the imagination. Secondly, No one, living in this mortal life, has seen the divine essence in itself. Thirdly, No one, man or angel, has seen God by a vision of comprehension. So when it is said that certain ones have seen God with their eyes or while living in the body, he is not seen through his essence, but through a creature acting as a substitute, as was said. And thus it was necessary for us to receive wisdom, because No one has ever seen God.

215 The Evangelist mentions the competent teacher of this wisdom when he adds, **it is the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father**. He shows the competence of this teacher in three ways: by a natural likeness, by a singular excellence, and by a most perfect consubstantiality.

216 By natural likeness, because a son is naturally like his father. Wherefore it also follows that one is called a son of God insofar as he shares in the likeness of his natural son; and one knows him insofar he has a likeness to him, since knowledge is attained through assimilation [or "likeness to"]. Hence 1 John (3:2) says, "Now we are sons of God," and he immediately adds, "when he comes, we will be like him, and we will see him as he is." Therefore, when the Evangelist says Son, he implies a likeness as well as all aptitude for knowing God.

217 Because this teacher knows God in a more special way than other sons do, the Evangelist suggests this by his singular excellence, saying, **the Only Begotten**. As if to say: He knows God more than other sons do. Hence, because he is the natural Son, having the same nature and knowledge as the Father, he is **called the Only Begotten**. "The Lord said to me: 'You are my Son'" (Ps 2:7).

218 Although he may know in a unique way, he would be lacking the ability to teach if he were not to know wholly. Hence he adds a third point, namely, his

consubstantiality to the Father, when he says, **who is in the bosom of the Father**. "Bosom" is not to be taken here as referring to men in their garments, but it indicates the secret things of the Father. For what we carry in our bosom we do in secret. The secret things of the Father refer to his unsurpassed power and knowledge, since the divine essence is infinite. Therefore, in that bosom, i.e., in the most secret things of the paternal nature and essence, which transcends all the power of the creature, is **the Only Begotten Son**; and so he is consubstantial with the Father.

What the Evangelist signifies by "bosom," David expressed by "womb," saying: "From the womb, before the daystar," i.e., from the inmost secret things of my essence, incomprehensible to every created intellect, "I begot you" (Ps 109:3), consubstantial with me, and of the same nature and power, and virtue and knowledge. "What man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man that is in him? So also, no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11). Therefore, he comprehends the divine essence, which is his own.

219 But the soul of Christ, which knows God, does not comprehend him, because this is attributed only to the Only Begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father. So the Lord also says: "No one knows the Father except the Son, and any to whom the Son wishes to reveal him" (Mt 11:27); we should understand this as referring to the knowledge of comprehension, about which the Evangelist seems to be speaking here. For no one comprehends the divine essence except the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And so we have shown the competence of the teacher.

220 We should note that the phrase, **who is in the bosom of the Father**, rejects the error of those who say that the Father is invisible, but the Son is visible, though he was not seen in the Old Testament. For from the fact that he is among the hidden things of the Father, it is plain that he is naturally invisible, as is the Father. So it is said of him: "Truly, you are a hidden God" (Is 45:15). And so Scripture mentions the incomprehensibility of the Son: "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son" (Mt 11:27), "What is the name of his son, if you know?" as we read in Proverbs (30:4)

221 Then the Evangelist indicates the way in which this teaching is handed down, saying that it is the Only Begotten Son **who has made him known**. For in the past, the Only Begotten Son revealed knowledge of God through the prophets, who made him known to the extent that they shared in the eternal Word. Hence they said things like, "The Word of the Lord came to me." But now the Only Begotten Son **has made him known** to the faithful: "It is I who spoke; here I am" (Is 52:6); "God, who in many and varied ways, spoke to the fathers in past

times through the prophets, has spoken to us in these days in his Son" (Heb 1:1).

And this teaching surpasses all other teachings in dignity, authority and usefulness, because it was handed on immediately by the Only Begotten Son, who is the first Wisdom. "It was first announced by the Lord, and confirmed to us by those who heard him" (Heb 2:3).

222 But what did he make known except the one God? And even Moses did this: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord your God is one" (Dt 6:4). What did this add to Moses? It added the mystery of the Trinity, and many other things that neither Moses nor any of the prophets made known.

LECTURE12

19 This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jeru'salem to him, to ask him: "Who are you?" 20 He declared openly, and did not deny, and stated clearly, "I am not the Messiah." 21 And they questioned him, "Who then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he responded, "No." 22 They therefore said to him, "Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?" 23 He said, quoting the prophet Isaiah, "I am a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord" [Is 40:3].

223 Above, the Evangelist showed how Christ was made known to the apostles through the testimony of John; here he develops this testimony more fully. First, he presents John's testimony to the people. Secondly, the testimony he gave of Christ to his own disciples (below 1:35). If we carefully consider what was said, we discover a twofold testimony of John to Christ: one which he gave to Christ in his presence, the other in his absence. For he would not have said, "It is he" (below 1:30), unless he had given testimony in Christ's presence; and he would not have said, "of whom I said," unless he gave testimony to him in his absence. So first, the Evangelist develops the testimony John gave to Christ in his absence; secondly, that he gave in his presence (v 29).

Now these two testimonies differ, because the first was given when he was questioned; the other was spontaneous. So in the first instance, we are given not only his testimony, but also the questions. First, he was asked about himself; secondly, about his office (v 24). First we are shown how John stated that he was

not what he really was not; secondly, that he did not deny what he was.

224 As to the first, there are three questions and three answers, as is plain from the text. In the first question there is great respect for John shown by the Jews. They had sent certain ones to him to ask about his testimony. The greatness of their respect is gathered from four facts. First, from the dignity of those who sent the questioners; for they were not sent by Galileans, but by those who were first in rank among the people of Israel, namely, Judeans, of the tribe of Juda, who lived about Jerusalem. It was from Juda that God chose the princes of the people.

Secondly, from the preeminence of the place, that is, from Jerusalem, which is the city of the priesthood, the city dedicated to divine worship: "You people claim that Jerusalem is the place where men must worship God" (below 4:20); "They will worship him with sacrifices and offerings" (Is 19:21). Thirdly, from the authority of the messengers, who were religious and from among the holier of the people, namely, priests and Levites; "You will be called the priests of the Lord" (Is 61:6).

Fourthly, from the fact that they sent them so that John might bear witness to himself, indicating that they put such trust in his words as to believe John even when giving testimony about himself. Hence he says they were sent to ask him, Who are you? They did not do this to Christ; in fact they said to him: "You are bearing witness to yourself; your testimony is not true" (below 8:13).

225 Then when he says, **He declared openly, and did not deny**, John's answer is given. The Evangelist twice mentioned that John spoke forth to show his humility; for although he was held in such high esteem among the Jews that they believed he might be the Messiah, he, on his part, usurped no honor what was not due him; **indeed, he stated clearly, I am not the Messiah.**

226 What of' the statement, **He declared openly, and did not deny**? For it seems that he did deny, because he said that he was not the Messiah. It must be answered that he did not deny the truth, for he said he was not the Messiah; otherwise he would have denied the truth. "A very great iniquity, and a denial of the most high God" (Jb 31:28). Thus he did not deny the truth, because however great he might have been considered, he did not become proud, usurping for himself the honor of another. He stated clearly, **I am not the Messiah**; because in truth he was not. "He was not the light," as was said above (1:8).

227 Why did John answer, **I am not the Messiah**, since those who had been sent did not ask if he was the Messiah, but who he himself was? I answer that John directed his answer more to the mind of the questioners than to their

question. And we can understand this in two ways. According to Origen, the priests and Levites came to John with a good intention. For they knew from the Scriptures, and particularly from the prophecy of Daniel, that the time for the coming of the Messiah had arrived. So, seeing John's holiness, they suspected that he might be the Messiah. So they sent to John, wishing to learn by their question, **Who are you?** whether John would admit that he was the Messiah. And so he directs his answer to their thoughts: **I am not the Messiah.**

Chrysostom, however, says that they questioned him as a stratagem. For John was related to priests, being the son of a chief priest, and he was holy. Yet, he bore witness to Christ, whose family seemed lowly; for that reason they even said, "Is not this the son of the carpenter?"; and they did not know him. So, preferring to have John as their master, not Christ, they sent to him, intending to entice him by flattery and persuade him to take this honor for himself, and to state that he was the Messiah. But John, seeing their evil intent, said, **I am not the Messiah.**

228 The second question is stated when they ask him, **Who then? Are you Elijah?** Here we should note that just as the Jews awaited the Lord who was to come, so to they waited for Elijah, who would precede the Messiah: "I will send you Elijah, the prophet" (Mal 4:5). And so those who were sent, seeing that John did not say that he was the Messiah, pressed him that at least he state if he were Elijah. And this is what they ask: **Who then? Are you Elijah?**

229 There are certain heretics who say that souls migrate from one body to another. And this belief was current among the Jews of that time. For this reason they believed that the soul of Elijah was in John's body, because of the similarity of John's actions to those of Elijah. And they say that these messengers asked John whether he was Elijah, i.e., whether the soul of Elijah was in John. They support this with Christ's statement, "He is Elijah who is to come," as is found in Matthew (11:14). But John's answer conflicts with their opinion, as he says, I am not. i.e., Elijah.

They counter this by saying that John answered in ignorance, not knowing whether his soul was the soul of Elijah. But Origen says in answer to this that it seems most unreasonable that John, a prophet enlightened by the Spirit, and telling such things about the Only Begotten Son of God, should be ignorant of himself, and not know whether his soul had been in Elijah.

230 So this was not the reason John was asked, **Are you Elijah?** Rather it was because they took it from Scripture (2 Kings 2:11) that Elijah did not die, but had been carried alive by a whirlwind into heaven. Accordingly, they believed that he

had suddenly appeared among them.

But against this opinion is the fact that John was born from parents who were known, and his birth had been known to everyone. So it says in Luke (1:66) that all said, "What do you think this child will be?" One might say to this that it is not incredible that they should regard John in the manner described. For a similar situation is found in Matthew (14:1): for Herod thought that Christ was John, whom he had beheaded, even though Christ had been preaching and was known for some time before John had been beheaded. And so from a similar stupidity and madness the Jews asked John whether he was Elijah.

231 Why does John say, I am not Elijah, while Christ said, "He is Elijah" (Mt 11:14). The angel gives us the answer: "He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Lk 1:17), i.e., in his works. Thus he was not Elijah in person, but in spirit and power, i.e., because he showed a similarity to Elijah in his works.

232 This likeness can be found in three matters. First, in their office: because as Elijah will precede the second coming of Christ, so John preceded the first. Thus the angel said, "He will go before him." Secondly, in their manner of living. For Elijah lived in desert places, ate little food and wore coarse clothing, as recorded in 1 and 2 Kings. John, also, lived in the desert, his food was locusts and wild honey, and he wore clothing of camel's hair. Thirdly, in their zeal. For Elijah was filled with zeal; thus it was said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord" (1 Kgs 19:10). So, also, John died because of his zeal for the truth, as is clear from Matthew (14:6)

233 Then when he says, **Are you the Prophet?** the third question is presented. Here there is a difficulty, for since it is said in Luke (1:76), "And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High," why does John, when asked if he is a prophet, answer that he is not a prophet?

There are three ways of answering this. One is that John is not just a prophet, but more than a prophet. For the other prophets only predicted future things from afar: "if there is a delay, wait for it" (Hb 2:2).. But John proclaimed that the Messiah was present, pointing him out with his finger: "Look, there is the Lamb of God," as it says below (1:36). And so the Lord says that he is more than a prophet (Mt 11:9).

Again, in another way, according to Origen, because through a misunderstanding the Jews associated three great personages with the coming of Christ: Christ himself, Elijah, and some other person, the greatest of the prophets, about whom Deuteronomy (18:15) says: "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you."

And although this greatest of the prophets is in fact none other than Christ, according to the Jews he is someone other than Christ. And so they do not ask simply whether he is a prophet, but whether he is that "greatest of the prophets." And this is clear from the order of their questions. For they first ask whether he is the Messiah; secondly, whether he is Elijah; thirdly, whether he is that prophet. Accordingly, in Greek, the article is used here as signifying *the* prophet, as it were, antonomastically.

In a third way, because the Pharisees were indignant at John for assuming the office of baptizing outside the order of the law and their tradition. For the Old Testament mentions three persons to whom this office could belong. First, to the Messiah, since "I will pour clean water upon you, and you will be cleansed" (Ez 36:25), are words considered as spoken by the person of the Messiah. Secondly, to Elijah, of whom it says in 2 Kings that he divided the water of the Jordan, and crossing over, was taken up. Finally, to Elisha, who made Naaman the Syrian wash seven times in the Jordan so as to be cured of leprosy, as mentioned in 2 Kings (c 5). And so when the Jews saw that John was baptizing, they believed that he was one of those three: the Messiah, or Elijah, or Elisha. Accordingly, when they ask here, **Are you the Prophet?** they are asking whether he is Elisha, who is called "prophet" in a special way because of the many miracles he had performed; hence he himself says, "Let him come to me, so that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel" (2 Kgs 5:8). And to this John answers, No, I am not Elisha.

234 Then he shows how he declared who he was. First, the question of the messengers is given; secondly, his answer (v 23).

235 They said, **Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us.** As if to say: We were sent to learn who you are; so tell us, **What have you to say about yourself?**

Notice John's devotion. He has already fulfilled what the Apostle says, "It is not I who now live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). And so he does not answer, "I am the son of Zachary," or this or that, but only the way in which he followed Christ.

236 So he says, **I am a voice that cries in the wilderness.** And he says that he is a voice because from the point of view of origin, a voice comes after the [mental, interior] word, but before the knowledge it causes. For we know a [mental, interior] word conceived in the heart by means of the voice which speaks it, since it is its sign. But God the Father sent the precursor John, who came to be in time, in order to make known his Word, which was conceived from

eternity. And so he fittingly says, **I am a voice.**

237 The addition, **that cries**, can be understood in two ways: as referring to John, crying and preaching in the wilderness; or to Christ crying in him, according to, "Do you want proof that Christ is speaking in me" (2 Cor 13:3).

Now he cries for four reasons. First of all, a cry implies a showing; and so he cries in order to show that Christ is clearly speaking in John and in himself: "Now on the last, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If any one thirsts, let him come to me and drink'" (below 7:37). But he did not cry out in the prophets because prophecies were given in enigmas and figures; so it is said that he was "wrapped in dark rain-clouds" (Ps 17:12). Secondly, because a cry is made to those who are at a distance; and the Jews were far from God. Thus it was necessary that he cry: "You have taken my friends and neighbors away from me" (Ps 88:19). He cries, in the third place, because they were deaf: "Who is deaf, but my servant?" (Is 42:19). He cries, fourthly, because he speaks with indignation, for they deserved God's wrath: "He will speak to them in his anger" (Ps 2:5).

238 Note that he cries **in the wilderness**, because "The word of the Lord came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the desert," as we read in Luke (3:2). There can be both a literal and a mystical reason for this. The literal reason is that by living in the desert he would be immune from all sin, and so be more worthy to bear witness to Christ, and his testimony would be more credible to men because of his life.

The mystical reason is twofold. For the wilderness or desert designates paganism, according to Isaiah (54:1); "She who is deserted has more children than she who has a husband." Accordingly, in order to show that God's teaching would from now on not be in Jerusalem alone, but also among the pagans, he cried **in the wilderness**. "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a people that will produce its fruits" (Mt 21:43). Again, the desert can indicate Judea, which was already deserted: "Your house will be left to You, deserted" (Mt 23:38). And so he cried in the desert, **in the wilderness**, i.e., in Judea, to indicate that the people to whom he was preaching had already been deserted by God: "in a desert land, where there is no way or water, so I have come to your sanctuary" (Ps 62:3).

239 Why does he cry, **Make a straight way for the Lord?** Because this is the task for which he was sent. "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way" (Lk 1:76). The way, prepared and straight, for receiving the Lord is the way of justice,

according to Isaiah (26:7): "The way of the just is straight." For the way of the just is straight when the whole man is subject to God, i.e., the intellect through faith, the will through love, and actions through obedience, are all subject to God.

And this was spoken, i.e., predicted, by **the prophet Isaiah**. As if to say: I am the one in whom these things are fulfilled.

LECTURE13

24 Now these men had been sent from the Pharisees, 25 and they put this further question to him: "Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" 26 John replied, "I baptize with water. But there is one standing in your midst whom you do not recognize—27 the one who is to come after me, who ranks ahead of me—the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to unfasten." 28 This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

240 Above, we saw John bear witness to Christ as he was being questioned on matters concerning himself; here, on matters concerning his office. Four things are set forth: first, those who question him; secondly, their questions; thirdly, his answer, in which he bore witness; and fourthly, the place where all this happened.

241 His interrogators were Pharisees. Hence he says, **Now these men had been sent from the Pharisees**. According to Origen, what is being said from this point on describes a different testimony given by John; and further, those who were sent from the Pharisees are not the same as those priests and Levites sent by the generality of the Jews, but others who were specifically sent by the Pharisees. And according to this it says: **Now these men had been sent**, not by the Jews, as the priests and Levites had been, but were others, **from the Pharisees**. So he says about this that because the priests and Levites were educated and respectful, they ask John humbly and respectfully whether he is the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet. But these others, who were from the Pharisees, according to their name "separated" and importunate, used disdainful language. Thus they asked him, **Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?**

But according to others, such as Gregory, Chrysostom, and Augustine, these Pharisees are the same priests and Levites who had been sent by the Jews. For there was among the Jews a certain sect which was separated from the others by

reason of its external cult; and for this reason its members were called Pharisees, i.e., "divided." In this sect there were some priests and Levites, and some of the people. And so, in order that the delegates [to John] might possess a greater authority, they sent priests and Levites, who were Pharisees, thus furnishing them with the dignity of a priestly caste and with religious authority.

242 The Evangelist adds, **these men had been sent from the Pharisees**, to disclose, first, the reason why they asked about John's baptizing, which was not why they were sent. It is as though he were saying: They were sent to ask John who he was. But they asked, **Why do you baptize?** because they were from the Pharisees, whose religion was being challenged. Secondly, as Gregory says, in order to show with what intention they asked John, "Who are you?" (1:19). For the Pharisees, more than all the others, showed themselves crafty and insulting to Christ. Thus they said of him: "He casts out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils" (Mt 12:24). Further, they consulted with the Herodians on how to trap Jesus in his speech (Mt 22:15). And so in saying that **these men had been sent from the Pharisees**, he shows that they were disrespectful and were questioning him out of envy.

243 Their questions concerned his office of baptizing. Hence he says that they asked him, **Why then do you baptize?** Here we should note that they are asking not to learn, but to obstruct. For since they saw many people coming to John because of the new rite of baptism, foreign both to the rite of the Pharisees and of the law, they became envious of John and tried all they could to hinder his baptism. But being unable to contain themselves any longer, they reveal their envy and say, **Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?** As if to say: You should not baptize, since you deny that you are any of those three persons in whom baptism was prefigured, as was said above. In other words, **if you are not the Messiah**, who will possess the fountain by which sins are washed away, **nor Elijah, nor the Prophet**, i.e., Elisha, who made a dry passageway through the Jordan (2 Kgs 2:8), how do you dare baptize? They are like envious persons who hinder the progress of souls, "who say to the seers, 'See no visions'" (Is 30:10).

244 His answer is true: and so he says that John answered, **I baptize with water**. As if to say: You should not be disturbed, if I, who am not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet, baptize; because my baptism is not complete but imperfect. For the perfection of baptism requires the washing of the body and of the soul; and the body, by its nature, is indeed washed by water, but the soul is washed by the Spirit alone. So, **I baptize with water**, i.e., I wash the body with something bodily; but another will come who will baptize perfectly, namely, with water and with the Holy Spirit; God and man, who will wash the body with water and the spirit with the Spirit, in such a way that the sanctification of the spirit will

be distributed throughout the body. "For John indeed baptized with water but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5).

245 Then he bears witness to Christ. First, in relation to the Jews. Secondly, in relation to himself (v 27).

246 He relates him to the Jews when he says, **But there is one standing in your midst.** As if to say: I have done an incomplete work, but there is another who will complete my work, and he is **standing in your midst.**

This is explained in a number of ways. First, according to Gregory, Chrysostom and Augustine, it refers to the ordinary way Christ lived among men, because according to his human nature he appeared to be like other men: "He, being in the form of God ... emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil 2:6). And according to this he says, **there is one standing in your midst**, i.e., in many ways he lived as one of you: "I am in your midst" (Lk 22:27), **whom you do not recognize**, i.e., you cannot grasp the fact that God was made man. Likewise, you do not recognize how great he is according to the divine nature which is concealed in him: "God is great, and exceeds our knowledge" (Jb 36:26). And so, as Augustine says, "The lantern was lighted," namely, John, "so that Christ might be found." "I have prepared a lamp for my anointed" (Ps 131:17).

It is explained differently by Origen; and in two ways. First, as referring to the divinity of Christ: and according to this, **there is one standing**, namely, Christ, **in your midst**, that is, in the midst of all things; because he, as Word, has filled all from the beginning of creation: "I fill heaven and earth" (Jer 23:24). **Whom you do not recognize**, because, as was said above (1:10), "He was in the world ... and the world did not know him."

It is explained another way as referring to his causality of human wisdom. **But there is one standing in your midst**, i.e., he shines in everyone's understanding; because whatever light and whatever wisdom exists in men has come to them from participating in the Word. And he says, **in your midst**, because in the midst of man's body lies the heart, to which is attributed a certain wisdom and understanding; hence, although the intellect has no bodily organ, yet because the heart is our chief organ, it is the custom to take it for the intellect. So he is said to stand among men because of this likeness, insofar as he "enlightens every man coming into this world" (1:9). **Whom you do not recognize**, because, as was said above (1:5), "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

In a fourth way, it is explained as referring to the prophetic foretelling of the

Messiah. In this sense the answer is directed chiefly to the Pharisees, who continually searched the writings of the Old Testament in which the Messiah was foretold; and yet they did not recognize him. And according to this it says, **there is one standing in your midst**, i.e., in the Sacred Scriptures which you are always considering: "Search the Scriptures" (below 5:39); **whom you do not recognize**, because your heart is hardened by unbelief, and your eyes blinded, so that you do not recognize as present the person you believe is to come.

247 Then John compares Christ to himself. First, he states the superiority of Christ as compared to himself. Secondly, he shows the greatness of this superiority.

248 He shows the superiority of Christ in comparison to himself both in preaching and in dignity. Now, as to the order of preaching, John was the first to become known. Thus he says, the one who is to come after me, to preach, to baptize and to die; because as was said in Luke (1:76): "You will go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way." John preceded Christ as the imperfect the perfect, and as the disposition the form; for as is said, "The spiritual is not first, but the animal" (1 Cor 15:46). For the entire life of John was a preparation for Christ; so he said above, that he was "a voice that cries in the wilderness."

But Christ preceded John and all of us as the perfect precedes the imperfect and the exemplar precedes the copy: "If any one wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt 16:24); "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example" (1 Pt 2:21).

Then he compares Christ to himself as to dignity, saying, **who ranks ahead of me**, i.e., he has been placed above me and is above me in dignity, because as he says (below 3:30), "he must increase, and I must decrease."

249 He touches on the greatness of his superiority when he says, **the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to unfasten**. As if to say: You must not suppose that he ranks ahead of me in dignity in the way that one man is placed ahead of another, rather he is ranked so far above me that I am nothing in comparison to him. And this is clear from the fact that it is he **the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to unfasten**, which is the least service that can be done for men. It is clear from this that John had made great progress in the knowledge of God, so far that from the consideration of God's infinite greatness, he completely lowered himself and said that he himself was nothing. So did Abraham, when he recognized God, and said (Gn 18:27), "I will speak to my Lord, although I am but dust and ashes." And so also did Job, saying, "Now I see you, and so I reprove myself, and do penance in dust and ashes" (Jb 42:5).

Isaiah also said, after he had seen the glory of God, "Before him all the nations are as if they are not" (Is 40:17). And this is the literal explanation.

250 This is also explained mystically. Gregory explains it so that the sandal, made from the hides of dead animals, indicates our mortal human nature, which Christ assumed: "I will stretch out my sandal to Edom" (Ps 59:10). The strap of Christ's sandal is the union of his divinity and humanity, which neither John nor anyone can unfasten or fully investigate, since it is this which made God man and made man God. And so he says, **the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to unfasten**, i.e., to explain the mystery of the incarnation perfectly and fully. For John and other preachers unfasten the strap of Christ's sandal in some way, although imperfectly.

It is explained in another way by recalling that it was ordered in the Old Law that when a man died without children, his brother was obligated to marry the wife of the dead man and raise up children from her as his brother's. And if he refused to marry her, then a close relative of the dead man, if willing to marry her, was to remove the sandals of the dead man as a sign of this willingness and marry her; and his home was then to be called the home of the man whose sandals were removed (Dt 25:5). And so according to this he says, **the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to unfasten**, i.e., I am not worthy to have the bride, that is, the Church, to which Christ has a right. As if to say: I am not worthy to be called the bridegroom of the Church, which is consecrated to Christ in the baptism of the Spirit; but I baptize only in water. As it says below (3:29): "It is the groom who has the bride."

251 The place where these events happened is mentioned when he says, **This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan**. A question arises on this: Since Bethany is on the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem, as is said in John (11:1) and also in Matthew (26:6), how can he say that these things happened beyond the Jordan, which is quite far from Jerusalem? Origen and Chrysostom answer that it should be called Bethabara, not Bethany, which is a village on the far side of the Jordan; and that the reading "Bethany" is due to a copyist's error. However, since both the Greek and Latin versions have Bethany, one should rather say that there are two places called Bethany: one is near Jerusalem on the side of the Mount of Olives, and the other is on the far side of the Jordan where John was baptizing.

252 The fact that he mentions the place has both a literal and a mystical reason. The literal reason, according to Chrysostom, is that John wrote this Gospel for certain ones, perhaps still alive, who would recall the time and who saw the place where these things happened. And so, to lead us to a greater certitude, he makes them witnesses of the things they had seen.

The mystical reason is that these places are appropriate for baptism. For in saying "Bethany," which is interpreted as "house of obedience," he indicates that one must come to be baptized through obedience to the faith. "To bring all the nations to have obedience to the faith" (Rom 1:5). But if the name of the place is "Bethabara," which is interpreted as "house of preparation," it signifies that a man is prepared for eternal life through baptism.

There is also a mystery in the fact that this happened on the far side of the Jordan. For "Jordan" is interpreted as "the descent of them"; and according to Origen it signifies Christ, who descended from heaven, as he himself says that he descended from heaven to do the will of his Father (below 6:38).

Further, the river Jordan aptly signifies baptism. For it is the border line between those who received their inheritance from Moses on one side of the Jordan, and those who received it from Josue on the other side. Thus baptism is a kind of border between Jews and Gentiles, who journey to this place to wash themselves by coming to Christ so that they might put off the debasement of sin. For just as the Jews had to cross the Jordan to enter the promised land, so one must pass through baptism to enter into the heavenly land. And he says, **on the far side of the Jordan**, to show that John preached the baptism of repentance even to those who transgressed the law and sinners; and so the Lord also says, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mt 9:13).

LECTURE 14

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and he said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. 30 It is he of whom I said:

'After me is to come a man, who ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.'

31 And I did not know him! And yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptizing with water."

32 John gave this testimony also:

"I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove, and resting on him. 33 And I did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water had said to me: 'The man

on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 Now I have seen for myself and have given testimony that he is the Son of God."

253 Above, John had given testimony to Christ when he was questioned. Here, he gives testimony to him on his own initiative. First, he gives the testimony; secondly, he confirms it (v 32). As to the first: first, the circumstances of the testimony are given; and secondly, the testimony itself is given (v 29); thirdly, suspicion is removed from the witness (v 31).

254 The circumstances are first described as to the time. Hence he says, **The next day**. This gives credit to John for his steadfastness, because he bore witness to Christ not for just one day or once, but on many days and frequently: "Every day I will bless you" (Ps 144:2). His progress, too, is cited, because one day should not be just like the day before, but the succeeding day should be different, i.e., better: "They will go from strength to strength" (Ps 83:8).

Another circumstance mentioned is his manner of testifying, because **John saw Jesus**. This shows his certitude, for testimony based on sight is most certain. The last circumstance he mentions is about the one to whom he bore witness. Hence he says that he saw **Jesus coming toward him**, i.e., from Galilee, as it says, "Jesus came from Galilee" (Mt 3:13). We should not understand this as referring to the time when he came to be baptized, of which Matthew is here speaking, but of another time, i.e., a time when he came to John after he had already been baptized and was staying near the Jordan. Otherwise, he would not have said, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen" (v 33). Therefore, he had already seen him and the Spirit come down as a dove upon him.

255 One reason why Christ now came to John was to confirm the testimony of John. For John had spoken of Christ as "the one who is to come after me" (v 27). But since Christ was now present, some might not understand who it was that was to come. So Christ came to John to be pointed out by him, with John saying, **Look! There is the Lamb of God**. Another reason Christ came was to correct an error. For some might believe that the first time Christ came, i.e., to be baptized, he came to John to be cleansed from his sins. So, in order to preclude this, Christ came to him even after his baptism. Accordingly, John clearly says, **There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world**. He committed no sin, but came to take away sin. He also came to give us an example of humility, because as it is said, "The greater you are the more humble you should be in all matters" (Sir 3:20).

Note that after the conception of Christ, when his mother, the Virgin, went in haste to the mountainous country to visit John's mother, Elizabeth, that John, still in his mother's womb and unable to speak, leaped in her womb as though performing a religious dance out of reverence for Christ. And as then, so even now; for when Christ comes to John out of humility, John offers his testimony and reverence and breaks out saying, **Look! There is the Lamb of God.**

256 With these words John gives his testimony showing the power of Christ. Then Christ's dignity is shown (v 30). He shows the power of Christ in two ways: first, by means of a symbol; secondly, by explaining it (v 29).

257 As to the first, we should note, as Origen says, that it was customary in the Old Law for five animals to be offered in the temple: three land animals, namely, the heifer, goat and sheep (although the sheep might be a ram, a sheep or a lamb) and two birds, namely, the turtle-dove and the dove. All of these prefigured the true sacrifice, which is Christ, who "gave himself for us as an offering to God," as is said in Ephesians (5:2).

Why then did the Baptist, when giving witness to Christ, specifically call him a Lamb? The reason for this is that, as stated in Numbers (28:3), although there were other sacrifices in the temple at other times, yet each day there was a time in which a lamb was offered every morning, and another was offered in the evening. This never varied, but was regarded as the principal offering, and the other offerings were in the form of additions. And so the lamb, which was the principal sacrifice, signified Christ, who is the principal sacrifice. For although all the saints who suffered for the faith of Christ contribute something to the salvation of the faithful, they do this only inasmuch as they are immolated upon the oblation of the Lamb, they being, as it were, in oblation added to the principal sacrifice. The lamb is offered in the morning and in the evening because it is through Christ that the way is opened to the contemplation and enjoyment of the intelligible things of God, and this pertains to "morning knowledge"; and we are instructed how to use earthly things without staining ourselves, and this pertains to "evening knowledge." And so he says, Look! **There is the Lamb of God**, i.e., the one signified by the lamb.

He says, of God, because there are two natures in Christ, a human nature and a divine nature. And it is due to the power of the divinity that this sacrifice has the power to cleanse and sanctify us from our sins, inasmuch as "God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5:19). Or, he is called **the Lamb of God**, because offered by God, i.e., by Christ himself, who is God; just as we call what a man offers the offering of the man. Or, he is called **the Lamb of God**, that is, of the Father, because the Father provided man with an oblation to offer that satisfied for sins, which man could not have through himself. So when Isaac

asked Abraham, "Where is the victim for the holocaust?" he answered, "God himself will provide a victim for the holocaust" (Gn 22:7); "God did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for all of us" (Rom 8:32).

258 Christ is called a Lamb, first, because of his purity: "Your lamb will be without blemish" (Ex 12:5); "You were not redeemed by perishable gold or silver" (1 Pt 1:18). Secondly, because of his gentleness: "Like a lamb before the shearer, he will not open his mouth" (Is 53:7). Thirdly, because of his fruit; both with respect to what we put on: "Lambs will be your clothing" (Prv 27:26), "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 13:14); and with respect to food: "My flesh is for the life of the world" (below 6:52). And so Isaiah said (16:1): "Send forth, O Lord, the lamb, the ruler of the earth."

259 Then when he says, **who takes away the sins of the world**, he explains the symbol he used. In the law, sin could not be taken away either by a lamb or by any other sacrifice, because as is said in Hebrews (10:4), "It is impossible that sins be taken away by the blood of bulls and goats." This blood takes away, i.e., removes, **the sins of the world**. "Take away all iniquity" (Hos 14:3). Or, **takes away**, i.e., he takes upon himself the sins of the whole **world**, as is said, "He bore our sins in his own body" (1 Pt 2:24); "It was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured," as we read in Isaiah (53:4).

However, according to a Gloss, he says sin, and not "sins," in order to show in a universal way that he has taken away every kind of sin: "He is the offering for our sins" (1 Jn 2:2); or because he died for one sin, that is, original sin: "Sin entered into this world through one man" (Rom 5:12).

260 Above, the Baptist bore witness to the power of Christ; now he bears witness to his dignity, comparing Christ to himself in three respects. First, with respect to their office and order of preaching. So he says, It is he, pointing him out, that is, the Lamb, **of whom I said**, i.e., in his absence, **After me is to come a man**, to preach and baptize, who in birth came after me.

Christ is called a man by reason of his perfect age, because when he began to teach, after his baptism, he had already reached a perfect age: "Jesus was now about thirty years of age" (Lk 3:23). He is also called a man because of the perfection of all the virtues that were in him: "Seven women," i.e., the virtues, "will take hold of one man," the perfect Christ (Is 4:1); "Look, a man! His name is the Orient," because he is the origin of all the virtues found in others (Zec 6:12). He is also called a man because of his espousal, since he is the spouse of the Church: "You will call me 'my husband'" (Hos 2:16); "I espoused you to one husband" (2 Cor 11:2).

261 Secondly, he compares himself to Christ with respect to dignity when he says, **who ranks ahead of me**. As if to say: Although he comes to preach after me, yet he ranks before me in dignity. "See, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills" (Sg 2:8). One such hill was John the Baptist, who was passed over by Christ, because as is said below (3:30), "He must increase, and I must decrease."

262 Thirdly, he compares himself to Christ with respect to duration, saying, because he existed before me. As if to say: It is not strange if he ranks ahead of me in dignity; because although he is after me in time, he is before me in eternity, **because he existed before me**.

This statement refutes a twofold error. First, that of Arius, for John does not say that "he was made before me," as though he were a creature, but he existed before me, from eternity, before every creature: "The Lord brought me forth before all the hills," as is said in Proverbs (8:25). The second error refuted is that of Paul of Samosata: for John said, he existed before me, in order to show that he did not take his beginning from Mary. For if he had taken the beginning of his existence from the Virgin, he would not have existed before the precursor, who, in the order of human generation, preceded Christ by six months.

263 Next (v 31), he precludes an erroneous conjecture from his testimony. For someone might say that John bore witness to Christ because of his affection for him, coming from a special friendship. And so, excluding this, John says, **And I did not know him!**; for John had lived in the desert from boyhood. And although many miracles happened during the birth of Christ, such as the Magi and the star and so on, they were not known to John: both because he was an infant at the time, and because, after withdrawing to the desert, he had no association with Christ. In the interim between his birth and baptism, Christ did not perform any miracles, but led a life similar to any other person, and his power remained unknown to all.

264 It is clear that he worked no miracles in the interim until he was thirty years old from what is said below (2:11): "This beginning of signs Jesus worked in Cana of Galilee." This shows the error of the book, *The Infancy of the Savior*. The reason he performed no miracles during this period was that if his life had not been like that of other infants, the mystery of the circumcision and incarnation might have been regarded as pure fancy. Accordingly, he postponed showing his knowledge and power to another time, corresponding to the age when other men reach the fulness of their knowledge and power. About this we read, "And Jesus increased in grace and wisdom" (Lk 2:52); not that he acquired a power and wisdom that he previously lacked, for in this respect he was perfect from the

instant of his conception, but because his power and wisdom were becoming known to men: "Indeed, you are a hidden God" (Is 45:15).

265 The reason why John did not know him was that he had so far seen no signs, and no one else had known Christ through signs. Hence he adds: **It was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptizing with water.** As if to say: My entire ministry is to reveal: "He was not the light, but he came in order to bear witness to the light," as was said above (1:8).

266 He says, **I came baptizing with water,** to distinguish his baptism from that of Christ. For Christ baptized not just in water, but in the Spirit, conferring grace; and so the baptism of John was merely a sign, and not causative.

John's baptism made Christ known in three ways. First, by the preaching of John. For although John could have prepared the way for the Lord and led the people to Christ without baptizing, yet because of the novelty of the service many more came to him than would have come if his preaching were done without baptism. Secondly, John's baptism was useful because of Christ's humility, which he showed by willing to be baptized by John: "Christ came to John, to be baptized by him" (Mt 3:13). This example of humility he gives us here is that no one, however great, should disdain to receive the sacraments from any person ordained for this purpose. Thirdly, because it was during Christ's baptism by John that the power of the Father was present in the voice, and the Holy Spirit was present in the dove, by which the power and dignity of Christ were all the more shown: "And the voice of the Father was heard: 'This is my beloved Son'" (Lk 3:22).

267 Then when he says, **John gave this testimony also,** he confirms by the authority of God the great things he testified to about Christ, that Christ alone would take away the sins of the whole world. As to this he does three things. First, he presents a vision. Secondly, he tells us the meaning of the vision (v 33). Thirdly, he shows what he learned from this vision (v 34).

268 He presents the vision when he says, **I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven.** When this actually happened John the Evangelist does not tell us, but Matthew and Luke say that it took place when Christ was being baptized by John. And it was indeed fitting for the Holy Spirit to be present at this baptism and to the person being baptized. It was appropriate for the one baptized, for as the Son, existing by the Father, manifests the Father, "Father, I have manifested your name" (below 17:6), so the Holy Spirit, existing by the Son, manifests the Son, "He will glorify me, because he will receive from me" (below 16:14). It was appropriate for this baptism because the baptism of Christ begins

and consecrates our baptism. Now our baptism is consecrated by invoking the whole Trinity: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). Thus, the ones we invoke in our baptism were present at the baptism of Christ: the Father in the voice, the Holy Spirit in the dove, and the Son in his human nature.

269 He says, **coming down**, because descent, since it has two termini, the start, which is from above, and the end, which is below, suits baptism in both respects. For there is a twofold spirit: one of the world and the other of God. The spirit of the world is the love of the world, which is not from above; rather, it comes up to man from below and makes him descend. But the spirit of God, i.e., the love of God, comes down to man from above and makes him ascend: "We have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit of God," as is said in 1 Corinthians (2:12). And so, because that spirit is from above, he says, **coming down**.

Similarly, because it is impossible for the creature to receive God's goodness in the fulness in which it is present in God, the communication of this goodness to us is in a way a certain coming down: "Every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (Jas 1:17).

270 The Evangelist, in describing the manner of the vision and of the coming down, says that the Holy Spirit did not appear in the spirit, i.e., in his nature, but in the form of a dove, saying, that he came like a dove. The reason for this is that the Holy Spirit cannot be seen in his nature, as is said, "The Spirit blows where it wills, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes" (below 3:8), and because a spirit does not come down but goes up, "The spirit lifted me up" (Ez 8:3).

It was appropriate that the Son of God, who was made visible through flesh, should be made known by the Holy Spirit in the visible form of a dove. However, the Holy Spirit did not assume the dove into a unity of person, as the Son of God assumed human nature. The reason for this is that the Son did not appear as a manifester but as a Savior. And so, according to Pope Leo, it was appropriate that he be God and man: God, in order to provide a remedy; and man, in order to offer an example. But the Holy Spirit appeared only to make known, and for this it was sufficient merely to assume a visible form which was suitable for this purpose.

271 As to whether this dove was a real animal and whether it existed prior to its appearance, it seems reasonable to say that it was a real dove. For the Holy Spirit came to manifest Christ, who, being the Truth, ought to have been manifested only by the truth. As to the other part of the question, it would seem that the

dove did not exist prior to its appearance, but was formed at the time by the divine power, without any parental union, as the body of Christ was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and not from a man's seed. Yet it was a real dove, for as Augustine says in his work, *The Christian Combat*: "It was not difficult for the omnipotent God, who produced the entire universe of creatures from nothing, to form a real body for the dove without the aid of other doves, just as it was not difficult to form the true body of Christ in the womb of the Blessed Virgin without natural semen."

Cyprian, in his *The Unity of the Church*, says: "It is said that the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove because the dove is a simple harmless animal, not bitter with gall, not savage with its bites, not fierce with rending talons; it loves the dwellings of men, is able to live together in one nest, together it raises its young, they remain together when they fly, spend their life in mutual association, signify the concord of peace with the kiss of their bill, and fulfill the law of harmony in all things."

272 Many reasons are given why the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove rather than in some other form. First, because of its simplicity, for the dove is simple: "Be wise as serpents, and simple as doves" (Mt 10:16). And the Holy Spirit, because he inclines souls to gaze on one thing, that is, God, makes them simple; and so he appeared in the form of a dove. Further, according to Augustine, the Holy Spirit also appeared in the form of fire over the heads of the assembled apostles. This was done because some are simple, but lukewarm; while others are fervent but guileful. And so in order that those sanctified by the Spirit may have no guile, the Spirit is shown in the form of a dove; and in order that their simplicity may not grow tepid, the Spirit is shown in fire.

A dove was used, secondly, because of the unity of charity; for the dove is much aglow with love: "One is my dove" (Sg 6:9). So, in order to show the unity of the Church, the Holy Spirit appears in the form of a dove. Nor should it disturb you that when the Holy Spirit rested on each of the disciples, there appeared separate tongues of fire; for although the Spirit appears to be different according to the different functions of his gifts, he nevertheless unites us through charity. And so, because of the first he appeared in separate tongues of fire, as is said, "There are different kinds of gifts" (1 Cor 12:4); but he appears in the form of a dove because of the second.

A dove was used, thirdly, because of its groaning, for the dove has a groaning chant; so also the Holy Spirit "pleads for us with indescribable groanings" (Rom 8:26); "Her maidens, groaning like doves" (Na 2:7). Fourthly, because of the doves fertility, for the dove is a very prolific animal. And so in order to signify the fecundity of spiritual grace in the Church, the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of

a dove. This is why the Lord commanded an offering of two doves (Lv 5:7).

A dove was used, fifthly, because of its cautiousness. For it rests upon watery brooks, and gazing into them can see the hawk flying overhead and so save itself: "His eyes are like doves beside brooks of water" (Sg 5:12). And so, because our refuge and defense is found in baptism, the Holy Spirit appropriately appeared in the form of a dove.

The dove also corresponds to a figure in the Old Testament. For as the dove bearing the green olive branch was a sign of God's mercy to those who survived the waters of the deluge, so too in baptism, the Holy Spirit, coming in the form of a dove, is a sign of the divine mercy which takes away the sins of those baptized and confers grace.

273 He says that the Holy Spirit was **resting on him**. If the Holy Spirit does not rest on someone, it is due to two causes. One is sin. For all men except Christ are either suffering from the wound of mortal sin, which banishes the Holy Spirit, or are darkened with the stain of venial sin, which hinders some of the works of the Holy Spirit. But in Christ there was neither mortal nor venial sin; so, the Holy Spirit in him was never disquieted, but was **resting on him**.

The other reason concerns charismatic graces, for the other saints do not always possess their power. For example, the power to work miracles is not always present in the saints, nor is the spirit of prophecy always in the prophets. But Christ always possessed the power to accomplish any work of the virtues and the graces. So to indicate this, he says, **resting on him**. Hence this was the characteristic sign for recognizing Christ, as the Gloss says. "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him" (Is 11:2), which we should understand of Christ as man, according to which he is less than the Father and the Holy Spirit.

274 Then when he says, **I did not know him**, he teaches us how this vision should be understood. For certain heretics, as the Ebionites, said that Christ was neither the Christ nor the Son of God from the time he was born, but only began to be the Son of God and the Christ when he was anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit at his baptism. But this is false, because at the very hour of his birth the angel said to the shepherds: "This day a Savior has been born for you in the city of David, Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). Therefore, so that we do not believe that the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ in his baptism as though Christ needed to receive the Spirit anew for his sanctification, the Baptist gives the reason for the Spirit's coming down. He says that the Spirit descended not for the benefit of Christ, but for our benefit, that is, so that the grace of Christ might be made known to us. And so he says, **And I did not know him! And yet it was to**

reveal him to Israel that I came baptizing with water.

275 There is a problem here. For he says, **he who sent me to baptize**. If he is saying that the Father sent him, it is true. Also, if he is saying that the Son sent him, it is even more clear, since it is said that both the Father and the Son sent him, because John is not one of those referred to in Jeremiah (23:21), "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran." But if the Son did send him, how can he then say, **I did not know him**? If it is said that although he knew Christ according to his divinity, yet he did not know him according to his humanity until after he saw the Spirit coming down upon him, one might counter that the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ when he was being baptized, and John had already known Christ before he was baptized, otherwise he would not have said: "I ought to be baptized by you, and you come to me?" (Mt 3:14).

So we must say that this problem can be resolved in three ways. In one way, according to Chrysostom, so that the meaning is to know familiarly; the sense being that **I did not know him**, i.e., in a familiar way. And if the objection is raised that John says, "I ought to be baptized by you," it can be answered that two different times are being discussed: so that **I did not know him**, refers to a time long before baptism, when he was not yet familiar with Christ: but when he says, "I ought to be baptized by you," he is referring to the time when Christ was being baptized, when he was now familiar with Christ because of his frequent visits. In another way, according to Jerome, it could be said that Christ was the Son of God and the Savior of the world, and that John did in fact know this; but it was not through the baptism that he knew that he was the Savior of the world. And so to remedy this ignorance he adds, he **is the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit**. But it is better to say with Augustine that John knew certain things and was ignorant of others. Explaining what he did not know, he adds that the power of baptizing, which Christ could have shared with his faithful followers, would be reserved for himself alone. And this is what he says, **he who sent me to baptize with water ... is the one**, exclusively and solely, **who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit**, i.e., he and no one else, because this power he reserved for himself alone.

276 We should note that a threefold power of Christ is found in baptism. One is the power of efficiency, by which he interiorly cleanses the soul from the stain of sin. Christ has this power as God, but not as man, and it cannot be communicated to any other. Another is the power of ministry, which he does share with the faithful: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). Therefore priests have the power to baptize as ministers. Christ too, as man, is called a minister, as the Apostle says. But he is also the head of all the ministers of the Church.

Because of this he alone has the power of excellence in the sacraments. And this excellence shows itself in four things. First, in the institution of the sacraments, because no mere man or even the entire Church could institute sacraments, or change the sacraments, or dispense with the sacraments. For by their institution the sacraments give invisible grace, which only God can give. Therefore, only one who is true God can institute sacraments. The second lies in the efficacy of Christ's merits, for the sacraments have their power from the merit of Christ's passion: "All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus, have been baptized into his death" (Rom 6:3). The third is that Christ can confer the effect of baptism without the sacrament; and this is peculiar to Christ. Fourthly, because at one time baptism was conferred in the name of Christ, although this is no longer done.

Now he did not communicate these four things to anyone; although he could have communicated some of them, for example, that baptism be conferred in the name of Peter or of someone else, and perhaps one of the remaining three. But this was not done lest schisms arise in the Church by men putting their trust in those in whose name they were baptized.

And so John, in stating that the Holy Spirit came down upon Christ, teaches that it is Christ alone who baptizes interiorly by his own power.

277 One might also say that when John said, "I ought to be baptized by you," he recognized Christ. through an interior revelation, but that when he saw the Holy Spirit coming down upon him, he knew him through an exterior sign. And so he mentions both of these ways of knowing. The first when he says, **he who sent me to baptize with water had said to me**, i.e., revealed something in an interior way. The second when he adds, **The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit**.

278 Then he shows what the Baptist understood from this vision, that is, that Christ is the Son of God. And this is what he says, Now I have seen for myself, that is, the Spirit coming down on him, and have given testimony that he, that is, Christ, is the Son of God, that is, the true and natural Son. For there were adopted sons of the Father who had a likeness to the natural Son of God: "Conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29). So he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit, through whom we are adopted as sons, ought to fashion sons of God. "You did not receive the spirit of slavery ... but the spirit of adoption" (Rom 8:15). Therefore, because Christ is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit, the Baptist correctly concludes that he is the true and pure Son of God: "that we may be in his true Son" (1 Jn 5:20).

279 But if there were others who saw the Holy Spirit coming down upon Christ, why did they not also believe? I answer that they had not been so disposed for this. Or perhaps, this vision was seen only by the Baptist.

LECTURE15

35 On the following day John was standing there again with two of his disciples. 36 And seeing Jesus walking by, he said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God." 37 Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. 38 Jesus turned around, and seeing them following him said, "What are you looking for?" They replied, "Rabbi (which means Teacher), where do you live?" 39 "Come and see," he replied. They went and saw where he lived, and they stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two who had followed him after hearing John was Simon Peter's brother, Andrew. 41 The first thing he did was to look for his brother Simon, and say to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means the Christ), 42 and he brought him to Jesus. Looking at him intently Jesus said, "You are Simon, son of John; you are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

280 Above, the Evangelist presented the Baptist's testimony to the people; here he presents his testimony to John's disciples. First, his testimony is given; secondly, the fruit of this testimony (v 37). As to the first he does three things: first, the one giving the testimony is described; secondly, his way of testifying is given (v 36); and thirdly, his testimony itself, Look! **There is the Lamb of God.**

281 The witness is described when he says, **On the following day John was standing there again with two of his disciples.** In saying standing, three things are noted about John. First, his manner of teaching, which was different from that of Christ and his disciples. For Christ went about teaching; hence it is said: "Jesus traveled over all Galilee" (Mt 4:23). The apostles also traveled the world teaching: "Go to the whole world, and preach the good news to every creature" (Mk 16:15). But John taught in one place; hence he says, standing, that is, in one place, on the far side of the Jordan. And John spoke of Christ to all who came to him.

The reason why Christ and his disciples taught going about is that the preaching of Christ was made credible by miracles, and so they went to various places in order that the miracles and powers of Christ might be made known. But the

preaching of John was not confirmed by miracles, so that is written, "John performed no sign" (below 10:41), but by the merit and sanctity of his life. And so he was **standing** in one place so that various people might stream to him and be led to Christ by his holiness. Furthermore, if John had gone from place to place to announce Christ without performing any miracles, his testimony would have been quite unbelievable, since it would seem to be inopportune and he would seem to be forcing himself upon the people.

Secondly, John's perseverance in the truth is noted, because John was not a reed shaken by the wind, but was firm in the faith; "Let him who thinks that he stands, take heed so he will not fall" (1 Cor 10:12); "I will stand my watch" (Hb 2:1).

Thirdly, and allegorically, it is noted that to stand is, in an allegorical sense, the same as to fail or cease: "The oil stood," i.e., failed (2 Kgs 4:6). So when Christ came John was standing, because when the truth comes the figure ceases. John stands because the law passes away.

282 The manner of his testifying is presented as being certain, because based on sight. So he says, **seeing Jesus walking by**. Here it should be remarked that the prophets bore witness to Christ: "All the prophets bear witness to him" (Acts 10:43). So did the apostles as they traveled the world: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the remotest parts of the world" (Acts 1:8). However, their testimony was not about a person then visible or present, but on one who was absent. In the case of the prophets about one who was to come; in the case of the apostles, about one who was now gone. But John bore witness when Christ was present and seen by him; and so he says, seeing Jesus, with the eyes of his body and of his mind: "Look on the face of your Christ" (Ps 83:10); "They will see eye to eye" (Is 52:8).

He says, **walking**, to point out the mystery of the incarnation, in which the Word of God assumed a changeable nature: "I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world," as it says below (16:28).

283 Then he gives John's testimony in saying, **Look! There is the Lamb of God**. He says this not just to point out the power of Christ, but also in admiration of it: "His name will be called Wonderful" (Is 9:6). And this Lamb did possess truly wonderful power, because being slain, it killed the lion—that lion, I say, of which it says: "Your enemy, the devil, goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he can devour" (1 Pt 5:8). And so this Lamb, victorious and glorious, deserved to be called a lion: "Look! The Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered" (Rv 5:5).

The testimony he bears is brief, **Look! There is the Lamb of God.** It is brief both because the disciples before whom he testified had already been sufficiently instructed about Christ from the things they had heard from John, and also because this is sufficient for John's intention, whose only aim was to lead them to Christ. Yet he does not say, "Go to him," so that the disciples would not seem to be doing Christ a favor by following him. But he does praise the grace of Christ so that they would regard it as of benefit to themselves if they followed Christ. And so he says, Look! **There is the Lamb of God**, i.e., here is the One in whom is found the grace and the power which cleanses from sin; for the lamb was offered for sins, as we have said.

284 The fruit of his testimony is given when he says, **Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus.** First, the fruit resulting from the testimony of John and his disciples is given. Secondly, the fruit resulting from the preaching of Christ (v 43). In relation to the first: first, the fruit arising from John's testimony is given; secondly, the fruit coming from the preaching of one of his disciples (v 40). With respect to the first he does two things. First, he shows the very beginning of the fruit coming from John's testimony. Secondly, its consummation as accomplished by Christ (v 38).

285 He says, **Hearing this**, John saying, "Look! There is the Lamb of God," **the two disciples**, who were with him, **followed Jesus**, literally. going with him, First, the fact that it is John who speaks while Christ is silent, and that disciples gather to Christ through the words of John, all this points out a mystery. For Christ is the groom of the Church, and John, the friend and groomsman of the groom. Now the function of the groomsman is to present the bride to the groom, and verbally make known the agreements; the role of the groom is to be silent, from modesty, and to make arrangements for his new bride as he wills. Thus, the disciples are presented by John to Christ and espoused in faith. John speaks, Christ is silent; yet after Christ accepts them, he carefully instructs them.

We can note, secondly, that no one was converted when John praised the dignity of Christ, saying, he "ranks ahead of me," and "I am not worthy to unfasten the strap of his sandal." But the disciples followed Christ when John revealed Christ's humility and about the mystery of the incarnation; and this is because we are more moved by Christ's humility and the sufferings he endured for us. So it is said: "Your name is like oil poured out," i.e., mercy, by which you have obtained salvation for all; and the text immediately follows with, "young maidens have greatly loved you" (Sg 1:2).

We can note, thirdly, that the words of a preacher are like seed falling on different kinds of ground: on one they bear fruit, and on another they do not. So too, John, when he preaches, does not convert all his disciples to Christ, but only

two, those who were well disposed. The others are envious of Christ, and they even question him, as mentioned in Matthew (9:14).

Fourthly, we may note that John's disciples, after hearing his witness to Christ, did not at once thrust themselves forward to speak with him hastily; rather, seriously and with a certain modesty, they tried to speak to Christ alone and in a private place: "There is a time and fitness for everything" (Ecc 8:6).

286 The consummation of this fruit is now set forth (v 38), for what John began is completed by Christ, since "the law brought nothing to perfection" (Heb 7:19). And Christ does two things. First, he questions the disciples who were following him. Secondly, he teaches them (v 39). As to the first we have: first, the question of Christ is given; secondly, the answer of the disciples.

287 He says, **Jesus turned around, and seeing them following him said.** According to the literal sense we should understand that Christ was walking in front of them, and these two disciples, following him, did not see his face at all; and so Christ turns to them to bolster their confidence. This lets us know that Christ gives confidence and hope to all who begin to follow him with a pure heart: "She goes to meet those who desire her" (Wis 6:14). Now Jesus turns to us in order that we may see him; this will happen in that blessed vision when he will show us his face, as is said: "Show us your face, and we will be saved" (Ps 79:4). For as long as we are in this world we see his back, because it is through his effects that we acquire a knowledge of him; so it is said, "You will see my back" (Ex 33:23). Again, he turns to give us the riches of his mercy. This is requested in Psalm 89 (13): "Turn to us, O Lord." For as long as Christ withholds the help of his mercy he seems to be turned away from us. And so Jesus turned to the disciples of John who were following him in order to show them his face and to pour his grace upon them.

288 Christ examines them specifically about their intention. For all who follow Christ do not have the same intention: some follow him for the sake of temporal goods, and others for spiritual goods. And so the Lord asks their intention, saying, **What are you looking for?**; not in order to learn their intention, but so that, after they showed a proper intention, he might make them more intimate friends and show that they are worthy to hear him.

289 It may be remarked that these are the first words which Christ speaks in this Gospel. And this is appropriate, because the first thing that God asks of a man is a proper intention. And, according to Origen, after the six words that John had spoken, Christ spoke the seventh. The first words spoken by John were when, bearing witness to Christ, he cried out, saying, "This is the one of whom I said."

The second is when he said, "I am not worthy to unfasten the strap of his sandal." The third is, "I baptize with water. But there is one standing in your midst whom you do not recognize." The fourth is, "Look! There is the Lamb of God." The fifth, "I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove." The sixth, when he says here, "Look! There is the Lamb of God." But it is Christ who speaks the seventh words so that we may understand, in a mystical sense, that rest, which is signified by the seventh day, will come to us through Christ, and that in him is found the fulness of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

290 The disciples answer; and although there was one question, they gave two answers. First, why they are following Christ, namely, to learn; thus they call him Teacher, **Rabbi (which means Teacher)**. As if to say: We ask you to teach us. For they already knew what is stated in Matthew (23:10): "You have one Teacher, the Christ." The second answer is what they want in following him, that is, **Where do you live?** And literally, it can be said that in truth they were looking for the home of Christ. For because of the great and wonderful things they had heard about him from John, they were not satisfied with questioning him only once and in a superficial way, but wanted to do so frequently and seriously. And so they wanted to know where his home was so that they might visit him often, according to the advice of the wise man: "If you see a man of understanding, go to him early" (Sir 6:36), and "Happy is the man who hears me, who watches daily at my gates" (Prv 8:34).

In the allegorical sense, God's home is in heaven, according to the Psalm (122:1): "I have lifted up my eyes to you, who live in heaven." So they asked where Christ was living because our purpose in following him should be that Christ leads us to heaven, i.e., to heavenly glory.

Finally, in the moral sense, they ask, **Where do you live?** as though desiring to learn what qualities men should possess in order to be worthy to have Christ dwell in them. Concerning this dwelling Ephesians (2:22) says: "You are being built into a dwelling place for God." And the Song (1:6) says: "Show me, you whom my soul loves, where you graze your flock, where you rest at midday."

291 Then when he says, **Come and see**, Christ's instruction of the disciples is given. First we have the instruction of the disciples by Christ; secondly, their obedience is cited; and thirdly, the time is given.

292 First he says, **Come and see**, that is, where I live. There is a difficulty here: for since the Lord says, "The Son of Man does not have any place to lay his head" (Mt 8:20), why does he tell them to **Come and see** where he lives? I answer, according to Chrysostom, that when the Lord says, "The Son of Man

does not have any place to lay his head," he showed that he had no home of his own, but not that he did not remain in someone else's home. And such was the home he invited them to see, saying, **Come and see.**

In the mystical sense, he says, **Come and see**, because the dwelling of God, whether of glory or grace, cannot be known except by experience: for it cannot be explained in words: "I will give him a white stone upon which is written a new name, which no one knows but he who receives it" (Rv 2:17). And so he says, **Come and see: Come**, by believing and working; **and see**, by experiencing and understanding.

293 It should be noted that we can attain to this knowledge in four ways. First, by doing good works; so he says, Come: "When shall I come and appear before the face of God" (Ps 41:3). Secondly, by the rest or stillness of the mind: "Be still and see" (Ps 45:10). Thirdly, by tasting the divine sweetness: "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (Ps 33:9). Fourthly, by acts of devotion: "Let us lift up our hearts and hands in prayer" (Lam 3:41). And so the Lord says: "it is I myself. Feel and see" (Lk 24:39).

294 Next the obedience of the disciples is mentioned; for immediately **they went and saw**, because by coming they saw him, and seeing they did not leave him. Thus it says, **and they stayed with him the rest of that day**, for as stated below (6:45): "Every one who hears the Father, and has learned, comes to me." For those who leave Christ have not yet seen him as they should. But those who have seen him by perfectly believing **stayed with him the rest of that day**; hearing and seeing that blessed day, they spent a blessed night: "Happy are your men, and happy are your servants, who always stand before you" (1 Kgs 8:10). And as Augustine says: "Let us also build a dwelling in our heart and fashion a home where he may come and teach us."

And he says, that day, because there can be no night where the light of Christ is present, where there is the Sun of justice.

295 The time is given when he says, **It was about the tenth hour.** The Evangelist mentions this in order that, considering the literal sense, he might give credit to Christ and the disciples. For the tenth hour is near the end of the day. And this praises Christ who was so eager to teach that not even the lateness of the hour induced him to postpone teaching them; but he taught them at the tenth hour. "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not let your hands be idle" (Ecc 11:6).

296 The moderation of the disciples is also praised, because even at the tenth

hour, when men usually have eaten and are less self-possessed for receiving wisdom, they were both self-possessed and prepared to hear wisdom and were not hindered because of food or wine. But this is not unexpected, for they had been disciples of John, whose drink was water and whose food was the locust and wild honey.

297 According to Augustine, however, the tenth hour signifies the law, which was given in ten precepts. And so the disciples came to Christ at the tenth hour and remained with him to be taught so that the law might be fulfilled by Christ, since it could not be fulfilled by the Jews. And so at that hour he is called Rabbi, that is, Teacher.

298 Then (v 40), he sets forth the fruit produced by the disciple of John who was converted to Christ. First, the disciple is described; secondly, the fruit begun by him (v 41); thirdly, the consummation of this fruit by Christ (v 42).

299 The disciple is described by name when he says, **Andrew**, i.e., "manly". "Act manfully, and let Your heart be strong," as it says in Psalm 30 (v 25). he mentions his name in order to show his privilege: he was not only the first to be perfectly converted to Christ, but he also preached Christ. So, as Stephen was the first martyr after Christ, so Andrew was the first Christian.

He is described, secondly, by his relationship, that is, as **Simon Peter's brother**, for he was the younger. And this is mentioned to commend him, for although younger in age, he became first in faith.

He is described, thirdly, by his discipleship, because he was **one of the two who had followed him**. His name is mentioned in order to show that Andrew's privilege was remarkable. For the name of the other disciple is not mentioned: either because it was John the Evangelist himself, who through humility followed the practice in his Gospel of not mentioning his own name when he was involved in some event; or, according to Chrysostom, because the other one was not a notable person, nor had he done anything great, and so there was no need to mention his name. Luke does the same in his Gospel (10:1), where he does not mention the names of the seventy-two disciples sent out by the Lord, because they were not the outstanding and important persons that the apostles were. Or, according to Alcuin, this other disciple was Philip: for the Evangelist, after discussing Andrew, begins at once with Philip, saying: "On the following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and coming upon Philip" (below 1:43).

He is commended, fourthly, for the zeal of his devotion; hence he says that Andrew followed him, i.e., Jesus: "My foot has followed in his steps" (Jb 23:11).

300 The fruit begun by Andrew is mentioned when he says, **The first thing he did was to look for his brother Simon.** He first mentions the one for whom he bore fruit, that is, his brother, in order to mark the perfection of his conversion. For as Peter says, in the *Itinerary of Clement*, the evident sign of a perfect conversion of anyone is that, once converted, the closer one is to him the more he tries to convert him to Christ. And so Andrew, being now perfectly converted, does not keep the treasure he found to himself, but hurries and quickly runs to his brother to share with him the good things he has received. And so he says the **first thing he**, that is, Andrew, **did was to look for his brother Simon**, so that related in blood he might make him related in faith: "A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city" (Prv 18:19); "Let him who hears say, 'Come'" (Rv 22:17).

301 Secondly, he mentions the words spoken by Andrew, **We have found the Messiah (which means the Christ).** Here, according to Chrysostom, he is tacitly answering a certain question: namely, that if someone were to ask what they had been instructed about by Christ, they would have the ready answer that through the testimony of the Scriptures he instructed him in such a way that he knew he was the Christ. And so he says, **We have found the Messiah.** He implies by this that he had previously sought him by desire for a long time: "Happy is the man who finds wisdom" (Prv 3:13).

"Messiah," which is Hebrew, is translated as "Christos" in Greek, and in Latin as "Unctus" (anointed), because he was anointed in a special way with invisible oil, the oil of the Holy Spirit. So Andrew explicitly designates him by this title: "Your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows," i.e., above all the saints. For all the saints are anointed with that oil, but Christ was singularly anointed and is singularly holy. So, as Chrysostom says, he does not simply call him "Messiah," but **the Messiah.**

302 Thirdly, he mentions the fruit he produced, because **he brought him**, that is, **Peter, to Jesus.** This gives recognition to Peter's obedience, for he came at once, without delay. And consider the devotion of Andrew: for he brought him to Jesus and not to himself (for he knew that he himself was weak); and so he leads him to Christ to be instructed by him. This shows us that the efforts and the aim of preachers should not be to win for themselves the fruits of their preaching, i.e., to turn them to their own private benefit and honor, but to bring them to Jesus, i.e., to refer them to his glory and honor: "What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ," as is said in 2 Corinthians (4:5).

303 The consummation of this fruit is given when he says, **Looking at him intently Jesus said.** Here Christ, wishing to raise him up to faith in His divinity,

begins to perform works of divinity, making known things that are hidden. First of all, things which are hidden in the present: so **looking at him**, i.e., as soon as Jesus saw him, he considered him by the power of his divinity and called him by name, saying, **You are Simon**. This is not surprising, for as it is said: "Man sees the appearances, but the Lord sees the heart" (1 Sm 16:7). This name is appropriate for the mystery. For "Simon" means "obedient," to indicate that obedience is necessary for one who has been converted to Christ through faith: "He gives the Holy Spirit to all who obey him" (Acts 5:32).

304 Secondly, he reveals things hidden in the past. Hence he says, son of John, because that was the name of Simon's father; or he says, "son of Jonah," as we find in Matthew (16:17), "Simon Bar-Jonah." And each name is appropriate to this mystery. For "John" means "grace," to indicate that it is through grace that men come to the faith of Christ: "You are saved by his grace" (Eph 2:5). And "Jonah" means "dove," to indicate that it is by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us, that we are made strong in our love for God: "The love of God is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5).

305 Thirdly, he reveals things hidden in the future. So he says, **you are to be called Cephas (which is translated Peter)**, and in Greek, "head." And this is appropriate to this mystery, which is that he who was to be the head of the others and the vicar of Christ should remain firm. As Matthew (16:18) says: "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."

306 There is a question here about the literal meaning. First, why did Christ give Simon a name at the beginning of his conversion, rather than will that he have this name from the time of his birth? Two different answers have been given for this. The first, according to Chrysostom, is that divinely given names indicate a certain eminence in spiritual grace. Now when God confers a special grace upon anyone, the name indicating that grace is given at one's birth: as in the case of John the Baptist, who was named before he was born, because he had been sanctified in his mother's womb. But sometimes a special grace is given during the course of one's life: then such names are divinely given at that time and not at birth: as in the case of Abraham and Sarah, whose names were changed when they received the promise that their posterity would multiply. Likewise, Peter is named in a divine way when he is called to the faith of Christ and to the grace of apostleship, and particularly because he was appointed Prince of the apostles of the entire Church—which was not done with the other apostles.

But, according to Augustine, if he had been called Cephas from birth, this mystery would not have been apparent. And so the Lord willed that he should have one name at birth, so that by changing his name the mystery of the Church, which was built on his confession of faith, would be apparent. Now

"Peter" (*Petrus*) is derived from "rock" (*petra*). But the rock was Christ. Thus, the name "Peter" signifies the Church, which was built upon that solid and immovable rock which is Christ.

307 The second question is whether this name was given to Peter at this time, or at the time mentioned by Matthew (16:18). Augustine answers that this name was given to Simon at this time; and at the event reported by Matthew the Lord is not giving this name but reminding him of the name that was given, so that Christ is using this name as already given. But others think that this name was given when the Lord said, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" (Mt 16:18); and in this passage in the Gospel of John, Christ is not giving this name, but foretelling what will be given later.

308 The third question is about the calling of Peter and Andrew: for here it says that they were called near the Jordan, because they were John's disciples; but in Matthew (4:18) it says that Christ called them by the Sea of Galilee. The answer to this is that there was a triple calling of the apostles. The first was a call to knowledge or friendship and faith; and this is the one recorded here. The second consisted in the prediction of their office: "From now on you will be catching men" (Lk 5:10). The third call was to their apostleship, which is mentioned by Matthew (4:18). This was the perfect call because after this they were not to return to their own pursuits.

LECTURE16

43 On the following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and coming upon Philip, he said, "Follow me." 44 Now Philip came from Bethsaida, the same town as Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip sought out Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found the one Moses spoke of in the law - the prophets too - Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth." 46 "From Nazareth!" Nathanael replied, "What good can come from that place?" Philip said, "Come and see." 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him: "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile." 48 Nathanael asked him, "How do you know me?" Jesus replied and said, "Before Philip called you, I saw you when you were sitting under the fig tree." 49 "Rabbi," said Nathanael, "you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." 50 Jesus responded and said, "You believed just because I said to you that I saw you sitting under the fig tree! You will see greater things than this." 51 He went on to say, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you

will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

309 After having shown the fruit produced by John’s preaching and that of his disciples, the Evangelist now shows the fruit obtained from the preaching of Christ. First, he deals with the conversion of one disciple as the result of Christ’s preaching. Secondly, the conversion of others due to the preaching of the disciple just converted to Christ (v 45). As to the first he does three things: first, the occasion when the disciple is called is given; secondly, his calling is described; thirdly, his situation.

310 The occasion of his calling was the departure of Jesus from Judea. So he says, **On the following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and coming upon Philip.** There are three reasons why Jesus left for Galilee, two of which are literal. One of these is that after being baptized by John and desiring to shed honor on the Baptist, he left Judea for Galilee so that his presence would not obscure and lessen John’s teaching authority (while he still retained that state); and this teaches us to show honor to one another, as is said in Romans (12:10).

The second reason is that there are no distinguished persons in Galilee: “No prophet is to rise from Galilee” (below 7:52). And so, to show the greatness of his power, Christ wished to go there and choose there the princes of the earth, who are greater than the prophets: “He has turned the desert into pools of water,” as we read in Psalm 106 (v 35).

The third reason is mystical: for “Galilee” means “passage.” So Christ desired to go from Judea into Galilee in order to indicate that on “on the following day,” i.e., on the day of grace, that is, the day of the Good News, he would pass from Judea into Galilee, i.e., to save the Gentiles: “Is he going to go to those who are dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?” (below 7:35).

311 A disciple’s vocation is to follow: hence he says that after Christ found Philip he said, **Follow me.** Note that sometimes man finds God, but without knowing it, as it were: “He who finds me will find life, and will have salvation from the Lord” (Prv 8:35). And at other times God finds the man, in order to bestow honor and greatness upon him: “I have found David, my servant” (Ps 88:2 1). Christ found Philip in this way, that is, to call him to the faith and to grace. And so he says at once, **Follow me.**

312 There is a question here: Why did not Jesus call his disciples at the very beginning? Chrysostom answers that he did not wish to call anyone before someone clung to him spontaneously because of John’s preaching, for men are

drawn by example more than by words.

313 One might also ask why Philip followed Christ immediately after only a word, while Andrew followed Christ after hearing about him from John, and Peter after hearing from Andrew.

Three answers can be given. One is that Philip had already been instructed by John: for according to one of the explanations given above, Philip was that other disciple who followed Christ along with Andrew. Another is that Christ's voice had power not only to act on one's hearing from without, but also on the heart from within: "My words are like fire" (Jer 23:29). For the voice of Christ was spoken not only to the exterior, but it enkindled the interior of the faithful to love him. The third answer is that Philip had perhaps already been instructed about Christ by Andrew and Peter, since they were from the same town. In fact, this is what the Evangelist seems to imply by adding, **Now Philip came from Bethsaida, the same town as Andrew and Peter.**

314 This gives us the situation of the disciples he called: for they were from Bethsaida. And this is appropriate to this mystery. For "Bethsaida" means "house of hunters," to show the attitude of Philip, Peter and Andrew at that time, and because it was fitting to call, from the house of hunters, hunters who were to capture souls for life: "I will send my hunters" (Jer 16:16).

315 Now the fruit produced by the disciple who was converted to Christ is given. First, the beginning of the fruit, coming from this disciple. Secondly, its consummation by Christ (v 47). As to the first, he does three things: first, the statement of Philip is given; secondly, Nathanael's response; and thirdly, Philip's ensuing advice.

316 As to the first, note that just as Andrew, after having been perfectly converted, was eager to lead his brother to Christ, so too Philip with regard to his brother, Nathanael. And so he says that Philip found Nathanael, whom he probably looked for as Andrew did for Peter; and this was a sign of a perfect conversion. The word "Nathanael" means "gift of God"; and it is God's gift if anyone is converted to Christ.

He tells him that all the prophecies and the law have been fulfilled, and that the desires of their holy forefathers are not in vain, but have been guaranteed, and that what God has promised was now accomplished. **We have found the one Moses spoke of in the law—the prophets too—Jesus.** We understand by this that Nathanael was fairly learned in the law, and that Philip, now having learned about Christ, wished to lead Nathanael to Christ through the things he

himself knew, that is, from the law and the prophets. So he says, **the one Moses spoke of in the law**. For Moses wrote of Christ: "If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe me, for he wrote of me" (below 5:46). **The prophets too** wrote of Christ: "All the prophets bear witness to him" (Acts 10:43).

317 Note that Philip says three things about Christ that are in agreement with the law and the prophets. First, the name: for he says, **We have found Jesus**. And this agrees with the prophets: "I will send them a Savior" (Is 19:20); "I will rejoice in God, my Jesus" (Hb 3:18).

Secondly, the family from which Christ took his human origin, when he says, **son of Joseph**, i.e., who was of the house and family of David. And although Jesus did not derive his origin from him, yet he did derive it from the Virgin, who was of the same line as Joseph. He calls him the son of Joseph, because Jesus was considered to be the son of the one to whom his mother was married. So it is said: "the son of Joseph (as was supposed)" (Lk 3:23). Nor is it strange that Philip called him the son of Joseph, since his own mother, who was aware of his divine incarnation, called him his son: "Your father and I have been looking for you in sorrow" (Lk 2:48). Indeed, if one is called the son of another because he is supported by him, this is more reason why Joseph should be called the father of Jesus, even though he was not so according to the flesh: for he not only supported him, but was the husband of his virgin mother. However, Philip calls him the son of Joseph (not as though he was born from the union of Joseph and the Virgin) because he knew that Christ would be born from the line of David; and this was the house and family of Joseph, to whom Mary was married. And this also is in agreement with the prophets: "I will raise up a just branch for David" (Jer 23:5).

Thirdly, he mentions his native land, saying, **from Nazareth**; not because he had been born there, but because he was brought up there; but he had been born in Bethlehem. Philip omits to mention Bethlehem but not Nazareth because, while the birth of Christ was not known to many, the place where he was brought up was. And this also agrees with the prophets: "A shoot will arise from the root of Jesse, and a flower (or Nazarene, according to another version) will rise up from his roots" (Is 11:1).

318 Then when he says, **Nathanael replied**, the answer of Nathanael is given. His answer can be interpreted as an assertion or as a question; and in either way it is suitable to Philip's affirmation. If it is taken as an assertion, as Augustine does, the meaning is: "Some good can come from Nazareth." In other words, from a city with that name it is possible that there come forth to us some very excellent grace or some outstanding teacher to preach to us about the flower of the virtues and the purity of sanctity; for "Nazareth" means "flower." We can

understand from this that Nathanael, being quite learned in the law and a student of the Scriptures, knew that the Savior was expected to come from Nazareth—something that was not so clear even to the Scribes and Pharisees. And so when Philip said, **We have found Jesus from Nazareth**, his hopes were lifted and he answered: "Indeed, some good can come from Nazareth."

But if we take his answer as a question, as Chrysostom does, then the sense is: **From Nazareth! What good can come from that place?** As if to say: Everything else you say seems credible, because his name and his lineage are consistent with the prophecies, but your statement that he is **from Nazareth** does not seem possible. For Nathanael understood from the Scriptures that the Christ was to come from Bethlehem, according to: "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of you a ruler will come forth, who will rule my people Israel," as we read in Matthew (2:6). And so, not finding Philip's statement in agreement with the prophecy, he prudently and moderately inquires about its truth, **What good can come from that place?**

319 Then Philip's advice is given, **Come and see**. And this advice suits either interpretation of Nathanael's answer. To the assertive interpretation it is as though he says: You say that something good can come from Nazareth, but I say that the good I state to you is of such a nature and so marvelous that I am unable to express it in words, so **Come and see**. To the interpretation that makes it a question, it is as though he says: You wonder and say: **What good can come from that place?**, thinking that this is impossible according to the Scriptures. But if you are willing to experience what I experienced, you will understand that what I say is true, so **Come and see**.

Then, not discouraged by his questions, Philip brings Nathanael to Christ. He knew that he would no longer argue with him if he tasted the words and teaching of Christ. And in this, Philip was imitating Christ who earlier answered those who had asked about the place where he lived: "Come and see ... "Come to him, and be enlightened" (Ps 33:6).

320 Then when he says, **When Jesus saw Nathanael**, the consummation of this fruit by Christ is described. We should note that there are two ways in which men are converted to Christ: some by miracles they have seen and things experienced in themselves or in others; others are converted through internal insights, through prophecy and the foreknowledge of what is hidden in the future. The second way is more efficacious than the first: for devils and certain men who receive their help can simulate marvels; but to predict the future can only be done by divine power. "Tell us what is to come, and we will say that you are gods" (Is 41:23); "Prophecies are for those who believe." And so our Lord

draws Nathanael to the faith not by miracles but by making known things which are hidden. And so he says of him, **Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile.**

321 Christ mentions three hidden matters: things hidden in the present, in the heart; past facts; and future heavenly matters. To know these three things is not a human but a divine achievement.

He mentions things hidden in the present when he says, **Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile.** Here we have, first, the prior revelation of Christ; secondly, Nathanael's question, **How do you know me?**

322 First he says, **When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him.** As if to say: Before Nathanael reached him, Jesus said, **Here is a true Israelite.** He said this about him before he came to him, because had he said it after he came, Nathanael might have believed that Jesus had heard it from Philip.

Christ said, **Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile.** Now "Israel" has two meanings. One of these, as the Gloss says, is "most righteous".—"Do not fear, my most righteous servant, whom I have chosen" (Is 44:2). Its second meaning is "the man who sees God." And according to each meaning Nathanael is a true Israelite. For since one in whom there is no guile is called righteous, Nathanael is said to be a **true Israelite, in whom there is no guile.** As if to say: You truly represent your race because you are righteous and without guile. Further, because man sees God through cleanness of heart and simplicity, Christ said, **a true Israelite,** i.e., you are a man who truly sees God because you are simple and without guile.

Further, he said, **in whom there is no guile,** so that we do not think that it was with malice that Nathanael asked: **What good can come from that place?**

323 Augustine has a different explanation of this passage. It is clear that all are born under sin. Now those who have sin in their hearts but outwardly pretend to be just are called guileful. But a sinner who admits that he is a sinner is not guileful. So Christ said, **Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile,** not because Nathanael was without sin, or because he had no need of a physician, for no one is born in such a way as not to need a physician; but he was praised by Christ because he admitted his sins.

324 Then when he says, **How do you know me?,** we have Nathanael's question. For Nathanael, in wonder at the divine power in this revelation of what is hidden, because this can only be from God—"The heart is depraved and

inscrutable, and who is able to know it? I the Lord search the heart and probe the loins" (Jer 17:9); "Man sees the appearances, but the Lord sees the heart" (1 Sin 16:7)—asks, **How do you know me?** Here we can recognize Nathanael's humility, because, although he had been praised, he did not become elated, but held this praise of himself suspect. "My people, who call you blessed, they are deceiving you" (Is 3:12).

325 Then he touches on matters in the past, saying, **Before Philip called you, I saw you when you were sitting under the fig tree.** First we have the statement of Christ; secondly, the confession of Nathanael.

326 As to the first, we should note that Nathanael might have had two misgivings about Christ. One, that Christ said this in order to win his friendship by flattery; the other, that Christ had learned what he knew from others. So, to remove Nathanael's suspicions and raise him to higher things, Christ reveals certain hidden matters that no one could know except in a divine way, that is, things that related only to Nathanael. He refers to these when he says, **Before Philip called you, I saw you when you were sitting under the fig tree.** In the literal sense, this means that Nathanael was under a fig tree when he was called by Philip—which Christ knew by divine power, for "The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun" (Sir 23:28).

In the mystical sense, the fig tree signifies sin: both because we find a fig tree, bearing only leaves but no fruit, being cursed, as a symbol of sin (Mt 11:19); and because Adam and Eve, after they had sinned, made clothes from fig leaves. So he says here, when you were sitting under the fig tree, i.e., under the shadow of sin, before you were called to grace, I saw you, with the eye of mercy; for God's predestination looks upon the predestined, who are living under sin, with an eye of pity, for as Ephesians (1:4) says, "He chose us before the foundation of the world." And he speaks of this eye here: I saw you, by predestining you from eternity.

Or, the meaning is, according to Gregory: I saw you when **you were sitting under the fig tree**, i.e., under the shadow of the law. "The law has only a shadow of the good things to come" (Heb 10:1).

327 Hearing this, Nathanael is immediately converted, and, seeing the power of the divinity in Christ, breaks out in words of conversion and praise, saying, **Rabbi, you are the Son of God.** Here he considers three things about Christ. First, the fullness of his knowledge, when he says, **Rabbi**, which is translated as Teacher. As if to say: You are perfect in knowledge. For he had already realized what is said in Matthew (23:10): "You have one Teacher, the Christ." Secondly,

the excellence of his singular grace, when he says, **you are the Son of God**. For it is due to grace alone that one becomes a son of God by adoption. And it is also through grace that one is a son of God through union; and this is exclusive to the man Christ, because that man is the Son of God not due to any preceding merit, but through the grace of union. Thirdly, he considers the greatness of his power when he says, **you are the King of Israel**, i.e., awaited by Israel as its king and defender: "His power is everlasting" (Dn 7:14).

328 A question comes up at this point, according to Chrysostom. For since Peter, who after many miracles and much teaching, confessed what Nathanael confesses here about Christ, that is, you are **the Son of God**, merited a blessing, as the Lord said: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona" (Mt 16:17), why not the same for Nathanael, who said the same thing before seeing any miracles or receiving any teaching? Chrysostom answers that the reason for this is that even though Nathanael and Peter spoke the same words, the meaning of the two was not the same. For Peter acknowledged that Christ was the true Son of God by nature, i.e., he was man, and yet truly God; but Nathanael acknowledged that Christ was the Son of God by means of adoption, in the sense of, "I said: You are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High" (Ps 81:6). This is clear from what Nathanael said next: for if he had understood that Christ was the Son of God by nature, he would not have said, you are the King of Israel, but "of the whole world." It is also clear from the fact that Christ added nothing to the faith of Peter, since it was perfect, but stated that he would build the Church on that profession. But he raises Nathanael to greater things, since the greater part of his profession was deficient; to greater things, i.e., to a knowledge of his divinity.

329 And so he said, **You will see greater things than this**. Here we have, thirdly, an allusion to the future. As if to say: Because I have revealed the past to you, you believe that I am the Son of God only by adoption, and the King of Israel; but I will bring you to greater knowledge, so that you may believe that I am the natural Son of God, and the King of all ages. And accordingly he says, Amen, amen, I say to **you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man**. By this, according to Chrysostom, the Lord wishes to prove that he is the true Son of God, and God. For the peculiar task of angels is to minister and be subject: "Bless the Lord, all of you, his angels, his ministers, who do his will" (Ps 102:20). So when you see angels minister to me, you will be certain that I am the true Son of God. "When he leads his First-Begotten into the world, he says: 'Let all the angels of God adore him'" (Heb 1:6).

330 When did the apostles see this? They saw it, I say, during the passion, when an angel stood by to comfort Christ (Lk 22:13); again, at the resurrection, when the apostles found two angels who were standing over the tomb. Again, at the

ascension, when the angels said to the apostles: "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

331 Because Christ spoke the truth about the past, it was easier for Nathanael to believe what he foretells about the future, saying, **you will see**. For one who has revealed the truth about things hidden in the past, has an evident argument that what he is saying about the future is true. He says, **the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man**, because, in his mortal flesh, he was a little less than the angels; and from this point of view, angels ascend and descend upon him. But insofar as he is the Son of God, he is above the angels, as was said.

332 According to Augustine, Christ is here revealing his divinity in a beautiful way. For it is recorded that Jacob dreamed of a ladder, standing on the ground, with "the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Gn 28:16). Then Jacob arose and poured oil on a stone and said, "Truly, the Lord is in this place" (Gn 28:16). Now that stone is Christ, whom the builders rejected; and the invisible oil of the Holy Spirit was poured on him. He is set up as a pillar, because he was to be the foundation of the Church: "No one can lay another foundation except that which has been laid" (1 Cor 3:11). The angels are ascending and descending inasmuch as they are ministering and serving before him. So he said, **Amen, amen, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened**, and so forth, as if to say: Because you are truly an Israelite, give heed to what Israel saw, so that you many believe that I am the one signified by the stone anointed by Jacob, for you also will see angels ascending and descending upon him [viz. Jesus].

333 Or, the angels are, according to Augustine, the preachers of Christ: "Go, swift angels, to a nation rent and torn to pieces," as it says in Isaiah (18:2). They ascend through contemplation, just as Paul had ascended even to the third heaven (2 Cor 12:2); and they descend by instructing their neighbor. **On the Son of Man**, i.e., for the honor of Christ, because "what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:5). In order that they might ascend and descend, the heavens were opened, because heavenly graces must be given to preachers if they are to ascend and descend. "The heavens broke at the presence of God" (Ps 67:9); "I saw the heavens open" (Rv 4:1).

334 Now the reason why Nathanael was not chosen to be an apostle after such a profession of faith is that Christ did not want the conversion of the world to the faith to be attributed to human wisdom, but solely to the power of God. And so he did not choose Nathanael as an apostle, since he was very learned in the law; he rather chose simple and uneducated men. "Not many of you are learned," and

“God chose the simple of the world” (1 Cor 1:26).

2

LECTURE I

1 On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the feast. 3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no more wine." 4 Jesus then said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with me and you? My time has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Now there were six stone water jars near by for purifications according to Jewish customs, each holding two or three metretes. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill those jars with water." And they filled them to the top. 8 Then Jesus said to them, "Now pour out a drink and take it to the head waiter." They did as he instructed them. 9 Now when the head waiter tasted the water made wine, and not knowing where it came from (although the servants knew, since they had drawn the water), he called the groom over 10 and said to him, "People usually serve the choice wines first, and when the guests have had their fill, then they bring out inferior wine; but you have saved the best wine until now." 11 This beginning of signs Jesus worked in Cana of Galilee; and Jesus revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

335 Above, the Evangelist showed the dignity of the incarnate Word and gave various evidence for it. Now he begins to relate the effects and actions by which the divinity of the incarnate Word was made known to the world. First, he tells the things Christ did, while living in the world, that show his divinity. Secondly, he tells how Christ showed his divinity while dying; and this from chapter twelve on.

As to the first he does two things. First, he shows the divinity of Christ in relation to the power he had over nature. Secondly, in relation to the effects of grace; and this from chapter three on. Christ's power over nature is pointed out to us by the fact that he changed a nature. And this change was accomplished by Christ as a sign: first, to his disciples, to strengthen them; secondly, to the people, to lead them to believe (2:12). This transformation of a nature, in order to strengthen the disciples, was accomplished at a marriage, when he turned water

into wine. First, the marriage is described. Secondly, those present. Thirdly, the miracle performed by Christ.

330 In describing the marriage, the time is first mentioned. Hence he says. On the **third day there was a wedding**, i.e., after the calling of the disciples mentioned earlier. For, after being made known by the testimony of John, Christ also wanted to make himself known. Secondly, the place is mentioned; hence he says, **at Cana in Galilee**. Galilee is a province, and Cana a small village located in that province.

337 As far as the literal meaning is concerned, we should note that there are two opinions about the time of Christ's preaching. Some say that there were two and a half years from Christ's baptism until his death. According to them, the events at this wedding took place in the same year that Christ was baptized. However, both the teaching and practice of the Church are opposed to this. For three miracles are commemorated on the feast of the Epiphany: the adoration of the Magi, which took place in the first year of the Lord's birth; secondly, the baptism of Christ, which implies that he was baptized on the same day thirty years later; thirdly, this marriage, which took place on the same day one year later. It follows from this that at least one year elapsed between his baptism and this marriage. In that year the only things recorded to have been done by the Lord are found in the sixth chapter of Matthew: the fasting in the desert, and the temptation by the devil; and what John tells us in this Gospel of the testimony by the Baptist and the conversion of the disciples. After this wedding, Christ began to preach publicly and to perform miracles up to the time of his passion, so that he preached publicly for two and one half years.

338 In the mystical sense, marriage signifies the union of Christ with his Church, because as the Apostle says: "This is a great mystery: I am speaking of Christ and his Church" (Eph 5:32). And this marriage was begun in the womb of the Virgin, when God the Father united a human nature to his Son in a unity of person. So, the chamber of this union was the womb of the Virgin: "He established a chamber for the sun" (Ps 18:6). Of this marriage it is said: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who married his son" (Mt 22:2), that is, when God the Father joined a human nature to his Word in the womb of the Virgin. It was made public when the Church was joined to him by faith: "I will bind you to myself in faith" (Hos 2:20). We read of this marriage: "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rv 19:9). It will be consummated when the bride, i.e., the Church, is led into the resting place of the groom, i.e., into the glory of heaven.

The fact that this marriage took place on the third day is not without its own mystery. For the first day is the time of the law of nature; the second day is the

time of the written law. but the third day is the time of grace, when the incarnate Lord celebrated the marriage: "He will revive us after two days: on the third day he will raise us up" (Hos 6:3).

The place too is appropriate. For "Cana" means "zeal" and "Galilee" means "passage." So this marriage was celebrated in the zeal of a passage, to suggest that those persons are most worthy of union with Christ who, burning with the zeal of a conscientious devotion, pass over from the state of guilt to the grace of the Church. "Pass over to me, all who desire me" (Sir 24:26). And they pass from death to life, i.e., from the state of mortality and misery to the state of immortality and glory: "I make all things new" (Rv 21:5).

339 Then the persons invited are described. Mention is made of three: the mother of Jesus, Jesus himself, and the disciples.

340 The mother of Jesus is mentioned when he says, **the mother of Jesus was there**. She is mentioned first to indicate that Jesus was still unknown and not invited to the wedding as a famous person, but merely as one acquaintance among others; for as they invited the mother, so also her son. Or, perhaps his mother is invited first because they were uncertain whether Jesus would come to a wedding if invited, because of the unusual piety they noticed in him and because they had not seen him at other social gatherings. So I think that they first asked his mother whether Jesus should be invited. That is why the Evangelist expressly said first that his mother was at the wedding, and that later Jesus was invited.

341 And this is what comes next: **Jesus was invited**. Christ decided to attend this wedding, first of all, to give us an example of humility. For he did not look to his own dignity, but "just as he condescended to accept the form of a servant, so he did not hesitate to come to the marriage of servants," as Chrysostom says. And as Augustine says: "Let man blush to be proud, for God became humble." For among his other acts of humility, the Son of the Virgin came to a marriage, which he had already instituted in paradise when he was with his Father. Of this example it is said: "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart" (Mt 11:29).

He came, secondly, to reject the error of those who condemn marriage, for as Bede says: "If there were sin in a holy marriage bed and in a marriage carried out with due purity, the Lord would not have come to the marriage." But because he did come, he implies that the baseness of those who denounce marriage deserves to be condemned. "If she marries, it is not a sin" (1 Cor 7:36).

342 The disciples are mentioned when he says, **and his disciples.**

343 In its mystical meaning, the mother of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin, is present in spiritual marriages as the one who arranges the marriage, because it is through her intercession that one is joined to Christ through grace: "In me is every hope of life and of strength" (Sir 24:25). Christ is present as the true groom of the soul, as is said below (3:29): "It is the groom who has the bride." The disciples are the groomsmen uniting the Church to Christ, the one of whom it is said: "I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor 11:2).

344 At this physical marriage some role in the miracle belongs to the mother of Christ, some to Christ, and some to the disciples. When he says, **When the wine ran out**, he indicates the part of each. The role of Christ's mother was to superintend the miracle; the role of Christ to perform it; and the disciples were to bear witness to it. As to the first, Christ's mother assumed the role of a mediatrix. Hence she does two things. First, she intercedes with her Son. In the second place, she instructs the servants. As to the first, two things are mentioned. First, his mother's intercession; secondly, the answer of her Son.

345 In Mary's intercession, note first her kindness and mercy. For it is a quality of mercy to regard another's distress as one's own, because to be merciful is to have a heart distressed at the distress of another: "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" (2 Cor 11:29). And so because the Blessed Virgin was full of mercy, she desired to relieve the distress of others. So he says, **When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him.**

Note, secondly, her reverence for Christ: for because of the reverence we have for God it is sufficient for us merely to express our needs: "Lord, all my desires are known by you" (Ps 37:10). But it is not our business to wonder about the way in which God will help us, for as it is said: "We do not know what we should pray for as we ought" (Rom 8:26). And so his mother merely told him of their need, saying, **They have no more wine.**

Thirdly, note the Virgin's concern and care. For she did not wait until they were in extreme need, but **When the wine ran out**, that is, immediately. This is similar to what is said of God: "A helper in times of trouble" (Ps 9:10).

346 Chrysostom asks: Why did Mary never encourage Christ to perform any miracles before this time? For she had been told of his power by the angel, whose work had been confirmed by the many things she had seen happening in his regard, all of which she remembered, thinking them over in her heart (Lk 2:5

1). The reason is that before this time he lived like any other person. So, because the time was not appropriate, she put off asking him. But now, after John's witness to him and after the conversion of his disciples, she trustingly prompted Christ to perform miracles. In this she was true to the symbol of the synagogue, which is the mother of Christ: for it was customary for the Jews to require miracles: "The Jews require signs" (1 Cor 1:22).

347 She says to him, **They have no more wine.** Here we should note that before the incarnation of Christ three wines were running out: the wine of justice, of wisdom, and of charity or grace. Wine stings, and in this respect it is a symbol of justice. The Samaritan poured wine and oil into the wounds of the injured man, that is, he mingled the severity of justice with the sweetness of mercy. "You have made us drink the wine of sorrow" (Ps 59:5). But wine also delights the heart, "Wine cheers the heart of man" (Ps 103:15). And in this respect wine is a symbol of wisdom, the meditation of which is enjoyable in the highest degree: "Her companionship has no bitterness" (Wis 8:16). Further, wine intoxicates: "Drink, friends, and be intoxicated, my dearly beloved" (Sg 5:1). And in this respect wine is a symbol of charity: "I have drunk my wine with my milk" (Sg 5:1). It is also a symbol of charity because of charity's fervor: "Wine makes the virgins flourish" (Zec 9:17).

The wine of justice was indeed running out in the old law, in which justice was imperfect. But Christ brought it to perfection: "Unless your justice is greater than that of the scribes and of the Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:20). The wine of wisdom was also running out, for it was hidden and symbolic, because as it says in 1 Corinthians (10:11): "All these things happened to them in symbol." But Christ plainly brought wisdom to light: "He was teaching them as one having authority" (Mt 7:29). The wine of charity was also running out, because they had received a spirit of serving only in fear. But Christ converted the water of fear into the wine of charity when he gave "the spirit of adoption as sons, by which we cry: 'Abba, Father'" (Rom 8:15), and when "the charity of God was poured out into our hearts," as Romans (5:5) says.

348 Then when he says, Jesus said to her, the answer of Christ is given. This answer has been the occasion for three heresies.

349 The Manicheans claim that Christ had only an imaginary body, not a real one. Valentinus maintained that Christ assumed a celestial body and that, as far as his body was concerned, Christ was not related to the Virgin at all. The source of this error was that he understood, **Woman, what does that have to do with me and you?** as if it meant: "I have received nothing from you." But this is contrary to the authority of Sacred Scripture. For the Apostle says: "God sent his Son, made from a woman" (Gal 4:4). Now Christ could not be said to have been made

from her, unless he had taken something from her. Further, Augustine argues against them: "How do you know that our Lord said, **What does that have to do with me and you?** You reply that it is because John says so. But he also says that the Virgin was the mother of Christ. So, if you believe the Evangelist when he states that Jesus said this to his mother, you should also believe him when he says, **and the mother of Jesus was there.**"

350 Then there was Ebion who said that Christ was conceived from a man's seed, and Elvidius, who said that the Virgin did not remain a virgin after childbirth. They were deceived by the fact that he said, Woman, which seems to imply the loss of virginity. But this is false, for in Sacred Scripture the word "woman" sometimes refers merely to the female sex, as it does in "made from a woman" (Gal 4:4). This is obvious also by the fact that Adam, speaking to God about Eve, said: "The woman whom you gave me as a companion, gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it" (Gn 3:12); for Eve was still a virgin in Paradise, where Adam had not known her. Hence the fact that the mother of Christ is here called "woman" in this Gospel does not imply a loss of virginity, but refers to her sex.

351 The Priscillianists, however, erred by misunderstanding the words of Christ, **My time has not yet come.** They claimed that all things happen by fate, and that the actions of men, including those of Christ, are subject to predetermined times. And that is why, according to them, Christ said, **My time has not yet come.**

But this is false for any man. For since man has free choice, and this is because he has reason and will, both of which are spiritual, then obviously, as far as choice is concerned, man, so far from being subject to bodies, is really their master. For spiritual things are superior to material things, so much so that the Philosopher says that the wise man is master of the stars. Further, their heresy is even less true of Christ, who is the Lord and Creator of the stars. Thus when he says, **My time has not yet come,** he is referring to the time of his passion, which was fixed for him, not by necessity, according to divine providence. What is said in Sirach (33:7) is also contrary to their opinion: "Why is one day better than another?" And the answer is: "They have been differentiated by the knowledge of the Lord," i.e., they were differentiated from one another not by chance, but by God's providence.

352 Since we have eliminated the above opinions, let us look for the reason why our Lord answered, **Woman, what does that have to do with me and you?** For Augustine, Christ has two natures, the divine and the human. And although the same Christ exists in each, nevertheless things appropriate to him according to his human nature are distinct from what is appropriate to him according to his

divine nature. Now to perform miracles is appropriate to him according to his divine nature, which he received from the Father; while to suffer is according to his human nature, which he received from his mother. So when his mother requests this miracle, he answers, **Woman, what does that have to do with me and you?** as if saying: I did not receive from you that in me which enables me to perform miracles, but that which enables me to suffer, i.e., that which makes it appropriate for me to suffer, i.e., I have received a human nature from you. And so I will recognize you when this weakness hangs on the cross. And so he continues with, **My time has not yet come.** As if to say: I will recognize you as my mother when the time of my passion arrives. And so it was that on the cross he entrusted his mother to the disciple.

353 Chrysostom explains this differently. He says that the Blessed Virgin, burning with zeal for the honor of her Son, wanted Christ to perform miracles at once, before it was opportune; but that Christ, being much wiser than his mother, restrained her. For he was unwilling to perform the miracle before the need for it was known; otherwise, it would have been less appreciated and less credible. And so he says, **Woman, what does that have to do with me and you?** As if to say: Why bother me? **My time has not yet come**, i.e., I am not yet known to those present. Nor do they know that the wine ran out; and they must first know this, because when they know their need they will have a greater appreciation of the benefit they will receive.

354 Now although his mother was refused, she did not lose hope in her Son's mercy. So she instructs the servants, Do whatever he tells you, in which, indeed, consists the perfection of all justice. For perfect justice consists in obeying Christ in all things: "We will do all that the Lord commanded us" (Ex 29:35). Do whatever he tells you, is fittingly said of God alone, for man can err now and then. Hence in matters that are against God, we are not held to obey men: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). We ought to obey God, who does not err and cannot be deceived, in all things.

355 Now Christ's completion of the miracle is set forth. First, the vessels in which the miracle was performed are described. Secondly, the matter of the miracle is stated (v 7). Thirdly, we have how the miracle was made known and approved (v 8).

356 The miracle was performed in six vessels; **Now there were six stone water jars near by.** Here we should note, that as mentioned in Mark (7:2), the Jews observed many bodily washings and the cleansing of their cups and dishes. So, because they were in Palestine where there was a shortage of water, they had vessels in which they kept the purest water to be used for washing themselves and their utensils. Hence he says, **there were six stone water jars near by**, i.

e., vessels for holding water, **for purifications according to Jewish customs**, i.e., to use for **purification, each holding two or three metretes** of liquid, that is, two or three measures; for the Greek "metrete" is the same as the Latin "mensura."

These jars were standing there, as Chrysostom says, in order to eliminate any suspicion about the miracle: both on account of their cleanliness, lest anyone suspect that the water had acquired the taste of wine from the dregs of wine previously stored in them, for these jars were standing there **for purifications according to Jewish customs**, and so had to be very pure; and also on account of the capacity of the jars, so that it would be abundantly clear that the water in such jars could be changed into wine only by divine power.

357 In the mystical sense, the six water jars signify the six eras of the Old Testament during which the hearts of men were prepared and made receptive of God's Scriptures, and put forward as an example for our lives.

The term **metretes**, according to Augustine, refers to the Trinity of persons. And they are described as **two or three** because at times in Scripture three persons in the Trinity are distinctly mentioned: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19), and at other times only two, the Father and the Son, in whom the Holy Spirit, who is the union of the two, is implied: "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him" (below 14:23). Or they are described as two on account of the two states of mankind from which the Church arose, that is, Jews and Gentiles. Or three on account of the three sons of Noe, from whom the human race arose after the deluge.

358 Then when he says that Jesus instructed them, **Fill those jars with water**, he gives the material of the miracle. Here we might ask why this miracle was performed with already existing material, and not from nothing. There are three reasons for this. The first reason is literal, and is given by Chrysostom: to make something from nothing is much greater and more marvelous than to make something from material already existing; but it is not so evident and believable to many. And so, wishing to make what he did more believable, Christ made wine from water, thus condescending to man's capacity.

Another reason was to refute wrong dogmas. For there are some (as the Marcionists and Manicheans) who said that the founder of the world was someone other than God, and that all visible things were established by such a one, that is, the devil. And so the Lord performed many miracles using created and visible substances in order to show that these substances are good and were

created by God.

The third reason is mystical. Christ made the wine from water, and not from nothing, in order to show that he was not laying down an entirely new doctrine and rejecting the old, but was fulfilling the old: "I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it" (Mt 5:17). In other words, what was prefigured and promised in the old law, was disclosed and revealed by Christ: "Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures" (Lk 24:45).

Finally, he had the servants fill the jars with water so that he might have witnesses to what he did; so it is said, **the servants knew, since they had drawn the water.**

359 Then, the miracle is made known. For as soon as the jars were filled, the water was turned into wine. So the Lord reveals the miracle at once, saying: **Now pour out a drink and take it to the head waiter.** First, we have the command of Christ selecting who is to test the wine; secondly, the judgment of the head waiter who tasted it.

360 **Then Jesus said to them**, i.e., to the servants, **Now pour out a drink**, that is, of wine, from the jars, **and take it to the head waiter** (*arch itriclin us*). Here we should note that a *triclinium* is a place where there are three rows of tables, and it is called a *trichinium* from its three rows of dining couches: for *cline* in Greek means couch. For the ancients were accustomed to eat reclining on couches, as Maximus Valerius recounts. This is the reason why the Scriptures speak of lying next to and lying down. Thus the *architriclinus* was (the first and chief among those dining. Or, according to Chrysostom, the *architriclinus* was the one in charge of the whole banquet. And because he had been busy and had not tasted anything, the Lord wanted him, and not the guests, to be the judge of what had been done, so some could not detract from the miracle by saying the guests were drunk and, their senses dulled, could not tell wine from water. For Augustine, the *architriclinus* was the chief guest, as was intensioned; and Christ wanted to have the opinion of this person in high position so it would be more acceptable.

361 In the mystical sense, those who pour out the water are preachers: "With joy you will draw water from the springs of the Savior" (Is 12:3). And the *architriclinus* is someone skilled in the law, as Nicodemus, Gamaliel or Paul. So, when the word of the Gospel, which was hidden under the letter of the law, is entrusted to such persons, it is as though wine made from water is poured out for the *architriclinus*, who, when he tastes it, gives his assent to the faith of Christ.

362 Then the judgment of the one examining the wine is given. First, he inquires into the truth of the fact; secondly, he gives his opinion.

He says, **Now when the head waiter tasted the water made wine, and not knowing where it came from**, because he did not know that the water had miraculously been made wine by Christ, **although the servants knew**, the reason being, **since they had drawn the water, he called the groom over**, in order to learn the truth and give his opinion of the wine. Hence he adds: **People usually serve the choice wines first, and when the guests have had their fill, then they bring out inferior wine.**

Here we should consider, according to Chrysostom, that everything is most perfect in the miracles of Christ. Thus, he restored most complete health to Peter's mother-in-law, so that she arose at once and waited on them, as we read in Mark (1:30) and Matthew (7:14). Again, he restored the paralytic to health so perfectly that he also arose immediately, took up his mat, and went home, as we read below (5:9). And this is also evident in this miracle, because Christ did not make mediocre wine from the water, but the very best possible. And so the head waiter says, **People usually serve the choice wines first, and when the guests have had their fill, then they bring out inferior wine**, because they drink less, and because good wine consumed in quantity along with a quantity of food causes greater discomfort. It is as though he were saying: Where did this very good wine come from which, contrary to custom, you saved until now?

363 This is appropriate to a mystery. For in the mystical sense, he serves good wine first who, with an intent to deceive others, does not first mention the error he intends, but other things that entice his hearers, so that he can disclose his evil plans after they have been intoxicated and enticed to consent. We read of such wine: "It goes down pleasantly, but finally it will bite like a serpent" (Prv 23:3 1). Again, he serves good wine first who begins to live in a saintly and spiritual manner at the start of his conversion, but later sinks into a carnal life: "Are you so foolish as, having begun in the Spirit, to end in the flesh?" (Gal 3:3).

Christ, however, does not serve the good wine first, for at the outset he proposes things that are bitter and hard: "Narrow is the way that leads to life" (Mt 7:14). Yet the more progress a person makes in his faith and teaching, the more pleasant it becomes and he becomes aware of a greater sweetness: "I will lead You by the path of justice, and when you walk you will not be hindered" (Prv 4:11). Likewise, all those who desire to live conscientiously in Christ stiffer bitterness and troubles in this world: "You will weep and mourn" (below 16:20). But later they will experience delights and joys. So he goes on: "but your sorrow will be turned into joy." "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, which will be revealed in us," as

is said in Romans (8:18).

364 Then when he says, **This beginning of signs Jesus worked in Cana of Galilee**, he gives the disciples' acknowledgment of the miracle. We can see from this the falsity of the *History of the Infancy of the Savior*, which recounts many miracles worked by Christ as a boy. For if these accounts were true, the Evangelist would not have said, **This beginning of signs Jesus worked**. We have already given the reason why Christ worked no miracles during his childhood, that is, lest men regard them as illusions.

It was for the reason given above, then, that Jesus performed this miracle of turning water into wine at Cana of Galilee; and this was the first of the signs he did. **And Jesus revealed his glory**, i.e., the power by which he is glorious: "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory" (Ps 23:10).

365 **And his disciples believed in him**. But how did they believe? For they already were his disciples and had believed before this. I answer that sometimes a thing is described not according to what it is at the time, but according to what it will be. For example, we say that the apostle Paul was born at Tarsus, in Cilicia; not that an actual apostle was born there, but a future one was. Similarly, it says here that **his disciples believed in him**, i.e., those who would be his disciples. Or, one might answer that previously they had believed in him as a good man, preaching what was right and just; but now they believed in him as God.

LECTURE 2

12 After this he went down to Capernaum together with his mother, his brethren and his disciples; but they did not remain there many days. 13 The Jewish Passover was near at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple precincts he came upon merchants selling oxen, sheep and doves, and moneychangers seated at tables. 15 And when he had made a kind of whip from cords, he drove everyone, including sheep and oxen, out of the temple, swept away the gold of the money changers, and knocked over their tables. 16 To those selling doves he said, "Get Out of here! And stop making my Father's house into a marketplace." 17 His disciples then remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house consumes me."

366 Above, the Evangelist presented the sign Christ worked in order to confirm his disciples; and this sign pertained to his power to change nature. Now he deals with the sign of his resurrection; a sign pertaining to the same power, but proposed by Christ to convert the people.

The Evangelist does two things as to this miracle. First, he mentions its occasion. Secondly, the prediction of the miracle (v 18). As to the first he does two things. First, he describes the place. Secondly, he tells of the incident which was the occasion for proposing this miracle (v 14). Now the place where this happened was Jerusalem. And so the Evangelist recounts step by step how the Lord had come to Jerusalem. First, then, he shows how he went down to Capernaum. Secondly, how he then went up to Jerusalem. As to the first he does three things. First, he mentions the place to which he went down. Secondly, he describes his company. Thirdly, he mentions the length of his stay.

367 The place to which Christ went down was Capernaum; and so he says, **After this**, i.e., the miracle of the wine, **he went down to Capernaum**. Now as far as the historical truth is concerned, this seems to conflict with Matthew's account that the Lord went down to Capernaum after John had been thrown into prison (Mt 4:12), while the entire series of events the Evangelist refers to here took place before John's imprisonment.

I answer that in order to settle this question we should bear in mind what is learned from the *Ecclesiastical History*, that is, that the other Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, began their account of the public life of Christ from the time that John was thrown into prison. Thus Matthew (4:12), after describing the baptism, fast and temptation of Christ, began at once to weave his story after John's imprisonment, saying: "When Jesus heard that John had been arrested." And Mark (1:14) says the same: "After John had been arrested, Jesus came into Galilee." John, who outlived the other three Evangelists, approved the accuracy and truth of their accounts when they came to his notice. Yet he saw that certain things had been left unsaid, namely, things which the Lord had done in the very first days of his preaching before John's imprisonment. And so, at the request of the faithful, John, after he began his own Gospel in a loftier manner, recorded events that took place during the first year in which Christ was baptized before John's imprisonment, as is plain from the order of the events in his Gospel. According to this, then, the Evangelists are not in disagreement. Rather, the Lord went down to Capernaum twice: once before John's imprisonment (which is the one dealt with here), and once after his imprisonment, which is dealt with in Matthew (4:13) and Luke (4:31).

368 Now "Capernaum" means "very pretty village," and signifies this world, which has its beauty from the order and disposition of divine wisdom: "The beauty of

the land is mine" (Ps 49:2). So the Lord went down to Capernaum, i.e., this world, with his mother and brethren and disciples. For in heaven the Lord has a Father without a mother; and on earth a mother without a father. Thus, he significantly mentions only his mother. In heaven he does not have brothers either, but is "the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father" (above 1:18). But on earth he is "the Firstborn of many brothers" (Rom 8:29). And on earth he has disciples, to whom he can teach the mysteries of the divinity, which were not known to men before: "In these days he has spoken to us in his Son" as we read in Hebrews (1:1).

Or, "Capernaum" means "the field of consolation"; and this signifies every man who bears good fruit: "The odor of my son is like the odor of a fruitful field" (Gn 27:27). Such a person is called a field of consolation because the Lord is consoled and rejoices in his achievement: "God will rejoice over you" (Is 62:5), and because the angels rejoice over his good: "There is joy in the angels of God over one repentant sinner" (Lk 15:10).

369 His companions were, first of all, his mother. So he says, **with his mother**, for because she had come to the wedding and had brought about the miracle, the Lord accompanied her back to the village of Nazareth. Nazareth was a village in Galilee, whose chief town was Capernaum.

370 Secondly, his companions were his brethren; and so he says, **his brethren** (*fratres*, brothers, brethren). We must avoid two errors here. First, that of Elvidius, who said that the Blessed Virgin had other sons after Christ; and he called these the brothers of the Lord. This is heretical, because our faith maintains that just as the mother of Christ was a virgin before giving birth, so in giving birth and after giving birth, she remained a virgin. We must also avoid the error of those who say that Joseph fathered sons with another wife, and that these are called the brothers of the Lord; for the Church does not admit this.

Jerome refutes this opinion: for on the cross the Lord entrusted his virgin mother to the care of his virgin disciple. Therefore, since Joseph was the special guardian of the Virgin, and of the Savior too, in his childhood, one may believe that he was a virgin. Consequently, it is a reasonable interpretation to say that the brothers of the Lord were those related to his virgin mother in some degree of consanguinity, or even to Joseph, who was the reputed father. And this conforms to the custom of Scripture which generally refers to relatives as brothers. Thus we read: "Let us not quarrel, for we are brothers" (Gn 13:8), as Abram said to Lot, who was his nephew. And note that he distinguishes between relatives and disciples, because not all of Christ's relatives were his disciples; hence we read: "Even his brethren did not believe in him" (below 7:5) .

371 Thirdly, his disciples were his companions; hence he says, **and his disciples**. But who were his disciples? For it seems, according to Matthew, that the first ones to be converted to Christ were Peter and Andrew, John and James; but they were called after John's imprisonment, as is clear from Matthew (4:18). Thus it does not seem that they went down to Capernaum with Christ, as it says here, since this was before John's imprisonment.

There are two answers to this. One is from Augustine, in his *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, namely, that Matthew does not follow the historical order, but in summarizing what he omitted, relates events that occurred before John's imprisonment as though they happened after. So, without any suggestion of a time lapse he says, "As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers" (Mt 4:18), without adding "after this" or "at that time." The other answer, also by Augustine, is that in the Gospel not only the twelve whom the Lord chose and named apostles are called disciples of the Lord (Lk 6:13), but also all who believed in him and were instructed for the kingdom of heaven by his teaching. Therefore, it is possible that although those twelve did not yet follow him, others who adhered to him are called disciples here. But the first answer is better.

372 His stay there was short; hence he says, **but they did not remain there many days**. The reason for this was that the citizens of Capernaum were not eager to accept the teachings of Christ, being very corrupt, so that in Matthew (11:23) the Lord rebukes them for not doing penance in spite of the miracles done there and of Christ's teaching: "And you Capernaum, will you be lifted up to heaven? You will go down to hell. For if the mighty works that were done in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have stood until this day." But although they were evil, he went there to accompany his mother, and to stay there for a few days for her consolation and honor.

373 As for its mystical sense, this signifies that some cannot remain long with the many words spoken by Christ; a few of these words are enough for them, to enlighten them, because of the weakness of their understanding. Hence as Origen said, Christ reveals few things to such persons, according to "I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now" (Jn 16:12).

374 Then when he says, **The Jewish Passover was near at hand**, he mentions the place to which he went up. And concerning this he does two things. First, the occasion is given. Secondly, the going up.

375 Now the occasion for his going up was the Jewish Passover. For in Exodus (13:17) it is commanded that every male be presented to the Lord three times a

year; and one of these times was the Jewish Passover. So, since the Lord came to teach everyone by his example of humility and perfection, he wished to observe the law as long as it was in force. For he did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (Mt 5:17). And so, because the Passover of the Jews was at hand, he went up to Jerusalem. So we, after his example, should carefully observe the divine precepts. For if the Son of God fulfilled the decrees of a law he himself had given, and celebrated the great feasts, with what zeal for good works ought we both to prepare for them and observe them?

376 It should be noted that in John's Gospel mention is made of the Passover in three passages: here, and in (6:4), when he worked the miracle of the loaves, where it is said: "Now the Jewish Passover was near at hand", and again in (13:1), where it says: "Before the feast day of the Passover." So, according to this Gospel, we understand that after the miracle of the wine Christ preached for two years plus the interval between his baptism and this Passover. For what he did here occurred near the Passover, as it says here, and then a year later, near the time of another Passover, he performed the miracle of the loaves, and in the same year John was beheaded. Thus John was beheaded near the time of the Passover, because we read in Matthew (14:13) that immediately after John was beheaded Christ withdrew to the desert, where he worked the miracle of the loaves; and this miracle took place near Passover time, as stated below (6:4). Nevertheless, the feast of this beheading of John is celebrated on the day his head was found. It was later, during another Passover, that Christ suffered.

So, according to the opinion of those who say that the miracle worked at the wedding and the events being discussed here occurred in the same year in which Christ was baptized, there was an interval of two and one half years between Christ's baptism and his passion. So, according to them, the Evangelist says, **The Jewish Passover was near at hand**, in order to show that Christ had been baptized just a few days before.

But the Church holds the opposite. For we believe that Christ worked the miracle of the wine on the first anniversary of the day of his baptism; then a year later, near Passover time, John was beheaded; and then there was another year between the Passover near which John was beheaded and the Passover during which Christ suffered. So between the baptism of Christ and the miracle of the wine there had to be another Passover which the Evangelist does not mention. And so, according to what the Church holds, Christ preached for three and one half years.

377 He says, **the Jewish Passover**, not as though the people of other nations celebrated a Passover, but for two reasons. One, because when people celebrate a feast in a holy and pure way, it is said that they celebrate it for the Lord; but

when they celebrate it in neither of those ways, they do not celebrate it for the Lord, but for themselves: "My soul hates your new moons and your feasts" (Is 1:14). It is as though he said: Those who celebrate for themselves and not for me, do not please me: "When you fasted, did you fast for me?" (Zec 7:5), as if to say: You did not do it for me, but for yourselves. And so because these Jews were corrupt and celebrated their Passover in an unbecoming manner, the Evangelist does not say, "the Passover of the Lord," but the Jewish Passover was at hand.

Or, he says this to differentiate it from our Passover. For the Passover of the Jews Was symbolic, being celebrated by the immolation of a lamb which was a symbol. But our Passover is true, in which we recall the true passing [passion] of the Immaculate Lamb: "Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7).

378 The journey was to Jerusalem, and so he says, **and Jesus went up to Jerusalem**. Note here that according to the historical order, Jesus went up to Jerusalem near the time of the Passover and expelled the merchants from the temple on two occasions. The first, before John's imprisonment, is the one the Evangelist mentions here; the other is mentioned by Matthew (21:13) as occurring when the Passover and the hour of his passion were at hand. For the Lord frequently repeated works that were similar. For example, the two cases of giving sight to the blind: one in Matthew (9:28) and another in Mark (10:46). In like manner he twice cast merchants from the temple.

379 In the mystical sense, Jesus went up to Jerusalem, which is translated as the "vision of peace," and signifies eternal happiness. It is to here that Jesus ascended, and he took his own with him. There is no lack of mystery in the fact that he went down to Capernaum and later went up to Jerusalem. For if he did not first go down, he would not have been suited to go up, because, as it is said: "He who descended is the same as he who ascended" (Eph 4:10). Further, no mention is made of the disciples in the ascent to Jerusalem because the ascent of the disciples comes from the ascent of Christ: "No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man, who lives in heaven" (below 3:13).

380 Then when he says, **In the temple precincts he came upon merchants selling oxen, sheep and doves**, the Evangelist sets down what moved Christ to propose the sign of the resurrection. He does three things with this. First, he exposes the faulty behavior of the Jews. Secondly, he discloses Christ's remedy (v 15). Thirdly, he gives the announcement of the prophecy (v 22).

381 With respect to the first, we should note that the devil plots against the

things of God and strives to destroy them. Now among the means by which he destroys holy things, the chief is avarice; hence it is said: "The shepherds have no understanding. All have turned aside to their own way; everyone after his own gain, from the first one to the last" (Is 56:11). And the devil has done this from the earliest times. For the priests of the Old Testament, who had been established to care for divine matters, gave free rein to avarice. God commanded, in the law, that animals should be sacrificed to the Lord on certain feasts. And in order to fulfill this command, those who lived nearby brought the animals with them. But those who came a long distance were unable to bring animals from their own homes. And so because offerings of this kind resulted in profit for the priests, and so animals to offer would not be lacking to those who came from a distance, the priests themselves saw to it that animals were sold in the temple. And so they had them shown for sale in the temple, i.e., in the atrium of the temple. And this is what he says: **In the temple precincts he came upon merchants selling oxen, sheep and doves.**

Mention is first made of two land animals, which according to the law could be offered to the Lord: the ox and the sheep. The third land animal offered, the goat, is implied when he says "sheep", similarly, the turtle-dove is included when he says "doves."

382 It sometimes happened that some came to the temple not only without animals, but also without money to buy them. And so the priests found another avenue for their avarice; they set up moneychangers who would lend money to those who came without it. And although they would not accept a usurious gain, because this was forbidden in the law, nevertheless in place of this they accepted certain "*collibia*", i.e., trifles and small gifts. So this also was turned to the profit of the priests. And this is what he says, **moneychangers seated at tables**, i.e., in the temple, ready to lend money.

383 This can be understood mystically in three ways. First of all, the merchants signify those who sell or buy the things of the Church: for the oxen, sheep and doves signify the spiritual goods of the Church and the things connected with them. These goods have been consecrated and authenticated by the teachings of the apostles and doctors, signified by the oxen: "When there is an abundant harvest the strength of the ox is evident" (Prv 14:4); and by the blood of the martyrs, who are signified by the sheep: so it is said for them: "We are regarded as sheep for the slaughter" (Rom 8:36): and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, signified by the doves, for as stated above, the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove. Therefore, those who presume to sell the spiritual goods of the Church and the goods connected with them are selling the teachings of the apostles, the blood of the martyrs, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, it happens that certain prelates or heads of churches sell these oxen, sheep and doves, not overtly by simony, but covertly by negligence; that is, when they are so eager for and occupied with temporal gain that they neglect the spiritual welfare of their subjects. And this is the way they sell the oxen, sheep and doves, i.e., the three classes of people subject to them. First of all, they sell the preachers and laborers, who are signified by the oxen: "Happy are you who sow beside all the streams, letting the ox and the donkey range free" (Is 32:20); because prelates ought to arrange the oxen, i.e., teachers and wise men, with the donkeys, i.e., the simple and uneducated. They also sell those in the active life, and those occupied with ministering, signified by the sheep: "My sheep hear my voice" (below 10:27); and as is said in 2 Samuel (24:17): "But these, who are the sheep, what have they done?" They also sell the contemplatives, signified by the doves: "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly?" (Ps 54:7).

Thirdly, by the temple of God we can understand the spiritual soul, as it says: "The temple of God is holy, and that is what you are" (1 Cor 3:17). Thus a man sells oxen, sheep and doves in the temple when he harbors bestial movements in his soul, for which he sells himself to the devil. For oxen, which are used for cultivating the earth, signify earthly desires; sheep, which are stupid animals, signify man's obstinacy; and the doves signify man's instability. It is God who drives these things out of men's hearts.

384 The Lord's remedy is at once set forth (v 15). Here the Lord's remedy consisted in action and in words, in order to instruct those who have charge of the Church that they must correct their subjects in deed and in word. And he does two things with respect to this. First, he gives the remedy Christ applied by his action. Secondly, the remedy he applied by word (v 16).

385 As to the first he does three things. First, he drives the men out. Secondly, the oxen and sheep. Thirdly, he sweeps away the money.

He drives the men out with a whip; and this is what he **says, when he had made a kind of whip from cords**. This is something that could be done only by divine power. For as Origen says, the divine power of Jesus was as able, when he willed, to quench the swelling anger of men as to still the stornis of minds: "The Lord brings to nought the thoughts of men" (Ps 32:10). He makes the whip from cords because, as Augustine says, it is from our own sins that he forms the matter with which he punishes us: for a series of sins, in which sins are added to sins, is called a cord: "He is bound fast by the cords of his own sins" (Prv 5:22); "Woe to you who haul wickedness with cords" (Is 5:18). Then, just as he drove the merchants from the temple, so he swept away the gold of the moneychangers and knocked over their tables.

386 And mark well that if he expelled from the temple things that seemed somehow licit, in the sense that they were ordained to the worship of God, how much more if he comes upon unlawful things? The reason he cast them out was because in this matter the priests did not intend God's glory, but their own profit. Hence it is said: "It is for yourselves that you placed guardians of my service in my sancturay" (Ez 44:8)

Further, our Lord showed zeal for the things of the law so that he might by this answer the chief priests and the priests who were later to bring a charge against him on this very point. Again, by casting things of this kind out of the temple he let it be understood that the time was coming in which the sacrifices of the law were due to cease, and the true worship of God transferred to the Gentiles: "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you" (Mt 21:43). Also, this shows us the condemnation of those who sell spiritual things: "May your money perish together with you" (Acts 8:20).

387 Then when he says, **To those selling doves he said**, he records the treatment which the Lord applied by word. Here it should be noted that those who engage in simony should, of course, first be expelled from the Church. But because as long as they are alive, they can change themselves by free will and by the help of God return to the state of grace, they should not be given up as hopeless. If, however, they are not converted, then they are not merely to be expelled, but handed over to those to whom it is said: "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness" (Mt 22:13). And so the Lord, attending to this, first warns them, and then gives the reason for his warning, saying, **stop making my Father's house into a marketplace.**

388 He warns those selling the doves by reproaching them, for they signify those who sell the gifts of the Holy Spirit, i.e., those who engage in simony.

389 He gives his reason for this when he says, **stop making my Father's house into a marketplace.** "Take away your evil from my sight" (Is 1:10). Note that Matthew (2 1:13) says: "Do not make my house a den of thieves," while here he says, **a marketplace.** Now the Lord does this because, as a good physician, he begins first with the gentler things; later on, he would propose harsher things. Now the action recorded here was the first of the two; hence in the beginning he does not call them thieves but merchants. But because they did not stop such business out of obstinacy, the Lord, when driving them out the second time (as mentioned in Mark 11:15), rebukes them more severely, calling robbery what he had first called business.

He says, **my Father's house**, to exclude the error of Manicheus, who said that

while the God of the New Testament was the Father of Christ, the God of the Old Testament was not. But if this were true, then since the temple was the house of the Old Testament, Christ would not have referred to the temple as **my Father's house**.

390 Why were the Jews not disturbed here when he called God his Father, for as is said below (5:18), this is why they persecuted him? I answer that God is the Father of certain men through adoption; for example, he is the Father of the just in this way. This was not a new idea for the Jews: "You will call me Father, and you will not cease to walk after me" (Jer 3:19). However, by nature he is the Father of Christ alone: "The Lord said to me: 'You are my Son'" (Ps 2:7), i.e., the true and natural Son. It is this that was unheard of among the Jews. And so the Jews persecuted him because he called himself the true Son of God: "the Jews tried all the harder to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath rest, but even called God his own Father, making himself equal to God" (below 5:18). But when he called God his Father on this occasion, they said it was by adoption.

391 That the house of God shall not be made a marketplace is taken from-Zechariah (14:21): "On that day there will no longer be any merchants in the house of the Lord of hosts"; and from the Psalm (70:16), where one version has the reading: "Because I was not part of the marketplace, I will enter into the strength of the Lord."

392 Then when he says, **His disciples then remembered**, he sets down a prophecy which was written in Psalm 69 (v 9): "Zeal for your house consumes me." Here we should remark that zeal, properly speaking, signifies an intensity of love, whereby the one who loves intensely does not tolerate anything which is repugnant to his love. So it is that men who love their wives intensely and cannot endure their being in the company of other men, as this conflicts with their own love, are called "zelotypes." Thus, properly speaking, one is said to have zeal for God who cannot patiently endure anything contrary to the honor of God, **whoin** he loves above all else: "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts" (1 Kgs 19:10). Now we should love the house of the Lord, according to the Psalm (25:8): "O Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house." Indeed, we should love it so much that our zeal consumes us, so that if we notice anything amiss being done, we should try to eliminate it, no matter how dear to us are those who are doing it; nor should we fear any evils that we might have to endure as a result. So the Gloss says: "Good zeal is a fervor of spirit, by which, scorning the fear of death, one is on fire for the defense of the truth. He is consumed by it who takes steps to correct any perversity he sees; and if he cannot, he tolerates it with sadness."

LECTURE 3

18 At this the Jews responded and said, "What sign can you show us authorizing you to do these things?" 19 Jesus replied, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again." 20 The Jews then retorted, "This temple took forty-six years to build, and you are going to raise it up again in three days!" 21 He was speaking, however, of the temple of his body. 22 When, therefore, he had risen from the dead, his disciples recalled that he had said this; they then believed the Scriptures and the statement Jesus had made. 23 While he was in Jerusalem during the Passover feast, many people, seeing the signs he was working, believed in his name. 24 But Jesus did not trust himself to them, for he knew all men, 25 and he did not need anyone to give him testimony about men. He was well aware of what was in man's heart.

393 Having set forth the occasion for showing the sign, the Evangelist then states the sign which would be given. First, he gives the sign. Secondly, he mentions the fruit of the signs Christ performed (v 23). As to the first he does three things. First, the request for the sign is given. Secondly, the sign itself (v 19). Thirdly, the way the sign was understood (v 20).

394 The Jews ask for a sign; and this is what he says: **What sign can you show us authorizing you to do these things?**

395 Here we should note that when Jesus drove the merchants Out of the temple, two things could be considered in Christ: his rectitude and zeal, which pertain to virtue; and his power or authority. **It was not appropriate to** require a sign from Christ concerning the virtue and zeal with which he did the above action, since everyone may lawfully act according to virtue. But he could be required to give a sign concerning his authority for driving them out of the temple, since it is not lawful for anyone to do this unless he has the authority.

And so the Jews, not questioning his zeal and virtue, ask for a sign of his authority; and so they say, **What sign can you show us authorizing you to do these things?** i.e., Why do you drive us out with such power and authority, for this does not seem to be your office? They say the same thing in Matthew (21:23): "By what authority are you doing these things?"

396 The reason they ask for a sign is that it was the usual thing for Jews to require a sign, seeing that they were called to the law by signs: "There did not

arise again in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom, the Lord knew face to face, with all his signs and wonders," as is said in Deuteronomy (34:10), and "The Jews require signs," as we find in 1 Corinthians (1:22). Hence David complains for the Jews saying: "We have not seen our signs" (Ps 73:9). However, they asked him for a sign not in order to believe, but in the hope that he would not be able to provide the sign, and then they could obstruct and restrain him. And so, because they asked in an evil manner, he did not give them an evident sign, but a sign clothed in a symbol, a sign concerning the resurrection.

397 Hence he says, **Jesus replied**, and he gives the sign for which they asked. He gives them the sign of his future resurrection because this shows most strikingly the power of his divinity. For it is not within the power of mere man to raise himself from the dead. Christ alone, who was free among the dead, did this by the power of his divinity. He shows them a similar sign in Matthew (12:30): "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign. And a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah the prophet." And although he gave a hidden and symbolic sign on both occasions, the first was stated more clearly, and the second more obscurely.

398 We should note that before the incarnation, God gave a sign of the incarnation to come: "The Lord himself will give you a sign. A virgin will conceive, and give birth to a son" (Is 7:14). And in like manner, before the resurrection he gave a sign of the resurrection to come. And he did this because it is especially by these two events that the power of the divinity in Christ is evidenced. For nothing more marvelous could be done than that God become man and that Christ's humanity should become a partaker of divine immortality after his resurrection: "Christ, rising from the dead, will not die again ... his life is life with God" (Roin 6:9), i.e., in a likeness to God.

399 We should note the words Christ used in giving this sign. For Christ calls his body a temple, because a temple is something in which God dwells, according to "The Lord is in his holy temple" (Ps 10:5). And so a holy soul, in which God dwells, is also called a temple of God: "The temple of God is holy, and that is what you are" (1 Cor 3:17). Therefore, because the divinity dwells in the body of Christ, the body of Christ is the temple of God, not only according to the soul but also according to the body: "In him all the fulness of the divinity dwells bodily" (Col 2:9). God dwells in us by grace, i.e., according to an act of the intellect and will, neither of which is an act of the body, but of the soul alone. But he dwells in Christ according to a union in the person; and this union includes not only the soul, but the body as well. And so the very body of Christ is God's temple.

400 But Nestorius, using this text in support of his error, claims that the Word of

God was joined to human nature only by an indwelling, from which it follows that the person of God is distinct from that of man in Christ. Therefore it is important to insist that God's indwelling in Christ refers to the nature, since in Christ human nature is distinct from the divine, and not to the person, which in the case of Christ is the same for both God and man, that is, the person of the Word, as was said above.

401 Therefore, granting this, the Lord does two things with respect to this sign. First, he foretells his future death. Secondly, his resurrection.

402 Christ foretells his own death when he says, **Destroy this temple**. For Christ died and was killed by others: "And they will kill him" (Mt 17:22), yet with him willing it: because as is said: "He was offered because it was his own will" (Is 53:7). And so he says, Destroy this temple, i.e., my body. He does not say, "it will be destroyed," lest you suppose he killed himself. He says, Destroy, which is not a command but a prediction and a permission. A prediction, so that the sense is, **Destroy this temple**, i.e., you will destroy. And a permission, so that the sense is, **Destroy this temple**, i.e., do with my body what you will, I submit it to you. As he said to Judas: "What you are going to do, do quickly" (below 13:27), not as commanding him, but as abandoning himself to his decision.

He says Destroy, because the death of Christ is the dissolution of his body, but in a way different from that of other men. For the bodies of other men are destroyed by death even to the point of the body's returning to dust and ashes. But Such a dissolution did not take place in Christ, for as it is said: "You will not allow your Holy One to see corruption" (Ps 15:10). Nevertheless, death did bring a dissolution to Christ, because his soul was separated from his body as a form from matter, and because his blood was separated from his body, and because his body was pierced with nails and a lance.

403 He foretells his resurrection when he says, **and in three days I will raise it up again**, that is, his body; i.e., I will raise it from the dead. He does not say, "I will be raised up," or "The Father will raise it up," but **I will raise it up**, to show that he would rise from the dead by his own power. Yet we do not deny that the Father raised him from the dead, because as it is said: "Who raised Jesus from the dead" (Rom 8:11); and "O Lord, have pity on me, and raise me up" (Ps 40:10). And so God the Father raised Christ from the dead, and Christ arose by his own power: "I have slept and have taken my rest, and I have risen, because the Lord has taken me" (Ps 3:6). There is no contradiction in this, because the power of both is the same; hence "whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise" (below 5:19). For if the Father raised him up, so too did the Son: "Although he was crucified through weakness, he lives through the power of

God" (2 Cor 13:4).

404 He says, **and in three days**, and not "after three days," because he did not remain in the tomb for three complete days; but, as Augustine says, he is employing synecdoche, in which a part is taken for the whole.

Origen, however, assigns a mystical reason for this expression, and says: The true body of Christ is the temple of God, and this body symbolizes the mystical body, i.e., the Church: "You are the body of Christ" (1 Cor 12:27). And as the divinity dwells in the body of Christ through the grace of union, so too he dwells in the Church through the grace of adoption. Although that body may seem to be destroyed mystically by the adversities of persecutions with which it is afflicted, nevertheless it is raised up in "three days," namely, in the "day" of the law of nature, the "day" of the written law, and the "day" of the law of grace; because in those days a part of that body was destroyed, while another still lived. And so he says, in three days, because the spiritual resurrection of this body is accomplished in three days. But after those three days we will be perfectly risen, not only as to the first resurrection, but also as to the second: "Happy are they who share in the second [sic] resurrection" (Rv 20:6).

405 Then when he says, **The Jews then retorted**, we have the interpretation of the sign he gave. First, the false interpretation of the Jews. Secondly, its true understanding by the apostles (v 21).

406 The interpretation of the Jews was false, because they believed that Christ was saying this of the material temple in which he then was; consequently, they answer according to this interpretation and say: **This temple took forty-six years to build**, i.e., this material temple in which we are standing, **and you are going to raise it up again in three days!**

407 There is a literal objection against this. For the temple in Jerusalem was built by Solomon, and it is recorded in 2 Chronicles (6:1) that it was completed by Solomon in seven years. How then can it be said that this temple took forty-six years to build? I answer that according to some this is not to be understood of the very first temple, which was completed by Solomon in seven years: for that temple built by Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. But it is to be understood of the temple rebuilt under Zerubbabel, after they returned from captivity, as recorded in the book of Ezra (5:2). However, this rebuilding was so hindered and delayed by the frequent attacks of their enemies on all sides, that the temple was not finished until forty-six years had passed.

408 Or it could be said, according to Origen, that they were speaking of

Solomon's temple: and it did take forty-six years to build if the time be reckoned from the day when David first spoke of building a temple and discussed it with Nathan the prophet, as we find in 2 Samuel (7:2), until its final completion under Solomon. For from that first day onward David began preparing the material and the things necessary for building the temple. Accordingly, if the time in question is carefully calculated, it will come to forty-six years.

409 But although the Jews referred their interpretation to the material temple, nevertheless, according to Augustine, it can be referred to the temple of Christ's body. As he says in *The Book of Eighty-three Questions*, the conception and formation of the human body is completed in forty-five days in the following manner. During the first six days, the conception of a human body has a likeness to milk; during the next nine days it is converted into blood; then in the next twelve days, it is hardened into flesh; then the remaining eighteen days, it is formed into a perfect outlining of all the members. But if we add six, nine, twelve and eighteen, we get forty-five; and if we add "one" for the sacrament of unity, we get forty-six.

410 However a question arises about this: because this process of formation does not seem to have taken place in Christ, who was formed and animated at the very instant of conception. But one may answer that although in the formation of Christ's body there was something unique, in that Christ's body was perfect at that instant as to the outlining of its members, it was not perfect as to the quantity due the body; and so he remained in the Virgin's womb until he attained the due quantity.

However, let us take the above numbers and select six, which was the first, and forty-six, which was the last, and let us multiply one by the other. The result is two hundred seventy-six. Now if we assemble these days into months, allotting thirty days to a month, we get nine months and six days. Thus it was correct to say that it took forty-six years to build the temple, which signifies the body of Christ; the suggestion being that there were as many years in building the temple as there were days in perfecting the body of Christ. For from March twenty-five, when Christ was conceived, and (as is believed) when he suffered, to December twenty-five, there are this number of days, namely, two hundred seventy-six, a number that is the result of multiplying forty-six by six.

411 Augustine (as is plain from the Gloss) has another mystical interpretation of this number. For he says that if one adds the letters in the name "Adam," using for each the number it represented for the Greeks, the result is forty-six. For in Greek, A represents the number one, since it is the first letter of the alphabet. And according to this order, D is four. Adding to the sum of these another one for the second A and forty for the letter M, we have forty-six. This signifies that the

body of Christ was derived from the body of Adam.

Again, according to the Greeks, the name "Adam" is composed of the first letters of the names of the four directions of the world: namely, Anathole, which is the east; Disis, which is the west; Arctos, which is the north; and Mensembria, the south. This signifies that Christ derived his flesh from Adam in order to gather his elect from the four parts of the world: "He will gather his elect from the four winds" (Mt 24:31).

412 Then, the true interpretation of this sign as understood by the apostles is given (v 2 1). First, the way they understood it is given. Secondly, the time when they understood it (v 22).

413 He says therefore: The Jews said this out of ignorance. But Christ did not understand it in their way; in fact, he meant the temple of his body, and this is what he says: **He was speaking, however, of the temple of his body.** We have already explained why the body of Christ could be called a temple.

Apollinaris misunderstood this and said that the body of Christ was inanimate matter because the temple was inanimate. He was mistaken in this for when it is said that the body of Christ is a temple, one is speaking metaphorically. And in this way of speaking a likeness does not exist in all respects, but only in some respect, namely, as to indwelling, which is referred to the nature, as was explained. Further, this is evident from the authority of Sacred Scripture. when Christ himself said: "I have the power to lay down my life," as we read below (10:18).

414 The time when the apostles acquired this true understanding is then shown by the Evangelist when he says, **When, therefore, he had risen from the dead, his disciples recalled that he had said this.** Prior to the resurrection it was difficult to understand this. First, because this statement asserted that the true divinity was in the body of Christ; otherwise it could not be called a temple. And to understand this at that time was above human ability. Secondly, because in this statement mention is made of the passion and resurrection, when he says, **I will raise it up again;** and this is something none of the disciples had heard mentioned before. Consequently, when Christ spoke of his resurrection and passion to the apostles, Peter was scandalized when he heard it, saying, "God forbid, Lord" (Mt 16:22). But after the resurrection, when they now clearly understood that Christ was God, through what he had shown in regard to his passion and resurrection, and when they had learned of the mystery of his resurrection, **his disciples recalled that he had said this** of his body, and **they then believed the Scriptures**, i.e., the prophets: "He will revive us after

two days; on the third day he will raise us up" (Hos 6:3), and "Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (Jon 2:1). So it is that on the very day of the resurrection he opened their understanding so that they might understand the Scriptures **and the statement Jesus had made**, namely, **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.**

415 In the anagogical sense, according to Origen, we understand by this that in the final resurrection of nature we will be disciples of Christ, when in the great resurrection the entire body of Jesus, that is, his Church, will be made certain of the things we now hold through faith in a dark manner. Then we shall receive the fulfillment of faith, seeing in actual fact what we now observe through a mirror.

416 Then (v 23) he sets forth the fruit which resulted from the signs, namely, the conversion of certain believers. Concerning this he does three things. First, he mentions those who believed on account of the miracles. Secondly, he shows the attitude of Christ to them (v 24). Thirdly, he gives the reason for this (v 25).

417 The fruit which developed from the signs of Jesus was abundant, because many believed and were converted to him; and this is what he says, **While he was in Jerusalem during the Passover feast, many people, seeing the signs he was working, believed in his name**, i.e., in him.

418 Note that they believed in two ways: some on account of the miracles they saw, and some on account of the revelation and prophecy of hidden things. Now those who believe on account of doctrine are more commendable, because they are more spiritual than those who believe on account of signs, which are grosser and on the level of sense. Those who were converted are shown to be more on the level of sense by the fact that they did not believe on account of the doctrine, as the disciples did, but **seeing the signs he was working**: "Prophecies are for those who believe" (1 Cor 14:22).

419 One might ask which signs worked by Jesus they saw, for we do not read of any sign worked by him in Jerusalem at that time. According to Origen, there are two answers to this. First, Jesus did work many miracles there at that time, which are not recorded here; for the Evangelist purposely omitted many of Christ's miracles, since he worked so many that they could not easily be recorded: "Jesus did many other signs, and if every one was written, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that would be written" (below 21:25). And the Evangelist expressly shows this when he says, **seeing the signs he was working**, without mentioning them, because it was not the intention of the Evangelist to record all the signs of Jesus, but as many as were needed to instruct the Church of the faithful. The second answer is that among the miracles

the greatest could be the sign in which Jesus by himself drove from the temple a crowd of men with a whip of small cords.

420 The attitude of Jesus to those who believed in him is shown when he says, **But Jesus did not trust himself to them**, i.e., those who had believed in him. What is this, men entrust themselves to God, and Jesus himself does not entrust himself to them? Could they kill him against his will? Some will say that he did not trust himself to them because he knew that their belief was not genuine. But if this were true, the Evangelist would surely not have said that many believed in his name, and yet he did not trust himself to them. According to Chrysostom, the reason is that they did believe in him, but imperfectly, because they were not yet able to attain to the profound mysteries of Christ, and so **Jesus did not trust himself to them**, i.e., he did not yet reveal his secret mysteries to them; for there were many things he would not reveal even to the apostles: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (below 16:12), and "I could not speak to you as spiritual persons, but as sensual" (1 Cor 3:1). And so it is significant that in order to show that they believed imperfectly, the Evangelist does not say that they believed "in him," because they did not yet believe in his divinity, but he says, **in his name**, i.e., they believed what was said about him, nominally, i.e., that he was just, or something of that sort.

Or, according to Augustine, these people represent the catechumens in the Church, who, although they believe in the name of Christ, Jesus does not trust himself to them, because the Church does not give them the body of Christ. For just as no priest except one ordained in the priesthood can consecrate that body, so no one but a baptized person may receive it.

421 The reason Jesus did not trust himself to them arises from his perfect knowledge; hence he says, **for he knew all men**. For although one must ordinarily presume good of everyone, yet after the truth about certain people is known, one should act according to their condition. Now because nothing in man was unknown to Christ and since he knew that they believed imperfectly, he did not trust himself to them.

422 The universal knowledge of Christ is then described: for he knew not only those who were on close terms with him, but strangers too. And therefore he says, **for he knew all men**; and this by the power of his divinity: "The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun" (Sir 23:28). Now a man, although he may know other people, cannot have a sure knowledge of them, because he sees only what appears; consequently, he must rely on the testimony of others. But Christ knows with the greatest certainty, because he beholds the heart; and so **he did not need anyone to give testimony about men**. In fact, he is the one who gives testimony: "Look, my witness is in heaven" (Jb 16:20)

His knowledge was perfect, because it extended not only to what was exterior, but even to the interior; thus he says, **He was well aware of what was in man's heart**, i.e., the secrets of the heart: "Hell and destruction are open to the Lord: how much more the hearts of the children of men" (Prv 15:11).

3

LECTURE 1

1 There was a certain Pharisee named Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one could perform the signs you perform, unless he had God with him." 3 Jesus responded and said to him,

"Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless one is born again,
he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born again when he is already an old man? Is it possible for him to return to his mother's womb and be born all over again?" 5 Jesus replied,

"Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless one is born again of water and the Holy Spirit,
he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
6 What is born of flesh is itself flesh;
and what is born of Spirit is itself spirit."

423 Above, the Evangelist showed Christ's power in relation to changes affecting nature; here he shows it in relation to our reformation by grace, which is his principal subject. Reformation by grace comes about through spiritual generation and by the conferring of benefits on those regenerated. First, then, he treats of spiritual generation. Secondly, of the spiritual benefits divinely conferred on the regenerated, and this in chapter five.

As to the first he does two things. First, he treats of spiritual regeneration in relation to the Jews. Secondly, of the spreading of the fruits of this regeneration even to foreign peoples, and this in chapter four. Concerning the first he does two things. First, he explains spiritual regeneration with words. Secondly, he completes it with deeds (3:22).

As to the first he does three things. First, he shows the need for a spiritual regeneration. Secondly, its quality (3:4). Thirdly, its mode and nature (3:9). As to the first he does two things. First, he mentions the occasion for showing this need. Secondly, the need itself for this regeneration (3:3).

The occasion was presented by Nicodemus; hence he says, **There was a certain Pharisee named Nicodemus**. And he describes him as to his person, from the time, and from his statements.

424 he describes his person in three ways. First, as to his religion, because he was a Pharisee, hence he says, **There was a certain Pharisee**. For there were two sects among the Jews: the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees were closer to us in their beliefs, for they believed in the resurrection, and admitted the existence of spiritual creatures. The Sadducees, on the other hand, disagree more with us, for they believed neither in the resurrection to come nor in the existence of spirits. The former were called Pharisees, as being separated from the others. And because their opinion was the more credible and nearer to the truth, it was easier for Nicodemus to be converted to Christ. "I lived as a Pharisee, according to the strictest sect of our religion" (Acts 26:5).

425 As to his name he says, **named Nicodemus**, which means "victor," or "the victory of the people." This signifies those who overcame the world through faith by being converted to Christ from Judaism. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (1 Jn 5:4).

426 Thirdly, as to his rank he says, a **member of the Sanhedrin**. For although our Lord did not choose the wise or powerful or those of high birth at the beginning, lest the power of the faith be attributed to human wisdom and power—"Not many of you are learned in the worldly sense, not many powerful, not many of high birth. But God chose the simple ones of the world" (1 Cor 1:26)—still he willed to convert some of the wise and powerful to himself at the very beginning. And he did this so that his doctrine would not be held in contempt, as being accepted exclusively by the lowly and uneducated, and so that the number of believers would not be attributed to the rusticity and ignorance of the converts rather than to the power of the faith. However, he did not will that a large number of those converted to him be powerful and of high birth, lest, as has been said, it should be ascribed to human power and wisdom. And so it says, "many of those in authority believed in him" (below 12:42), among whom was this Nicodemus. "The rulers of the people have come together" (Ps 46:10).

427 Then he describes him as to the time, saying, **he came to Jesus at night**. In regard to this, it might be noted that in Scripture the quality of the time is

mentioned as to certain persons in order to indicate their knowledge or the condition of their actions. Here an obscure time is mentioned, **at night**. For the night is obscure and suited to the state of mind of Nicodemus, who did not come to Jesus free of care and anxiety, but in fear; for he was one of those of whom it is said that they "believed in him; but they did not admit it because of the Pharisees, so that they would not be expelled from the synagogue" (below 12:42). For their love was not perfect, so it continues, "For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God."

Further, night was appropriate to his ignorance and the imperfect understanding he had of Christ: "The night has passed, and day is at hand. So let us cast-off the works of darkness" (Rom 13:12); "They have not known or understood; they are walking in darkness" (Ps 81:5).

428 Then he is described from his statements, when he says that Nicodemus said to Jesus: **Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God**. Here he affirms Christ's office as teacher when he says, **Rabbi**, and his power of acting, saying, **for no one could perform the signs you perform, unless he had God with him**. And in both remarks he says what is true, but he does not affirm enough.

He is right in calling Jesus **Rabbi**, i.e., Teacher, because, "You call me Teacher and Lord; and you do well, for so I am," as we read below (13:13). For Nicodemus had read what was written in Joel (2:23): "Children of Sion, rejoice, and be joyful in the Lord your God, because he has given you a teacher of justice." But he says too little, because he says that Jesus came as a teacher from God, but is silent on whether he is God. For to come as a teacher from God is common to all good prelates: "I will give you shepherds after my own heart, and they will feed you with knowledge and doctrine," as it says in Jeremiah (3:15). Therefore, this is not unique to Christ even though Christ taught in a manner unlike other men. For some teachers teach only from without, but Christ also instructs within, because "He was the true light, which enlightens every man" (above 1:9); thus he alone gives wisdom: "I will give you an eloquence and a wisdom" (Lk 21:15), and this is something that no mere man can say.

429 He affirms his power because of the signs he saw. As if to say: I believe that you have come as a teacher from God, **for no one could perform the signs you perform**. And he is speaking the truth, because the signs which Christ did cannot be worked except by God, and because God was with him: "He who sent me is with me" (below 8:29). But he says too little, because he believed that Christ did not perform these signs through his own power, but as relying on the power of another; as though God were not with him by a unity of essence but merely by an infusion of grace. But this is false, because Christ performed these

signs not by an exterior power but by his own; for the power of God and of Christ is one and the same. It is similar to what the woman says to Elijah: "Because of this I know that you are a man of God" (1 Kgs 17:24).

430 Then when he says that Jesus answered, **Amen, amen, I say to you**, he sets down the necessity for spiritual regeneration, because of the ignorance of Nicodemus. And so he says, **Amen, amen**. Here we should note that this word, **amen**, is a Hebrew word frequently employed by Christ; hence out of reverence for him no Greek or Latin translator wanted to translate it. Sometimes it means the same as "true" or "truly"; and sometimes the same as "so be it." Thus is the Psalms 71 (v 19), 88 (v 53), and 106, where we have, "So be it, so be it," the Hebrew has "Amen, amen." But John is the only Evangelist who duplicates or makes a twin use of this word. The reason for this is that the other Evangelists are concerned mainly with matters pertaining to the humanity of Christ, which, since they are easier to believe, need less reinforcement; but John deals chiefly with things pertaining to the divinity of Christ, and these, since they are hidden and remote from men's knowledge and experience, require greater formal declaration.

431 Next we should point out that at first glance this answer of Christ seems to be entirely foreign to Nicodemus' statement. For what connection is there between Nicodemus' statement, **Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God**, and the Lord's reply, **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God**.

But we should note, as has already been stated, that Nicodemus, having an imperfect opinion about Christ, affirmed that he was a teacher and performed these signs as a mere man. And so the Lord wishes to show Nicodemus how he might arrive at a deeper understanding of him. And as a matter of fact, the Lord might have done so with an argument, but because this might have resulted in a quarrel—the opposite of which was prophesied about him: "He will not quarrel" (Is 42:2)—he wished to lead him to a true understanding with gentleness. As if to say: It is not strange that you regard me as a mere man, because one cannot know these secrets of the divinity unless he has achieved a spiritual regeneration. And this is what he says: **unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God**.

432 Here we should point out that since vision is an act of life, then according to the diverse kinds of life there will be diversity of vision. For there is a sentient life which some living things share in common, and this life has a sentient vision or knowledge. And there is also a spiritual life, by which man is made like God and other holy spirits; and this life enjoys a spiritual vision. Now spiritual things

cannot be seen by the sentient: "The sensual man does not perceive those things that pertain to the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:14), but they are perceived by the spiritual vision: "No one knows the things of God but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11). So the apostle says: "You did not receive the spirit of slavery, putting you in fear again, but the spirit of adoption" (Rom 8:15). And we receive this spirit through a spiritual regeneration: "He saved us by the cleansing of regeneration in the Holy Spirit" (Ti 3:3). Therefore, if spiritual vision comes only through the Holy Spirit, and if the Holy Spirit is given through a cleansing of spiritual regeneration, then it is only by a cleansing of regeneration that we can see the kingdom of God. Thus he says, **unless one is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.** As if to say: It is not surprising if you do not see the kingdom of God, because no one can see it unless he receives the Holy Spirit, through whom one is reborn a son of God.

433 It is not only the royal throne that pertains to a kingdom, but also the things needed for governing the kingdom, such as the royal dignity, royal favors, and the way of justice by which the kingdom is consolidated. Hence he says, **he cannot see the kingdom of God**, i.e., the glory and dignity of God, i.e., the mysteries of eternal salvation which are seen through the justice of faith: "The kingdom of God is not food and drink" (Rom 14:17).

Now in the Old Law there was a spiritual regeneration; but it was imperfect and symbolic: "All were baptized into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor 10:2), i.e., they received baptism in symbol. Accordingly, they did see the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but only symbolically: "seeing from afar" (Heb 11:13). But in the New Law there is an evident spiritual regeneration, although imperfect, because we are renewed only inwardly by grace, but not outwardly by incorruption: "Although our outward nature is wasting away, yet our inward nature is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor 4:16). And so we do see the kingdom of God and the mysteries of eternal salvation, but imperfectly, for as it says, "Now we see in a mirror, in an obscure manner" (1 Cor 13:12). But there is perfect regeneration in heaven, because we will be renewed both inwardly and outwardly. And therefore we shall see the kingdom of God in a most perfect way: "But then we will see face to face," as is said in 1 Corinthians (13:12); and "When he appears we will be like him, because we will see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2).

434 It is clear, therefore, that just as one does not have bodily vision unless he is born, so one cannot have spiritual vision unless he is reborn. And according to the threefold regeneration, there is a threefold kind of vision.

435 Note that the Greek reading is not "again," but *anōthe*, i.e., "from above," which Jerome translated as "again," in order to suggest addition. And this is the way Jerome understood the saying, **unless one is born again.** It is as if he

were saying: Unless one is reborn once more through a fraternal generation.

Chrysostom, however, says that to be "born from above" is peculiar to the Son of God, because he alone is born from above: "The one who came from above is above all things" (below 3:31). And Christ is said to be born from above both as to time (if we may speak thus), because he was begotten from eternity: "Before the daystar I begot you" (Ps 109:3), and as to the principle of his generation, because he proceeds from the heavenly Father: "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (below 6:38). Therefore, because our regeneration is in the likeness of the Son of God, inasmuch as "Those whom he foreknew he predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29), and because that generation is from above, our generation also is from above: both as to the time, because of our eternal predestination, "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4), and as to its being a gift of God, as we read below (6:44), "No one can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him"; and "You have been saved by the grace of God" (Eph 2:5).

436 Then when he says, **Nicodemus said to him**, he gives the manner of and the reason for this spiritual regeneration. First, the doubt of Nicodemus is set forth. Secondly, Christ's response (v 5).

437 As to the first we should note that as stated in 1 Corinthians (2:14): "The sensual man does not perceive those things that pertain to the Spirit of God." And so because Nicodemus was yet carnal and sensual, he was unable to grasp, except in a carnal manner, the things that were said to him. Consequently, what the Lord said to him about spiritual regeneration, he understood of carnal generation. And this is what he says: **How can a man be born again when he is already an old man?**

We should note here, according to Chrysostom, that Nicodemus wanted to object to what was said by the Savior. But his objection is foolish, because Christ was speaking of spiritual regeneration, and he is objecting in terms of carnal regeneration. In like manner, all the reasons brought forth to attack the things of faith are foolish, since they are not according to the meaning of Sacred Scripture.

438 Nicodemus objected to the Lord's statement that a man must be born again according to the two ways in which this seemed impossible. In one way, on account of the irreversibility of human life; for a man cannot return to infancy from old age. Hence we read, "I am walking on a path," namely, this present life, "by which I will not return" (Jb 16:23). And it is from this point of view that he says, **How can a man be born again when he is already an old man?** As if

to say: Shall he become a child once more so that he can be reborn? "He will not return again to his home, and his place will not know him any more" (Jb 7:10). In the second way, regeneration seemed impossible because of the mode of carnal generation. For in the beginning, when a man is generated, he is small in size, so that his mother's womb can contain him; but later, after he is born, he continues to grow and reaches such a size that he cannot be contained within his mother's womb. And so Nicodemus says, **Is it possible for him to return to his mother's womb and be born all over again?** As if to say: He cannot, because the womb cannot contain him.

439 But this does not apply to spiritual generation. For no matter how spiritually old a man might become through sin, according to the Psalm (31:3): "Because I kept silent, all my bones grew old," he can, with the help of divine grace, become new, according to the Psalm (102:5): "Your youth will be renewed like the eagle's." And no matter how enormous he is, he can enter the spiritual womb of the Church by the sacrament of baptism. And it is clear what that spiritual womb is; otherwise it would never have been said: "From the womb, before the daystar, I begot you" (Ps 109:3). Yet there is a sense in which his objection applies. For just as a man, once he is born according to nature, cannot be reborn, so once he is born in a spiritual way through baptism, he cannot be reborn, because he cannot be baptized again: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," as we read in Ephesians (4:5).

440 Then we have the answer of Christ. Concerning this he does three things. First, he answers the arguments of Nicodemus by showing the nature of regeneration. Secondly, he explains this answer with a reason (v 6). Thirdly, he explains it with an example.

441 He answers the objections by showing that he is speaking of a spiritual regeneration, not a carnal one. And this is what he says: **unless one is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.** As if to say: You are thinking of a carnal generation, but I am speaking of a spiritual generation.

Note that above he had said, **he cannot see the kingdom of God**, while here he says, **he cannot enter the kingdom of God**, which is the same thing. For no one can see the things of the kingdom of God unless he enters it; and to the extent that he enters, he sees. "I will give him a white stone upon which is written a new name, which no one knows but he who receives it" (Rv 5:5).

442 Now there is a reason why spiritual generation comes from the Spirit. It is necessary that the one generated be generated in the likeness of the one

generating; but we are regenerated as sons of God, in the likeness of his true Son. Therefore, it is necessary that our spiritual regeneration come about through that by which we are made like the true Son. and this comes about by Our having his Spirit: "If any one does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his" (Rom 8:9); "By this we know that we abide in him, and he in us: because he has given us of his Spirit" (1 Jn 4:13). Thus spiritual regeneration must come from the Holy Spirit. "You did not receive the spirit of slavery, putting you in fear again, but the spirit of adoption" (Rom 8:15); "It is the Spirit that gives life" (below 6:63).

443 Water, too, is necessary for this regeneration, and for three reasons. First, because of the condition of human nature. For man consists of soul and body, and if the Spirit alone were involved in his regeneration, this would indicate that only the spiritual part of man is regenerated. Hence in order that the flesh also be regenerated, it is necessary that, in addition to the Spirit through whom the soul is regenerated, something bodily be involved, through which the body is regenerated; and this, is water.

Secondly, water is necessary for the sake of human knowledge. For, as Dionysius says, divine wisdom so disposes all things that it provides for each thing according to its nature. Now it is natural for man to know; and so it is fitting that spiritual things be conferred on men in such a way that he may know them: "so that we may know what God has given us" (1 Cor 2:12). But the natural manner of this knowledge is that man know spiritual things by means of sensible things, since all our knowledge begins in sense knowledge. Therefore, in order that we might understand what is spiritual in our regeneration, it was fitting that there be in it something sensible and material, that is, water, through which we understand that just as water washes and cleanses the exterior in a bodily way, so through baptism a man is washed and cleansed inwardly in a spiritual way.

Thirdly, water was necessary so that there might be a correspondence of causes. For the cause of our regeneration is the incarnate Word: "He gave them power to become the sons of God," as we saw above (1:12). Therefore it was fitting that in the sacraments, which have their efficacy from the power of the incarnate Word, there be something corresponding to the Word, and something corresponding to the flesh, or body. And spiritually speaking, this is water when the sacrament is baptism, so that through it we may be conformed to the death of Christ, since we are submerged in it during baptism as Christ was in the womb of the earth for three days: "We are buried with him by baptism" (Rom 6:4).

Further, this mystery was suggested in the first production of things, when the Spirit of God hovered over the waters (Gn 1:2). But a greater power was conferred on water by contact with the most pure flesh of Christ; because in the beginning water brought forth crawling creatures with living souls, but since

Christ was baptized in the Jordan, water has yielded spiritual souls.

444 It is clear that the Holy Spirit is God, since he says, **unless one is born again of water and the Holy Spirit** (*ex aqua et Spiritu Sancto*). For above (1:13) he says: "who are born not from blood, nor from the desires of the flesh, nor from man's willing it, but from God (*ex Deo*)."
From this we can form the following argument: He from whom men are spiritually reborn is God; but men are spiritually reborn through the Holy Spirit, as it is stated here; therefore, the Holy Spirit is God.

445 Two questions arise here. First, if no one enters the kingdom of God unless he is born again of water, and if the fathers of old were not born again of water (for they were not baptized), then they have not entered the kingdom of God. Secondly, since baptism is of three kinds, that is, of water, of desire, and of blood, and many have been baptized in the latter two ways (who we say have entered the kingdom of God immediately, even though they were not born again of water), it does not seem to be true to say that **unless one is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God**.

The answer to the first is that rebirth or regeneration from water and the Holy Spirit takes place in two ways: in truth and in symbol. Now the fathers of old, although they were not reborn with a true rebirth, were nevertheless reborn with a symbolic rebirth, because they always had a sense perceptible sign in which true rebirth was prefigured. So according to this, thus reborn, they did enter the kingdom of God, after the ransom was paid.

The answer to the second is that those who are reborn by a baptism of blood and fire, although they do not have regeneration in deed, they do have it in desire. Otherwise neither would the baptism of blood mean anything nor could there be a baptism of the Spirit. Consequently, in order that man may enter the kingdom of heaven, it is necessary that there be a baptism of water in deed, as in the case of all baptized persons, or in desire, as in the case of the martyrs and catechumens, who are prevented by death from fulfilling their desire, or in symbol, as in the case of the fathers of old.

446 It might be remarked that it was from this statement, **unless one is born again of water and the Holy Spirit**, that the Pelagians derived their error that children are baptized not in order to be cleansed from sin, since they have none, but in order to be able to enter the kingdom of God. But this is false, because as Augustine says in his book, *The Baptism of Children*, it is not fitting for an image of God, namely, man, to be excluded from the kingdom of God except for some obstacle, which can be nothing but sin. Therefore, there must be some sin,

namely, original sin, in children who are excluded from the kingdom.

447 Then when he says, **What is born of flesh is itself flesh**, he proves by reason that it is necessary to be born of water and the Holy Spirit. And the reasoning is this: No one can reach the kingdom unless he is made spiritual; but no one is made spiritual except by the Holy Spirit; therefore, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born again of the Holy Spirit.

So he says, what is born of flesh (*ex carne*) is itself flesh, i.e., birth according to the flesh makes one be born into the life of the flesh: "The first man was from the earth, earthly" (1 Cor 15:47); **and what is born of Spirit** (*ex Spiritu*) , i.e., from the power of the Holy Spirit, **is itself spirit**, i.e., spiritual.

448 Note, however, that this preposition *ex* (from, of, by) sometimes designates a material cause, as when I say: "A knife is made of (*ex*) iron"; sometimes it designates an efficient cause, as when I say: "The house was built by (*ex*) a carpenter." Accordingly, the phrase, **what is born of** (*ex*) flesh is itself flesh, can be understood according to either efficient or material causality. As efficient cause, indeed, because a power existing in flesh is productive of generation; and as material cause, because some carnal element in animals makes up the animal generated. But nothing is said to be made out of spirit (*ex spiritu*) in a material sense, since spirit is unchangeable, whereas matter is the subject of change; but it is said in the sense of efficient causality.

According to this, we can discern a threefold generation. One is materially and effectively from (*ex*) the flesh, and is common to all who exist according to the flesh. Another is according to the Spirit effectively, and according to it we are reborn as sons of God through the grace of the Holy Spirit, and are made spiritual. The third is midway, that is, only materially from the flesh but effectively from the Holy Spirit. And this is true in the singular case of Christ: because he was born deriving his flesh materially from the flesh of his mother, but effectively from the Holy Spirit: "What she has conceived is of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 1:20). Therefore, he was born holy: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. And so the Holy One who will be born from you, will be called the Son of God" (Lk 1:35).

LECTURE 2

7 "Do not be surprised that I said to you,
you must be born again.

8 The wind blows where it wills,
and you hear its sound, but you do not know
where it comes from or where it goes.
So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9 "How can all this happen?" asked Nicodemus. 10 Jesus replied:
"You are a teacher in Israel and you do not know these things?

11 "Amen, amen I say to you,
that we know of what we speak,
and we bear witness of what we see;
but you do not accept our testimony.
12 If I spoke of earthly things,
and you did not believe me,
how will you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?
13 No one has gone up to heaven
except the One who came down from heaven,
the Son of Man, who lives in heaven.
14 Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
15 so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost,
but have eternal life."

449 Above, in his instruction on spiritual generation, the Lord presented a reason; here he gives an example. For we are led to see that Nicodemus was troubled when he heard that **what is born of Spirit is itself spirit**. And so the Lord says to him, **Do not be surprised that I said to you, you must be born again**.

Here we should note that there are two kinds of surprise or astonishment. One is the astonishment of devotion in the sense that someone, considering the great things of God, sees that they are incomprehensible to him; and so he is full of astonishment: "The Lord on high is wonderful" (Ps 92:4), "Your testimonies are wonderful" (Ps 118:129). Men are to be encouraged, not discouraged, to this kind of astonishment. The other is the astonishment of disbelief, when someone does not believe what is said. So Matthew (13:54) says: "They were astonished," and further on adds that "They did not accept him." It is from this kind of astonishment that the Lord diverts Nicodemus when he proposes an example and says: **The wind** (*spiritus*, wind, spirit) **blows where it wills**. In the literal sense, the same words can be explained in two ways.

450 In the first way, according to Chrysostom, *spiritus* is taken for the wind, as in Psalm 148 (v 8): "The winds of the storm that fulfill his word." According to this

interpretation, he says four things about the wind. First, the power of the wind, when he says, **the wind blows where it wills**. And if you say that the wind has no will, one may answer that "will" is taken for a natural appetite, which is nothing more than a natural inclination, about which it is said: "He created the weight of the wind" (Jb 28:25). Secondly, he tells the evidence for the wind, when he says, **and you hear its sound**, where "sound" (*vox*, voice, sound) refers to the sound the wind makes when it strikes a body. Of this we read: "The sound (*vox*) of your thunder was in the whirlwind" (Ps 76:19).

Thirdly, he mentions the origin of the wind, which is unknown; so he says, **but you do not know where it comes from**, i.e., from where it starts: "He brings forth the winds out of his storehouse" (Ps 134:7). Fourthly, he mentions the wind's destination, which is also unknown; so he says, **or where it goes** you do not know, i.e., where it remains.

And he applies this similarity to the subject under discussion, saying, **So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit**. As if to say: If the wind, which is corporeal, has an origin which is hidden and a course that is unknown, why are you surprised if you cannot understand the course of spiritual regeneration.

451 Augustine objects to this explanation and says that the Lord was not speaking here about the wind, for we know where each of the winds comes from and where it goes. For "Auster" comes from the south and goes to the north; "Boreas" comes from the north and goes to the south. Why, then, does the Lord say of this wind, you do not know where it comes from or where it goes?

One may answer that there are two ways in which the source of the wind might be unknown. In one way, in general: and in this way it is possible to know where it comes from, i.e., from which direction of the world, for example, that Auster comes from the south, and where it goes, that is, to the north. In another way, in particular: and in this sense it is not known where the wind comes from, i.e., at which precise place it originated, or where it goes, i.e., exactly where it stops. And almost all the Greek doctors agree with this exposition of Chrysostom.

452 In another way, *spiritus* is taken for the Holy Spirit. And according to this, he mentions four things about the Holy Spirit. First, his power, saying, **The Spirit blows where it wills**, because it is by the free use of his power that he breathes where he wills and when he wills, by instructing hearts: "One and the same Spirit does all these things, distributing to each as he wills" (1 Cor 12:11). This refutes the error of Macedonius who thought that the Holy Spirit was the minister of the Father and the Son. But then he would not be breathing where he willed, but where he was commanded.

453 Secondly, he mentions the evidence for the Holy Spirit, when he says, **and you hear its voice**: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Ps 94:8).

Chrysostom objects to this and says that this cannot pertain to the Holy Spirit. For the Lord was speaking to Nicodemus, who was still an unbeliever, and thus not fit to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. We may answer to this, with Augustine, that there is a twofold voice of the Holy Spirit. One is that by which he speaks inwardly in man's heart; and only believers and the saints hear this voice, about which the Psalm (84:9) says: "I will hear what the Lord God says within me." The other voice is that by which the Holy Spirit speaks in the Scriptures or through those who preach, according to Matthew (10:20): "For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit who is speaking through you." And this voice is heard by unbelievers and sinners.

454 Thirdly, he refers to the origin of the Holy Spirit, which is hidden; thus he says, **but you do not know where it comes from**, although you may hear its voice. And this is because the Holy Spirit comes from the Father and the Son: "When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father" (below 15:26). But the Father and the Son "dwell in inaccessible light, whom no man has seen or is able to see" (1 Tim 6:16).

455 Fourthly, he gives the destination of the Holy Spirit, which is also hidden; and so he says, you do not know where it goes, because the Spirit leads one to a hidden end, that is, eternal happiness. Thus it says in Ephesians (1:14) that the Holy Spirit is "the pledge of our inheritance." And again, "The eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor has the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor 2:9).

Or, **you do not know where it comes from**, i.e., how the Spirit enters into a person, **or where it goes**, i.e., to what perfection he may lead him: "If he comes toward me, I will not see him" (Jb 9:11).

456 **So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit**, i.e., they are like the Holy Spirit. And no wonder: for as he had said before, "What is born of Spirit is itself spirit," because the qualities of the Holy Spirit are present in the spiritual man, just as the qualities of fire are present in burning coal.

Therefore, the above four qualities of the Holy Spirit are found in one who has been born of the Holy Spirit. First of all, he has freedom: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17), for the Holy Spirit leads us to what is

right: "Your good Spirit will lead me to the right path" (Ps 142:10); and he frees us from the slavery of sin and of the law: "The law of the Spirit, of life in Christ, has set me free" (Rom 8:2). Secondly, we get an indication of him through the sound of his words; and when we hear them we know his spirituality, for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

Thirdly, he has an origin and an end that are hidden, because no one can judge one who is spiritual: "The spiritual man judges all things, and he himself is judged by no one" (1 Cor 2:15). Or, we do not know where such a person comes from, i. e., the source of his spiritual birth, which is baptismal grace; or where he goes, i. e., of what he is made worthy, that is, of eternal life, which remains concealed from us.

457 Then the cause and reason for spiritual regeneration are set forth. First, a question is asked by Nicodemus; secondly, the Lord's answer is given (v 10).

458 It is apparent from the first that Nicodemus, as yet dull, and remaining a Jew on the level of sense, was unable to understand the mysteries of Christ in spite of the examples and explanations that were given. And so he says, **How can all this happen?**

There are two reasons why one may question about something. Some question because of disbelief, as did Zechariah, saying: "How will I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in age" (Lk 1:18); "He confounds those who search into mysteries" (Is 40:23). Others, on the other hand, question because of a desire to know, as the Blessed Virgin did when she said to the angel: "How shall this be, since I do not know man?" (Lk 1:34). It is the latter who are instructed. And so, because Nicodemus asked from a desire to learn, he deserved to be instructed.

459 And this is what follows: **Jesus replied.** First the Lord chides him for his slowness. Secondly, he answers his question (v 13).

460 He chides him for his slowness, basing himself on three things. First, the condition of the person to whom he is speaking, when he says, **You are a teacher in Israel.** And here the Lord did not chide him to insult him. Rather, because Nicodemus, presuming on his own knowledge, was still relying on his status as a teacher, the Lord wished to make him a temple of the Holy Spirit by humbling him: "For whom will I have regard? For he who is humble and of contrite spirit" (Is 66:2). And he says, **You are a teacher,** because it is tolerable if a simple person cannot grasp profound truths, but in a teacher, it deserves rebuke. And so he says, You are a teacher, i. e., of the letter that kills (2 Cor 3:6),

and you do not know these things? i.e., spiritual things. "For although you ought to be teachers by now, you yourselves need to be taught again" (Heb 5:12).

461 You might say that the Lord would have rebuked Nicodemus justly if he had spoken to him about matters of the Old Law and he did not understand them; but he spoke to him about the New Law. I answer that the things which the Lord says of spiritual generation are contained in the Old Law, although under a figure, as is said in 1 Corinthians (10:2): "All were baptized into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea." And the prophets also said this: "I will pour clean water upon you, and you will be cleansed from all your uncleanness" (Ez 36:25).

462 Secondly, he rebukes him for his slowness on account of the character of the person who is speaking. For it is tolerable if one does not acquiesce to the statements of an ignorant person; but it is reprehensible to reject the statements of a man who is wise and who possesses great authority. And so he says, Amen, amen I say to you, that we **know of what we speak, and we bear witness of what we see**. For a qualified witness must base his testimony on hearing or sight: "What we have seen and heard" (1 Jn 1:3). And so the Lord mentions both: **we know of what we speak, and we bear witness of what we see**. Indeed, the Lord as man knows all things: "Lord, you know all things" (below 21:17); "The Lord, whose knowledge is holy, knows clearly" (2 Mc 6:30). Further, he sees all things by his divine knowledge: "I speak of what I have seen with my Father," as we read below (8:38).

He speaks in the plural, we know, we see, in order to suggest the mystery of the Trinity: "The Father, who dwells in me, he does the works" (below 14:10). Or, we know, i.e., I, and others who have been made spiritual, because "No one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son wishes to reveal him" (Mt 11:27).

But you do not accept our testimony, so approved, so solid. "And his testimony no one accepts (below 3:32).

463 Thirdly, he rebukes him for his slowness because of the quality of the things under discussion. For it is not unusual when someone does not grasp difficult matters, but it is inexcusable not to grasp easy things. So he says, **If I spoke of earthly things, and you did not believe, how will you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?** As if to say: If you do not grasp these easy things, how will you be able to understand the progress of the Holy Spirit? "What is on earth we find difficult, and who will search Out the things in heaven," as is said in Wisdom (9:10).

464 But one might object that the above does not show that the Lord spoke of earthly things to Nicodemus. I answer, according to Chrysostom, that the Lord's statement, **If I spoke of earthly things**, refers to the example of the wind. For the wind, being something which is generable and corruptible, is regarded as an earthly thing. Or one might say, again according to Chrysostom, that the spiritual generation which is given in baptism is heavenly as to its source, which sanctifies and regenerates; but it is earthly as to its subject, for the one regenerated, man, is of the earth.

Or one might answer, according to Augustine, that we must understand this in reference to what Christ said earlier: "Destroy this temple," which is earthly, because he said this about the temple of his body, which he had taken from the earth.

If I spoke of earthly things, and you did not believe, how will you believe if I tell you of heavenly things? As if to say: If you do not believe in a spiritual generation occurring in time, how will you believe in the eternal generation of the Son? Or, if you do not believe what I tell you about the power of my body, how will you believe what I tell you about the power of my divinity and about the power of the Holy Spirit?

465 **Jesus replied.** Here he answers the question. First, he lays down the causes of spiritual regeneration. Secondly, he explains what he says (3:16). Now there are two causes of spiritual regeneration, namely, the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, and his passion. So first, he treats of the incarnation; secondly, of the passion (3:14).

466 Here we should consider, first of all, how this answer of Christ is an adequate reply to the question of Nicodemus. For above, when the Lord was speaking of the Spirit, he said: **you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.** We understand by this that spiritual regeneration has a hidden source and a hidden end. Now the things in heaven are hidden from us: "Who will search out the things in heaven?" (Wis 9:16). Therefore, the sense of Nicodemus' question, **How can all this happen?** is this: How can something come from the secret things of heaven or go to the secret things of heaven? So before answering, the Lord expressed this interpretation of the question, saying, **how will you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?**

And immediately he begins to show whose prerogative it is to ascend into heaven, namely, anyone who came down from heaven, according to the statement of Ephesians (4:10): "He who descended is he who ascended." This is verified even in natural things, namely, that each body tends to a place according

to its origin or nature. And so in this way it can come about that someone, through the Spirit, may go to a place which carnal persons do not know, i.e., by ascending into heaven, if this is done through the power of one who descended from heaven: because he descended in order that, in ascending, he might open a way for us: "He ascends, opening the way before them" (Mi 2:13).

467 Some have fallen into error because of his saying, **the One who came down from heaven, the Son of Man**. For since Son of Man designates human nature, which is composed of soul and body, then because he says that the Son descended from heaven, Valentinus wanted to maintain that he even took his body from heaven and thus passed through the Virgin without receiving anything from her, as water passes through a pipe; so that his body was neither of an earthly substance nor taken from the Virgin. But this is contrary to the statement of the Apostle, writing to the Romans (1:3): "who was made from the seed of David according to the flesh."

On the other hand, Origen said that he descended from heaven as to his soul, which, he says, had been created along with the angels from the very beginning, and that later this soul descended from heaven and took flesh from the Virgin. But this also conflicts with the Catholic faith, which teaches that souls do not exist before their bodies.

468 Therefore, we should not understand that the Son of Man descended from heaven according to his human nature, but only according to his divine nature. For since in Christ there is one *suppositum*, or hypostasis, or person of the two natures, the divine and human natures, then no matter from which of these two natures this *suppositum* is named, divine and human things can be attributed to him. For we can say that the Son of Man created the stars and that the Son of God was crucified. But the Son of God was crucified, not according to his divine nature, but according to his human nature; and the Son of Man created the stars according to his divine nature. And so in things that are said of Christ, the distinction is not to be taken with respect to that about which they are said, because divine and human things are said of God and man indifferently; but a distinction must be made with respect to that according to which they are said, because divine things are said of Christ according to his divine nature, but human things according to his human nature. Thus, to descend from heaven is said of the Son of Man, not according to his human nature, but according to his divine nature, according to which it was appropriate to him to have been from heaven before the incarnation, as is said, "Heaven belongs to the Lord" (Ps 113:16).

469 he is said to have come down, but not by local motion, because then he would not have remained in heaven; for nothing which moves locally remains in the place from which it comes down. And so to exclude local motion, he adds,

who lives in heaven. As if to say: He descended from heaven in such a way as yet to be in heaven. For he came down from heaven without ceasing to be above, yet assuming a nature which is from below. And because he is not enclosed or held fast by his body which exists on earth, he was, according to his divinity, in heaven and everywhere. And therefore to indicate that he is said to have come down in this way, because he assumed a [human] nature, he said, **the Son of Man** came down, i.e., insofar as he became Son of Man.

470 Or it can be said, as Hilary does, that he came down from heaven as to his body: not that the material of Christ's body came down from heaven, but that the power which formed it was from heaven.

471 But why does he say, **No one has gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, who lives in heaven?** For have not Paul and Peter and the other saints gone up, according to 2 Corinthians (5:1): "We have a house in the heavens." I answer that no one goes up into heaven except Christ and his members, i.e., those believers who are just. Accordingly, the Son of God came down from heaven in order that, by making us his members, he might prepare us to ascend into heaven: now, indeed, in hope, but later in reality. "He has raised us up, and has given us a place in heaven in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6).

472 Here he mentions the mystery of the passion, in virtue of which baptism has its efficacy: "We who have been baptized into Christ Jesus, have been baptized into his death" (Rom 6:3). And with regard to this he does three things. First, he gives a symbol for the passion. Secondly, the manner of the passion. Thirdly, the fruit of the passion.

473 He takes the symbol from the old law, in order to adapt to the understanding of Nicodemus; so he says, **Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert.** This refers to Numbers (21:5) when the Lord, faced with the Jewish people saying, "We are sick of this useless food," sent serpents to punish them; and when the people came to Moses and he interceded with the Lord, the Lord commanded that for a remedy they make a serpent of bronze; and this was to serve both as a remedy against those serpents and as a symbol of the Lord's passion. Hence it says that this bronze serpent was lifted up as a sign (Nm 21:9).

Now it is characteristic of serpents that they are poisonous, but not so the serpent of bronze, although it was a symbol of a poisonous serpent. So, too, Christ did not have sin, which is also a poison: "Sin, when it is fully developed, brings forth death" (Jas 1:15); but he had the likeness of sin: "God sent his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3). And thus Christ had the effect of the serpent against the insurgence of inflamed concupiscences.

474 He shows the manner of the passion when he says, **so must the Son of Man be lifted up**: and this refers to the lifting up of the cross. So below (12:34) when it says, "The Son of Man must be lifted up," it also has, "He said this to indicate the manner of his death."

He willed to die lifted up, first of all, to cleanse the heavens: for since he had cleansed the things on earth by the sanctity of his life, the things of the air were left to be cleansed by his death: "through him he should reconcile all things to himself, whether on earth or in the heavens, making peace through his blood" (Col 1:20). Secondly, to triumph over the demons who prepare for war in the air: "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2). Thirdly, he wished to die lifted up to draw our hearts to himself: "I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself" (below 12:32). And fourthly, because in the death of the cross he was lifted up in the sense that there he triumphed over his enemies; so it is not called a death, but a lifting up: "He will drink from the stream on the way, therefore he will lift up his head" (Ps 109:7). Fifthly, he willed to die lifted up because the cross was the reason for his being lifted up, i.e., exalted: "He became obedient to the Father even to death, the death of the cross; on account of which God has exalted him" (Phil 2:8).

475 Now the fruit of Christ's passion is eternal life; hence he says, so **that everyone who believes in him, performing good works, may not be lost, but have eternal life**. And this fruit corresponds to the fruit of the symbolic serpent. For whoever looked upon the serpent of bronze was freed from poison and his life was preserved. But he who looks upon the lifted up Son of Man, and believes in the crucified Christ, he is freed from poison and sin: "Whoever believes in me will never die" (below 11:26), and is preserved for eternal life. "These things are written that you may believe ... and that believing you may have life in his name" (below 20:3 1).

LECTURE 3

16 "For God so loved the world
that he gave his Only Begotten Son,
so that whoever believes in him should not perish,
but have eternal life.

17 God did not send his Son into the world
to judge the world,
but that the world might be saved through him.

18 Whoever believes in him is not judged;

but whoever does not believe is already judged,
since he does not believe in the name of the
Only Begotten Son of God.

19 The judgment of condemnation is this:

the light came into the world,
and men loved darkness more than the light,
because their deeds were evil.

20 Everyone who practices evil hates the light,
and does not approach the light
for fear that his deeds might be exposed.

21 But everyone who practices the truth
comes to the light,
to make clear that his deeds are done in God."

476 Above, the Lord assigned as the cause of spiritual regeneration the coming down of the Son and the lifting up of the Son of Man; and he set forth its fruit, which is eternal life. But this fruit seemed unbelievable to men laboring under the necessity of dying. And so now the Lord explains this. First, he proves the greatness of the fruit from the greatness of God's love. Secondly, he rejects a certain reply (v 17).

477 Here we should note that the cause of all our good is the Lord and divine love. For to love is, properly speaking, to will good to someone. Therefore, since the will of God is the cause of things, good comes to us because God loves us. And God's love is the cause of the good of nature: "You love everything which exists" (Wis 11:2 5). It is also the cause of the good which is grace: "I have loved you with an. everlasting love, and so I have drawn you" i.e., through grace (Jer 3 1:3). But it is because of his great love that he gives us the good of glory. So he shows us here, from four standpoints, that this love of God is the greatest.

First, from the person of the one loving, because it is God who loves, and immeasurably. So he says, **For God so loved:** "He has loved the people; all the holy ones are in his hand" (Dt 33:3). Secondly, from the condition of the one who is loved, because it is man, a bodily creature of the world, i.e., existing in sin: "God shows his love for us, because while we were still his enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom 5:8). Thus he says, **the world.** Thirdly, from the greatness of his gifts, for love is shown by a gift; as Gregory says: "The proof of love is given by action." But God has given us the greatest of gifts, his Only Begotten Son, and so he says, **that he gave his Only Begotten Son.** "God did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for all of us" (Rom 8:32).

He says his Son, i.e., his natural Son, consubstantial, not an adopted son, i.e.,

not those sons of which the Psalmist says: "I said: You are gods" (Ps 81:6). This shows that the opinion of Arius is false: for if the Son of God were a creature, as he said, the immensity of God's love through the taking on of infinite goodness, which no creature can receive, could not have been revealed in him. He further says **Only Begotten**, to show that God does not have a love divided among many sons, but all of it is for that Son whom he gave to prove the immensity of his love: "For the Father loves the Son, and shows him everything that he does" (below 5:20).

Fourthly, from the greatness of its fruit, because through him we have eternal life. Hence he says, **so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life**, which he obtained for us through the death of the cross.

478 But did God give his Son with the intention that he should die on the cross? He did indeed give him for the death of the cross inasmuch as he gave him the will to suffer on it. And he did this in two ways. First, because as the Son of God he willed from eternity to assume flesh and to suffer for us; and this will he had from the Father. Secondly, because the will to suffer was infused into the soul of Christ by God.

479 Note that above, when the Lord was speaking about the coming down which belongs to Christ according to his divinity, he called him the Son of God; and this because of the one *suppositum* of the two natures, as was explained above. And so divine things can be said about the *suppositum* of the human nature, and human things can be said about the *suppositum* of the divine nature, but not with reference to the same nature. Rather, divine things are said with reference to the divine nature, and human things with reference to the human nature. Now the specific reason why he here calls him the Son of God is that he set forth that gift as a sign of the divine love, through which the fruit of eternal life comes to us. And so, he should have been called by that name which indicates the power that produces eternal life; and this power is not in Christ as Son of Man but as Son of God: "This is the true God and eternal life," as we read in 1 John (5:20); "In him was life" (above 1:4).

480 Note also that he says, **should not perish**. Someone is said to be perishing when he is hindered from arriving at the end to which he is ordained. But the end to which man is ordained is eternal life, and as long as he sins, he turns himself from that end. And although while he is living he cannot entirely perish in the sense that he cannot be restored, yet when he dies in sin, then he entirely perishes: "The way of the wicked will perish" (Ps 1:7).

He indicates the immensity of God's love in saying, **have eternal life**: for by

giving eternal life, he gives himself. For eternal life is nothing else than enjoying God. But to give oneself is a sign of great love: "But God, who is rich in mercy, has brought us to life in Christ" (Eph 2:5), i.e., he gave us eternal life.

481 Here the Lord excludes an objection that might be made. For in the old law it was promised that the Lord would come to judge: "The Lord will come to judge" (Is 3:14). So someone might say that the Son of God had not come to give eternal life but in order to judge the world. The Lord rejects this. First, he shows that he has not come to judge. Secondly, he proves it (v 18).

482 So he says: The Son of God has not come to judge, because **God did not send his Son**, referring to his first coming, **into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him**. The same thing is found below (12:47): "I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world."

Now man's salvation is to attain to God: "My salvation is in God" (Ps 61:8). And to attain to God is to obtain eternal life; hence to be saved is the same as to have eternal life. However, because the Lord says, "I did not come to judge the world," men should not be lazy or abuse God's mercy, or give themselves over to sin: because although in his first coming he did not come to judge but to forgive, yet in his second coming, as Chrysostom says, he will come to judge but not to forgive. "At the appointed time I will judge with rigor" (Ps 74:3).

483 However, this seems to conflict with what is said below (9:39): "I came into this world to judge." I answer that there are two kinds of judgment. One is the judgment of distinction, and the Son has come for this in his first coming; because with his coming men are distinguished, some by blindness and some by the light of grace. The other is the judgment of condemnation; and he did not come for this as such.

484 Now he proves what he had said, as though by a process of elimination, in the following way: Whoever will be judged will be either a believer or an unbeliever. But I have not come to judge unbelievers, because they are already judged. Therefore, from the outset, God did not send his Son to judge the world. So first he shows that believers are not judged. Secondly, that unbelievers are not judged (v 18).

485 He says therefore: I have not come to judge the world: because he did not come to judge believers, for **Whoever believes in him is not judged**, with the judgment of condemnation, with which no one who believes in him with faith informed by love is judged: "Whoever believes ... will not encounter judgment, but will pass from death to life" (below 5:24). But he is judged with the judgment

of reward and approval, of which the Apostle says: "It is the Lord who judges me" (1 Cor 4:4).

486 But will there be many believing sinners who will not be damned? I reply that some heretics [e.g., Origen] have said that no believer, however great a sinner he may be, will be damned, but he will be saved by reason of his foundation of salvation, namely, his faith, although he may suffer some [temporary] punishment. They take as the basis of their error the statement of the Apostle: "No one can lay a foundation other than the one that has been laid, that is, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 3:11); and further on: "If a man's building burns ... he himself will be saved as one fleeing through fire" (3:15).

But this view is clearly contrary to what the Apostle says in Galatians (5:1): "It is obvious what proceeds from the flesh: lewd conduct, impurity, licentiousness ... Those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Therefore we must say that the foundation of salvation is not faith without charity (unformed faith), but faith informed by charity. Significantly therefore the Lord did not say, "whoever believes him," but **whoever believes in him**, that is, whoever by believing tends toward him through love **is not judged**, because he does not sin mortally, thereby removing the foundation.

Or one could say, following Chrysostom, that everyone who acts sinfully is not a believer: "They profess to know God, but they deny him by their actions" (Ti 1:16); but only one who acts worthily: "Show me your faith by your works" (Jas 2:18). It is only such a one who is not judged and not condemned for unbelief.

487 Here [the Lord] shows that unbelievers are not judged. First he makes the statement; secondly, he explains it (v 19).

488 Concerning the first we should note, according to Augustine, that Christ does not say, "whoever does not believe is judged," but rather **is not judged**. This can be explained in three ways. For, according to Augustine, whoever does not believe is not judged, because he is already judged, not in fact, but in God's foreknowledge, that is, it is already known to God that he will be condemned: "The Lord knows who are his" (2 Tim 2:19). In another way: according to Chrysostom, **whoever does not believe is already judged**, that is, the very fact that he does not believe is for him a condemnation: for not to believe is not to adhere to the light—which is to live in darkness, and this is a momentous condemnation: "All were bound with one chain of darkness" (Wis 17:17). "What kind of joy can I have, I who sit in darkness and do not see the light of heaven?" (Tb 5:12). In a third way: also according to Chrysostom, **whoever does not believe is not judged**, that is, being already condemned, he displays

the obvious reason for his condemnation. This is like saying that a person who is proven guilty of death is already dead, even before the sentence of death has been passed on him, because he is as good as dead.

Hence Gregory says that in passing judgments there is a twofold order. Some will be sentenced by a trial; such are the ones who have something not deserving of condemnation, namely, the good of faith, that is, sinners who believe. But unbelievers, Whose reason for condemnation is manifest, are sentenced without trial; and of these it is said, **whoever does not believe is already judged**. "In judgment the wicked will not stand" (Ps 1:6), that is, stand in trial.

489 It should be noted that to be judged is the same as to be condemned; and to be condemned is to be shut out from salvation, to which only one road leads, that is, the name of the Son of God: "There is no other name under heaven given to men, by which we are saved" (Acts 4:12); "O'God, save me by your name" (Ps 53:3). Therefore, those who do not believe in the Son of God are cut off from salvation, and the cause of their damnation is evident.

490 Here the Lord explains his statement that unbelievers have an evident cause for their condemnation. First, he sets forth the sign which shows this. Secondly, the fittingness of this sign (v 20).

491 In the sign he sets forth he does three things. First, he mentions the gift of God. Secondly, the perversity of mind in unbelievers. Thirdly, the cause of this perversity.

So he says: It is abundantly clear that **whoever does not believe is already judged**, because **the light came into the world**. For men were in the darkness of ignorance, and God destroyed this darkness by sending a light into the world so that men might know the truth: "I am the light of the world. He who follows me does not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (below 8:12); "To enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Lk 1:78). Now the light came into the world because men could not come to it: for "He dwells in inaccessible light, whom no man has seen or is able to see" (1 Tim 6:16).

It is also clear from the perversity of mind in unbelievers who **loved darkness more than the light**, i.e., they preferred to remain in the darkness of ignorance rather than be instructed by Christ: "They have rebelled against the light" (Jb 24:13); "Woe to you who substitute darkness for light, and light for darkness" (Is 5:20).

And the cause of this perversity is that **their deeds were evil:** and such deeds do not conform to the light but seek the darkness: "Let us cast off the works of darkness" (Rom 13:12), i.e., sins, which seek the darkness; "Those who sleep, sleep at night" (1 Thes 5:7); "The eye of the adulterer watches for the darkness," as we read in Job (24:15). Now it is by withdrawing from the light, which is unpleasant to him, that one does not believe the light.

492 But do all unbelievers produce evil works? It seems not: for many Gentiles have acted with virtue; for example, Cato, and many others. I answer, with Chrysostom, that is it one thing to work by reason of virtue, and another by reason of a natural aptitude or disposition. For some act well because of their natural disposition, because their temperament is not inclined in a contrary way. And even unbelievers can act well in this way. For example, one may live chastely because he is not assailed by concupiscence; and the same for the other virtues. But those who act well by reason of virtue do not depart from virtue, in spite of inclinations to the contrary vice, because of the rightness of their reason and the goodness of their will; and this is proper to believers.

Or, one might answer that although unbelievers may have done good things, they do not do them for love of virtue but out of vainglory. Further, they did not do all things well; for they failed to render to God the worship due him.

493 Then when he says, **Everyone who practices evil hates the light,** he shows the appropriateness of the sign he used. First, with respect to those who are evil. Secondly, with respect to the good.

494 So he says: The reason why they did not love the light is that their works were evil. And this is plain because **Everyone who practices evil hates the light.** He does not say, "practiced," but rather practices: because if someone has acted in an evil way, but has repented and is sorry, seeing that he has done wrong, such a person does not hate the light but comes to the light. But Everyone who practices evil, i.e., persists in evil, is not sorry, nor does he come to the light, but he hates it; not because it reveals truth, but because it reveals a person's sins. For an evil person still wants to know the light and the truth; but he hates to be unmasked by it. "If the dawn suddenly appears, they regard it as the shadow of death" (Job 24:17). And so he **does not approach the light;** and this **for fear that his deeds might be exposed.** For no one who is unwilling to desert evil wants to be rebuked; this is fled from and hated. "They hate the one who rebukes at the city gate" (Am 5:10); "A corrupt man does not love the one who rebukes him" (Prov 15:12).

495 Now he shows the same things with respect to the good, who practice the

truth, i.e., perform good works. For truth is found not only in thought and words. but also in deeds. Everyone of these **comes to the light**.

But did anyone practice the truth before Christ? It seems not, for to practice the truth is not to sin; and "before Christ all have sinned" (Rom 3:23). I answer, according to Augustine, that he practices the truth in himself who is displeased at the evil he has done; and after leaving the darkness, keeps himself from sin, and repenting of the past, **comes to the light**, with the special intention of making his actions known.

496 But this conflicts with the teaching that no one should make public the good he has done; and this was a reason why the Lord rebuked the Pharisees. I answer that it is lawful to want one's works to be seen by God so that they may be approved: "It is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom God commends" (2 Cor 10:18); "My witness is in heaven," as is said in Job (16:20). It is also lawful to want them to be seen by one's own conscience, so that one may rejoice: "Our glory is this: the testimony of our conscience" (2 Cor 1:12). But it is reprehensible to want them to be seen by men in order to be praised or for one's own glory. Yet, holy persons desire that their good works be known to men for the sake of God's glory and for the good of the faith: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:16). Such a person **comes to the light to make clear that his deeds are done in God**, that is, according to God's commandment or through the grace of God. For whatever good we do, whether it be avoiding sin, repenting of what has been done, or doing good works, it is all from God: "You have accomplished all our works" (Is 26:12).

LECTURE 4

22 After this Jesus and his disciples came to Judean territory; he stayed there with his disciples and was baptizing. 23 But John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, where the water was plentiful, and people kept coming and were baptized. 24 John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison. 25 A controversy arose between the disciples of John and the Jews concerning purification. 26 They went to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the man who was with you across the Jordan, the one of whom you have given testimony, he is here baptizing, and all the people are flocking to him."

497 Above, the Lord gave us his teaching on spiritual regeneration in words, here

he completes his teaching through action, by baptizing. First, two kinds of baptism are mentioned. Secondly, a question about their relationship is raised (v 25). As to the first, two things are done. Mention is first made of the baptism of Christ. Secondly, of the baptism of John.

498 He says first, **After this**, i.e., the teaching on spiritual regeneration, **Jesus and his disciples came to Judean territory**. There is a question here about the literal meaning. For above, the Evangelist had said that the Lord had come from Galilee to Jerusalem, which is in Judean territory, where he taught Nicodemus. So how, after teaching Nicodemus, can he come into Judea, since he was already there?

Two answers are given to this. According to Bede, after his discussion with Nicodemus, Christ went to Galilee, and after remaining there for a time, returned to Judea. And so **After this Jesus and his disciples came to Judean territory**, should not be understood to mean that he came into Judea immediately after his talk with Nicodemus. Another explanation, given by Chrysostom, is that he did come into the territory of Judea immediately after this discussion: for Christ wanted to preach where the people gathered, so that many might be converted: "I have declared your justice in the great assembly" (Ps 3 9:10); "I have spoken openly to the world" (below 18:20). Now there were two places in Judea where the Jewish people gathered: Jerusalem, where they went for their feasts, and the Jordan, where they gathered on account of John's preaching and his baptism. And so the Lord used to visit both places; and after the feast days were over in Jerusalem, which is in one part of Judea, he went to another part, to the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

499 As for the moral sense, Judea means "confession," to which Jesus came, for Christ visits those who confess their sins or speak in praise of God: "Judea became his sanctuary" (Ps 113:2). He stayed there, because he did not make a merely temporary visit: "We will come to him, and make our abode with him," as it says below (14:23). **And was baptizing**, i.e., cleansing from sin; because unless one confesses his sins he does not obtain forgiveness: "He who hides his sins will not prosper" (Prv 28:13).

500 Then when he says, **But John also was baptizing**, the Evangelist presents the baptism of John. And in regard to this he does four things. First, he presents the person who is baptizing. Secondly, the place of the baptism. Thirdly, its fruit. Fourthly, the time.

501 John is the person who is baptizing-, so he says, **John also was baptizing**. There is a question about this: Since John's baptism was ordained to the baptism

of Christ, it seems that John should have stopped baptizing when Christ started to baptize, just as the symbol does not continue when the truth comes. Three reasons are given for this. The first is in relation to Christ, for John baptized in order that Christ might be baptized by him. But it was not fitting that John baptize just Christ; otherwise, on this point alone, it might seem that John's baptism was superior to Christ's. Accordingly, it was expedient that John baptize others before Christ, because before Christ's teaching was to be made public it was necessary that men be prepared for Christ by John's baptism. In this way, the baptism of John is related to the baptism of Christ as the catechesis or religious instruction given to prospects to teach and prepare them for baptism is related to the true baptism. It was likewise important that John baptize others after he had baptized Christ, so that John's baptism would not seem to be worthless. For the same reason, the practice of the ceremonies of the old law was not abolished as soon as the truth came, but as Augustine says, the Jews could lawfully observe them for a time.

The second reason relates to John. For if John had stopped baptizing at once after Christ began baptizing, it might have been thought that he stopped out of envy or anger. And because, as the Apostle says, "We ought to look after what is good, not only before God, but also before all men" (Rom 12:17), this is the reason why John did not stop at once.

The third reason relates to John's disciples, who were already beginning to act like zealots toward Christ and his disciples, because they were baptizing. So if John had entirely stopped from baptizing, it would have provoked his disciples to an even greater zeal and opposition to Christ and his disciples. For even while John continued baptizing, they were hostile to Christ's baptism, as later events showed. And so John did not stop at once: "Take care that your freedom does not become a hindrance to those who are weak," as is said in 1 Corinthians (8:9).

502 The place of his baptism was **at Aenon near Salim, where the water was plentiful**. Another name for Salim is Salem, which is the village from which the king Melchizedek came. It is called Salim here because among the Jews a reader may use any vowel he chooses in the middle of his words; hence it made no difference to the Jews whether it was pronounced Salim or Salem. He added, **where the water was plentiful**, to explain the name of this place, i.e., **Aenon**, which is the same as "water."

503 The fruit of his baptism is the remission of sins; thus he says, **people kept coming and were baptized**, i.e., cleansed: for as is stated in Matthew (3:5) and in Luke (3:7), great crowds came to John.

504 The time is indicated when he says, **John had not yet been thrown into prison.** He says this so that we may know that he began his narrative of Christ's life before the other Evangelists. For the others began their account only from the time of John's imprisonment. So Matthew (4:12) says: "When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee." And so, because they had passed over the things that Christ did before John's imprisonment, John, who was the last to write a Gospel, supplied these omissions. He suggests this when he says: **John had not yet been thrown into prison.**

505 Note that by divine arrangement it came about that when Christ began to baptize, John did not continue his own baptizing and preaching for very long, in order not to create disunion among the people. But he was granted a little time so that it would not seem that he deserved to be repudiated, as was mentioned before. Again, by God's arrangement, it came about that after the faith had been preached and the faithful converted, the temple was utterly destroyed, in order that all the devotion and hope of the faithful could be directed to Christ.

506 Then when he says, **A controversy arose**, he brings in the issue of the two baptisms. First, the issue is mentioned. Secondly, it is brought to John's attention (v 26). Thirdly, the issue is resolved.

507 Because both John and Christ were baptizing, the disciples of John, out of zeal for their teacher, started a controversy over this. And this is what he says, A controversy arose, i.e., a dispute, **between the disciples of John**, who were the first to raise the issue, **and the Jews**, whom the disciples of John had rebuked for preferring Christ, because of the miracles he did, to John, who did not do any miracles. The issue was **concerning purification**, i.e., baptizing. The cause of their envy and the reason why they started the controversy was the fact that John sent those he baptized to Christ, but Christ did not send those he baptized to John. It seemed from this, and perhaps the Jews even said so, that Christ was greater than John. Thus, the disciples of John, having not yet become spiritual, quarreled with the Jews over the baptisms. "While there is envy and fighting among you, are you not carnal?" (1 Cor 3:3).

508 They referred this issue to John; hence he says, **They went to John.** If we examine this closely, we see that they were trying to incite John against Christ. Indeed, they are like the gossip and the double-tongued: "Those who gossip and are double-tongued are accursed, for they disturb many who are at peace" (Sir 28:15).

So they bring up four things calculated to set John against Christ. First, they recall the previous unimportant status of Christ. Secondly, the good John did for

him. Thirdly, the role which Christ took on. Fourthly, the loss to John because of Christ's new role.

509 They recall Christ's unimportance when they say, **the man who was with you**, as one of your disciples; and not the one you were with as your teacher. For there is no good reason for envy if honor is shown to one who is greater; rather, envy is aroused when honor is given to an inferior: "I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking like slaves" (Ecc 10:7); "I called my servant, and he did not answer me" (Jb 19:16). For a master is more disturbed at the rebellion of a servant and a subject than of anyone else.

510 Secondly, they remind John of the good he did Christ. Thus they do not say, "the one whom you baptized," because they would then be admitting the greatness of Christ which was shown during his baptism when the Holy Spirit came upon him in the form of a dove and in the voice of the Father speaking to him. So they say, **the one of whom you have given testimony**, i.e., we are very angry that the one you made famous and admired dares to repay you in this way: "The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me" (Ps 40:10). They said this because those who seek their own glory and personal profit from their office become dejected if their office is taken over by someone else

511 And so thirdly, they even add that Christ took over John's office for himself, when they say, **he is here baptizing**, i.e., he is exercising your office; and this also disturbed them very much. For we generally see that men of the same craft are envious and underhanded with respect to one another; a potter envies another potter, but does not envy a carpenter. So, even teachers, who are seeking their own honor, become sad if another teaches the truth. In opposition to them, Gregory says: "The mind of a holy pastor wishes that others teach the truth which he cannot teach all by himself." So also Moses: "Would that all the people might prophesy," as we read in Numbers (11:29).

512 Yet they were not satisfied with merely disturbing John, rather they report something that should really excite him, that is, the loss that John seemed to be having because of the office Christ took over. They give this when they say: **and all the people are flocking to him**, i.e., the ones who used to come to you. In other words, they have rejected and disowned you, and now are all going to his baptism. It is clear from Matthew (11:7) that they used to go to John: "What did you go into the desert to see?" The same envy affected the Pharisees against Christ; so they said: "Look, the whole world has gone after him" (below 12:19). However, all this did not set John against Christ, for he was not a reed swaying in the wind, and this is clear from John's answer to their question.

LECTURE 5

27 John replied and said:

"No one can lay hold of anything
unless it is given to him from heaven.

28 "You yourselves are witnesses to the fact that I said: I am not
the Christ, but the one sent before him.

>29 "It is the groom who has the bride.
The groom's friend waits there and listens to him,
rejoicing at hearing his voice.
Therefore in this case my joy is complete.
30 He must increase,
and I must decrease.
31 The One who came from above
is above all things.
He who is of earth is earthly,
and speaks of earthly things.
32a The One who comes from heaven
is above all things,
and he testifies to what he sees,
and to what he hears.

513 Here we have John's answer to the question presented to him by his disciples. Their question contained two points: a complaint about the office Christ took on, and so they said, **he is here baptizing**; and about Christ's increasing fame and reputation among the people, and so they said, **all the people are flocking to him**. Accordingly, John directs his answer to these two complaints. First he answers the complaint about the office Christ took on. Secondly, the complaint about Christ's increasing reputation (v 30). As to the first he does two things. First, he shows the source of Christ's office and of his own. Secondly, their difference (v 28). Thirdly, how Christ and he are related to these offices.

514 As to the first, note that although John's disciples broach their question maliciously, and so deserve to be rebuked, John nevertheless does not sharply reprove them; and this because of their imperfection. For he feared that they might be provoked by a rebuke, leave him, and, joining forces with the Pharisees, publicly harass Christ. In acting this way he was putting into practice what is said

of the Lord: "The burised reed he will not break" (Is 42:3). Again, we should also note that he begins his answer not by telling them what is great and wonderful about Christ, but what is common and obvious; and he did this on account of their envy. For since the excellence of a person provokes others to envy, if John had stressed Christ's excellence at once, he would have fed the fire of their envy.

515 Thus he states something unpretentious, and says, **No one can lay hold of anything unless it is given to him from heaven;** and he said this to them in order to inspire them with reverence. As if to say: If all men are going to him, it is God's doing, because **no one can lay hold of anything**, in the order of perfection and goodness, unless it is given to him from heaven. Therefore, if you oppose him, you oppose God. "If this plan or work is from men, it will fail," as is said in Acts (5:38). This is the way Chrysostom explains it, applying these words to Christ.

Augustine, on the other hand, does much better when he refers them to John. **No one can lay hold of anything unless it is given to him from heaven:** as if to say: You are zealous on my behalf and you want me to be greater than Christ; but that has not been given to me, and I do not wish to usurp it: "No one takes this honor on himself" (Heb 5:4). This is the origin of their offices.

516 Then follows the difference of their offices, when he says, You yourselves are witnesses. As if to say: From the testimony which I bore to him, you can know the office committed to me by Christ: for You yourselves are witnesses, i.e., you can testify, **to the fact that I said: I am not the Christ**—"He declared openly and did not deny" (above 1:20)—**but the one sent before him**, as a herald before a judge. And so from my own testimony you can know my office, which is to go before Christ and prepare the way for him: "There was a man sent by God, whose name was John" (above 1:6). But the office of Christ is to judge and to preside. If we look at this closely we can see that John, like a skilful disputant, answers them with their own arguments: "I judge you out of your own mouth," as said in Luke (19:22).

517 He shows how John is related to his own office when he says: **It is the groom who has the bride.** First, he gives a simile. Secondly, he applies it to his own situation. With respect to the first he does two things. First, he gives a simile which applies to Christ; and secondly, to himself.

518 As to the first, we should note that on the human level it is the groom who regulates, governs and has the bride. Hence he says, **It is the groom who has the bride.** Now the groom is Christ: "Like a bridegroom coming out of his bridal chamber" (Ps 18:6). His bride is the Church, which is joined to him by faith: "I

will espouse you to myself in faith" Mos 2:20). In keeping with this figure, Zipporah said to Moses: "You are a spouse of blood to me" (Ex 4:25). We read of the marriage: "The marriage of the Lamb has come" (Rv 19:7). So, because Christ is the groom, he has the bride, that is, the Church; but my part is only to rejoice in the fact that he has the bride.

519 Consequently he says, **The groom's friend waits there and listens to him, rejoicing at hearing his voice.** Although John had said earlier that he was not worthy to unfasten the strap of Jesus' sandal, he here calls himself the friend of Jesus in order to bring out the faithfulness of his love for Christ. For a servant does not act in the spirit of love in regard to the things that pertain to his master, but in a spirit of servitude; while a friend, on the other hand, seeks his friend's interests out of love and faithfulness. Hence a faithful servant is like a friend to his master: "If you have a faithful servant, treat him like yourself" (Sir 33:31). Indeed, it is proof of a servant's faithfulness when he rejoices in the prosperity of his master, and when he obtains various goods, not for himself, but for his master. And so because John did not keep the bride entrusted to his care for himself, but for the groom, we can see that he was a faithful servant and a friend of the groom. It is to suggest this that he calls himself **the groom's friend.**

Those who are friends of the truth should act in the same way, not turning the bride entrusted to their care to their own advantage and glory, but treating her honorably for the honor and glory of the groom; otherwise they would not be friends of the groom but adulterers. This is why Gregory says that a servant who is sent by the groom with gifts for the bride is guilty of adulterous thoughts if he himself desires to please the bride. This is not what the Apostle did: "I espoused you to one husband in order to present you to Christ as a chaste virgin" (2 Cor 11:2). And John did the same, because he did not keep the bride, i.e., the faithful, for himself, but brought them to the groom, that is, to Christ.

520 And so by saying, **the groom's friend,** he suggests the faithfulness of his love. Further, he suggests his constancy when he says, **waits,** firm in friendship and faithfulness, not extolling himself above what he really is: "I will stand my watch" (Hb 2:1); "Be steadfast and unchanging" (1 Cor 15:58); "A faithful friend, if he is constant, is like another self" (Sir 6:11).

He suggests his attention when he says, **and listens to him,** i.e., attentively considers the way in which the groom is united to the bride. For according to Chrysostom, these words explain the manner of this marriage, for it is accomplished through faith, and "faith comes through hearing" (Rom 10:17). Or, he **listens to him,** i.e., reverently obeys him, by caring for the bride according to the commands of the groom: "I will listen to him as my master," as is said in

Isaiah (50:4). This is in opposition to those evil prelates who do not follow Christ's command in governing the Church.

Likewise, he hints at his spiritual joy when he says, **rejoicing at hearing his voice**, that is, when the groom talks to his bride. And he says, **rejoicing** (literally, "rejoicing with joy"), to show the truth and perfection of his joy. For one whose rejoicing is not over the good, does not rejoice with true joy. And so, if it made me sad that Christ, who is the true groom, preaches to the bride, i.e., the Church, I would not be a friend of the groom; but I am not sad.

521 Therefore in this case my joy is complete, namely, in seeing what I have so long desired, that is, the groom speaking to his bride. Or, my joy is complete, i.e., brought to its perfect and due measure, when the bride is united to the groom, because I now have my grace and I have completed my work: "I will rejoice in the Lord, and I will take joy in God, my Jesus" (Hb 3:18).

522 Then when he says, **He must increase, and I must decrease**, he answers their question as to their complaint about the increasing esteem given to Christ. First, he notes that such an increase is fitting. Secondly, he gives the reason for it (v 31).

523 So he says: You say that all the people are flocking to him, i.e., to Christ, and therefore that he is growing in honor and esteem among the people. But I say that this is not unbecoming, because He must increase, not in himself, but in relation to others, in the sense that his power become more and more known. **And I must decrease**, in the reverence and esteem of the people: for esteem and reverence are not due to me as if I were a principal; but they are due to Christ. And therefore since he has come, the signs of honor are diminishing in my regard, but increasing in regard to Christ, just as with the coming of the prince, the office of the ambassador ceases: "When the perfect comes, what is imperfect will pass away" (1 Cor 13:10). And just as in the heavens the morning star appears and gives light before the sun, only to cease giving light when the sun appears, so John went before Christ and is compared to the morning star: "Can you bring out the morning star?" (Jb 38:32).

This is also signified in John's birth and in his death. In his birth, because John was born at a time when the days are getting shorter; Christ, however, was born when the days are growing longer, on the twenty-fifth of December. In his death, because John dies shortened by decapitation; but Christ died raised up by the lifting up of the cross.

524 In the moral sense, this should take place in each one of us. Christ must

increase in you, i.e., you should grow in the knowledge and love of Christ, because the more you are able to grasp him by knowledge and love, the more Christ increases in you; just as the more one improves in seeing one and the same light, the more that light seems to increase. Consequently, as men advance in this way, their self-esteem decreases; because the more one knows of the divine greatness, the less he thinks of his human smallness. As we read in Proverbs (30:1): "The revelation spoken by the man close to God"; and then there follows: "I am the most foolish of men, and the wisdom of men is not in me." "I have heard you, but now I see you, and so I reprove myself, and do penance in dust and ashes," as we read in Job (42:5).

525 Then when he says, **The One who came from above is above all things**, he gives the reason for what he has just said. And he does this in two ways. First, on the basis of Christ's origin. And secondly, by considering Christ's teaching.

526 Regarding the first, we should note that in order for a thing to be perfect, it must reach the goal fixed for it by its origin; for example, if one is born from a king, he should continue to progress until he becomes a king. Now Christ has an origin that is most excellent and eternal; therefore he must increase by the manifestation of his power, in relation to others, until it is recognized that he is above all things. Thus he says, **The One who came from above**, that is, Christ, according to his divinity. "No one has gone up to heaven except the One who came down from heaven" (above 3:13); "You are from below, I am from above" (below 8:23).

527 Or, he **came from above**, as to his human nature, i.e., from the "highest" condition of human nature, by assuming it according to what was predominant in it in each of its states. For human nature is considered in three states. First, is the state of human nature before sin; and from this state he took his purity by assuming a flesh unmarked by the stain of original sin: "A lamb without blemish" (Ex 12:5). The second state is after sin; and from this he took his capability to suffer and die by assuming the likeness of sinful flesh as regards its punishment, but not in its guilt: "God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3). The third state is that of resurrection and glory; and from this he took his impossibility of sinning and his joy of soul.

528 Here we must be on guard against the error of those who say that there was left in Adam something materially unmarked by the original stain, and this was passed on to his descendants; for example, to the Blessed Virgin, and that Christ's body was formed from this. This is heretical, because whatever existed in Adam in a material way was marked by the stain of original sin. Further, the matter from which the body of Christ was formed was purified by the power of

the Holy Spirit when he sanctified the Blessed Virgin.

529 **The One who came from above**, according to his divinity as well as his human nature, **is above all things**, both by eminence of rank: "The Lord is high above all nations" (Ps 112:4), and by his authority and power: "He has made him the head of the Church," as is said in Ephesians (1:22).

530 Now he gives the reason for what he had said above (v 30), by considering the teaching of Christ. First, he describes the doctrine of Christ and its grandeur. Secondly, the difference in those who receive or reject this doctrine (v 32b). He does two things with respect to the first. First, he describes John's doctrine. Secondly, he describes the doctrine of Christ (v 32).

531 As to the first we should note that a man is known mainly by what he says: "Your accent gives you away" (Mt 26:73); "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt 12:34). This is why the quality of a teaching or doctrine is considered according to the quality of its origin. Accordingly, in order to understand the quality of John's doctrine, we should first consider his origin. So he says, **He who is of earth**, that is John, not only as to the matter from which he was made, but also in his efficient cause: because the body of John was formed by a created power: "They dwell in houses of clay, and have a foundation of earth" (Jb 4:19). Secondly, we should consider the quality of John himself, which is earthly; and so he says, is earthly. Thirdly, the quality of his teaching is described: he **speaks of earthly things**. "You will speak of the earth" (Is 29:4).

532 But since John was full of the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb, how can he be said to speak of earthly things? I answer that, according to Chrysostom, John says he speaks of earthly things by comparison with the teaching of Christ. As if to say: The things I speak of are slight and inferior as becomes one of an earthly nature, in comparison to him "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3); "As the heavens are high above the earth, so my ways are high above your ways" (Is 55:9).

Or we could say according to Augustine, and this is a better explanation, that we can consider what any person has of himself and what he has received from another. Now John and every mere human of himself is of the earth. Therefore, from this standpoint, he has nothing to speak of except earthly things. And if he does speak of divine things, it is due to a divine enlightenment: "Your heart has visions, but unless they come from the Almighty, ignore them" (Sir 34:6). So the Apostle says, "It is not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Cor 15:10);

"For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit who is speaking through you" (Mt 10:20). Accordingly, as regards John, he **is earthly and speaks of earthly things**. And if there was anything divine in him, it did not come from him, as he was the recipient, but from the one enlightening him.

533 Now he describes the doctrine of Christ. And he does three things. First, he shows its origin, which is heavenly; hence he says, **The One who comes from heaven is above all things**. For although the body of Christ was of the earth as regards the matter of which it was made, yet it came from heaven as to its efficient cause, inasmuch as his body was formed by divine power. It also came from heaven because the eternal and uncreated person of the Son came from heaven by assuming a body. "No one has gone up to heaven except the One who came down from heaven, the Son of Man, who lives in heaven" (above 3:13).

Secondly, he shows the dignity of Christ, which is very great; so he says, **is above all things**. This was explained above.

Thirdly, he infers the dignity of Christ's doctrine, which is most certain, because **he testifies to what he sees and to what he hears**. For Christ, as God, is truth itself; but as man, he is its witness: "For this was I born, and for this I came into the world: to testify to the truth" (below 18:37). Therefore, he gives testimony to himself: "You testify to yourself" (below 8:13). And he testifies to what is certain, because his testimony is about what he has heard with the Father: "I speak to the world what I have heard from my Father" (below 8:26); "What we have seen and heard" (1 Jn 1:3).

534 Note that knowledge of a thing is acquired in through sight and in one way another way through hearing. For by sight, a knowledge of a thing is acquired by means of the very thing seen; but by hearing, a thing is not made known by the very voice that is heard, but by means of the understanding of the one speaking. And so, because the Lord has knowledge which he has received from the Father, he says, **to what he sees**, insofar as he proceeds from the essence of the Father; **and to what he hears, insofar** as he proceeds as the Word of the Father's intellect. Now because among intellectual beings, their act of being is other than their act of understanding, their knowledge through sight is other than their knowledge through hearing. But in God the Father, the act of being (*esse*) and the act of understanding (*intelligere*) are the same. Thus in the Son, to see and hear are the same thing. Moreover, since even in one who sees there is not the essence of the thing seen in itself but only its similitude, as also in the hearer there is not the actual thought of the speaker but only an indication of it, so the one who sees is not the essence of the thing in itself, nor is the listener the very thought expressed. In the Son, however, the very essence of the Father is received by generation, and he himself is the Word; and so in him to see and to

hear are the same.

And so John concludes that since the doctrine of Christ has more grandeur and is more certain than his, one must listen to Christ rather than to him.

LECTURE 6

32b "And his testimony no one accepts.
33 But whoever accepts his testimony
has given a sign [or certifies] that God is true.
34 For the One whom God sends
speaks the words of God,
for God does not bestow the Spirit in fractions.
35 The Father loves the Son,
and has put everything into his hands.
36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.
But whoever is unbelieving in the Son
will not see life;
rather, the anger of God rests on him."

535 Above, John the Baptist commended the teaching of Christ; here, however, he considers the difference in those who receive it. Thus, he treats of the faith that must be given to this teaching. And he does three things. First, he shows the scarcity of those who believe. Secondly, the obligation to believe (v 33). Lastly, the reward for belief (v 36).

536 He says therefore: I say that Christ has certain knowledge and that he speaks the truth. Yet although few accept his testimony, that is no reflection on his teaching, because it is not the fault of the teaching but of those who do not accept it: namely, the disciples of John, who did not yet believe, and the Pharisees, who slandered his teaching. Thus he says, **And his testimony no one accepts.**

537 **No one** can be explained in two ways. First, so that it implies a few; and so some did accept his testimony. He shows that some did accept it when he adds, "But whoever accepts his testimony." The Evangelist used this way of speaking before when he said: "He came unto his own, and his own did not receive him" (above 1:11): because a few did receive him.

In another way, to accept his testimony is understood as to believe in God. But

no one can believe of himself, but only due to God: "You are saved by grace" (Eph 2:8). And so he says, his testimony no one accepts, i.e., of himself, but it is given to him by God.

This can be explained in another way by realizing that Scripture refers to people in two ways. As long as we are in this world the wicked are mingled with the good; and so Scripture sometimes speaks of "the people," or "they," meaning those who are good; while at other times, the same words can refer to the wicked. We can see this in Jeremiah (26): for first it says that all the people and the priests sought to kill Jeremiah, and this referred to those who were evil; then at once it says that all the people sought to free him, and this referred to those who were good. In the same way, John the Baptist says, looking to the left, i.e., toward those who are evil, **And his testimony no one accepts**; and later, referring to those on the right, i.e., to the good, he says, **But whoever accepts his testimony**.

538 But whoever accepts his testimony. Here he speaks of the obligation to believe, i.e., to submit oneself to divine truth. As to this he does four things. First, he presents the divine truth. Secondly, he speaks of the proclamation of the divine truth (v 34). Thirdly, of the ability to proclaim it (v 34b). Fourthly, he gives the reason for this ability (v 35).

539 Man's obligation to the faith is to submit himself to divine truth, and so he says that if few accept his testimony that means that some do. Hence he says, **whoever accepts his testimony**, i.e., whoever he may be, **has given a sign**, i.e., he ought to affix a certain sign or has in fact placed a seal in his own heart, that Christ is God. And he [Christ] is true, because he said that he is God. If he were not, he would not be true, but it is written: "God is true" (Rom 3:4). Concerning this seal it is said: "Set me as a seal on your heart" (Sg 8:6), and "The foundation of God stands firm, bearing a seal, etc." as we read in 2 Timothy (2:19).

Or, following Chrysostom, he has given a sign, i.e., he has shown **that God**, that is, the Father, **is true**, because he sent his Son whom he promised to send. The Evangelist says this to show that those who do not believe Christ deny the truthfulness of the Father.

540 Then immediately he adds a commendation of divine truth, saying, **For the One whom God sends speaks the words of God**. As if to say: He has given this as a sign, namely, that Christ, whose testimony he accepts, **the One whom God sends speaks the words of God**. Consequently, one who believes Christ believes the Father: "I speak to the world what I have heard from the

Father" (below 8:26). So he expressed verbally nothing but the Father and the words of the Father, because he has been sent by the Father, and because he is the Word of the Father. Hence, he says that he even bespeaks the Father.

Or, if the statement **God is true** refers to Christ, we understand the distinction of persons; for since the Father is true God, and Christ is true God, it follows that the true God sent the true God, who is distinct from him in person, but not in nature.

541 The ability to proclaim divine truth is present in Christ in the highest degree, because he does not receive the Spirit in a partial way; and so he says, **for God does not bestow the Spirit in fractions.**

You might say that although God sent Christ, yet not all that Christ says is from God, but only some of the things; for even the prophets spoke at times from their own spirit, and at other times from the Spirit of God. For example, we read that the prophet Nathan (2 Sm 7:3), speaking out of his own spirit, advised David to build a temple, but that later, under the influence of the Spirit of God, he retracted this. However, the Baptist shows that such is not the case with Christ. For the prophets receive the Spirit of God only fractionally, i.e., in reference to some things, but not as to all things. Consequently, not all they say are the words of God. But Christ, who received the Spirit fully and in regards to all things, speaks the words of God as to all things.

542 But how can the Holy Spirit be given in fractions, since he is immense or infinite, according to the Creed of Athanasius: "Immense is the Father, immense the Son, immense the Holy Spirit"? I answer that the Holy Spirit is given in fractions, not in respect to his essence or power, according to which he is infinite, but as to his gifts, which are given fractionally: "Grace has been given to each of us according to degree" (Eph 4:7).

543 We should note that we can understand in two ways what is said here, namely, that God the Father did not give the Spirit to Christ in a partial way. We can understand it as applying to Christ as God, and, in another way, as applying to Christ as man. Something is given to someone in order that he may have it: and it is appropriate to Christ to have the Spirit, both as God and as man. And so he has the Holy Spirit with respect to both. As man, Christ has the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me" (Is 6 1:1), namely, as man. But as God, he has the Holy Spirit only as manifesting himself, inasmuch as the Spirit proceeds from him: "He will give glory to me," that is, make known, "because he will have received from me," as is said below (16:14).

Therefore, both as God and as man, Christ has the Holy Spirit beyond measure. For God the Father is said to give the Holy Spirit without measure to Christ as God, because he gives to Christ the power and might to bring forth (*spirandi*) the Holy Spirit, who, since he is infinite, was infinitely given to him by the Father: for the Father gives it just as he himself has it, so that the Holy Spirit proceeds from him as much as from the Son. And he gave him this by an everlasting generation. Similarly, Christ as man has the Holy Spirit without measure, for the Holy Spirit is given to different men in differing degrees, because grace is given to each "by measure" [cf., e.g., Mk 4:24; Mt 7:2]. But Christ as man did not receive a certain amount of grace; and so he did not receive the Holy Spirit in any limited degree.

544 It should be noted, however, that there are three kinds of grace in Christ: the grace of [the hypostatic] union, the grace of a singular person, which is habitual, and the grace of headship, which animates all the members. And Christ received each of these graces without measure.

The grace of union, which is not habitual grace, but a certain gratuitous gift, is given to Christ in order that in his human nature he be the true Son of God, not by participation, but by nature, insofar as the human nature of Christ is united to the Son of God in person. This union is called a grace because he had it without any preceding merits. Now the divine nature is infinite; hence from that union he received an infinite gift. Thus it was not by degree or measure that he received the Holy Spirit, i.e., the gift and grace of union which, as gratuitous, is attributed to the Holy Spirit.

His grace is termed habitual insofar as the soul of Christ was full of grace and wisdom: "the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (above 1:14). We might wonder if Christ did receive this grace without measure. For since such grace is a created gift, we must admit that it has a finite essence. Therefore, as far as its essence is concerned, since it is something created, this habitual grace was finite. Yet Christ is not said to have received this in a limited degree for three reasons.

First, because of the one who is receiving the grace. For it is plain that each thing's nature has a finite capacity, because even though one might receive an infinite good by knowing, loving and enjoying it, nevertheless one receives it by enjoying it in a finite way. Further, each creature has, according to its species and nature, a finite amount of capacity. But this does not make it impossible for the divine power to make another creature possessing a greater capacity; but then such a creature would not be of a nature which is specifically the same, just as when one is added to three, there is another species of number. Therefore, when some nature is not given as much of the divine goodness as its natural

capacity is able to contain, then it is seen to be given to it by measure; but when its total natural capacity is filled, it is not given to it by measure, because even though there is a measure on the part of the one receiving, there is none on the part of the one giving, who is prepared to give all. Thus, if someone takes a pail to a river, he sees water present without measure, although he takes the water by measure on account of the limited dimensions of the pail. Thus, the habitual grace of Christ is indeed finite according to its essence, but it is said to be given in an infinite way and not by measure or partially, because as much was given to him as created nature was able to hold.

Secondly, Christ did not receive habitual grace in a limited way by considering the gift which is received. For every form or act, considered in its very nature, is not finite in the way in which it is made finite by the subject in which it is received. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent it from being finite in its essence, insofar as its existence (*esse*) is received in some subject. For that is infinite according to its essence which has the entire fulness of being (*essendi*): and this is true of God alone, who is the supreme *esse*. But if we consider some "spiritual" form as not existing in a subject, for example, whiteness or color, it would not be infinite in essence, because its essence would be confined to some genus or species; nevertheless it would still possess the entire fulness of that species. Thus, considering the nature of the species, it would be without limit or measure, since it would have everything that can pertain to that species. But if whiteness or color should be received into some subject, it does not always have everything that pertains necessarily and always to the nature of this form, but only when the subject has it as perfectly as it is capable of being possessed, i.e., when the way the subject possesses it is equivalent to the power of the thing possessed. Thus, Christ's habitual grace was finite according to its essence; yet it is said to have been in him without a limit or measure because he received everything that could pertain to the nature of grace. Others, however, do not receive all this, but one receives in one way, and another in another way: "There are different graces"

The third reason for saying that the habitual grace of Christ was not received in a limited way is based on its cause. For an effect is in some way present in its cause. Therefore, if someone has an infinite power to produce something, he is said to have what can be produced without measure and, in a way, infinitely. For example, if someone has a fountain which could produce an infinite amount of water, he would be said to have water in an infinite way and without measure. Thus, the soul of Christ has infinite grace and grace without measure from the fact that he has united to himself the Word, which is the infinite and unfailing source of the entire emanation of all created things.

From what has been said, it is clear that the grace of Christ which is called capital grace, insofar as he is head of the Church, is infinite in its influence. For from the

fact that he possessed that from which the gifts of the Spirit could flow out without measure, he received the power to pour them out without measure, so that the grace of Christ is sufficient not merely for the salvation of some men, but for all the people of the entire world: "He is the offering for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the entire world" (1 Jn 2:2), and even for many worlds, if they existed.

545 Christ also had the ability appropriate for declaring divine truth, because all things are in his power; hence he says, **The Father loves the Son, and has put everything into his hands.** This can refer to Christ both as man and as God, but in different ways. If it refers to Christ according to his divine nature, then **loves** does not indicate a principle but a sign: for we cannot say that the Father gives all things to the Son because he loves him. There are two reasons for this. First, because to love is an act of the will; but to give a nature to the Son is to generate him. Therefore, if the Father gave a nature to the Son by his will, the will of the Father would be the principle of the generation of the Son; and then it would follow that the Father generated the Son by will, and not by nature; and this is the Arian heresy.

Secondly, because the love of the Father for the Son is the Holy Spirit. So, if the love of the Father for the Son were the reason why the Father put everything into his hands, it would follow that the Holy Spirit would be the principle of the generation of the Son; and this is not acceptable. Therefore, we should say that **loves** implies only a sign. As if to say: The perfect love with which **the Father loves the Son**, is a sign that the Father **has put everything into his hands**, i. e., everything which the Father has: "All things have been given to me by my Father- (Mt 11:27); "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands" (below 13:3).

But if loves refers to Christ as man, then it implies the notion of a principle, so that the Father is said to have put everything into the hands of the Son, everything, that is, that is in heaven and on earth: "All authority has been given to me, in heaven and on earth," as he says in Matthew (28:18); "He has appointed him [the Son] the heir of all things" (Heb 1:2). And the reason why the Father gives to the Son is because he loves the Son; hence he says, **The Father loves the Son**, for the Father's love is the reason for creating each creature: "You love everything which exists, and hate nothing which you have made" (Wis 11:25). Concerning his love for the Son we read in Matthew (3:17): "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; "He has brought us into the kingdom of the Son of his love," that is, i.e., of his beloved Son (Col 1:13).

546 Then when he says, **Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life**, he shows the fruit of faith. First, he sets forth the reward for faith. Secondly, the penalty for unbelief (v 36b).

547 The reward for faith is beyond our comprehension, because it is eternal life. Hence he says, **Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life**. And this is shown from what has already been said. For if the Father has given everything he has to the Son, and the Father has eternal life, then he has given to the Son to be eternal life: "Just as the Father possesses life in himself, so he has given it to the Son to have life in himself" (below 5:26): and this belongs to Christ insofar as he is the true and natural Son of God. "That you may be in his true Son, Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 Jn 5:20). **Whoever believes in the Son** has that toward which he tends, that is, the Son, in whom he believes. But the Son is eternal life; therefore, whoever believes in him has eternal life. As it says below (10:27): "My sheep hear my voice ... and I give them eternal life."

548 The penalty for unbelief is unendurable, both as to the punishment of loss and as to the punishment of sense. As to the punishment of loss, because it deprives one of life; hence he says, **whoever is unbelieving in the Son will not see life**. He does not say, "will not have," but will not see, because eternal life consists in the vision of the true life: "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (below 17:3): and unbelievers will not have this vision and this knowledge: "Let him not see the brooks of honey" (Jb 4:19), that is, the sweetness of eternal life. And he says, **will not see**, because to see life itself is the proper reward for faith united with love.

The punishment of sense is unendurable because one is severely punished; so he says: **the anger of God rests on him**. For in the Scriptures anger indicates the pain with which God punishes those who are evil. So when he says, the anger of God, the Father, rests on him, it is the same as saying: They will feel punishment from God the Father.

Although the Father "has given all judgment to the Son," as we read below (5:22), the Baptist refers this to the Father in order to lead the Jews to believe in the Son. It is written about this judgment: "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31). He says, **rests on him**, because this punishment will never be absent from the unbelieving, and because all who are born into this mortal life are the objects of God's anger, which was first felt by Adam: "We were by nature," that is, through birth, "children of anger" (Eph 2:3). And we are freed from this anger only by faith in Christ; and so the anger of God rests on those who do not believe in Christ, the Son of God.

4

LECTURE I

1 When, therefore, Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was making more disciples and baptizing more than John 2 (although Jesus did not himself baptize, but his disciples did), 3 he left Judea, and went again to Galilee. 4 He had, however, to pass through Samaria. 5 He came therefore to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the plot of land which Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 This was the site of Jacob's well. Jesus, tired from his journey, rested there at the well. It was about the sixth hour. 7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (His disciples had gone to the town to buy some food.) 9 So the Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me, a woman of Samaria, for a drink?" (Recall that the Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans.)

549 Having set forth the teaching of Christ on spiritual regeneration, and that Christ had given this grace of spiritual regeneration to the Jews, he now shows how Christ gave this grace to the Gentiles. Now the salutary grace of Christ had been dispensed in two ways to the Gentiles: through teaching and through miracles. "Going forth, they preached everywhere": this is the teaching; "the Lord cooperated with them, and confirmed the word with signs". These are the miracles (Mk 16:20).

First, he shows the future conversion of the Gentiles through teaching. Secondly, their future conversion through miracles (v 43). As to the first, he does two things. First, he sets down certain matters preliminary to the teaching. Secondly, he presents the teaching and its effect (v 10). As to the first, he sets down three preliminary facts. First, what relates to the one teaching. Secondly, something about the matter taught. Thirdly, something about who received the instruction (v 7). As to the person teaching, the preliminary remark is about his journey to the place where he taught. Here he does three things. First, he gives the place which he left, that is, from Judea. Secondly, the place where he was going, to Galilee. Thirdly, the place through which he passed, Samaria. As to the first, he does three things. First, he gives the reason for his leaving Judea. Secondly, he

explains certain facts included in this reason. Thirdly, he describes Christ's departure from Judea (v 3).

550 The Evangelist says, **When, therefore, Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard**, because he wished to show that after the Baptist had calined the envy of his disciples, Jesus avoided the ill will of the Pharisees.

551 Since we read: "All things were known to the Lord God before they were created" (Sir 23:29), and "All things are naked and open to his eyes" (Heb 4:13), it seems that we should ask why Jesus is said to acquire new knowledge. We must answer that Jesus, in virtue of his divinity, knew from eternity all things, past, present and to come, as the scriptural passages cited above indicate. Nevertheless, as man, he did begin to know certain things through experiential knowledge. And it is this experiential knowledge that is indicated when it says here, **When Jesus learned**, after the news was brought to him, **that the Pharisees had heard**. And Christ willed to acquire this knowledge anew as a concession, to show the reality of his human nature, just as he willed to do and endure many other things characteristic of human nature.

552 Why does he say: **the Pharisees had heard that he was making more disciples and baptizing more than John**, when this would seem to be of no concern to them? For they persecuted John and did not believe in him: for as Matthew says (21:25), when the Lord questioned them about the source of John's baptism, they said: "If we say from heaven, he will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?" " Thus they did not believe in John.

There are two answers to this. One is that those disciples of John who had spoken against Christ were either Pharisees or allies of the Pharisees. For we see in Matthew (9:11, 14), that the Pharisees along with the disciples of John raised questions against the disciples of Christ. And so according to this explanation, then, the Evangelist says that **When, therefore, Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard**, that is, after he learned that John's disciples, who were Pharisees or allied with the Pharisees, had raised questions and had been disturbed about his baptism and that of his disciples, **he left Judea**.

Or, we might say that the Pharisees were disturbed at John's preaching due to their envy, and for this reason they persuaded Herod to arrest him. This is plain from Matthew (17:12), where Christ, speaking of John, says, "Elijah has already come ... and they did with him whatever they wanted," and then he adds, "so also will the Son of Man suffer from them." The Gloss comments on this that it was the Pharisees who incited Herod to arrest John and put him to death. Thus it seems probable that they felt the same way toward Christ because of what he

was preaching. And this is what it says, that is, the envious Pharisees and persecutors of Christ **had heard**, with the intention of persecuting him, **that he was making more disciples and baptizing more than John**.

553 This kind of hearing is described by Job (28:22): "Death and destruction have said: We have heard of his deeds." The good, on the other hand, hear in order to obey: "We have heard him in Ephrathah" (Ps 131:6), followed by, "We will adore at his footstool."

The Pharisees heard two things. First, that Christ made more disciples than John. This was right and reasonable, for as we read above (3:30), Christ must increase and John must decrease. The second thing was that Christ baptized; and rightly so, because he cleanses: "Wash me from my injustice" (Ps 50:4), and again in Psalm (7:7): "Rise up, O Lord," by baptizing, "in the command you have given," concerning baptism, "and a congregation of people," united through baptism, "will surround you."

554 Then when he says, **although Jesus did not himself baptize**, he explains what he has just said about Christ's baptizing. Augustine says that there is an apparent inconsistency here: for he had stated that Jesus was baptizing, whereas now he says, as though correcting himself, **Jesus did not himself baptize**.

There are two ways to understand this. This first way is that of Chrysostom. What the Evangelist now says is true, i.e., that Christ did not baptize. When he said above that Jesus was baptizing, this was the report received by the Pharisees. For certain people came to the Pharisees and said: You are envious of John because he has disciples and is baptizing. But Jesus is making more disciples than John. and is also baptizing. Why do you put up with him? So the Evangelist is not himself saying that Jesus was baptizing, but only that the Pharisees heard that he was. It is with the intention of correcting this false rumor that the Evangelist says: It is true that the Pharisees heard that Christ was baptizing, but this is not true. So he adds: **although Jesus did not himself baptize, but his disciples did**. And so for Chrysostom, Christ did not baptize, because the Holy Spirit was not given at any time before the passion of Christ in the baptism of John and his disciples. The purpose of John's baptism was to accustom men to the baptism of Christ and to gather people in order to instruct them, as he says. Moreover, it would not have been fitting for Christ to baptize if the Holy Spirit were not given in his baptism; but the Spirit was not given until after the passion of Christ, as we read below (7:39): "The Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified."

According to Augustine, however, one should say, and this is the preferable, way,

that the disciples did baptize with the baptism of Christ, that is, in water and the Spirit, and the Spirit was given in this baptism, and also that Christ did and did not baptize. Christ did baptize because he performed the interior cleansing; but he did not baptize because he did not wash them externally with the water. It was the office of the disciples to wash the body, while Christ gave the Spirit which cleansed within. So in the proper sense Christ did baptize, according to: "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit," as was said above (1:33).

With respect to the opinion of Chrysostom that the Holy Spirit was not yet given and so on, we might say that the Spirit was not yet given in visible signs, as he was given to the disciples after the resurrection; nevertheless, the Spirit had been given and was being given to believers through an interior sanctification.

The fact that Christ was not always baptizing gives an example to us that the major prelates of the churches should not occupy themselves with things that can be performed by others, but should allow them to be done by those of lesser rank: "Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 1:17).

555 If someone should ask whether Christ's disciples had been baptized, it could be said, as Augustine answered Stelentius, that they had been baptized with the baptism of John, because some of Christ's disciples had been disciples of John. Or, which is more likely, they were baptized with the baptism of Christ, in order that Christ might have baptized servants through whom he would baptize others. This is the meaning of what is said below (13:10): "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except his feet," and then follows, "and you are clean, but not all."

556 He then mentions Christ's going away, **he left Judea**. He left for three reasons. First, to get away from the envy of the Pharisees, who were disturbed because of what they had heard about Christ, and were preparing to harass him. By this he gives us the example that we should, with gentleness, yield ground to evil for a time: "Do not pile wood on his fire" (Sir 8:4). Another reason was to show us that it is not sinful to flee from persecution: "If they persecute you in one town, flee to another" (Mt 10:23). The third reason was that the time of his passion had not yet come: "My time has not yet come" (above 2:4). And there is an additional reason, a mystical one: he indicated by his leaving that because of persecution the disciples were destined to abandon the Jews and go to the Gentiles.

557 Then when he says, **and went again to Galilee**, he shows where he was going. He says, **again**, because above (2:12) he had mentioned another time when Christ went to Galilee: when he went to Capernaum after the miracle at the

wedding. Since the other three evangelists did not mention this first trip, the Evangelist says **again** to let us know that the other evangelists had mentioned none of the matters he mentions up to this point, and that he is now beginning to give his account contemporaneous with theirs. According to one interpretation, Galilee is understood to signify the Gentile world, to which Christ passed from the Jews; for Galilee means "passage." According to another interpretation, Galilee signifies the glory of heaven, for Galilee also means "revelation."

558 Then he describes the intermediate place through which Christ passed; first in a general way, then specifically.

559 On his way to Galilee, Christ passes through Samaria; hence he says, **He had to pass through Samaria**. He says, **had to pass**, lest he seem to be acting contrary to his own teaching, for Christ says in Matthew (10:5): "Do not go on the roads of the Gentiles." Now since Samaria was Gentile territory, he shows that he went there of necessity and not by choice. Thus he says, **had to pass**, the reason being that Samaria was between Judea and Galilee.

It was Amri, the king of Israel, who bought the hill of Samaria from a certain Somer (1 Kgs 16:24); and it was there he built the city which he called Samaria, after the name of the person from whom he bought the land. After that, the kings of Israel used it as their royal city, and the entire region surrounding this city was called Samaria. When we read here that Christ **had to pass through Samaria**, we should understand the region rather than the city.

560 Describing it in more detail, he adds, **He came therefore to a city of Samaria**, i.e., of the region of Samaria, **called Sychar**. This Sychar is the same as Shechem. Genesis (33:18) says that Jacob camped near here and that two of his sons, enraged at the rape of Dinah, Jacob's daughter, by the son of the king of Shechem, killed all the males in that city. And so Jacob took possession of the city, and he lived there and dug many wells. Later, as he lay dying, he gave the land to his son Joseph: "I am giving you a portion more than your brothers" (Gn 48:22). And this is what he says: **near the plot of land which Jacob had given to his son Joseph**.

The Evangelist is so careful to record all these matters in order to show us that all the things which happened to the patriarchs were leading up to Christ, and that they pointed to Christ, and that he descended from them according to the flesh.

561 Then when he says, **This was the site of Jacob's well**, the Evangelist gives the material setting for the spiritual doctrine about to be taught. And this was most fitting: for the doctrine about to be taught was about water and a

spiritual font, and so he mentions the material well, thus giving rise to a discussion of the spiritual font, which is Christ: "For with you is the fountain of life" (Ps 35:10), namely, the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of life. Likewise, the well symbolizes baptism: "On that day a fountain will be open to the house of David, to cleanse the sinner and the unclean" (Zec 13:1).

He does three things here. First, he describes the well. Secondly, Christ's rest at the well. Thirdly, the time.

562 He describes the water source saying, **the site of Jacob's well**. Here one might object that further on (v 11) he says this source is deep; thus it did not gush water like a fountain. I answer, as does Augustine, that it was both a well and gushed water like a fountain. For every well is a fountain, although the converse is not true. For when water gushes from the earth we have a fountain; and if this happens just on the surface, the source is only a fountain. But if the water gushes both on the surface and below, we have a well; although it is also still called a fountain. It is called Jacob's well because he had dug this well there due to a shortage of water, as we read in Genesis (c 34).

563 **Jesus, tired from his journey, rested there at the well**. Jesus reveals his weakness (even though his power was unlimited), not because of a lack of power, but to show us the reality of the [human] nature he assumed. According to Augustine, Jesus is strong, for "In the beginning was the Word" (above 1:1); but he is weak, for "the Word was made flesh" (above 1:14). And so Christ, wishing to show the truth of his human nature, allowed it to do and to endure things proper to men; and to show the truth of his divine nature, he worked and performed things proper to God. Hence when he checked the inflow of divine power to his body, he became hungry and tired; but when he let his divine power influence his body, he did not become hungry in spite of a lack of food, and he did not become tired in his labors. "He had fasted forty days and forty nights, and was hungry" (Mt 4:2).

564 Seeing Jesus becoming tired from his journey is an example to us not to shrink from our work for the salvation of others: "I am poor, and have labored since my youth" (Ps,87:16). We also have an example of poverty, as Jesus **rested there**, upon the bare earth.

In its mystical meaning, this resting [literally, a sitting] of Christ indicates the abasement of his passion: "You know when I sit down (i.e., the passion), and when I rise" (Ps 138:2). Also, it indicates the authority of his teaching, for he speaks as one having power; thus we read in Matthew (5:1) that Christ, "sitting down, taught them."

565 He indicates the time, saying, **It was about the sixth hour.** There are both literal and mystical reasons for fixing the time. The literal reason was to show the cause of his tiredness: for men are more weary from work in the heat and at the sixth hour [at noon]. Again, it shows why Christ was resting: for men gladly rest near the water in the heat of the day.

There are three mystical reasons for mentioning the time. First, because Christ assumed flesh and came into the world in the sixth age of the world. Another is that man was made on the sixth day, and Christ was conceived in the sixth month. Third, at the sixth hour the sun is at its highest, and there is nothing left for it but to decline. In this context, the "sun" signifies temporal prosperity, as suggested by Job (31:26): "If I had looked at the sun when it shone, etc." Therefore Christ came when the prosperity of the world was at its highest, that is, it flourished through love in the hearts of men; but because of him natural love was bound to decline.

566 Next, we have a preliminary remark concerning the one who listens to Christ. First, we are introduced to the person who is taught. Secondly, we are given her preparation for his teaching.

567 The teaching is given to a Samaritan woman; so he says, a **Samaritan woman came to draw water.** This woman signifies the Church, not yet justified, of the Gentiles. It was then involved in idolatry, but was destined to be justified by Christ. She **came** from foreigners, i.e., from the Samaritans, who were foreigners, even though they lived in the neighboring territory: because the Church of the Gentiles, foreign to the Jewish race, would come to Christ: "Many will come from the East and the West, and will sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven," as we find in Matthew (8:11).

568 Christ prepares this woman for his teaching when he says, **Give me a drink.** First, we have the occasion for his asking her. Secondly, the Evangelist suggests why it was opportune to make this request (v 8).

569 The occasion and the preparation of the woman was the request of Christ; thus he says, **Give me a drink.** He asks for a drink both because he was thirsty for water on account of the heat of the day, and because he thirsted for the salvation of man on account of his love. Accordingly, while hanging on the cross he cried out: "I thirst."

570 Christ had the opportunity to ask this of the woman because his disciples, whom he would have asked for the water, were not there, thus the Evangelist says, **His disciples had gone to the town.**

Here we might notice three things about Christ. First, his humility, because **he was left alone. This** is an example to his disciples that they should suppress all pride. Someone might ask what need there was to train the disciples in humility, seeing that they had been but lowly fishermen and tentmakers. Those who say such things should remember that these very fishermen were suddenly made more deserving of respect than any king, more eloquent than philosophers and orators, and were the intimate companions of the Lord of creation. Persons of this kind, when they are suddenly promoted, ordinarily become proud, not being accustomed to such great honor.

Secondly, note Christ's temperance: for he was so little concerned about food that he did not bring anything to eat. Thirdly, note that he was also left alone on the cross: "I have trodden the wine press alone, and no one of the people was with me" (Is 63:3).

571 Our Lord prepared the woman to receive his spiritual teaching by giving her an occasion to question him. First, her question is given. Secondly, her reason for asking it (v 9).

572 Here we should point out that our Lord, when asking the woman for a drink, had in mind more a spiritual drink than a merely physical one. But the woman, not yet understanding about such a spiritual drink, thought only of a physical drink. So she responds: **How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me, a woman of Samaria, for a drink?** For Christ was a Jew, because it was promised that he would be from Judah: "The scepter will not be taken away from Judah ... until he who is to be sent comes" (Gn 49:10); and he was born from Judah: "It is evident that our Lord came from Judah" (Heb 7:14). The woman knew that Christ was Jewish from the way he dressed: for as Numbers (15:37) says, the Lord commanded the Jews to wear tassels on the corners of their garments, and put a violet cord on each tassel, so that they could be distinguished from other people.

573 Then the reason for this question is given: either by the Evangelist, as the Gloss says, or by the woman herself, as Chrysostom says; the reason being, **the Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans.**

Apropos of this, we should note that, as mentioned in 2 Kings, it was on account of their sins that the people of Israel, i.e., of the ten tribes, who were worshipping idols, were captured by the king of the Assyrians, and led as captives into Babylonia. Then, so that Samaria would not remain unpopulated, the king gathered people from various nations and forced them to live there. While they were there, the Lord sent lions and other wild beasts to trouble them; he did this to show that he let the Jews be captured because of their sins, and not because

of any lack in his own power. When news of their trouble reached the Assyrian king and he was informed that this was happening because these people were not observing the rites of the God of that territory, he sent them a priest of the Jews who would teach them God's law as found in the law of Moses. This is why, although these people were not Jewish, they came to observe the Mosaic law. However, along with their worship of the true God, they also worshipped idols, paid no attention to the prophets, and referred to themselves as Samaritans, from the city of Samaria which was built on a hill called Somer (1 Kgs 16:24). After the Jews returned to Jerusalem from their captivity, the Samaritans were a constant source of trouble, and as we read in Ezra, interfered with their building of the temple and the city. Although the Jews did not mix with other people, they especially avoided these Samaritans and would have nothing to do with them. And this is what we read: **Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans.** He does not say that the Samaritans do not associate with Jews, for they would have gladly done so and have cooperated with them. But the Jews rebuffed them in keeping with what is said in Deuteronomy (7:2): "Do not make agreements with them."

574 If it was not lawful for the Jews to associate with Samaritans, why did God ask a Samaritan woman for a drink? One might answer, as Chrysostorn does, that the Lord asked her because he knew that she would not give him the drink. But this is not an adequate answer, because one who asks what is not lawful is not free from sin—not to mention the scandal—even though what he asks for is not given to him. So we should say, as we find in Matthew (12:8): "The Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath." Thus, as Lord of the law, he was able to use or not use the law and its observances and legalities as it seemed suitable to him. And because the time was near when the nations would be called to the faith, he associated with those nations.

LECTURE 2

10 Jesus replied and said:

"If you knew the gift of God,
and realized who it is who says to you,
'Give me a drink,'
You perhaps would have asked him
that he give you living water."

11 The woman challenged him: "You, sir, have no bucket, and the

well is deep. How then could you have living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it with his sons and his flocks?" 13 Jesus replied and said:

"Whoever drinks this water
will be thirsty again,
but whoever drinks the water that I give,
will never be thirsty again.
14 The water that I give
will become a fountain within him,
leaping up to provide eternal life."

15 "Lord," the woman said, "Give me this water so that I shall not grow thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." 16 Jesus said to her: "Go, call your husband, and then come back here." 17 "I have no husband," replied the woman. Jesus said, "You are right in saying you have no husband, 18 for you have had five, and the man you are living with now is not your husband. What you said is true." 19 "Sir," said the woman, "I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you people claim that Jerusalem is the place where men must worship God." 21 Jesus said to her:

"Believe me, woman,
the hour is coming
when you will worship the Father
neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.
22 You people worship what
you do not understand,
while we understand what we worship,
since salvation is from the Jews.
23 But the hour is coming, and is now here,
when true worshipers will worship the Father
in spirit and in truth.
Indeed, it is just such worshipers the Father seeks.
24 God is spirit,
and those who worship him
ought to worship in spirit and truth."

25 The woman said to him: "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called Christ; when he comes he will tell us everything." 26 Jesus replied:

"I who speak to you am he."

575 Now (v 10), the Evangelist gives us Christ's spiritual teaching. First, he gives the teaching itself. Secondly, the effect it had (v 27). As to the first, he does two things. First, a summary of the entire instruction is given. Secondly, he unfolds it part by part (v 11).

576 He said therefore: You are amazed that I, a Jew, should ask you, a Samaritan woman, for water; but you should not be amazed, because I have come to give drink, even to the Gentiles. Thus he says: **If you knew the gift of God, and realized who it is who says to you, Give me a drink, you perhaps would have asked him.**

577 We may begin with what is last, and we should know first what is to be understood by water. And we should say that water signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes this grace is called fire, and at other times water, to show that it is neither one of these in its nature, but like them in the way it acts. It is called fire because it lifts up our hearts by its ardor and heat: "ardent in Spirit" (Rom 12:11), and because it burns up sins: "Its light is fire and flame" (Sg 8:6). Grace is called water because it cleanses: "I will pour clean water upon you, and you will be cleansed from all your uncleanness" (Ez 36:25), and because it brings a refreshing relief from the heat of temptations: "Water quenches a flaming fire" (Sir 3:33), and also because it satisfies our desires, in contrast to our thirst for earthly things and all temporal things whatever: "Come to the waters, all you who thirst" (Is 55:1).

Now water is of two kinds: living and non-living. Non-living water is water which is not connected or united with the source from which it springs, but is collected from the rain or in other ways into ponds and cisterns, and there it stands, separated from its source. But living water is connected with its source and flows from it. So according to this understanding, the grace of the Holy Spirit is correctly called living water, because the grace of the Holy Spirit is given to man in such a way that the source itself of the grace is also given, that is, the Holy Spirit. Indeed, grace is given by the Holy Spirit: "The love of God is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). For the Holy Spirit is the unfailing fountain from whom all gifts of grace flow "One and the same Spirit does all these things" (1 Cor 12:11). And so, if anyone has a gift of the Holy Spirit without having the Spirit, the water is not united with its source, and so is not living but dead: "Faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:20).

578 Then we are shown that in the case of adults, living water, i.e., grace, is obtained by desiring it, i.e., by asking. "The Lord has heard the desire of the

poor" (Ps. 9:17), for grace is not given to anyone without their asking and desiring it. Thus we say that in the justification of a sinner an act of free will is necessary to detest sin and to desire grace, according to Matthew (7:7): "Ask and you will receive." In fact, desire is so important that even the Son himself is told to ask: "Ask me, and I will give to you" (Ps 2:8). Therefore, no one who resists grace receives it, unless he first desires it; this is clear in the case of Paul who, before he received grace, desired it, saying: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Thus it is significant that he says, you perhaps would have asked him. He says perhaps on account of free will, with which a person sometimes desires and asks for grace, and sometimes does not.

579 There are two things which lead a person to desire and ask for grace: a knowledge of the good to be desired and a knowledge of the giver. So, Christ offers these two to her. First of all, a knowledge of the gift itself; hence he says, If you knew the gift of God, which is every desirable good which comes from the Holy Spirit: "I know that I cannot control myself unless God grants it to me" (Wis 8:2 1). And this is a gift of God, and so forth. Secondly, he mentions the giver; and he says, and realized who it is who says to you, i.e., if you knew the one who can give it, namely, that it is I: "When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth ... he will bear witness to me" (below 15:26); "You have given gifts to men" (Ps 67:19).

Accordingly, this teaching concerns three things: the gift of living water, asking for this gift, and the giver himself.

580 When he says, The woman challenged him, he treats these three things explicitly. First, the gift; secondly, asking for the gift (v 19); and thirdly, the giver (v 25). He does two things about the first. First, he explains the gift by showing its power. Secondly, he considers the perfection of the gift (v 15). About the first he does two things. First, he gives the woman's request. Secondly, Christ's answer (v 13).

581 We should note, with respect to the first, that this Samaritan woman, because she was sensual, understood in a worldly sense what the Lord understood in a spiritual sense: "The sensual man does not perceive those things that pertain to the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:14). Consequently, she tried to reject what our Lord said as unreasonable and impossible with the following argument: You promise me living water; and it must come either from this well or from another one. But it cannot come from this well because **You, sir, have no bucket, and the well is deep;** and it does not seem probable that you can get it from some other well, because you are not **greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well.**

582 Let us first examine what she says, **You, sir, have no bucket**, i.e., no pail to use to draw water from the well, **and the well is deep**, so you cannot reach the water by hand without a bucket.

The depth of the well signifies the depth of Sacred Scripture and of divine wisdom: "It has great depth. Who can find it out?" (Ecc 7:25). The bucket with which the water of wisdom is drawn out is prayer: "If any of you lack wisdom, ask God" (Jas 1:5).

583 The second point is given at, **Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well?** As if to say: Have you better water to give us than Jacob? She calls Jacob her father not because the Samaritans were descendants of the Jews, as is clear from what was said before, but because the Samaritans had the Mosaic law, and because they occupied the land promised to the descendants of Jacob.

The woman praised this well on three counts. First, on the authority of the one who gave it; so she says: our father Jacob, who gave us this well. Secondly, on account of the freshness of its water, saying: Jacob drank from it with his sons: for they would not drink it if it were not fresh, but only give it to their cattle. Thirdly, she praises its abundance, saying, and his flocks: for since the water was fresh, they would not have given it to their flocks unless it were also abundant.

So, too, Sacred Scripture has great authority: for it was given by the Holy Spirit. It is delightfully fresh: "How sweet are your words to my palate" (Ps 118:103). Finally, it is exceedingly abundant, for it is given not only to the wise, but also to the unwise.

584 Then when he says, Jesus replied and said, he sets down the Lord's response, in which he explains the power of his doctrine. First, with respect to the fact that he had called it water. Secondly, with respect to the fact that he called it living water (v 14).

585 He shows that his doctrine is the best water because it has the effect of water, that is, it takes away thirst much more than does that natural water. He shows by this that he is greater than Jacob. So he says, **Jesus replied and said**, as if to say: You say that Jacob gave you a well; but I will give you better water, because **whoever drinks this water**, that is, natural water, or the water of sensual desire and concupiscence, although it may satisfy his appetite for a while, **will be thirsty again**, because the desire for pleasure is insatiable: "When will I wake up and find wine again?" (Prv 23:35). **But whoever drinks the water**, that is, spiritual water, **that I give, will never be thirsty again**.

"My servants will drink, and you will be thirsty," as said in Isaiah (65:13).

586 Since we read in Sirach (24:29): "Those who drink me will still thirst," how is it possible that we will never be thirsty if we drink this water of divine wisdom, since this Wisdom itself says we will still thirst? I answer that both are true: because he who drinks the water that Christ gives still thirsts and does not thirst. But whoever drinks natural water will become thirsty again for two reasons. First, because material and natural water is not eternal, and it does not have an eternal cause, but an impermanent one; therefore its effects must also cease: "All these things have passed away like a shadow" (Wis 5:9). But spiritual water has an eternal cause, that is, the Holy Spirit, who is the unfailing fountain of life. Accordingly, he who drinks of this will never thirst; just as someone who had within himself a fountain of living water would never thirst.

The other reason is that there is a difference between a spiritual and a temporal thing. For although each produces a thirst, they do so in different ways. When a temporal thing is possessed it causes us to be thirsty, not for the thing itself, but for something else; while a spiritual thing when possessed takes away the thirst for other things, and causes us to thirst for it. The reason for this is that before temporal things are possessed, they are highly regarded and thought satisfying; but after they are possessed, they are found to be neither so great as thought nor sufficient to satisfy our desires, and so our desires are not satisfied but move on to something else. On the other hand, a spiritual thing is not known unless it is possessed: "No one knows but he who receives it" (Rv 2:17). So, when it is not possessed, it does not produce a desire; but once it is possessed and known, then it brings pleasure and produces desire, but not to possess something else. Yet, because it is imperfectly known on account of the deficiency of the one receiving it, it produces a desire in us to possess it perfectly. We read of this thirst: "My soul thirsted for God, the living fountain" (Ps 41:2). This thirst is not completely taken away in this world because in this life we cannot understand spiritual things; consequently, one who drinks this water will still thirst for its completion. But he will not always be thirsty, as though the water will run out, for we read (Ps 35:9): "They will be intoxicated from the richness of your house." In the life of glory, where the blessed drink perfectly the water of divine grace, they will never be thirsty again: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for what is right," that is, in this world, "for they will be satisfied," in the life of glory" (Mt 5:6).

587 Then when he says, **The water that I give will become a fountain within him, leaping up to provide eternal life**, he shows from the movement of the water that his doctrine is living water; thus he says that it is a leaping fountain: "The streams of the river bring joy to the city of God" (Ps 45:4).

The course of material water is downward, and this is different from the course of spiritual water, which is upward. Thus he says: I say that material water is such that it does not slake your thirst; but the water that I give not only quenches your thirst, but it is a living water because it is united with its source. Hence he says that this water **will become a fountain within** one: a fountain leading, through good works, to eternal life. So he says, **leaping up**, that is, making us leap up, **to eternal life**, where there is no thirst: "He who believes in me, out of his heart there will flow rivers " that is, of good desires, "of living water" (below 7:38); "With you is the fountain of life" (Ps 3 5:10).

588 Then when he says, **The woman said**, he states her request for the gift. First, her understanding of the gift is noted. Secondly, the woman is found guilty (v 17). As was said, the way to obtain this gift is by prayer and request. And so first, we have the woman's request. Secondly, Christ's answer (v 16).

589 We should note with respect to the first that at the beginning of this conversation the woman did not refer to Christ as "Lord," but simply as a Jew, for she said: "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me, a woman of Samaria, for a drink?" But now as soon as she hears that he can be of use to her and give her water, she calls him "Lord": Lord, give me this water. For she was thinking of natural water, and was subject to the two natural necessities of thirst and labor, that is, of going to the well and of carrying the water. So she mentions these two things when asking for the water: saying in reference to the first, **so that I shall not grow thirsty**; and in reference to the second, **and have to keep coming here to draw water**, for man naturally shrinks from labor: "They do not labor as other men" (Ps 72:5).

590 Then (v 16), the answer of Jesus is given. Here we should note that our Lord answered her in a spiritual way, but she understood in a sensual way. Accordingly, this can be explained in two ways. One way is that of Chrysostom, who says that our Lord intended to give the water of spiritual instruction not only to her, but especially to her husband, for as is said, "Man is the head of woman" (1 Cor 11:3), so that Christ wanted God's precepts to reach women through men, and "If the wife wishes to learn anything, let her ask her husband at home" (1 Cor 14:35). So he says, **Go, call your husband, and then come back here**; and then I will give it to you with him and through him.

Augustine explains it another way, mystically. For as Christ spoke symbolically of water, he did the same of her husband. Her husband, according to Augustine, is the intellect: for the will brings forth and conceives because of the cognitive power that moves it; thus the will is like a woman, while the reason, which moves the will, is like her husband. Here the woman, i.e., the will, was ready to receive,

but was not moved by the intellect and reason to a correct understanding, but was still detained on the level of sense. For this reason the Lord said to her, Go, you who are still sensual, **call your husband**, call in the reasoning intellect so you can understand in a spiritual and intellectual way what you now perceive in a sensual way; **and then come back here**, by understanding under the guidance of reason.

591 Here (v 17), the woman is found guilty by Christ. First, her answer is set down. Secondly, the encounter in which she is found guilty by Christ.

592 As to the first, we should note that the woman, desiring to hide her wrongdoing, and regarding Christ as only a mere man, did answer Christ truthfully, although she keep silent about her sin, for as we read, "A fornicating woman will be walked on like dung in the road" (Sir 9:10). She said, **I have no husband**. This was true; for although she previously had a number of husbands, five of them, she did not now have a lawful husband, but was just living with a man; and it is for this that the Lord judges her.

593 Then the Evangelist reports that Jesus said to her: **You are right in saying you have no husband**, a legitimate husband; **for you have had five**, before this one, **and the man you are living with now**, using as a husband, **is not your husband. What you said is true**, because you do not have a husband. The reason our Lord spoke to her about these things he had not learned from her and which were her secrets, was to bring her to a spiritual understanding so that she might believe there was something divine about Christ.

594 In the mystical sense, her five husbands are the five books of Moses: for, as was said, the Samaritans accepted these. And so Christ says, **you have had five**, and then follows [understanding Christ's words in a slightly different sense, as meaning:] **and he whom you now have**, i.e., he to whom you are now listening, i.e., Christ, **is not your husband**, because you do not believe.

This explanation, as Augustine says, is not very good. For this woman came to her present "husband" after having left the other five, whereas those who come to Christ do not put aside the five books of Moses. We should rather say, **you have had five**, i.e., the five senses, which you have used up to this time; but **the man you are living with now**, i.e., an erring reason, with which you still understand spiritual things in a sensual way, **is not your lawful husband**, but an adulterer who is corrupting you. **Call your husband**, i.e., your intellect, so that you may really understand me.

595 Now the Evangelist treats of the request by which the gift is obtained, which

is prayer. First there is the woman's inquiry about prayer. Secondly, Christ's answer (v 21). Concerning the first the woman does two things. First, she admits that Christ is qualified to answer her question. Secondly, she asks the question (v 20).

596 And so this woman, hearing what Christ had told her about things that were secret, admits that the one who up to now she believed was a mere man, is a prophet, and capable of settling her doubts. For it is characteristic of prophets to reveal what is not present, and hidden: "He who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer" (1 Sin 9:9). And so she says, **Sir, I see that you are a prophet.** As if to say: You show that you are a prophet by revealing hidden things to me. It is clear from this, as Augustine says, that her husband was beginning to return to her. But he did not return completely because she regarded Christ as a prophet: for although he was a prophet—"A prophet is not without honor except in his own country" (Mt 13:57)—he was more than a prophet, because he produces prophets: "Wisdom produces friends of God and prophets" (Wis 7:27)

597 Then she asks her question about prayer, saying: **Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you people claim that Jerusalem is the place where men must worship God.** Here we should admire the woman's diligence and attention: for women are considered curious and unproductive, and not only unproductive, but also lovers of ease (1 Tim 5), whereas she did not ask Christ about worldly affairs, or about the future, but about the things of God, in keeping with the advice, "Seek first the kingdom of God" (Mt 6:33)

She first asks a question about a matter frequently discussed in her country, that is, about the place to pray; this was the subject of argument between Jews and Samaritans. She says, **Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you people say.** We should mention that the Samaritans, worshiping God according to the precepts of the law, built a temple in which to adore him; and they did not go to Jerusalem where the Jews interfered with them. They built their temple on Mount Gerizim, while the Jews built their temple on Mount Sion. The question they debated was which of these places was the more fitting place of prayer; and each presented reasons for its own side. The Samaritans said that Mount Gerizim was more fitting, because their ancestors worshiped the Lord there. So she says, **Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain.**

598 How can this woman say, **our ancestors**, since the Samaritans were not descended from Israel? The answer, according to Chrysostom, is that some claim that Abraham offered his son on that mountain; but others claim that it was on Mount Zion. Or, we could say that **our ancestors** means Jacob and his sons, who as stated in Genesis (33) and as mentioned before, lived in Shechem, which

is near Mount Gerizim, and who probably worshiped the Lord there on that mountain. Or it could be said that the children of Israel worshiped on this mountain when Moses ordered them to ascend Mount Gerizim that he might bless those who observed God's precepts, as recorded in Deuteronomy (6). And she calls them her ancestors either because the Samaritans observed the law given to the children of Israel, or because the Samaritans were now living in the land of Israel, as said before.

The Jews said that the place to worship was in Jerusalem, by command of the Lord, who, had said: "Take care not to offer your holocausts in every place, but offer them in the place the Lord will choose" (Dt 12:13). At first, this place of prayer was in Shiloh, and then after, on the authority of Solomon and the prophet Nathan, the ark was taken from Shiloh to Jerusalem, and it was there the temple was built: so we read: "He left the tabernacle in Shiloh," and a few verses later, "But he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loved" (Ps 77:60). Thus the Samaritans appealed to the authority of the patriarchs, and the Jews appealed to the authority of the prophets, whom the Samaritans did not accept. This is the issue the woman raises. It is not surprising that she was taught about this, for it often happens in places where there are differences in beliefs that even the simple people are instructed about them. Because the Samaritans were continually arguing with the Jews over this, it came to the knowledge of the women and ordinary people.

599 Christ's answer is now set down (v 21). First he distinguishes three types of prayer. Secondly, he compares them to each other (v 22).

600 As to the first, he first of all gains the woman's attention, to indicate that he was about to say something important, saying, **Believe me**, and have faith, for faith is always necessary: "To come to God, one must believe" (Heb 11:6); "If you do not believe, you will not understand" (Is 7:9).

Secondly, he mentions the three kinds of worship: two of these were already being practiced, and the third was to come. Of the two that were current, one was practiced by the Samaritans, who worshiped on Mount Gerizim; he refers to this when he says, **the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain**, of Gerizim. The other way was that of the Jews, who prayed on Mount Zion; and he refers to this when he says, **nor in Jerusalem**.

The third type of worship was to come, and it was different from the other two. Christ alludes to this by excluding the other two: for if the hour is coming when they will no longer worship on Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem, then clearly the

third type to which Christ refers will be a worship that does away with the other two. For if someone wishes to unite two people, it is necessary to eliminate that over which they disagree, and give them something in common on which they will agree. And so Christ, wishing to unite the Jews and Gentiles, eliminated the observances of the Jews and the idolatry of the Gentiles; for these two were like a wall separating the peoples. And he made the two people one: "He is our peace, he who has made the two of us one" (Eph 2:14). Thus the ritual observances [of the Jews] and the idolatry of the Gentiles were abolished, and the true worship of God established by Christ.

601 As for the mystical sense, and according to Origen, the three types of worship are three kinds of participation in divine wisdom. Some participate in it under a dark cloud of error, and these adore on the mountain: for every error springs from pride: "I am against you, destroying mountain" (Jer 51:25). Others participate in divine wisdom without error, but in an imperfect way, because they see in a mirror and in an obscure way; and these worship in Jerusalem, which signifies the present Church: "The Lord is building Jerusalem" (Ps 146:2). But the blessed and the saints participate in divine wisdom without error in a perfect way, for they see God as he is, as said in 1 John (3:2). And so Christ says, **the hour is coming**, i.e., is waited for, when you will participate in divine wisdom neither in error nor in a mirror in an obscure way, but as it is.

602 Then (v 22), he compares the different kinds of worship to each other. First, he compares the second to the first, Secondly, the third to the first and second (v 23). As to the first he does three things. First, he shows the shortcomings of the first type of worship. Secondly, the truth of the second (v 22b). Thirdly, the reason for each statement.

603 As to the first he says, **You people worship what you do not understand.**

Some might think that the Lord should have explained the truth of the matter and solve the woman's problem. But the Lord does not bother to do so because each of these kinds of worship was due to end.

As to his saying, **You people worship**, and so on, it should be pointed out that, as the Philosopher says, knowledge of complex things is different than knowledge of simple things. For something can be known about complex things in such a way that something else about them remains unknown; thus there can be false knowledge about them. For example, if someone has true knowledge of an animal as to its substance, he might be in error touching the knowledge of one of its accidents, such as whether it is black or white; or of a difference, such as

whether it has wings or is four-footed. But there cannot be false knowledge of simple things: because they are either perfectly known inasmuch as their quiddity is known; or they are not known at all, if one cannot attain to a knowledge of them. Therefore, since God is absolutely simple, there cannot be false knowledge of him in the sense that something might be known about him and something remain unknown, but only in the sense that knowledge of him is not attained. Accordingly, anyone who believes that God is something that he is not, for example, a body, or something like that, does not adore God but something else, because he does not know him, but something else.

Now the Samaritans had a false idea of God in two ways. First of all, because they thought he was corporeal, so that they believed that he should be adored in only one definite corporeal place. Further, because they did not believe that he transcended all things, but was equal to certain creatures, they adored along with him certain idols, as if they were equal to him. Consequently, they did not know him, because they did not attain to a true knowledge of him. So the Lord says, **You people worship what you do not understand**, i.e., you do not adore God because you do not know him, but only some imaginary being you think is God, "as the Gentiles do, with their foolish ideas" (Eph 4:17).

604 As to the second, i.e., the truth of the worship of the Jews, he says, **we understand what we worship**. He includes himself among the Jews, because he was a Jew by race, and because the woman thought he was a prophet and a Jew. **We understand what we worship**, because through the law and the prophets the Jews acquired a true knowledge or opinion of God, in that they did not believe that he was corporeal nor in one definite place, as though his greatness could be enclosed in a place: "If the heavens, and the heavens of the heavens cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built" (1 Kgs 8:27). And neither did they worship idols: "God is known in Judah" (Ps 75:2).

605 He gives the reason for this when he says, **since salvation is from the Jews**. As if to say: The true knowledge of God was possessed exclusively by the Jews, for it had been determined that salvation would come from them. And as the source of health should itself be healthy, so the source of salvation, which is acquired by the true knowledge and the true worship of God, should possess the true knowledge of God. Thus, since the source of salvation and its cause, i.e., Christ, was to come from them, according to the promise in Genesis (22:18): "All the nations will be blessed in your descendents," it was fitting that God be known in Judah.

606 Salvation comes from the Jews in three ways. First in their teaching of the truth, for all other peoples were in error, while the Jews held fast to the truth, according to Romans (3:2): "What advantage do Jews have? First, they were

entrusted with the words of God.” Secondly, in their spiritual gifts: for prophecy and the other gifts of the Spirit were given to them first, and from them they reached others: “You,” i.e., the Gentiles, “a wild olive branch, are ingrafted on them,” i.e., on the Jews (Rom 11:17); “If the Gentiles have become sharers in their (i.e., the Jews’) spiritual goods, they ought to help the Jews as to earthly goods” (Rom 15:27). Thirdly, since the very author of salvation is from the Jews, since “Christ came from them in the flesh” (Rom 9:5).

607 Now (v 23), he compares the third kind of worship to the first two. First, he mentions its superiority to the others. Secondly, how appropriate this kind of worship is (v 23b).

608 As to the first point, we should note, as Origen says, that when speaking above of the third kind of worship, the Lord said, **the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem;** but he did not then add, **and is now here.** But now, in speaking of it, he does say, **the hour is coming, and is now here.** The reason is because the first time he was speaking of the worship found in heaven, when we will participate in the perfect knowledge of God, which is not possessed by those still living in this mortal life. But now he is speaking of the worship of this life, and which has now come through Christ.

609 So he says, **But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.**

We can understand this, as Chrysostom does, as showing the superiority of this worship to that of the Jews. So that the sense is: Just as the worship of the Jews is superior to that of the Samaritans, so the worship of the Christians is superior to that of the Jews. It is superior in two respects. First, because the worship of the Jews is in bodily rites: “Rites for the body, imposed only until the time they are reformed” (Heb 9:10); while the worship of the Christians is in spirit. Secondly, because the worship of the Jews is in symbols: for the Lord was not pleased with their sacrificial victims insofar as they were things; so we read, “Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” (Ps 49:13), and again, “You would not be pleased with a holocaust” (Ps 50:18), that is, as a particular thing; but such a sacrificial victim would be pleasing to the Lord as a symbol of the true victim and of the true sacrifice: “The law has only a shadow of the good things to come” (Heb 10:1). But the worship of the Christians is in truth, because it is pleasing to God in itself: “grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ,” as we saw above (1:17). So he is saying here that **true worshipers will worship in spirit**, not in bodily rites, **and in truth**, not in symbols.

610 This passage can be interpreted in a second way, by saying that when our Lord says, **in spirit and in truth**, he wants to show the difference between the third kind of worship and not just that of the Jews, but also that of the Samaritans. In this case, **in truth**, refers to the Jews: for the Samaritans, as was said, were in error, because they worshiped what they did not understand. But the Jews worshiped with a true knowledge of God.

611 **In spirit and in truth** can be understood in a third way, as indicating the characteristics of true worship. For two things are necessary for a true worship: one is that the worship be spiritual; so he says, **in spirit**, i.e., with fervor of spirit: "I will pray with spirit, and I will pray with my mind" (1 Cor 14:15); "Singing to the Lord in your hearts" (Eph 5:19). Secondly, the worship should be **in truth**. First, in the truth of faith, because no fervent spiritual desire is meritorious unless united to the truth of faith, "Ask with faith, without any doubting" (Jas 1:6). Secondly, **in truth**, i.e., without pretense or hypocrisy; against such attitudes we read: "They like to pray at street corners, so people can see them" (Mt 6:5).

This prayer, then, requires three things: first, the fervor of love; secondly, the truth of faith; and thirdly, a correct intention.

He says, the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, because under the law, worship was not given to the Father, but to the Lord. We worship in love, as sons; whereas they worshiped in fear, as slaves.

612 He says **true** worshipers, in opposition to three things mentioned in the above interpretations. First, in opposition to the false worship of the Samaritans: "Put aside what is not true, and speak the truth" (Eph 4:25). Secondly, in opposition to the fruitless and transitory character of bodily rites: "Why do you love what is without profit, and seek after lies" (Ps 4:3). Thirdly, it is opposed to what is symbolic: "Grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ" (above 1:17).

613 Then when he says, **Indeed, it is just such worshipers the Father seeks**, he shows that this third kind of worship is appropriate for two reasons. First, because the One worshiped wills and accepts this worship. Secondly, because of the nature of the One worshiped (v 24).

614 Concerning the first, we should note that for a man to merit receiving what he asks, he should ask for things which are not in opposition to the will of the giver, and also ask for them in a way which is acceptable to the giver. And so when we pray to God, we ought to be such as God seeks. But God seeks those who will worship him in spirit and in truth, in the fervor of love and in the truth of

faith; "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God want from you, but that you fear the Lord your God, and walk in his ways, and love him, and serve the Lord your God with all your heart" (Dt 10:12); and in Micah (6:8): "I will show you, man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: to do what is right, and to love mercy, and to walk attentively with your God."

615 Then he shows that the third type of worship is appropriate from the very nature of God, saying, **God is spirit**. As is said in Sirach (13:19), "Every animal loves its like"; and so God loves us insofar as we are like him. But we are not like him by our body, because he is incorporeal, but in what is spiritual in us, for **God is spirit**: "Be renewed in the spirit," of your mind (Eph 4:23).

In saying, **God is spirit**, he means that God is incorporeal: "A spirit does not have flesh and bones" (Lk 24:39); and also that he is a life-giver, because our entire life is from God, as its creative source. God is also truth: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (below 14:6). Therefore, we should worship him in spirit and in truth.

616 When he says, **The woman said to him**, he mentions the one who gives the gift; and this corresponds to what our Lord said before, **If you knew the gift of God, and realized who it is who says to you, Give me a drink, you perhaps would have asked him**. First, we have the woman's profession. Secondly, the teaching of Christ (v 26). As to the first, he does two things. First, the woman professes her faith in the Christ to come. Secondly, in the fulness of his teaching, **he will tell us everything**.

617 The woman, wearied by the profound nature of what Christ was saying, was confused and unable to understand all this. She says: **I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called Christ**. As if to say: I do not understand what you are saying, but a time will come when the Messiah will arrive, and then we will understand all these things. For "Messiah" in Hebrew means the same as "Anointed One" in Latin, and "Christ" in Greek. She knew that the Messiah was coming because she had been taught by the books of Moses, which foretell the coming of Christ: "The scepter will not be taken away from Judah ... until he who is to be sent comes" (Gn 49:10). As Augustine says, this is the first time the woman mentions the name "Christ": and we see by this that she is now beginning to return to her lawful husband.

618 When this Messiah comes, he will give us a complete teaching. Hence she says, **when he comes he will tell us everything**. This was foretold by Moses: "I will raise up a prophet for them, from among their own brothers, like them; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them all I command

him" (Dt 18:18). Because this woman had now called her husband, i.e., intellect and reason, the Lord now offers her the water of spiritual teaching by revealing himself to her in a most excellent way.

619 And so Jesus says: **I who speak to you am he**, i.e., I am the Christ: "Wisdom goes to meet those who desire her, so she may first reveal herself to them" (Wis 6:14), and below (14:21): "I will love him, and reveal myself to him."

Our Lord did not reveal himself to this woman at once because it might have seemed to her that he was speaking out of vainglory. But now, having brought her step by step to a knowledge of himself, Christ revealed himself at the appropriate time: "Words appropriately spoken are like apples of gold on beds of silver" (Prv 25:11). In contrast, when he was asked by the Pharisees whether he was the Christ, "If you are the Christ, tell us clearly" (below 10:24), he did not reveal himself to them clearly, because they did not ask to learn but to test him. But this woman is speaking in all simplicity.

LECTURE 3

27 His disciples, returning at this point, were amazed that Jesus was speaking with a woman. But no one said, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking to her?" 28 The woman then left her water jar and went off to the town. And she said to the people: 29 "Come, and see the man who told me everything that I have done. Could he not be the Christ?" 30 At that they set out from the town to meet him. 31 Meanwhile, his disciples asked him saying, "Rabbi, eat something." 32 But he said to them,

"I have food to eat of which you do not know."

33 At this the disciples said to one another, "Do you suppose that someone has brought him something to eat?"

620 After presenting the teaching on spiritual water, the Evangelist now deals with the effect of this teaching. First, he sets down the effect itself. Secondly, he elaborates on it (v 31). The effect of this teaching is its fruit for those who believe. And first we have its fruit which relates to the disciples, who were surprised at Christ's conduct. Secondly, its fruit in relation to the woman, who proclaimed Christ's power (v 28).

621 We are told three things about the disciples. First, their return to Christ: he says, **His disciples, returning at this point.** As Chrysostorn reminds us, it was very convenient that the disciples returned after Christ had revealed himself to the woman, since this shows us that all events are regulated by divine providence: "He made the small and the great, and takes care for all alike" (Wis 6:8); "There is a time and fitness for everything" (Ecc 8:6).

622 Secondly, we see their surprise at what Christ was doing; he says, they **were amazed that Jesus was speaking with a woman.** They were amazed at what was good; and as Augustine says, they did not suspect any evil. They were amazed at two things. First, at the extraordinary gentleness and humility of Christ: for the Lord of the world stooped to speak with a poor woman, and for a long time, giving us an example of humility: "Be friendly to the poor" (Sir 4:7). Secondly, they were amazed that he was speaking with a Samaritan and a foreigner, for they did not know the mystery by which this woman was a symbol of the Church of the Gentiles; and Christ sought the Gentiles, for he came "to seek and to save what was lost" (Lk 19:10).

623 Thirdly, we see the disciples' reverence for Christ, shown by their silence. For we show our reverence for God when we do not presume to discuss his affairs: "It is to the glory of God to conceal things; and to the glory of kings to search things out" (Prv 25:2). So the Evangelist says that although his disciples were surprised, none of them said, **What do you want?** or asked him, **Why are you talking to her?** "Listen in silence" (Sir 32:9). Yet the disciples had been so trained to observe order, because of their reverence and filial fear toward Christ, that now and then they would question him about matters that concerned themselves, i.e., when Christ said things relating to them, but which were beyond their understanding: "Young men, speak if you have to" (Sir 3 2:10). At other times they did not question him; in those matters that were not their business, as here.

624 Then (v 28), we have the fruit which relates to the woman; by what she said to her people, she was taking on the role of an apostle. From what she says and does, we can learn three things. First, her affective devotion; secondly, her way of preaching; thirdly the effect her preaching had (v 30).

625 Her affection is revealed in two ways. First, because her devotion was so great that she forgot why she had come to the well, and left without the water and her water jar. So he says, **the woman then left her water jar and went off to the town,** to tell of the wonderful things Christ had done; and she was not now concerned for her own bodily comfort but for the welfare of others. In this respect she was like the apostles, who "leaving their nets, followed the Lord" (Mt 4:20). The water jar is a symbol of worldly desires, by which men draw

out pleasures from the depths of darkness—symbolized by the well—i.e., from a worldly manner of life. Accordingly, those who abandon worldly desires for the sake of God leave their water jars: “No soldier of God becomes entangled in the business of this world” (2 Tim 2:4). Secondly, we see her affection from the great number of those to whom she brings the news: not to just one or two, but to the entire town; we read that she **went off to the town**. This signifies the duty Christ gave to the apostles: “Go, teach all nations” (Mt 28:19); and “I have chosen you to go and bring forth fruit” (below 15:16).

626 Next we see her manner of preaching (v 29). She first invites them to see Christ, saying, **Come and see the man**. Although she had heard Christ say that he was the Christ, she did not at once tell the people that they should come to the Christ, or believe, so as not to give them a reason for scoffing. So at first she mentions things that were believable and evident about Christ, as that he was a man: “made in the likeness of men” (Phil 2:7). Neither did she say, “believe,” but **Come, and see**; for she was convinced that if they were to taste from that well by seeing him, they would be affected in the same way she was: “Come, and I will tell you the great things he has done for me” (Ps 65:16). In this she is imitating the example of a true preacher, not calling men to himself, but to Christ: “What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:5).

627 Secondly, she mentions a clue to Christ’s divinity, saying, **who told me everything that I have done**, that is, how many husbands she had had. For it is the function and sign of the divinity to disclose hidden things and the secrets of hearts. Although the things she had done would cause her shame, she is still not ashamed to mention them; for as Chrysostom says: “When the soul is on fire with the divine fire, it no longer pays attention to earthly things, neither to glory nor to shame, but only to that flame that holds it fast.”

628 Thirdly, she infers the greatness of Christ, saying, **Could he not be the Christ?** She did not dare to say that he was the Christ, lest she seem to be trying to teach them; they could have become angry at this and refuse to go with her. Yet she was not entirely silent on this point, but submitting it to their judgment, set it forth in the form of a question, saying, **Could he not be the Christ?** For this is an easier way to persuade someone.

629 This insignificant woman signifies the condition of the apostles, who were sent out to preach: “Not many of you are learned in the worldly sense, not many powerful ... But God chose the simple ones of the world to embarrass the wise” (1 Cor 1:26). Thus in Proverbs (9:3) the apostles are called handmaids: “She,” divine wisdom, i.e., the Son of God, “sent out her handmaids,” the apostles, “to summon to the tower.”

630 The fruit of her preaching is given when he says, **At that** they set **out from the town**, to where she had returned, to meet him, Christ. We see by this that if we desire to come to Christ, we must set out from the town, i.e., leave behind our carnal desires: "Let us go out to him outside the camp, bearing the abuse he took," as we read in Hebrews (13:13).

631 Now the effect of this spiritual teaching is elaborated. First, by what Christ said to his disciples; secondly, by the effect of all this on the Samaritans (v 39). Concerning the first he does two things. First, we have the situation in which Christ speaks to his disciples; secondly, what he said (v 32).

632 The situation is the insistence of the apostles that Christ eat. He says, **Meanwhile**, i.e., between the time that Christ and the woman spoke and the Samaritans came, **his disciples asked him**, that is, Christ, **Rabbi, eat something**: for they thought that then was a good time to eat, before the crowds came from the town. For the disciples did not usually offer Christ food in the presence of strangers: so we read in Mark (6:3 1), that so many people came to him that he did not even have time to eat.

633 After presenting the situation, he gives its fruit. First, it is given in figurative language. Secondly, we see the disciples are slow in understanding this. Thirdly, the Lord explains what he meant (v 34).

634 The fruit of his spiritual teaching is proposed under the symbols of food and nourishment, so the Lord says, **I have food to eat**. We Should note that just as bodily nourishment is incomplete unless there is both food and drink, so also both Should be found in spirittial notirishment: "The Lord fed him with the bread of life and understanding," this is the food, "and gave him a drink of the water of saving wisdom," and this is the drink (Sir 15:3). So it was appropriate for Christ to speak of food after having given drink to the Samaritan woman. And just as water is a symbol for saving wisdom, so food is a symbol of good works.

The food that Christ had to eat is the salvation of men; this was what he desired. When he says that he has food to eat, he shows how great a desire he has for our salvation. For just as we desire to eat when we are hungry, so he desires to save us: "My delight is to be with the children of men" (Prv 8:3 1). So he says, **I have food to eat**, i.e., the conversion of the nations, **of which you do not know**; for they had no way of knowing beforehand about this conversion of the nations.

635 Origen explains this in a different way, as follows. Spiritual food is like bodily food. The same amount of bodily food is not enough for everyone; some need

more, others less. Again, what is good for one is harmful to another. The same thing happens in spiritual nourishment: for the same kind and amount should not be given to everyone, but adjusted to what is appropriate to the disposition and capacity of each. "Like newborn babes, desire spiritual milk" (1 Pt 2:2). Solid food is for the perfect; thus Origen says that the man who understands the loftier doctrine, and who has charge of others in spiritual matters, can teach this doctrine to those who are weaker and have less understanding. Accordingly, the Apostle says in 1 Corinthians (3:2): "Being little ones in Christ, I gave you milk, not solid food." And Jesus could say this with much more truth: **I have food to eat**; and "I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now" (below 16:12).

636 The slowness of the disciples to understand these matters is implied by the fact that what our Lord said about spiritual food, they understood as referring to bodily food. For even they were still without understanding, as we see from Matthew (15:16). It is not surprising that this Samaritan woman did not understand about spiritual water, for even the Jewish disciples did not understand about spiritual food.

In their saying to each other, **Do you suppose that someone has brought him something to eat?** we should note that it was customary for Christ to accept food from others; but not because he needs our goods: "He does not need our goods" (Ps 15:2), nor our food, because it is he who gives food to every living thing.

637 Then why did he desire and accept goods from others? For two reasons. First, so that those who give him these things might acquire merit. Secondly, in order to give us an example. that those engrossed in spiritual matters should not be ashamed of their poverty, nor regard it burdensome to be supported by others. For it is fitting that teachers have others provide their food so that, being free from such concerns, they may carefully pay attention to the ministry of the word, as Chrysostom says, and as we find in the Gloss. "Let the elders who rule well be regarded as worthy of a double compensation; especially those concerned with preaching and teaching (1 Tim 5:17).

LECTURE 4

34 Jesus explained to them,

"My food is to do the will of him

who sent me, to accomplish his work.
35 Do you not have a saying:
'There are still four months, and it will be harvest time'?
So I say to you: Lift up your eyes,
look at the fields, because they are
already white for the harvest!
36 He who reaps receives his wages
and gathers fruit for eternal life,
so that the sower can rejoice
at the same time as the reaper.
37 For here the saying is verified:
'One man sows, another reaps.'
38 I have sent you to reap
what you have not worked for.
Others have done the work,
and you have entered into their labors."

638 Since the disciples were slow to understand the Lord's figure of speech, the Lord now explains it. First, we have its explanation; secondly, its application (v 35).

639 As to the first, we should note that just as Christ explained to the Samaritan woman what he had told her in figurative language about water, so he explains to his apostles what he told them in figurative language about food. But he does not do so in the same way in both cases. Since the apostles were able to understand these matters more easily, he explains to them at once and in few words; but to the Samaritan woman, since she could not understand as well, our Lord leads her to the truth with a longer explanation.

640 It is perfectly reasonable for Christ to say, **My food is to do the will of him who sent me, to accomplish his work.** For as bodily food sustains a man and brings him to perfection, the spiritual food of the soul and of the rational creature is that by which he is sustained and perfected; and this consists in being joined to his end and following a higher rule. David, understanding this, said: "For me, to adhere to God is good" (Ps 72:28). Accordingly, Christ, as man, fittingly says that his food is to do the will of God, to accomplish his work.

641 These two expressions can be understood as meaning the same thing, in the sense that the second is explaining the first. Or, they can be understood in different ways.

If we understand them as meaning the same, the sense is this: My food is, i.e., in

this is my strength and nourishment, **to do the will of him who sent me**; according to, "My God, I desired to do your will, and your law is in my heart" (Ps 39:9), and, "I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (below 6:38). But because "to do the will" (*facere voluntatem*) of another can be understood in two ways—one, by making him will it, and second, by fulfilling what I know he wills—therefore, explaining what it means to do the will of him who sent him, the Lord says, **to accomplish his work**, that is, that I might complete the work I know he wants: "I must do the works of him who sent me while it is day" (below 9:4).

If these two expressions are understood as different, then we should point out that Christ did two things in this world. First, he taught the truth, in inviting and calling us to the faith; and by this he fulfilled the will of the Father: "This is the will of my Father, who sent me: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life" (below 6:40). Secondly, he accomplished the truth by opening in us, by his passion, the gate of life, and by giving us the power to arrive at complete truth: "I have accomplished the work which you gave me to do" (below 17:4). Thus he is saying: **My food is to do the will of him who sent me**, by calling men to the faith, **to accomplish his work**, by leading them to what is perfect.

642 Another interpretation, given by Origen, is that every man who does good works should direct his intention to two things: the honor of God and the good of his neighbor: for as it is said: "The end of the commandment is love" (1 Tim 1:5), and this love embraces both God and our neighbor. And so, when we do something for God's sake, the end of the commandment is God; but when it is for our neighbor's good, the end of the commandment is our neighbor. With this in mind, Christ is saying, **My food is to do the will of him who sent me**, God, i. e., to direct and regulate my intention to those matters that concern the honor of God, **to accomplish his work**, i. e., to do things for the benefit and perfection of man.

643 On the other hand, since the works of God are perfect, it does not seem proper to speak of accomplishing or completing them. I answer that among lower creatures, man is the special work of God, who made him to his own image and likeness (Gn 1:26). And in the beginning God made this a perfect work, because as we read in Ecclesiastes (7:30): "God made man upright." But later, man lost this perfection by sin, and abandoned what was right. And so, this work of the Lord needed to be repaired in order to become right again; and this was accomplished by Christ, for "Just as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one man, many will be made just" (Rom 5:19). Thus Christ says, **to accomplish his work**, i. e., to bring man back to what is perfect.

644 Then when he says, **Do you not have a saying: There are still four months, and it will be harvest time?** he makes use of a simile. Note that when Christ asked the Samaritan woman for a drink, "Give me a drink," he made use of a simile concerning water. But here, the the disciples are urging the Lord to eat, and now he makes use of a simile concerning spiritual food.

There are some persons whom God asks for a drink, as this Samaritan woman; and there are some who offer a drink to God. But no one offers food to God unless God first asks him for it: for we offer spiritual food to God when we ask him for our salvation, that is, when we ask, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10). We cannot obtain salvation of ourselves, unless we are pre-moved by "prevenient grace," according to the statement in Lamentations (5:21): "Make us come back to you, O Lord, and we will come back" (Lam 5:21). The Lord himself, therefore, first asks for that which makes us ask through "prevenient grace."

In this simile, we have first, the harvest. Secondly, those who reap the harvest (v 36). He does two things concerning the first. First, he states the simile concerning the natural harvest; secondly, concerning the spiritual harvest (v 35b).

645 **Do you not have a saying: There are still four months, and it will be harvest time?** We can see from this that, as stated in Matthew (4:12), Christ left Judea and traveled through Samaria right after John was arrested, and that all this happened during the winter. So, because the harvests ripen there more according to the season, there were four months from that time till the harvest. Thus he says, **Do you not have a saying,** about the natural harvest, **There are still four months** that must pass, **and it will be harvest time?** i.e., the time for gathering up the harvest. So I say to you, speaking of the spiritual harvest, Lift up your eyes, **look at the fields, because they are already white for the harvest.**

646 Here we should point out that harvest time is the time when the fruit is gathered; and so whenever fruit is gathered can be regarded as a harvest time. Now fruit is gathered at two times: for both in temporal and in spiritual matters there is nothing to prevent what is fruit in relation to an earlier state from being seed in relation to something later. For example, good works are the fruit of spiritual instruction, as is faith and other such things; but these in turn are seeds of eternal life, because eternal life is acquired through them. So Sirach (24:23) says: "My blossoms," in relation to the fruit to follow, "bear the fruit of of honor and riches," in relation to what preceded.

With this in mind, there is a certain gathering of a spiritual harvest; and this concerns an eternal fruit, i.e., the gathering of the faithful into eternal life, of which we read: "The harvest is the end of the world" (Mt 13:39). We are not here concerned with this harvest. Another spiritual harvest is gathered in the present; and this is understood in two ways. In the first, the gathering of the fruit is the converting of the faithful to be assembled in the Church; in the second, the gathering is the very knowing of the truth, by which a person gathers the fruit of truth into his soul. And we are concerned with these two gatherings of the harvest, depending on the different expositions.

647 Augustine and Chrysostom understand the gathering of the harvest in the first way, as follows. You say that it is not yet the time for the natural harvest; but this is not true of the spiritual harvest. Indeed, **I say to you: Lift up your eyes**, i.e., the eyes of your mind, by thinking, or even your physical eyes, **look at the fields, because they are already white for the harvest**: because the entire countryside was full of Samaritans coming to Christ.

The statement that the fields are already white is metaphorical: for when sown fields are white, it is a sign that they are ready for harvest. And so he only means to say by this that the people were ready for salvation and to hear the word. He says, **look at the fields**, because not only the Jews, but the Gentiles as well, were ready for the faith: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few" (Mt 9:37). And just as harvests are made white by the presence of the burning heat of the summer sun, so by the coming of the Sun of justice, i.e., Christ, and his preaching and power, men are made ready for salvation. Malachi (4:2) says: "The sun of justice will rise on you who fear my name." Thus it is that the time of Christ's coming is called the time of plenitude or fulness: "When the fulness of time had come, God sent his Son" (Gal 4:4).

648 Origen deals with the second gathering of the harvest, i.e., the gathering of truth in the soul. He says that one gathers as much of the fruit of truth in the harvest as the truths he knows. And he says that everything said here (v 35) was presented as a parable. In this interpretation, the Lord does two things. First, he mentions a false doctrine held by some. Secondly, he rejects it, I say to you.

Some thought that man could not acquire any truth about anything. This opinion gave rise to the heresy of the Academicians, who maintained that nothing can be known as certain in this life; about which we read: "I tested all things by wisdom. I said: 'I will acquire wisdom,' and it became further from me" (Ecc 7:24). Our Lord mentions this opinion when he says, Do you not have a saying: There are **still four months and it will be harvest time?** i.e., this whole present life, in which man serves under the four elements, must end, so that after it truth may be gathered in another life.

Our Lord rejects this opinion when he says: This is not true, I say to you: Lift up your eyes. Sacred Scripture usually uses this expression when something subtle and profound is being presented; as, "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things" (Is 40:26). For when our eyes are not lifted away from earthly things or from the desires of the flesh, they are not fit to know spiritual fruit. For sometimes they are prevented from considering divine things because they have stooped to earthly things: "They have fixed their eyes on the earth" (Ps 16:11); sometimes they are blinded by concupiscence: "They have averted their eyes so as not to look at heaven or remember the judgments of God" (Dn 13:9).

649 So he says, **Lift up your eyes, look at the fields, because they are already white for the harvest**, i.e., they are such that the truth can be learned from them: for by the "fields" we specifically understand all those things from which truth can be acquired, especially the Scriptures: "Search the Scriptures ... they bear witness to me" (below 5:39). Indeed, these fields existed in the Old Testament, but they were not white for the harvest because men were not able to pick spiritual fruit from them until Christ came, who made them white by opening their understanding: "He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures" (Lk 24:45). Again, creatures are harvests from which the fruit of truth is gathered: "The invisible things of God are clearly known by the things that have been made" (Rom 1:20). None the less, the Gentiles who pursued a knowledge of these things gathered the fruits of error rather than of truth from them, because as we read, "they served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom 1:25). So the harvests were not yet white; but they were made white for the harvest when Christ came.

650 Next (v 36), he deals with the reapers. First, he gives their reward. Secondly, he mentions a proverb. And thirdly, he explains it, i.e., applies it (v 38).

651 Concerning the first, we should note that when the Lord was explaining earlier about spiritual water, he mentioned the way in which spiritual water differs from natural water: a person who drinks natural water will become thirsty again, but one who drinks spiritual water will never be thirsty again. Here, too, in explaining about the harvest, he points out the difference between a natural and a spiritual harvest. Three things are mentioned.

First, the way in which the two harvests are similar: namely, in that the person who reaps either harvest receives a wage. But the one who reaps spiritually is the one who gathers the faithful into the Church, or who gathers the fruit of truth into his soul. Each of these will receive a wage, according to: "Each one will receive his own wage according to his work" (1 Cor 3:8).

The two other points he mentions concern the ways the two harvests are unlike each other. First, the fruit gathered from a natural harvest concerns the life of the body; but the fruit gathered by one who reaps a spiritual harvest concerns eternal life. So he says, he who reaps, i.e., he who reaps spiritually, **gathers fruit for eternal life**, that is, the faithful, who will obtain eternal life: "Your fruit is sanctification, your end is eternal life" (Rom 6:22). Or, this fruit is the very knowing and explaining of the truth by which man acquires eternal life: "Those who explain me will have eternal life," as we read in Sirach (24:3 1). Secondly, the two harvests are unlike because in a natural harvest it is considered a misfortune that one should sow and another reap; hence he who sows is saddened when another reaps. But it is not this way when the seed is spiritual, for **the sower can rejoice at the same time as the reaper**.

According to Chrysostom and Augustine, the ones who sow spiritual seed are the fathers and prophets of the Old Testament, for "The seed is the word of God" (Lk 8:11), which Moses and the prophets sowed in the land of Judah. But the apostles were the reapers, because the former were not able to accomplish what they wanted to do, i.e., to bring men to Christ; this was done by the apostles. And so both the apostles and the prophets rejoice together, in one mansion of glory, over the conversion of the faithful: "Joy and gladness will be found there, thanksgiving and the voice of praise" (Is 51:3). This refutes the heresy of the Manicheans who condemn the fathers of the Old Testament; for as the Lord says here, they will rejoice with the apostles.

According to Origen, however, the "sowers" in any faculty [of the soul] are those who confer the very first principles of that faculty; but the reapers are those who proceed from these principles to further truths. And this is all the more true of the science of all the sciences. The prophets are sowers, because they handed down many things concerning divine matters; but the apostles are the reapers, because in preaching and teaching they revealed many things which the prophets did not make known: "which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles" (Eph 3:5).

652 Then when he says, **For here the saying is verified**, we are given a proverb. As if to say: **For here**, i.e., in this fact, **the saying is verified**, i.e., the proverb in current use among the Jews is fulfilled: **One man sows, another reaps**. This proverb seems to have grown out of a statement in Leviticus (26:16): "You will sow your seed in vain for it will be devoured by your enemies." As a result, the Jews used this proverb when one person labored on something, but another received the pleasure from it. This then is what our Lord says: The proverb is verified here because it was the prophets who sowed and labored, while you are the ones to reap and rejoice.

Another interpretation would be this. **For here the saying is verified**, i.e. what I am saying to you, **One man sows, another reaps**, because you will reap the fruits of the labor of the prophets. Now the prophets and the apostles are different, but not in faith, for they both had faith: "But now the justice of God has been manifested outside the law; the law and the prophets bore witness to it" (Rom 3:21). They are different in their manner of life, for the prophets lived under the ceremonies of the law, from which the apostles and Christians have been freed: "When we were children, we were slaves under the elements of this world. But when the fulness of time came, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we could receive adoption as sons" (Gal 4:3). And although the apostles and prophets labor at different times, nevertheless they will rejoice equally and receive wages **for eternal life, so that the sower can rejoice at the same time as the reaper**. This was prefigured in the transfiguration of Christ, where all had their own glory, both the fathers of the Old Testament, that is, Moses and Elijah, and the fathers of the New Testament, that is, Peter, John and James. We see from this that the just of the New and of the Old Testaments will rejoice together in the glory to come.

653 Then (v 38), he applies the proverb. First, he calls the apostles reapers. Secondly, he says they are laborers (v 38b).

654 he says concerning the first: I say that it is one who reaps, because you are reapers, and another who sows, for **I have sent you to reap what you have not worked for**. He does not say, "I will send you," but I have sent you. He says this because he sent them twice. One time was before his passion, when he sent them to the Jews, saying: "Do not go on the roads of the Gentiles ... but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 10:5). In this case, they were sent to reap that on which they did not work, that is, to convert the Jews, among whom the prophets worked. After the resurrection, Christ sent them to the Gentiles, saying: "Go to the whole world, and preach the good news to every creature," as we find in Mark (16:15). This time they were sent to sow for the first time; for as the Apostle says: "I have preached the good news, but not where Christ was already known, so as not to build on another's foundation. But as it is written: 'They to whom he was not proclaimed will see, and they who have not heard will understand.'" (Rom 15:20). And so Christ says, I have sent you, referring to the first time they were sent. This is the way, then, the apostles are reapers, and others, the prophets, are the sowers.

655 Accordingly, he says, Others have done the work, by sowing the beginnings of the doctrine of Christ, **and you have entered into their labors**, to collect the fruit: "The fruit of good labors is glorious" (Wis 3:15). The prophets labored, I

say, to bring men to Christ: "If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe me, for he wrote of me" (below 5:46). If you do not believe his written words, how will you believe my spoken words? But the prophets did not reap the fruit; so Isaiah said with this in mind: "I have labored for nothing and without reason; in vain I have exhausted my strength" (Is 49:4).

LECTURE 5

39 Many Samaritans of that town believed in him on the testimony of the woman who said, "He told me everything I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they begged him to stay with them awhile. So he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed in him because of his own words. 42 And they said to the woman, "Now we believe not just because of your story, but because we have heard him ourselves, and we know that here is truly the Savior of the world."

656 Above, the Lord foretold to the apostles the fruit to be produced among the Samaritans by the woman's witness. Now the Evangelist deals with this fruit. First, the fruit of the woman's witness is given. Secondly, the growth of this fruit produced by Christ (v 41). The fruit of the woman's witness is shown in three ways.

657 First, by the faith of the Samaritans, for they believed in Christ. Thus he says, **Many Samaritans of that town**, to which the woman had returned, believed in him, and this, **on the testimony of the woman**, from whom Christ asked for a drink of water, who said, **He told me everything I ever did**: for this testimony was sufficient inducement to believe Christ. For since Christ had disclosed her failures, she would not have mentioned them if she had not been brought to believe. And so the Samaritans believed as soon as they heard her. This indicates that faith comes by hearing.

658 Secondly, the fruit of her witness is shown in their coming to Christ: for faith gives rise to a desire for the thing believed. Accordingly, after they believed, they came to Christ, to be perfected by him. So he says, **So when the Samaritans came to him**. "Come to him, and be enlightened" (Ps 33:6); "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Mt 11:28).

659 Thirdly, the fruit of her witness is shown in their desire: for a believer must not only come to Christ, but desire that Christ remain with him. So he says, **they**

begged him to stay with them awhile. So he stayed there two days.

The Lord remains with us through charity: "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word" (below 14:23), and further on he adds, "and we will make our abode with him." The Lord remains for two days because there are two precepts of charity: the love of God and the love of our neighbor, "On these two commandments all the law and the prophets depend" (Mt 22:40). But the third day is the day of glory: "He will revive us after two days; on the third day he will raise us up" (Hos 6:3). Christ did not remain there for that day because the Samaritans were not yet capable of glory.

660 Then (v 41), the Evangelist says that the fruit resulting from the witness of the woman was increased by the presence of Christ; and this in three ways. First, in the number of those who believed. Secondly, in their reason for believing. Thirdly, in the truth they believed.

661 The fruit was increased as to the number of those who believed because while many believed in Christ on account of the woman, **many more believed in him because of his own words**, i.e., Christ's own words. This signifies that although many believed because of the prophets, many more were converted to the faith after Christ came, according to the Psalm (7:7): "Rise up, O Lord, in the command you have given, and a congregation of people will surround you."

662 Secondly, this fruit was increased because of the way in which they believed: for they say to the woman: **Now we believe not just because of your story.**

Here we should note that three things are necessary for the perfection of faith; and they are given here in order. First, faith should be right; secondly, it should be prompt; and thirdly, it should be certain.

Now faith is right when it obeys the truth not for some alien reason, but for the truth itself; and as to this he says that they said to the woman, Now we believe, the truth, **not just because of your story**, but because of the truth itself. Three things lead us to believe in Christ. First of all, natural reason: "Since the creation of the world the invisible things of God are clearly known by the things that have been made" (Rom 1:20). Secondly, the testimony of the law and the prophets: "But now justification from God has been manifested outside the law; the law and the prophets bore witness to it" (Rom 3:21). Thirdly, the preaching of the apostles and others: "How will they believe without someone to preach to them?" as Romans (10:14) says. Yet when a person, having been thus instructed, believes, he can then say that it is not for any of these reasons that he believes: i. e., neither on account of natural reason, nor the testimony of the law, nor the

preaching of others, but solely on account of the truth itself: "Abram believed God, who regarded this as his justification" (Gn 15:6).

Faith is prompt if it believes quickly; and this was verified in these Samaritans because they were converted to God by merely hearing him; so they say: **we have heard him ourselves**, and believe in him, **and we know that here is truly the Savior of the world**, without seeing miracles, as the Jews saw. And although to believe men quickly is an indication of thoughtlessness, according to Sirach (19:4): "He who believes easily is frivolous," yet to believe God quickly is more praiseworthy: "When they heard me, they obeyed me" (Ps 17:45).

Faith should be certain, because one who doubts in the faith is an unbeliever: "Ask with faith, without any doubting" (Jas 1:6). And so their faith was certain; thus they say, **and we know**. Sometimes, one who believes is said to know (*scire*), as here, because *scientia* [science, knowledge in a more perfect state] and faith agree in that both are certain. For just as *scientia* is certain, so is faith; indeed, the latter is much more so, because the certainty of *scientia* rests on human reason, which can be deceived, while the certainty of faith rests on divine reason, which cannot be contradicted. However they differ in mode: because faith possesses its certainty due to a divinely infused light, while *scientia* possesses its certainty due to a natural light. For as the certitude of *scientia* rests on first principles naturally known, so the principles of faith are known from a light divinely infused: "You are saved by grace, through faith; and this is not due to yourselves, for it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8).

663 Thirdly, the fruit was increased in the truth believed; so they say, **here is truly the Savior of the world**. Here they are affirming that Christ is the unique, true and universal Savior.

He is the unique Savior for they assert that he is different from others when they say, here is, i.e., here he alone is who has come to save: "Truly, you are a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Savior" (Is 45:15); "There is no other name under heaven given to men, by which we are saved" (Acts 4:12).

They affirm that Christ is the true Savior when they say, **truly**. For since salvation, as Dionysius says, is deliverance from evil and preservation in good, there are two kinds of salvation: one is true, and the other is not true. Salvation is true when we are freed from true evils and preserved in true goods. In the Old Testament, however, although certain saviors had been sent, they did not truly bring salvation, for they set men free from temporal evils, which are not truly evils, nor true goods, because they do not last. But Christ is truly the Savior, because he frees men from true evils, that is, sins: "He will save his people from

their sins" (Mt 1:21), and he preserves them in true goods, that is, spiritual goods.

They affirm that he is the universal Savior because he is not just for some, i.e., for the Jews alone, but is the Savior **of the world**. "God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (above 3:17).

LECTURE 6

43 After two days he left that place and went to Galilee. 44 Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45 When however he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, because they had seen all the things he had done in Jerusalem on the festive day, where they too had gone. 46a He therefore went to Cana in Galilee once more, where he had made the water wine.

664 Having described the conversion of the Gentiles due to teaching, their conversion due to miracles is now given. The Evangelist mentions a miracle performed by Christ: first, giving the place; secondly, describing the miracle; and thirdly, its effect (v 53). He does two things about the first. First, he gives the general location of the miracle, that is, Christ's own homeland. Secondly, the specific place (v 46). With respect to the first he does two things. First, he mentions the general place. Secondly, he tells how Christ was received there (v 45). Concerning the first he does two things. First, he indicates the general place. Secondly, he gives a certain reason, at (v 44).

665 He says first of all: I say that Jesus remained with these Samaritans for two days, and **after two days he left that place**, i.e., **Samaria, and went to Galilee**, where he had been raised. This signifies that at the end of the world, when the Gentiles have been confirmed in the faith and in the truth, a return will be made to convert the Jews, according to: "until the full number of the Gentiles enters, and so all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:2 5).

666 Then he gives a certain reason, saying: **Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country**. There are two questions here: one is about the literal meaning; and the other about the continuity of this passage with the first.

The problem about the literal meaning is that it does not seem to be true, as stated here, that a prophet has no honor in his own country: for we read that

other prophets were honored in their own land. Chrysostom answers this by saying that the Lord is speaking here about the majority of cases. So, although there might be an exception in some individual cases, what is said here should not be considered false: for in matters concerning nature and morals, that rule is true which is verified in most cases; and if a few cases are otherwise, the rule is not considered to be false.

Now what the Lord says was true with respect to most of the prophets, because in the Old Testament it is hard to find any prophet who did not suffer persecution, as stated in Acts (7:52): "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?"; and in Matthew (23:37): "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you." Further, this statement of our Lord holds true not only in the case of the prophets among the Jews, but also, as Origen says, with many among the Gentiles, because they were held in contempt by their fellow citizens and put to death: for living with men in the usual way, and too much familiarity, lessen respect and breed contempt. So it is that those with whom we are more familiar we come to reverence less, and those with whom we cannot become acquainted we regard more highly.

However, the opposite happens with God: for the more intimate we become with God through love and contemplation, realizing how superior he is, the more we respect him and the less do we esteem ourselves. "I have heard you, but now I see you, and so I reprove myself, and do penance in dust and ashes" (Jb 42:5). The reason for this is that man's nature is weak and fragile; and when one lives with another for a long time, he notices certain weaknesses in him, and this results in a loss of respect for him. But since God is infinitely perfect, the more a person knows him the more he admires his superior perfection, and as a result the more he respects him.

667 But was Christ a prophet? At first glance it seems not, because prophecy involves an obscure knowledge: "If there is a prophet of the Lord among you, I will appear to him in a vision" (Nm 12:6). Christ's knowledge, however, was not obscure. Yet he was a prophet, as is clear from, "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you, from your nation and your brothers; he will be like me. You will listen to him" (Dt 18:15). This text is referred to Christ.

I answer that a prophet has a twofold function. First, that of seeing: "He who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer" (I Sm 9:9). Secondly, he makes known, announces; Christ was a prophet in this sense for he made known the truth about God: "For this was I born, and for this I came into the world: to

testify to the truth" (below 18:37). As for the seeing function of a prophet, we should note that Christ was at once both a "wayfarer" and a "comprehensor," or blessed. He was a wayfarer in the sufferings of his human nature and in all the things that relate to this. He was a blessed in his union with the divinity, by which he enjoyed God in the most perfect way. There are two things in the vision or seeing of a prophet. First, the intellectual light of his mind; and as regards this Christ was not a prophet, because his light was not at all deficient; his light was that of the blessed. Secondly, an imaginary vision is also involved; and with respect to this Christ did have a likeness to the prophets insofar as he was a wayfarer and was able to form various images with his imagination.

668 Secondly, there is the problem about continuity. For the Evangelist does not seem to be right in connecting the fact that **After two days he left that place and went to Galilee**, with the statement of Jesus that **a prophet has no honor in his own country**. It would seem that the Evangelist should have said that Christ did not go into Galilee, for if he was not honored there, that would be a reason for not going there.

Augustine answers this by suggesting that the Evangelist said this to answer a question that could have been raised, namely: Why did Christ return to Galilee since he had lived there for a long time, and the Galileans were still not converted to him; while the Samaritans were converted in two days? It is the same as saying: Even though the Galileans had not been converted, still Jesus went there, for **Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country**.

Chrysostom explains this in a different way: After two days he left, not for Capernaum, which was his homeland because of his continuous residence there, nor for Bethlehem, where he was born, nor for Nazareth, where he was educated. Thus he did not go to Capernaum; hence in Matthew (11:23) he upbraids them, saying: "And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will descend even to hell." He went rather to Cana in Galilee. And he gives the reason here [for not going to Capernaum] : because they were ill-disposed toward him. This is what he says: **Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country**.

669 Was Christ seeking glory from men? It seems not, for he says: "I do not seek my own glory" (below 8:50). 1 answer that it is only God who seeks his own glory without sin. A man should not seek his own glory from men, but rather the glory of God. Christ, however, as God, fittingly sought his own glory, and as man, he sought the glory of God in himself.

670 Then he shows that Christ was received by the Galileans more respectfully than before, saying, **When however he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him**, respectfully. The reason behind this was **because they had seen all the things he had done in Jerusalem on the festive day, where they too had gone**, as the law commanded.

This seems to conflict with the fact that we did not read above of any miracles being performed by Christ at Jerusalem. I answer, with the opinion of Origen, that the Jews thought it a great miracle that Christ drove the traders from the temple with such authority (above 2:14). Or, we could say that Christ performed many miracles which were not written down, according to, "Jesus did many other signs ... which are not written down in this book" (below 20:30).

671 In its mystical sense, this gives us an example that if we wish to receive Jesus Christ within ourselves, we should go up to Jerusalem on a festive day, that is, we should seek tranquility of mind, and examine everything which Jesus does there: "Look upon Zion, the city of our festive days" (Is 33:20); "I have meditated on all Your works" (Ps 142:5).

672 Note that as men were lesser in dignity, they were better with respect to God. The Judeans were superior in dignity to the Galileans: "Look at the Scriptures and see that the Prophet will not come from Galilee" (below 7:52); and the Galileans were superior in dignity to the Samaritans: "The Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans" (above 4:9). On the other hand, the Samaritans were better than the Galileans because more of them believed in Christ in two days without any miracles than the Galileans did in a long period of time and even with the miracle of the wine: for none of them believed in him except his disciples. Finally, the Judeans were worse than the Galileans, because none of them believed in Jesus, except perhaps Nicodemus.

673 Then he says, **He therefore went to Cana in Galilee**. According to Chrysostom, this is given as a conclusion from what went before; it is as though he were saying: Christ did not go to Capernaum because he was not held in honor there. But he was under an obligation to go to Cana in Galilee: for on the first occasion he had been invited to the wedding, and now he goes again without being invited. The two trips to Cana are mentioned by the Evangelist to show their hardness of heart: for at the first miracle of the wine, only his disciples believed in Christ; and at the second miracle, only the official and his household believed. On the other hand, the Samaritans believed on Christ's words alone.

674 In the mystical sense, the two visits to Cana signify the effect of God's words on our minds. First of all they cause delight, because they who hear the word

"receive the word with joy" (Mt 13:20). This is signified in the miracle of the wine, which as the Psalm (103:15) says, "gladdens the heart of man." Secondly, the word of God heals: "It was neither a herb nor a poultice that healed them, but your word, O Lord, which heals all things" (Wis 16:12). And this is signified by the curing of the sick son.

Further, these two visits to Cana indicate the two comings of the Son of God. The first coming was in all gentleness to bring joy: "Rejoice and give praise, people of Zion, for he is great who is in your midst, the Holy One of Israel" (Is 12:6). So the angel said to the shepherds: "I bring you good news of great joy ... this day a Savior has been born to you" (Lk 2:10). This is signified by the wine. His second coming into the world will be in majesty, when he will come to take away our weaknesses and our punishments, and to make us like his radiant body. And this is signified in the cure of the sick son.

LECTURE 7

46b There happened to be a certain official, whose son lay sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come to Galilee from Judea, he went to him, and begged him to come down and heal his son, who was at the point of death. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you do not believe." 49 The official said to him, "Lord, come down before my child dies." 50 Jesus told him, "Go, your son lives." The man took Jesus at his word, and started for home. 51 While he was on his way down, his servants ran up to meet him with word' that his son was going to live. 52 He asked them at what time his boy got better. And they told him that yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. 53 The father then realized that it was at that very hour when Jesus told him, "Your son lives." He and his whole household became believers. 54 This was the second sign Jesus had performed on returning from Judea to Galilee.

675 Having told us the place of this miracle, the Evangelist now describes the miracle itself: telling us of the person who was ill; the one who interceded for him; and the one who healed him. The one who was ill was the son of the official; his father interceded for him; and it was Christ who was to heal him.

676 About the person who was ill, he first tells us of his status, a **son** of an

official; secondly, where he was, at **Capernaum**; thirdly, his illness, a **fever**.

He says about the first, **There happened to be a certain official, whose son lay sick**. Now one can be called an official for a variety of reasons. For example, if one is in charge of a small territory. This is not its meaning here for at this time there was no king in Judea: "We have no king but Caesar" (below 19:15). One is also called an official, as Chrysostom says, because he is from a royal family; and this is also not its meaning here. In a third way, an official is some officer of a king or ruler; and this is its meaning here.

Some think, as Chrysostom reports, that this official is the same as the centurion mentioned by Matthew (8:5). This is not so, for they differ in four ways. First, because the illness was not the same in each. The centurion was concerned with a paralytic, "My servant is lying paralyzed at home" (Mt 8:6); while this official's son is suffering from a fever, **yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him**. Secondly, those who are sick are not the same. In the first case, it was a servant, "my servant"; but now we have a son, as it says, **whose son**. Thirdly, what is requested is different. For when Christ wanted to go to the home of the centurion, the centurion discouraged him, and said: "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word and my servant will be healed" (Mt 8:8). But this official asked Christ to come to his house, **Lord, come down before my child dies**. Fourthly, the places are different. For the first healing took place at Capernaum, while this one is at Cana in Galilee. So this official is not the same as the centurion, but was from the household of Herod the Tetrarch, or some kind of a herald, or an official of the Emperor.

677 In its allegorical sense, this official is Abraham or one of the fathers of the Old Testament, in so far as he adheres by faith to the king, that is, to Christ, about which we read, "I was made king by him over Zion" (Ps 2:6). Abraham adhered to him, for as is said below (8:56): "Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see my day." The son of this official is the Jewish people: "We are the descendants of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any one" (below 8:33). But they are sick from evil pleasures and incorrect doctrines. They are sick at Capernaum, i.e., in the abundance of goods which caused them to leave their God, according to, "The beloved grew fat and rebellious ... he deserted the God who made him, and left God his Savior" (Dt 32:15).

678 In the moral sense, in the kingdom of the soul, the king is reason itself: "The king, who sits on his throne of judgment" (Prv 20:8). But why is reason called the king? Because man's entire body is ruled by it: his affections are directed and informed by it, and the other powers of the soul follow it. But sometimes it is called an official [not the king], that is, when its knowledge is obscured, with the result that it follows inordinate passions and does not resist them: "They live with

their foolish ideas, their understanding obscured by darkness” (Eph 4:17). Consequently, the son of this official, i.e., the affections, are sick, that is, they deviate from good and decline to what is evil. If reason were the king, that is, strong, its son would not be sick; but being only an official, its son is sick. This happens at Capernaum because a great many temporal goods are the cause of spiritual sickness: “This was the crime of your sister Sodom: richness, satiety in food, and idleness” (Ez 16:49).

679 Now we see the person making his request (v 47). First, we have the incentive for making his request. Secondly, the request itself. Thirdly, the need for the request.

680 The incentive for making the request was the arrival of Christ. So he says, **When he, the official, heard that Jesus had come to Galilee from Judea, he went to him.** For as long as the coming of Christ was delayed, men’s hope of being healed from their sins was that much fainter; but when it is reported that his coming is near, our hope of being healed rises, and then we go to him. For he came into this world to save sinners: “The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Lk 19:22). Further, as Sirach says (18:23), we should prepare our soul by prayer, and we do this by going to God through our desires. And this is what the official did, as we read, he went to him. Amos (4:12) says, “Be prepared to meet your God, O Israel.”

681 The request of the official was that Christ heal his son. So the Evangelist says that he begged him to come down, out of compassion: “O that you would rend the heavens, and come down” (Is 64:1), **and heal his son.** We, too, ought to ask to be healed from our sins: “Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you” (Ps 40:5). For no one of himself can return to the state of justice; rather, he has to be healed by God: “I cannot help myself” (Jb 6:13). The fathers of the Old Testament interceded for the people of Israel in the same way; for as we read of one: “He loves his brothers, because he prays much for the holy city and for the people of Israel, Jeremiah, the prophet of God” (2 Me 15:14).

682 The need for this request was urgent, for the son **was at the point of death.** When a person is tempted, he is beginning to become sick; and as the temptation grows stronger and takes the upper hand, inclining him to consent, he is near death. But when he has consented, he is at the point of death and beginning to die. Finally, when he completes his sin, he dies; for as we read: “Sin, when it is completed, brings forth death” (Jas 1:15). The Psalm (33:22) says about this: “The death of sinners is the worst,” because it begins here and continues into the future without end.

683 Now he deals with the request for Christ to heal the son of the official. First, our Lord's criticism is given. Secondly, the official's request. Thirdly, the granting of the request.

684 Our Lord criticizes him for his lack of faith, saying, **Unless you see signs and wonders, you do not believe.** This raises a question, for it does not seem right to say this to this official, for unless he had believed that Christ was the Savior, he would not have asked him to heal his son.

The answer to this is that this official did not yet believe perfectly; indeed, there were two defects in his faith. The first was that although he believed that Christ was a true man, he did not believe that he had divine power; otherwise he would have believed that Christ could heal one even while absent, since God is everywhere, as Jeremiah (23:24) says: "I fill heaven and earth." And so he would not have asked Christ to come down to his house, but simply give his command. The second defect in his faith, according to Chrysostom, was that he was not sure that Christ could heal his son: for had he been sure, he would not have waited for Christ to return to his homeland, but would have gone to Judea himself. But now, despairing of his son's health, and not wishing to overlook any possibility, he went to Christ like those parents who in their despair for the health of their children consult even unskilled doctors.

685 In the second place, it does not seem that he should have been criticized for looking for signs, for faith is proved by signs. The answer to this is that unbelievers are drawn to Christ in one way, and believers in another way. For unbelievers cannot be drawn to Christ or convinced by the authority of Sacred Scripture, because they do not believe it; neither can they be drawn by natural reason, because faith is above reason. Consequently, they must be led by miracles: "Signs are given to unbelievers, not to believers" (1 Cor 14:22). Believers, on the other hand, should be led and directed to faith by the authority of Scripture, to which they are bound to assent. This is why the official is criticized: although he had been brought up among the Jews and instructed in the law, he wanted to believe through signs, and not by the authority of the Scripture. So the Lord reproaches him, saying, **Unless you see signs and wonders**, i.e., miracles, which sometimes are signs insofar as they bear witness to divine truth. Or **wonders** (prodigia), either because they indicate with utmost certitude, so that a prodigy is taken to be a "portent" or some "sure indication"; or because they portend something in the future, as if something were called a **wonder** as if showing at a great distance some future effect.

686 Now we see the official's persistence, for he does not give up after the Lord's criticism, but insists, saying. **Lord, come down before my child dies:** "We should pray always, and not lose heart" (Lk 18:1). This shows an improvement in

his faith in one respect, that is, in that he calls him "Lord." But there is not a total improvement, for he still thought that Christ had to be physically present to heal his son; so he asked Christ to come.

687 His request is granted by the Lord, for persevering prayer is answered. Jesus said to him: **Go, your son lives.** Here we have first, the statement by Christ, who cured the boy, that the boy was cured. Secondly, we are told of the persons who witnessed the cure (v 51). Two things are mentioned concerning the first: the command of the Lord and the obedience of the official (v 50b).

688 As to the first, the Lord does two things. First, he orders; secondly, he affirms. He orders the official to go: hence he says, Go, i.e., prepare to receive grace by a movement of your free will toward God: "Turn to me, and you will be saved" (Is 45:22); and by a movement of your free will against sin. For four things are required for the justification of an adult sinner: the infusion of grace, the remission of guilt, a movement of the free will toward God, which is faith, and a movement of the free will against sin, which is contrition.

Then the Lord says that his son is healed, which was the request of the official: **Your son lives.**

689 One may ask why Christ refused to go down to the home of this official as asked, while he promised to go see the servant of the centurion. There are two reasons for this. One, according to Gregory, is to blunt our pride; the pride of us who offer our services to great men, but refuse to help the insignificant: since the Lord of all offered to go to the servant of the centurion, but refused to go to the son of an official: "Be well-disposed to the poor" (Sir 4:7). The other reason, as Chrysostom says, was that the centurion was already confirmed in the faith of Christ, and believed that he could heal even while not present; and so our Lord promised to go to show approval of his faith and devotion. But this official was still imperfect, and did not yet clearly know that Christ could heal even while absent. And so our Lord does not go, in order that he may realize his imperfection.

690 The obedience of this official is pointed out in two ways. First, because he believed what Christ said; so he says, **The man took Jesus at his word**, that is, **Your son lives.** Secondly, because he did obey the order of Christ; so he says, he **started for home**, progressing in faith, although not yet fully or soundly, as Origen says. This signifies that we must be justified by faith: "Justified by faith, let us have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1). We also must go and start out by making progress: because he who stands still runs the risk of being unable to preserve the life of grace. For,

along the road to God, if we do not go forward we fall back.

691 Next we see the servants bringing news of the healing. First, the news of the healing is given. Secondly, there is an inquiry about the time of the healing (v 52).

692 He says, **While he was on his way down**, from Cana of Galilee to his own home, **his servants ran up to meet him**—which shows that this official was wealthy and had many servants—**with word that his son was going to live**: and they did this because they thought that Christ was coming, and his presence was no longer necessary as the boy was already cured.

693 In the mystical sense, the servants of the official, i.e., of reason, are a man's works, because man is master of his own acts and of the affections of his sense powers, for they obey the command and direction of reason. Now these servants announce that the son of the official, that is, of reason, lives, when a man's good works shine out, and his lower powers obey reason, according to: "A man's dress, and laughter, and his walk, show what he is" (Sir 19:27).

694 Because this official did not yet believe either fully or soundly, he still wanted to know whether his son had been cured by chance or by the command of Christ. Accordingly, he asks about the time of the cure. **He asked them**, the servants, **at what time his boy got better**. And he found that his son was cured at exactly the same hour that our Lord said, **Go, your son lives**. And no wonder, because Christ is the Word, through whom heaven and earth were made: "He spoke and they were made; he commanded and they were created" (Ps. 148:5).

695 **And they**, his servants, **told him that yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him**. In the mystical sense, the seventh hour, when the boy is cured of his fever, signifies the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, through whom sins are forgiven, according to: "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you forgive, are forgiven" (below 20:22), and through whom spiritual life is produced in the soul: "It is the Spirit that gives life" (below 6:64). Again, the seventh hour signifies the appropriate time for rest, for the Lord rested from all his work on the seventh day. This indicates that the spiritual life of man consists in spiritual rest or quiet, according to: "If you remain at rest, you will be saved" (Is 30:15). But of the evil we read: "The heart of the wicked is like the raging sea, which cannot rest" (Is 57:20).

696 Next, we are given the effect of this miracle (v 53). First, its fruit is mentioned. Secondly, this miracle is linked with another one (v 54).

697 He says, **The father then realized**, by comparing the hour mentioned by

the servants with the hour of Christ's affirmation, **that it was at that very hour when Jesus told him, Your son lives.** Because of this he was converted to Christ, realizing that it was by his power that the miracle was accomplished. **He and his whole household became believers,** that is, his servants and his aides, because the attitude of servants depends on the condition, whether good or wicked, of their masters: "As the judge of the people is himself, so also are his ministers" (Sir 10:2); and in Genesis (18:19) we read: "I know that he will direct his sons."

This also shows that the faith of the official was constantly growing: for at the beginning, when he pleaded for his sick son, it was weak; then it began to grow more firm, when he called Jesus "Lord" then when he believed what the Lord said and started for home, it was more perfect, but not completely so, because he still doubted. But here, clearly realizing God's power in Christ, his faith is made perfect, for as Proverbs (4:18) says: "The way of the just goes forward like a shining light, increasing to the full light of day."

698 Finally, this miracle is linked with the previous one, **This was the second sign Jesus had performed on returning from Judea to Galilee.** We can understand this in two ways. In one way, that our Lord performed two miracles during this one trip from Judea to Galilee; but the first of these was not recorded, only the second. In the other way, we could say that Jesus worked two signs in Galilee at different times: the one of the wine, and this second one about the son of this official after he returned again to Galilee from Judea.

We also see from this that the Galileans were worse than the Samaritans. For the Samaritans expected no sign from the Lord, and many believed in his word alone; but as a result of this miracle, only this official and his whole household believed: for the Jews were converted to the faith little by little on account of their hardness, according to: "I have become as one who harvests in the summer time, like a gleaner at the vintage: not one cluster to eat, not one of the early figs I desire" (Mi 7:1).

5

LECTURE 1

1 After this there was a Jewish festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now at Jerusalem there is a Sheep Pool, called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. 3 In these porticoes lay a great number of people: feeble, blind, lame and withered, waiting for the movement of the water. 4 From time to time an angel of the Lord used to come down into the pool and the water was stirred up, and the first one into the pool after it was stirred was healed of whatever ailment he had. 5 There was one man lying there who had been sick for thirty-eight years with his infirmity. 6 Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing that he had been sick a long time, said to him, "Do you wish to be healed?" 7 The sick man said, "Sir, I have no one to plunge me into the pool once the water is stirred up. By the time I get there, someone else has gone in before me." 8 Jesus said to him, "Stand up, pick up your mat and walk!" 9a The man was immediately cured; he picked up his mat, and walked.

699 Above, our Lord dealt with spiritual rebirth; here he deals with the benefits God gives to those who are spiritually reborn. Now we see that parents give three things to those who are physically born from them: life, nourishment, and instruction or discipline. And those who are spiritually reborn receive these three from Christ: spiritual life, spiritual nourishment, and spiritual teaching. And so these three things are considered here: first, the giving of spiritual life; secondly, the giving of spiritual food (c 6); and thirdly, spiritual teaching (c 7).

About the first he does three things. First, he sets forth a visible sign in which he shows Christ's power to produce and to restore life. This is the usual practice in this Gospel: to always join to the teaching of Christ some appropriate visible action, so that what is invisible can be made known through the visible. Secondly, the occasion for this teaching is given (v 9b). Thirdly, the teaching itself is given (v 19). As to the first he does three things. First, the place of the miracle is given. Secondly, the illness involved. Thirdly, the restoration of the sick person to health (v 8).

700 The place of this miracle is described in two ways: in general and in particular. The general place is Jerusalem; so he says, **After this**, i.e., after the miracle performed in Galilee, **there was a Jewish festival**, that is Pentecost, according to Chrysostom. For above, when Christ went to Jerusalem, it was the Passover that was mentioned; and now, on the following festival of Pentecost, **Jesus went up to Jerusalem** again. For as we read in Exodus (23:17), the Lord commanded that all Jewish males be presented in the temple three times a year: on the festival days of the Passover, Pentecost, and the Dedication.

There were two reasons why our Lord went up to Jerusalem for these festivals. First, so that he would not seem to oppose the law, for he said himself: "I have not come to destroy the law, but to complete it" (Mt 5:17); and in order to draw the many people gathered there on the feast days to God by his signs and teaching: "I will praise him in the midst of the people" (Ps 108:30); and again, "I have declared your justice in the great assembly" (Ps 39:10). So Christ himself says, as we read below (18:20): "I have spoken openly to the world."

701 The specific place of the miracle was the pool called the Sheep Pool; so he says, **Now at Jerusalem there is a Sheep Pool**. This is described here in four ways: by its name, its structure, from its occupants, and from its power.

702 First, it is described from its name when he says, **there is a Sheep Pool** (*probatica piscina*), for *probaton* is Greek for "sheep." It was called the Sheep Pool for it was there that the priests washed the sacrificial animals; especially the sheep, who were used more than the other animals. And so in Hebrew it was called **Bethsaida**, that is, the "house of sheep." This pool was located near the temple, and formed from collected rain water.

703 In its mystical sense, this pool, according to Chrysostom, has prefigured Baptism. For the Lord, wishing to prefigure the grace of baptism in different ways, first of all chose water: for this washes the body from the uncleanness which came from contact with what was legally unclean (Nm 19). Secondly, he gave this pool a power that expresses even more vividly than water the power of Baptism: for it not only cleansed the body from its uncleanness, but also healed it from its illness; for symbols are more expressive, the closer they approach the reality. Thus it signified the power of Baptism: for as this water when applied to the body had the power (not by its own nature, but from an angel) to heal its illness, so the water of Baptism has the power to heal and cleanse the soul from sins: "He loved us, and washed us from our sins" (Rv 1:5). This is the reason why the passion of Christ, prefigured by the sacrifices of the Old Law, is represented in Baptism: "All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus, have been baptized into his death" (Rom 6:3).

According to Augustine, the water in this pool signified the condition of the Jewish people, according to: "The waters are the peoples" (Rv 17:15). The Gentiles were not confined within the limits of the divine law, but each of them lived according to the vanity of his heart (Eph 4:17). But the Jews were confined under the worship of the one God: "We were kept under the law, confined, until the faith was revealed" (Gal 3:23). So this water, confined to the pool, signified the Jewish people. And it was called the Sheep Pool, for the Jews were the special sheep of God: "We are his people, his sheep" (Ps 94:7).

704 The pool is described in its structure as **having five porticoes**, i.e., round about, so that a number of the priests could stand and wash the animals without inconvenience. In the mystical sense these five porticoes, according to Chrysostom, signify the five wounds in the body of Christ; about which we read: "Put your hand into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe" (below 20:27). But according to Augustine, these five porticoes signify the five books of Moses.

705 The pool is also described from its occupants, for **in these porticoes lay a great number of people: feeble, blind, lame and withered**. The literal explanation of this is that since all the afflicted persons gathered because of the curative power of the water, which did not always cure nor cure many at the same time, it was inevitable that there be many hanging around waiting to be cured. The mystical meaning of this, for Augustine, was that the law was incapable of healing sins: "It is impossible that sins be taken away by the blood of bulls and goats" (Heb 10:4). The law merely shed light on them, for "The knowledge of sin comes from the law" (Rom 3:20).

706 And so, subject to various illnesses, these people lay there, unable to be cured. They are described in four ways. First, by their posture: for there they lay, i.e., clinging to earthly things by their sins; for one who is lying down is in direct contact with the earth: "He had compassion on them, for they were suffering, and lying like sheep without a shepherd" (Mt 9:36). But the just do not lie down, but stand upright, toward the things of heaven: "They," i.e., sinners, "are bound, and have fallen down; but we," the just, "have stood and are erect" (Ps 19:9).

Secondly, they are described as to their number, for there was a **great number** of them: "The evil are hard to correct, and the number of fools is infinite" (Ecc 1:15); and in Matthew (7:13): "The road that leads to destruction is wide, and many go this way."

Thirdly, these sick people are described as to their condition. And he mentions four things which a person brings on himself through sin. First, a person who is

ruled by sinful passions is made listless or feeble: and so he says, **feeble**. So it is that Cicero calls certain passions of the soul, such as anger and concupiscence and the like, illnesses of the soul. And the Psalm says: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak" (Ps 6:3).

Secondly, due to the rule and victory of a man's passions, his reason is blinded by consent; and he says as to this, **blind**, that is, through sins. According to Wisdom (2:21): "Their own evil blinded them"; and in the Psalm (57:9): "Fire," that is the fire of anger and concupiscence, "fell on them, and they did not see the sun."

Thirdly, a person who is feeble and blind is inconstant in his works and is, in a way, lame. So we read in Proverbs (11:18): "The work of the wicked is unsteady." With respect to this the Evangelist says, lame. "How long will you be lame?" (1 Kgs 18:2 1).

Fourthly, a man who is thus feeble, blind in understanding, and lame in his exterior actions, becomes dry in his affections, in the sense that all the fatness of devotion withers within him. This devotion is sought in the Psalm (62:6): "May my soul be filled with fat and marrow." With respect to this the Evangelist says, withered. "My strength is dried up like baked clay" (Ps 21:16).

But there are some so afflicted by the lassitude of sin, who do not wait for the motion of the water, wallowing in their sins, according to Wisdom (14:22): "They live in a great strife of ignorance, and they call so many and great evils peace." We read of such people: "They are glad when they do evil, and rejoice in the worst of things" (Prv 2:14). The reason for this is that they do not hate their sins: they do not sin from ignorance or weakness, but from malice. But others, who do not sin from malice, do not wallow in their sins, but wait by desire for the motion of the water. So he says, **waiting**. "Every day of my service I wait for my relief to come" (Jb 14:14). This is the way those in the Old Testament waited for Christ: "I will wait for your salvation, O Lord" (Gn 49:18).

707 Finally, the power of the pool is described, for it healed all physical illnesses in virtue of an angel who came to it; so he says, **From time to time an angel of the Lord used to come down into the pool**. In certain ways, the power of this pool is like that of Baptism. It is like it, first, in the fact that its power was unperceived: for the power of the water in this pool did not come from its very nature, otherwise it would have healed at all times; its power was unseen, being from an angel. So he says, **From time to time an angel of the Lord used to come down into the pool**. The water of Baptism is like this in that precisely as water it does not have the power to cleanse souls, but this comes from the unseen power of the Holy Spirit, according to: "Unless one is born again of water

and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (above 3:5). It is like it, in a second way, in its effect: for as the water of Baptism heals, so also the water of that pool healed. So he says, **the first one into the pool was healed**. Further, God gave to that water the power to heal so that men by washing might learn through their bodily health to seek their spiritual health.

Yet the water of this pool differs from the water of Baptism in three ways. First, in the source of its power: for the water in the pool produced health because of an angel, but the water of Baptism produces its effect by the uncreated power not only of the Holy Spirit, but of the entire Trinity. Thus the entire Trinity was present at the baptism of Christ: the Father in the voice, the Son in person, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. This is why we invoke the Trinity in our baptism.

Secondly, this water differs in its power: for the water in the pool did not have a continuous power to cure, but only **from time to time**; while the water of Baptism has a permanent power to cleanse, according to: "On that day a fountain will be open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse the sinner and the unclean" (Zee 13:1).

Thirdly, this water differs as regards the number of people healed: for only one person was cured when the water of this pool was moved; but all are healed when the water of Baptism is moved. And no wonder: for the power of the water in the pool, since it is created, is finite and has a finite effect; but in the water of Baptism there is an infinite power capable of cleansing an infinite number of souls, if there were such: "I will pour clean water upon you, and you will be cleansed from all your uncleanness" (Ez 36:25).

708 According to Augustine, however, the angel signifies Christ, according to this reading of Isaiah (9:6): "He will be called great counsel." Just as the angel descended at certain times into the pool, so Christ descended into the world at a time fixed by the Father: "The time is near" (Is 14:1); "When the fulness of time had come God sent his Son, made from a woman, in a law" (Gal 4:4). Again, just as the angel was not seen except by the motion of the water, so Christ was not known as to his divinity, for "If they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:8). For as Isaiah (45:15) says: "Truly, you are a hidden God." And so the motion of the water was seen, but not the one who set it in motion, because, seeing the weakness of Christ, the people did not know of his divinity. And just as the one who went into the pool was healed, so a person who humbly believes in God is healed by his passion: "Justified by faith, through the redemption which is in Christ, whom God put forward as an expiation" (Rom 3:24). Only one was healed, because no one can be healed except in the oneness or unity of the Church: "One Lord, one faith, one

baptism" (Eph 4:5). Therefore, woe to those who hate unity, and divide men into sects.

709 Then (v 5), the Evangelist mentions the disability of a man who lay by the pool. First, we are told how long he was disabled; and secondly, why it was so long (v 7).

7 10 He was disabled for a long time, for **There was one man lying there who had been sick for thirty-eight years with his infirmity.** This episode is very aptly mentioned: the man who could not be cured by the pool was to be cured by Christ, because those whom the law could not heal, Christ heals perfectly, according to: "God did what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as a sin-offering, he condemned sin in his flesh" (Rom 8:3), and in Sirach (36:6): "Perform new signs and wonders."

711 The number thirty-eight is well-suited to his infirmity, for we see it associated with sickness rather than with health. For, as Augustine says, the number forty signifies the perfection of justice, which consists in observing the law. But the law was given in ten precepts, and was to be preached to the four corners of the world, or be completed by the four Gospels, according to: "The end of the law is Christ" (Rom 10:4). So since ten times four is forty, this appropriately signifies perfect justice. Now if two is subtracted from forty, we get thirty-eight. This two is the two precepts of charity, which effects perfect justice. And so this man was sick because he had forty minus two, that is, his justice was imperfect, for "On these two commandments all the law and the prophets depend" (Mt 22:40).

712 Now the reason for the length of the man's illness is considered. First, we have the Lord's query; secondly, the sick man's answer (v 7).

713 John says, Jesus, seeing him, the man, **lying there.** Jesus saw him not only with his physical eyes, but also with the eyes of his mercy; this is the way David begged to be seen, saying: "Look at me, O Lord, and have mercy on me" (Ps 85:16). And Jesus **knowing that he had been sick a long time**—which was repugnant to the heart of Christ as well as to the sick man himself: "A long illness is a burden to the physician" (Sir 10:11)—said to him, **Do you wish to be healed?** He did not say this because he did not know the answer, for it was quite evident that the man wanted to be healed, he said it to arouse the sick man's desire, and to show his patience in waiting so many years to be cured of his sickness. and in not giving up. We see from this that he was all the worthier to be cured: "Act bravely, and let your heart be strengthened, all you who hope in the Lord" (Ps 30:25). Jesus incites the man's desires because we keep more

securely what we perceive with desire and more easily acquire. "Knock," by your desire, "and it will be opened to you," as we read in Matthew (7:7).

Note that in other situations the Lord requires faith: "Do you believe that I can do this for you" (Mt 9:28); but here he does not make any such demand. The reason is that the others had heard of the miracles of Jesus, of which this man knew nothing. And so Jesus does not ask faith from him until after the miracle has been performed.

714 Then (v 7), the answer of the sick man is given. Two reasons are given for the length of his illness: his poverty and his weakness. As he was poor, he could not afford a man to plunge him into the pool; so he says, **Sir, I have no one to plunge me into the pool.** Perhaps he thought, as Chrysostom says, that Christ might even help to put him into the water. Someone else always reached the pool before him because he was weak and not able to move fast; so he says, **By the time I get there, someone else has gone in before me.** He could say with Job: "I cannot help myself" (Jb 6:13). This signifies that no mere man could save the human race, for all had sinned and needed the grace of God. Mankind had to wait for the coming of Christ, God and man, by whom it would be healed.

715 Now we see the man restored to health, i.e., the working of the miracle. First, the Lord's command is given; secondly, the man's obedience (v 9).

716 The Lord commanded both the nature of the man and his will, for both are under the Lord's power. He commanded his nature when he said, Stand up. This command was not directed to the man's will, for this was not within the power of his will. But it was within the power of his nature, to which the Lord gave the power to stand by his command. He gave two commands to the man's will: **pick up your mat and walk!** The literal meaning for this is that these two things were commanded in order to show that the man had been restored to perfect health. For in all his miracles the Lord produced a perfect work, according to what was best in the nature of each case: "The works of God are perfect" (Dt 32:4). Now this man was lacking two things: first, his own energy, since he could not stand up by himself, thus our Lord found him lying by the pool. Secondly, he lacked the help of others; so he said, **I have no one.** So our Lord, in order that this man might recognize his perfect health, ordered him who could not help himself to pick up his mat, and him who could not walk to walk.

717 These are the three things which the Lord commands in the justification of a sinner. First, he should **stand up**, by leaving his sinful ways: "Rise up, you who sleep, and arise from the dead" (Eph 5:14). Secondly, he is commanded to **pick up your mat**, by making satisfaction for the sins he has committed. For the mat

on which a man rests signifies his sins. And so a man takes up his mat when he begins to do the penance given to him for his sins. "I will bear the anger of God, because I have sinned against him" (Mi 7:9). Thirdly, he is commanded to **walk**, by advancing in what is good, according to: "They will go from strength to strength" (Ps 83:8).

718 According to Augustine, this sick man was lacking two things: the two precepts of charity. And so our Lord gives two commands to his will, which is perfected by charity: to take up his mat, and to walk. The first concerns the love of neighbor, which is first in the order of doing; the second concerns the love of God, which is first in the order of precept. Christ says, with respect to the first, **pick up your mat**. As if to say: When you are weak, your neighbor bears with you and, like a mat, patiently supports you: "We who are stronger ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not seek to please ourselves" (Rom 15:1). Thus, after you have been cured, **pick up your mat**, i.e., bear and support your neighbor, who carried you when you were weak: "Carry each other's burdens" (Gal 6:2). About the second he says, **walk**, by drawing near God; so we read: "They will go from strength to strength" (Ps 83:8); "Walk while you have the light" (below 12:35).

719 Next we see the man's obedience. First, the obedience of his nature, because, **The man was immediately cured**. And no wonder, because Christ is the Word through whom heaven and earth were made: "He commanded and they were created" (Ps 148:5); "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made" (Ps 32:6). Secondly, we see the obedience of the man's will: first, because **he picked up his mat**, and secondly, because he **walked**. "We will do everything that the Lord commands, and obey him" (Ex 24:7).

LECTURE 2

9b That day, however, was a Sabbath. 10 Therefore the Jews told the man who had been cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not permitted for you to carry your mat." 11 He replied to them, "He who cured me said to me: 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" 12 They then asked him, "Who is this man who told you to pick up your mat and walk?" 13 But he who was cured had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away from the crowd that had gathered in that place. 14 Later, Jesus found the man in the temple and said to him, "Remember, you have been made well; now do not sin again lest something worse happen to you." 15 The man went off and related

to the Jews that it was Jesus who had cured him. 16 For reasons like this the Jews began to persecute Jesus, because he performed such works on the Sabbath. 17 But Jesus had a reply for them: "My Father works even until now, and so do I." 18 Consequently, the Jews tried all the harder to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath rest, but even called God his own Father, making himself equal to God.

720 Having seen a visible miracle which shows the power of Christ to restore spiritual life, we now see an opportunity given to him to teach. This opportunity was the persecution launched against him by the Jews. These Jews, who were envious of Christ, persecuted him for two reasons: first, the above act of his mercy; secondly, his teaching of the truth (v 17). As to the first, the Evangelist does three things. First, he gives the occasion for their persecution. Secondly, the false accusation against the man who was just cured (v 10). And thirdly, their attempt to belittle Christ (v 12).

721 Their opportunity to persecute Christ was the fact that he cured the man on the Sabbath; accordingly, the Evangelist says, **That day, however, was a Sabbath**, when Christ performed the miracle of commanding the man to pick up his mat.

Three reasons are given why our Lord began to work on the Sabbath. The first is given by Ambrose, in his commentary, *On Luke*. He says that Christ came to renovate the work of creation, that is, man, who had become deformed. And so he should have begun where the Creator had left off the work of creation, that is, on a Sabbath, as mentioned in Genesis (c 1). Thus Christ began to work on the Sabbath to show that he was the renovator of the whole creature.

Another reason was that the Sabbath day was celebrated by the Jews in memory of the first creation. But Christ came to make, in a way, a new creature, according to Galatians (6:15): "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor the lack of circumcision is a benefit; what counts is a new creation," i.e., through grace, which comes through the Holy Spirit: "You will send forth your Spirit, and they will be created ; and you will renew the face of the earth" (Ps 103:30). And so Christ worked on the Sabbath to show that a new creation, a re-creation, was taking place through him: "that we might be the first fruits of his creatures" (Jas 1:18).

The third reason was to show that he was about to do what the law could not do: "God did what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, he condemned sin in his flesh, in order that the

requirements of the law might be accomplished in us" (Rom 8:3).

The Jews, however, did not do any work on the Sabbath, as a symbol that there were certain things pertaining to the Sabbath which were to be accomplished, but which the law could not do. This is clear in the four things which God ordained for the Sabbath: for he sanctified the Sabbath day, blessed it, completed his work on it, and then rested. These things the law was not able to do. It could not sanctify; so we read: "Save me, O Lord, for there are no holy people left" (Ps 11:1). Nor could it bless; rather, "Those who rely on the works of the law are under a curse" (Gal 3:10). Neither could it, complete and perfect, because "the law brought nothing to perfection" (Heb 7:19). Nor could it bring perfect rest: "If Joshua had given them rest, God would not be speaking after of another day" (Heb 4:8).

These things, which the law could not do, Christ did. For he sanctified the people by his passion: "Jesus, in order to sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered outside the gate" (Heb 13:12). He blessed them by an inpouring of grace: "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing of heaven, in Christ" (Eph 1:3). He brought the people to perfection by instructing them in the ways of perfect justice: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48). He also led them to true rest: "We who have believed will find rest," as is said in Hebrews (4:3). Therefore, it is proper for him to work on the Sabbath, who is able to make perfect those things that pertain to the Sabbath, from which an impotent law rested.

722 Then (v 10), the Evangelist gives the accusation brought against the man who was healed. First, we have the accusation; and secondly, the explanation given by the man who was healed (v 11).

723 The man was accused for carrying his mat on the Sabbath, and not for being healed; so they say: **It is the Sabbath; it is not permitted for you to carry your mat.** There are several reasons for this. One is that the Jews, although frequently charging Christ with healing on the Sabbath, had been embarrassed by him on the ground that they themselves used to pull their cattle from ditches on the Sabbath in order to save them. For this reason the Jews did not mention his healing, as it was useful and necessary; but they charge him with carrying his mat, which did not seem to be necessary. As if to say: Although your cure need not have been postponed, there was no need for you to carry your mat, or for the order to carry it. Another reason was that the Lord had shown, contrary to their opinion, that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath. And so, because being healed is not the same as doing good, but being done a good, they attack the one healed rather than the one healing. The third reason was that the Jews

thought that they were forbidden by the law to do any work on the Sabbath; and it was the carrying of burdens that was especially forbidden on the Sabbath: "Do not carry a burden on the Sabbath" (Jer 17:2 1). Accordingly, they made a special point of being against the carrying of anything on the Sabbath, as being opposed to the teaching of the prophet. But this command of the prophet was mystical: for when he forbade them to carry burdens, he wanted to encourage them to rest from the burdens of their sins on the Sabbath. Of these sins it is said: "My iniquities are a heavy burden and have weighed me down" (Ps 37:5). Therefore, since the time had come to explain the meaning of obscure symbols, Christ commanded him to take up his mat, i.e, to help his neighbors in their weaknesses: "Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2).

724 Then (v 11), we see the man who was healed defending himself. His defense is wisely taken: for a doctrine is never so well proved to be divinely inspired as by miracles which can be accomplished only by divine power: "Going out, they preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that followed" (Mk 16:20). Thus he argued with those who were defaming the one who healed him, saying: **He who cured me said to me.** As if to say: You say that I am forbidden to carry a burden on the Sabbath, and this on divine authority; but I was commanded by the same authority to pick up my mat. For, **he who cured me**, and by restoring my health showed that he had divine power, said to me, **Pick up your mat and walk.** Therefore, I was duty bound to obey the commands of one who has such power and who had done me such a favor. "I will never forget your precepts because you have brought me to life by them" (Ps 118:93).

725 Then, since they could not very well charge the man who was cured, they try to belittle Christ's cure, for this man defended himself through Christ. But since he did not indicate precisely who he was, they maliciously ask him who it was. With respect to this, first, the search for Christ is set down. Secondly, his discovery. And thirdly, his persecution (v 16).

726 Three things are mentioned about the first: the Jews' interrogation; the ignorance of the man who was cured, and the cause of that ignorance.

As to the first, we read: **They then asked him**, not with the good intention of making progress, but for the evil purpose of persecuting and destroying Christ: "You will seek me, and you will die in your sin" (below 8:21), Their very words show their malice: for while our Lord had commanded the man who was sick to become healed and to pick up his mat, they ignored the first, which is an undeniable sign of divine power, and harped on the second, which seemed to be against the law, saying, **Who is this man who told you to pick up you mat**

and walk? "He lies in wait, and turns good into evil, and he will put blame," i.e., attempt to put blame, "on the elect" (Sir 11:33).

727 As to the second, the Evangelist says, **But he who was cured had no idea who it was.** This cured man signifies those who believe and have been healed by the grace of Christ: "You are saved by grace" (Eph 2:8). Indeed, they do not know who Christ is, but they know only his effects: "While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord: for we walk by faith, and not by sight" (2 Cor 5:6). We will know who Christ is when "we shall see him as he is," as said in 1 John (3:2).

728 Next, the Evangelist gives the reason for the man's ignorance, saying, **for Jesus had slipped away from the crowd that had gathered in that place.** There are both literal and mystical reasons why Christ left. Of the two literal reasons, the first is to give us the example of concealing our good deeds and of not using them to seek the applause of men: "Take care not to perform your good actions in the sight of men, in order to be seen by them" (Mt 6:1). The second literal reason is to show us that, in all our actions, we should leave and avoid those who are envious, so as not to feed and increase their envy: "Do not be provoked by one who speaks evil of you, so he will not trap you by your own words" (Sir 8:14).

There are also two mystical reasons why Christ slipped away. First, it teaches us that Christ is not easy to find in the midst of men, or in the whirlwind of temporal cares; rather, he is found in spiritual seclusion: "I will lead her into the wilderness, and there I will speak to her heart" (Hos 2:14); and in Ecclesiastes (9:17): "The words of the wise are heard in silence." Secondly, this suggests to us that Christ was to leave the Jews for the Gentiles: "He hid his face for a while from the house of Jacob" (Is 8:17), i.e., he withdrew the knowledge of his truth from the Jewish people.

729 Then (v 14), the Evangelist tells us how Jesus was found. First, he says that he was found. Secondly, that after having been found, he taught. Thirdly, that after having taught, his identity was reported to the Jews.

730 The Evangelist tells us both where and the way in which Christ was found. The way in which he was found was remarkable, for Christ is not found unless he first finds; hence he says, Later, after the above events, **Jesus found the man.** For we cannot find Jesus by our own power unless Christ first presents himself to us; so we read: "Seek your servant" (Ps 118:176); and, "She [wisdom] goes to meet those who desire her" (Wis 6:14).

The place Christ was found was holy, **in the temple,** according to: "The Lord is

in his holy temple" (Ps 10:5). For his mother had also found him in the temple (Lk 2:46); and he was there for he had to be concerned with his Father's affairs. We see from this that this man was not cured in vain, but having been converted to a religious way of life, he visited the temple and found Christ: because if we desire to come to a knowledge of the Creator, we must run from the tumult of sinful affections, leave the company of evil men, and flee to the temple of our heart, where God condescends to visit and live.

731 After Christ was found, he began to teach (v 14). First, Christ reminded the man of the gift he was given. Secondly, he offered him sound advice. And thirdly, he pointed out an imminent danger.

732 The gift was remarkable, for it was a sudden restoration to health; so he says, Remember, you have been made well. Therefore, you should always keep this in mind, according to: "I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord" (Is 63:7).

733 His advice, too, was useful, that is, **do not sin again**. "My son, you have sinned. Do not sin again" (Sir 21:1).

Why did our Lord mention sin to this paralytic and to certain others that he cured, and not to the rest? He did this to show that illness comes to certain people as a result of their previous sins, according to: "For this reason many of you are weak and sick, and many have died" (1 Cor 11:30). In this way he even showed himself to be God, pointing out sins and the hidden secrets of the heart: "Hell and destruction are open to the Lord; how much more the hearts of the children of men" (Prv 15:11). And so Christ mentioned sin only to some he cured and not to all, for not all infirmities are due to previous sins: some come from one's natural disposition, and some are permitted as a trial, as with Job. Or, Christ might have brought up sin to some because they were better prepared for his correction: "Do not rebuke one who mocks, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you" (Prv 9:8). Or, we could say, in telling some not to sin, he intended his words for all the others.

734 The imminent danger was great, so he says, **lest something worse happen to you**. This can be understood in two ways, according to the two events that preceded. For this man was first punished with a troublesome infirmity, and then received a marvelous favor. Accordingly, Christ's statement can refer to each. To the first, for when anyone is punished for his sin, and the punishment does not check him from sinning, it is just for him to be punished more severely. So Christ says, **do not sin again**, because if you do sin, something worse will happen to you: "I have struck your children in vain" (Jer

2:30). It can refer to the second, for one who falls into sin after receiving favors deserves a more severe punishment because of his ingratitude, as we see in 2 Peter (2:20): "It would be better for them not to know the way of truth, than to turn back after knowing it." Also, because after a man has once returned to sin, he sins more easily, according to Matthew (12:45): "The last state of that man becomes worse than the first"; and in Jeremiah (2:20): "You broke your yoke a long time ago, and snapped off your chains, and said: I will not serve."

735 Then when he says, **The man went off and related to the Jews**, we see Jesus identified. Some think, as Chrysostom reports, that this man identified Jesus out of malice. But this does not seem probable: that he would be so ungrateful after receiving such a favor. He **related to the Jews that it was Jesus who had cured him**, in order to make it clear that Christ had the power to heal: "Come ... and I will tell you what great things the Lord has done for me," as we read in the Psalm (65:16). This is obvious, for they had asked him who commanded him to pick up his mat, but he told them that **it was Jesus who had cured him**.

736 Next (v 16), we have the persecution of Christ, begun because he performed a work of mercy on the Sabbath. Thus the Evangelist says, **For reasons like this the Jews began to persecute Jesus, because he performed such works on the Sabbath**. "Princes have persecuted me without cause" (Ps 118:16 1).

737 Then (v 17), the second reason for his persecution is given: what he taught. First, we are given the truth he taught; and secondly, the perversity of his persecutors (v 18).

73 8 Our Lord taught the truth while justifying his breaking of the Sabbath. Here we should note that our Lord justified both himself and his disciples from breaking the Sabbath. He justified his disciples, since they were men, by comparing them to other men: as the priests who, although they worked in the temple on the Sabbath, did not break the Sabbath; and to David, who, while Ahinielech was priest, took the consecrated bread from the temple oil the Sabbath when he was running from Saul (1 Sm 21:1).

Our Lord, who was both God and man, sometimes justified himself in breaking the Sabbath by comparing himself to men, as in Luke (14:5): "Which of you, if his donkey or ox falls into a pit, will not take him out on the Sabbath?" And sometimes he justified himself by comparing himself to God: particularly on this occasion, when he said: **My Father works even until now, and so do I**. As if to say: Do not think that my Father rested on the Sabbath in such a way that

from that time he does not work; rather, just as he is working even now without laboring, so I also am working.

By saying this, Christ eliminated the misunderstanding of the Jews: for in their desire to imitate God, they did not do any work on the Sabbath, as if God entirely ceased from work on that day. In fact, although God rested on the Sabbath from producing new creatures, he is working always and continuously even till now, conserving creatures in existence. Hence it is significant that Moses used the word "rest," after recounting the works of God from which he rested: for this signifies, in its hidden meaning, the spiritual rest which God, by the example of his own rest, promised to the faithful, after they have done their own good works. So we may say that this command was a foreshadowing of something that lay in the future.

739 He expressly says, **works even until now**, and not "has worked," to indicate that God's work is continuous. For they might have thought that God is the cause of the world as a craftsman is the cause of a house, i.e., the craftsman is responsible only for the making or coming into existence of the house: in other words, just as the house continues in existence even when the craftsman has ceased working, so the world would exist if God's influence ceased. But according to Augustine, God is the cause of all creatures in such a way as to be the cause of their existing: for if his power were to cease even for a moment, all things in nature would at once cease to be, just as we may say that the air is illuminated only as long as the light of the sun remains in it. The reason for this is that things which depend on a cause only for their coming into existence, are able to exist when that cause ceases; but things that depend on a cause not only for their coming into existence but also to exist, need that cause for their continuous conservation in existence.

740 Further, in saying that **My Father works even until now**, he rejects the opinion of those who say that God creates through the instrumentality of secondary causes. This opinion conflicts with Isaiah (26:12): "O Lord, you have accomplished all our works for LIS." Therefore, just as my **Father**, who in the beginning created nature, **works even until now**, by preserving and conserving his creation by the same activity, so (to I work, because I am the Word of the Father, through whom he accomplishes all things: "God said: 'Let there be light'" (Gn 1:3). Thus, just as he accomplished the first production of things through the Word, so also their conservation. Consequently, if he **works even until now, so do I**, because I am the Word of the Father, through whom all things are made and conserved.

741 Then (v 18), the Evangelist mentions the persecution of Christ, which resulted from his teaching: for it was because of his teaching that **the Jews**

tried all the harder, i.e., with greater eagerness and a higher pitch of zeal, **to kill him**. For in the law two crimes were punished by death: the crime of breaking the Sabbath—thus anyone who gathered wood on the Sabbath was stoned, as we see from Numbers (15:32); and the crime of blasphemy—so we read: “Bring the blasphemer outside the camp ... and let all the children of Israel stone him” (Lv 24:14). Now they thought it was blasphemy for a man to claim that he was God: “We are not stoning you for any good work, but for blasphemy: because although you are a man, you make yourself God” (below 10:33). It was these two crimes they imputed to Christ: the first because he broke the Sabbath; the second because he said he was equal to God. So the Evangelist says that **the Jews tried all the harder to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath rest, but even called God his own Father**.

Because other just man had also called God their Father, as in “You will call me ‘Father’” (Jer 3:19), they do not just say that he **called God his own Father**, but added what made it blasphemy, **making himself equal to God**, which they understood from his statement: **My Father works even until now, and so do I**. He said that God was his Father so that we might understand that God is his Father by nature, and the Father of others by adoption. He referred to both of these when he said: “I am going to my Father,” by nature, “and to your Father,” by grace (below 20:17). Again, he said that as the Father works, so he works. This answers the accusation of the Jews about his breaking the Sabbath: for this would not be a valid excuse unless he had equal authority with God in working. It was for this reason they said he made himself equal to God.

742 How great then is the blindness of the Arians when they say that Christ is less than God the Father: for they cannot understand in our Lord’s words what the Jews were able to understand. For the Arians say that Christ did not make himself equal to God, while the Jews saw this. There is another way to settle this, from the very things mentioned in the text. For the Evangelist says that the Jews persecuted Christ because he broke the Sabbath, because he said God is his Father, and because he made himself equal to God. But Christ is either a liar or equal to God. But if he is equal to God, Christ is God by nature.

743 Finally, the Evangelist says, **making himself equal to God**, not as though he was making himself become equal to God, because he was equal to God through an eternal generation. Rather, the Evangelist is speaking according to the understanding of the Jews who, not believing that Christ was the Son of God by nature, understood him to say that he was the Son of God in the sense of wishing to make himself equal to God; but they could not believe he was such: “because although you are a man, you make yourself God” (below 10:33), i.e., you say that you are God, understanding this as you wish to make yourself God.

LECTURE 3

19 Jesus therefore replied and said to them:

"Amen, amen, I say to you,
the Son cannot do anything of himself,
but only what he sees the Father doing.
For whatever the Father does,
the Son does likewise.
20a For the Father loves the Son,
and shows him everything that he does."

744 Here we have Christ's teaching on his life-giving power. First, his teaching is presented. Secondly, it is confirmed (v 3 1). Two things are done with the first. First, Christ's teaching on his life-giving power in general is given. Secondly, it is presented in particular (v 20b). As to the first, three things are done. First, the origin of this power is mentioned. Secondly, the greatness of this power, at (v 19b). Thirdly, the reason for each is given (v 20).

745 We should point out, with respect to the first, that the Arians use what Christ said here, **the Son cannot do anything of himself**, to support their error that the Son is less than the Father. As the Evangelist said, the Jews persecuted Christ for making himself equal to God. But the Arians say that when our Lord saw that this disturbed the Jews, he tried to correct this by stating that he was not equal to the Father, saying, **Amen, amen, I say to you, the Son cannot do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing**. As if to say: Do not interpret what I said, "My Father works even until now, and so do I, as meaning that I work as though I am equal to the Father. for I cannot do anything of myself. Therefore, they say, because the Son can do only **what he sees the Father doing**, he is less than the Father. But this interpretation is false and erroneous. For if the Son were not equal to the Father, then the Son would not be the same as the Father; and this is contrary to: "I and the Father are one" (below 10:30). For equality is considered with respect to greatness, which in divine realities is the essence itself. Hence, if the Son were not equal to the Father, he would be different from him in essence.

746 To get the true meaning of Christ's statement, we should know that in those matters which seem to imply inferiority in the Son, it could be said, as some do, that they apply to Christ according to the nature he assumed; as when he said: "The Father is greater than I" (below 14:28). According to this, they would say

that our Lord's statement, **the Son cannot do anything of himself**, should be understood of the Son in his assumed nature. However, this does not stand up, because then one would be forced to say that whatever the Son of God did in his assumed nature, the Father had done before him. For example, that the Father had walked upon the water as Christ did: otherwise, he would not have said, **but only what he sees the Father doing**.

And if we say that whatever Christ did in his flesh, God the Father also did in so far as the Father works in him, as said below (14:10): "The Father, who lives in me, he accomplishes the works," then Christ would be saying that **the Son cannot do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing** in him, i.e., in the Son. But this cannot stand either, because Christ's next statement, **For whatever the Father, does, the Son does likewise**, could not, in this interpretation, be applied to him, i.e., to Christ. For the Son, in his assumed nature, never created the world, as the Father did. Consequently, what we read here must not be understood as pertaining to Christ's assumed nature.

747 According to Augustine, however, there is another way of understanding statements which seem to, but do not, imply inferiority in the Son: namely, by referring them to the origin of the Son coming or begotten from the Father. For although the Son is equal to the Father in all things, he receives all these things from the Father in an eternal begetting. But the Father gets these from no one, for he is unbegotten. According to this explanation, the continuity of thought is the following: Why are you offended because I said that God is my Father, and because I made myself equal to the Father? **Amen, amen, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself**. As if to say: I am equal to the Father, but in such a way as to be from him, and not he from me; and whatever I may do, is in me from the Father.

748 According to this interpretation, mention is made of the power of the Son when he says, can, and of his activity when he says, do. Both can be understood here, so that, first of all, the derivation of the Son's power from the Father is shown, and secondly, the conformity of the Son's activity to that of the Father.

749 As to the first, Hilary explains it this way: Shortly above our Lord said that he is equal to the Father. Some heretics, basing themselves on certain scriptural texts which assert the unity and equality of the Son to the Father, claim that the Son is unbegotten. For example, the Sabellians, who say that the Son is identical in person with the Father. Therefore, so you do not understand this teaching in this way, he says, **the Son cannot do anything of himself**, for the Son's power is identical with his nature. Therefore the Son has his power from the same source as he has his being (*esse*); but he has his being (*esse*) from the Father: "I came forth from the Father, and I have come into the world" (Jn

16:28). He also has his nature from the Father, because he is God from God; therefore, it is from him that the Son has his power (*posse*).

So his statement, **the Son cannot do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing**, is the same as saying: The Son, just as he does not have his being (*esse*) except from the Father, so he cannot do anything except from the Father. For in natural things, a thing receives its power to act from the very thing from which it receives its being: for example, fire receives its power to ascend from the very thing from which it receives its form and being. Further, in saying, **the Son cannot do anything of himself**, no inequality is implied, because this refers to a relation; while equality and inequality refer to quantity.

750 Someone might misunderstand his saying, **but only what he sees the Father doing**, and take it to mean that the Son works or acts in the way he sees the Father acting, i.e., that the Father acts first, and when the Son sees this, then the Son begins to act. It would be like two carpenters, a master and his apprentice, with the apprentice making a cabinet in the way he saw the master do. But this is not true for the Word, for it was said above (1:3): "All things were made through him." Therefore, the Father did not make something in such a way that the Son saw him doing it and so learned from it.

But this is said so that the communication of paternity to the Son might be designated in terms of begetting or generation, which is fittingly described by the verb *sees*, because knowledge is conveyed to us by another through seeing and hearing. For we receive our knowledge from things through seeing, and we receive knowledge from words through hearing. Now the Son is not other than Wisdom, as we read: "I came forth out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures" (Sir 24:5). Accordingly, the derivation of the Son from the Father is nothing other than the derivation of divine Wisdom. And so, because the act of seeing indicates the derivation of knowledge and wisdom from another, it is proper for the generation of the Son from the Father to be indicated by an act of seeing; so that for the Son to see the Father doing something is nothing other than to proceed by an intellectual procession from the acting Father.

Another possible explanation of this is given by Hilary. For him, the word *sees* eliminates all imperfection from the generation of the Son or Word. For in physical generation, what is generated changes little by little in the course of time from what is imperfect to what is perfect, for such a thing is not perfect when it is first generated. But this is not so in eternal generation, since this is the generation of what is perfect from what is perfect. And so he says, **but only what he sees the Father doing**. For since the act of seeing is the act of a perfect thing, it is plain that the Son was begotten as perfect at once, as seeing

at once, and not as coming to perfection over a course of time.

751 Apropos of the second point, Chrysostom explains it as showing the conformity of the Father to the Son in operation. So that the sense is: I say that it is lawful for me to work on the Sabbath, because my Father, too, continues to work, and I cannot do anything opposed to him: and this is because **the Son cannot do anything of himself**. For one does something of himself when he does not conform himself to another in his actions. But whoever is from another sins, if he is opposed to him: "Whoever speaks on his own, seeks his own glory" (below 7:18). Therefore, whoever exists from another, but acts of himself, sins. Now the Son is from the Father; thus, if he acts of himself, he sins; and this is impossible. So by saying, **the Son cannot do anything of himself**, he means nothing more than that the Son cannot sin. As if to say: You are persecuting me unjustly for breaking the Sabbath, because I cannot sin, since I do not act in a way opposed to my Father.

Augustine makes use of both of these explanations, that of Hilary and the one given by Chrysostom, but in different places.

752 Then when he says, **For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise**, he affirms the greatness of Christ's power. He excludes three things in the power of Christ: limitation, difference, and imperfection.

First, limitation is excluded. Since there are diverse agents in the world, and the first universal agent has power over all other agents, but the other agents, which are from him, have a limited power in proportion to their rank in the order of causality, some might think that since the Son is not of himself, that he must have a power limited to certain existents, rather than a universal power over all, as the Father has. And so to exclude this he says, **whatever the Father does**, i. e., to all the things to which the Father's power extends, the Son's power also extends: "All things were made through him" (above 1:3).

Secondly, difference is excluded. For sometimes a thing that exists from another is able to do whatever that from which it exists does. And yet the things the former does are not the same as those done by that from which it is. For example, if one fire which exists from another can do whatever that other does, i. e., cause combustion, the act of causing combustion would be specifically the same in each, even though one fire ignites certain things and the other fire ignites different things. And so that you do not think that the Son's activity is different from the activity of the Father in this way, he says, **whatever the Father does, the Son does**, i. e., not different things, but the very same.

Thirdly, imperfection is excluded. Sometimes one and the same thing comes from two agents: from one as the principal and perfect agent, and from the other as an instrumental and imperfect agent. But it does not come in the same way, because the principal agent acts in a different way from the instrumental agent: for the instrumental agent acts imperfectly, and in virtue of the other. And so that no one thinks that this is the way the Son does whatever the Father does, he says that whatever the Father does, the Son does **likewise**, i.e., with the same power by which the Father acts, the Son also acts; because the same power and the same perfection are in the Father and the Son: "I was with him, forming all things" (Prv 8:30).

753 Then when he says, **For the Father loves the Son**, he gives the reason for each, i.e., for the origin of the Son's power and for its greatness. This reason is the love of the Father, who loves the Son. Thus he says, **For the Father loves the Son**.

In order to understand how the Father's love for the Son is the reason for the origin or communication of the Son's power, we should point out that a thing is loved in two ways. For since the good alone is loveable, a good can be related to love in two ways: as the cause of love, or as caused by love. Now in us, the good causes love: for the cause of our loving something is its goodness, the goodness in it. Therefore, it is not good because we love it, but rather we love it because it is good. Accordingly, in us, love is caused by what is good. But it is different with God, because God's love itself is the cause of the goodness in the things that are loved. For it is because God loves us that we are good, since to love is nothing else than to will a good to someone. Thus, since God's will is the cause of things, for "whatever he willed he made" (Ps 113:3), it is clear that God's love is the cause of the goodness in things. Hence Denis says in *The Divine Names* (c. 4) that the divine love did not allow itself to be without issue. So, if we wish to consider the origin of the Son, let us see whether the love with which the Father loves the Son, is the principle of his origin, so that he proceeds from it.

In divine realities, love is taken in two ways: essentially, so far as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit love; and notionally or personally, so far as the Holy Spirit proceeds as Love. But in neither of these ways of taking love can it be the principle of origin of the Son. For if it is taken essentially, it implies an act of the will; and if that were the sense in which it is the principle of origin of the Son, it would follow that the Father generated the Son, not by nature, but by will—and this is false. Again, love is not understood notionally, as pertaining to the Holy Spirit. For it would then follow that the Holy Spirit would be the principle of the Son—which is also false. Indeed, no heretic ever went so far as to say this. For although love, notionally taken, is the principle of all the gifts given to us by God, it is nevertheless not the principle of the Son; rather it proceeds from the Father

and the Son.

Consequently, we must say that this explanation is not taken from love as from a principle (*ex principio*), but as from a sign (*ex signo*). For since likeness is a cause of love (for every animal loves its like), wherever a perfect likeness of God is found, there also is found a perfect love of God. But the perfect likeness of the Father is in the Son, as is said: "He is the image of the invisible God" (1:15); and "He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the image of his substance" (Heb 1:3). Therefore, the Son is loved perfectly by the Father, and because the Father perfectly loves the Son, this is a sign that the Father has shown him everything and has communicated to him his very own [the Father's] power and nature. And it is of this love that we read above (3:5): "The Father loves the Son, and has put everything into his hands"; and, "This is my beloved. Son" (Mt 3:17).

754 With respect to what follows, **and shows him everything that he does**, we should point out that someone can show another his works in two ways: either by sight, as an artisan shows his apprentice the things he has made, or by hearing, as when he verbally instructs him). In whatever of these ways shows is understood, there can follow something which is not appropriate, that is, something that is not present when the Father shows things to the Son. For if we say the Father shows things to the Son by sight, then it follows, as with humans, that the Father first does something which he then shows to the Son; and that he does this by himself, without the Son. But the Father does not show the Son things which he did before, for the Son himself says: "The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his ways, before he made anything" (Prv 8:22). Nor does the Father show the Son things he has done without the Son, for the Father does all things through the Son: "All things were made through him" (above 1:3). If **shows** is understood as a kind of hearing, two things seem to follow. For the one who teaches by word first points out something to the one who is ignorant; again, the word is something intermediate between the one showing and the one being shown. But it is in neither of these ways that the Father shows things to the Son: for he does not do so to one who is ignorant, since the Son is the Wisdom of the Father: "Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24); nor does the Father use some intermediate word, because the Son himself is the Word of the Father: "The Word was with God" (above 1:1).

Therefore, it is said that the Father **shows** all that he does to the Son, inasmuch as he gives the Son a knowledge of all of his works. For it is in this way that a master is said to show something to his disciple, inasmuch as he gives him a knowledge of the things he makes. Hence, according to Augustine, for the Father to show anything to the Son is nothing more than for the Father to beget or generate the Son. And for the Son to see what the Father does is nothing more than for the Son to receive his being (*esse*) and nature from the Father.

Nevertheless, this showing can be considered similar to seeing insofar as the Son is the brightness of the paternal vision, as we read in Hebrews (1:3): for the Father, seeing and understanding himself, conceives the Son, who is the concept of this vision. Again, it can be considered similar to hearing insofar as the Son proceeds from the Father as the Word. As if to say: **The Father shows him everything**, insofar as he generates him as the brightness and concept of his own wisdom, and as the Word. Thus the words, **The Father shows**, refer to what was said before: **the Son cannot do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing**. And the word, everything, refers to, **For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise**.

LECTURE 4

20b "Indeed, he will show him even greater works than these, such that you will be amazed. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and grants life, so the Son grants life to those to whom he wishes. 22 The Father himself judges no one, but he has given all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all men may honor the Son as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24 Amen, amen, I say to you, that whoever hears my voice and believes in him who sent me, possesses eternal life; and he will not encounter judgment, but has passed from death to life. 25 Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear it will live."

755 Having pointed out the power of the Son in general, he now shows it in more detail. First, the Lord discloses his life-giving power. Secondly, he clarifies what seemed obscure in what was said before (v 26). As to the first he does two things. First, he shows that the Son has life-giving power. Secondly, he teaches how life is received from the Son (v 24). Concerning the first he does three things. First, he presents the life-giving power of the Son. Secondly, he gives a reason for what he says (v 22). Thirdly, he shows the effect of this (v 23). With respect to the first he does two things. First, he sets forth this life-giving power in general. Secondly, he expands on it (v 21).

756 He says, to the first, **Indeed, he will show even greater works than these**. As if to say: You are astonished and affected by the power of the Son in his healing of the sick man, but the Father will show **even greater works than**

these, as in raising the dead, such that you will be amazed.

757 This passage gives rise to two difficulties. First, about his saying, **he will show**. For the earlier statement that the Father shows everything to the Son (5:20) refers to his eternal generation. How, then, can he say here, **he will show**, if the Son is coeternal with him and eternity does not allow of a future? The second difficulty is over, **such that you will be amazed**. For if he intends to show something to amaze the Jews, then he will be showing it to the Son at the same time as to them; for they could not be amazed unless they saw it. And yet the Son saw all things from eternity with the Father.

758 We must say that this is explained in three ways. The first way is given by Augustine, and in it this future showing is referred to the disciples. For it is Christ's custom that now and then he says that what happens to his members happens to himself, as in Matthew (25:40): "As long as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me." And then the meaning is this: You saw the Son do something great in healing the sick man, and you were amazed; but the Father **will show him even greater works than these**, in his members, that is, the disciples: "He will do greater things than these," as we read below (14:12). He then says, **such that you will be amazed**, for the miracles of the disciples so amazed the Jews that a great many of them were converted to the faith, as we see in the Acts.

759 The second explanation, also by Augustine, refers this showing to Christ according to his assumed nature. For in Christ there is both a divine nature and a human nature, and in each he has life-giving power from the Father, although not in the same way. According to his divinity he has the power to give life to souls; but according to his assumed nature, he gives life to bodies. Hence Augustine says: "The Word gives life to souls; but the Word made flesh gives life to bodies." For the resurrection of Christ and the mysteries which Christ fulfilled in his flesh are the cause of the future resurrection of bodies: "God, who is rich in mercy, has brought us to life in Christ" (Eph 2:5); "If it is preached that Christ rose from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor 15:12). The first life-giving power he has from eternity; and he indicated this when he said: "The Father shows him everything that he does" (above 4:20), all of which he shows to his flesh.

The other life-giving power he has in time, and concerning this he says: **he will show him even greater works than these**, i.e., his power will be shown by the fact that he will do greater works, by raising the dead. He will raise some of the dead here: as Lazarus, the young girl, and the mother's only son; and finally he will raise all on the day of judgment.

760 A third explanation refers this showing to Christ in his divine nature, according to the custom of Scripture in saying that a thing is beginning to take place when it is beginning to be known. For example: "All power has been given to me, in heaven and on earth" (Mt 28:18); for although Christ had the complete fulness of power from eternity (because "whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise"), he still speaks of this power as being given to him after the resurrection, not because he was then receiving it for the first time, but because it was through the glory of the resurrection that it became most known. In this interpretation, then, he says that power is given to him insofar as he exercises it in some work. As if to say: **he will show him even greater works than these**, i.e., he will show by his works what has been given to him. And this will come about when you are amazed, i.e., when the one who seems to you to be a mere man is revealed to be a person of divine power and as God.

We could also take the word show as referring to an act of seeing, as was explained above [750].

761 Now he explains in more detail the life-giving power of the Son by indicating those greater works which the Father will show the Son (v 21). Here we should point out that in the Old Testament the divine power is particularly emphasized by the fact that God is the author of life: "The Lord kills, and brings to life" (1 Sm 2:6); "I will kill, and bring to life again" (Dt 32:39). Now just as the Father has this power, so also does the Son; hence he says, **For just as the Father raises the dead and grants life, so the Son grants life to those to whom he wishes**. As if to say: These are those greater works that the Father will show the Son, that is, he will give life to the dead. Such works are obviously greater, for it is greater to raise the dead than for a sick man to become well. Thus **the Son grants life to those to whom he wishes**, i.e., by giving initial life to the living, and by raising the dead.

We should not think that some are raised up by the Father and others by the Son. Rather, the same ones who are raised and vivified by the Father, are raised and vivified by the Son also: because just as the Father does all things through the Son, who is his power, so he also gives life to all through the Son, who is life, as he says below: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6).

The Father does not raise up and give life through the Son as through an instrument, because then the Son would not have freedom of power. And so to exclude this he says, **the Son grants life to those to whom he wishes**, i.e., it lies in the freedom of his power to grant life to whom he wills. For the Son does not will anything different than the Father wills: for just as they are one substance, so they have one will; hence Matthew (20:15) says: "Is it not lawful

for me to do as I will?"

762 Then when he says, **The Father himself judges no one**, he gives the reason for what was said above, and indicates his own power. It should be remarked that there are two expositions for the present passages: one is given by Augustine, and the other by Hilary and Chrysostom.

Augustine's explanation is this. The Lord had said that just as the Father raises the dead, so also does the Son. But so that we do not think that this refers only to those miracles the Son performs in raising the dead to this life, and not to the Son's raising to eternal life, he leads them to the deeper consideration of the resurrection to occur at the future judgment. Thus he refers explicitly to the judgment, saying, **The Father himself judges no one**.

Another explanation by Augustine, in which the same meaning is maintained, is that the earlier statement, **just as the Father raises the dead and grants life, so the Son**, should be referred to the resurrection of souls, which the Son causes inasmuch as he is the Word; but the text, **The Father himself judges no one**, should be referred to the resurrection of bodies, which the Son causes inasmuch as he is the Word made flesh. For the resurrection of souls is accomplished through the person of the Father and of the Son; and for this reason he mentions the Father and Son together, saying, **just as the Father raises the dead ... so the Son**. But the resurrection of bodies is accomplished through the humanity of the Son, according to which he is not coeternal with the Father. Consequently, he attributes judgment solely to the Son.

763 Note the wonderful variety of expressions. The Father is first presented as acting and the Son as resting, when it says: "the Son cannot do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing" (5:19); but here, on the contrary, the Son is presented as acting and the Father as resting: **The Father himself judges no one, but he has given all judgment to the Son**. We can see from this that he is speaking from different points of view at different times. At first, he was speaking of an action which belongs to the Father and the Son; thus he says that "the Son cannot do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing"; but here he is speaking of an action by which the Son, as man, judges, and the Father does not: thus he says that the Father **has given all judgment to the Son**. For the Father will not appear at the judgment because, in accord with what is just, God cannot appear in his divine nature before all who are to be judged: for since our happiness consists in the vision of God, if the wicked were to see God in his own nature, they would be enjoying happiness. Therefore, only the Son will appear, who alone has an assumed nature. Therefore, he alone will judge who alone will appear to all. Yet he will judge with the authority of the Father: "He is the one appointed by God to be the

judge of the living and of the dead" (Acts 10:42); and in the Psalm (71:1) we read: "O Lord, give your judgment to the king."

764 Then when he says, so **that all men may honor the Son**, he gives the effect which results from the power of the Son. First, he gives the effect. Secondly, he excludes an objection (v 23b).

765 He says that the Father has given all judgment to the Son, according to his human nature, because in the incarnation the Son emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, under which form he was dishonored by men, as is said below (8:49): "I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me." Therefore, judgment was given to the Son in his assumed nature in order **that all men may honor the Son as they honor the Father**. For on that day "they will see the Son of Man coming with great power and glory" (Lk 21:27); "They fell on their faces and worshipped, saying: 'Blessing and glory, and wisdom and thanks, and honor, power and strength, to our God'" (Rv 7:11).

766 Someone might say: I am willing to honor the Father, but do not care about the Son. This cannot be, because **Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him**. For it is one thing to honor God precisely as God, and another to honor the Father. For someone may well honor God as the omnipotent and immutable Creator without honoring the Son. But no one can honor God as Father without honoring the Son; for he cannot be called Father if he does not have a Son. But if you dishonor the Son by diminishing his power, this also dishonors the Father; because where you give less to the Son, you are taking away from the power of the Father.

767 Another explanation, given by Augustine, is this. A twofold honor is due to Christ. One, according to his divinity, in regard to which he is owed an honor equal to that given the Father; and with respect to this he says, **that all men may honor the Son as they honor the Father**. Another honor is due the Son according to his humanity, but not one equal to that given the Father; and with respect to this he says, **Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him**. Thus in the first case he significantly used "as"; but now, the second time, he does not say "as," but states absolutely that the Son should be honored: "He who rejects you, rejects me; and he who rejects me, rejects **him who** sent me," as we read in Luke (10:16).

768 Hilary and Chrysostom give a more literal explanation, but it is only slightly different. They explain it this way. Our Lord said above, **the Son grants life to those to whom he wishes**. Now whoever does anything according to the free decision of his will acts because of his own judgment. But it was stated above

that "whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise" (5:19). Therefore, the Son enjoys a free decision of his own will in all things, since he acts because of his own judgment. Thus he immediately mentions judgment, saying that **the Father himself judges no one**, i.e., without or apart from the Son. Our Lord used this way of speaking below (12:47): "I do not judge him," i.e., I alone, "but the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day." **But he has given all judgment to the Son**, as he has given all things to him. For as he has given him life and begotten him as living, so he has given him all judgment, i.e., begotten him as judge: "I judge only as I hear it" (below 5:30), i.e., just as I have being (*esse*) from the Father, so also judgment. The reason for this is that the Son is nothing other than the conception of the paternal wisdom, as was said. But each one judges by the concept of his wisdom. Hence, just as the Father does all things through the Son, so he judges all things through him. And the fruit of this is **that all men may honor the Son as they honor the Father**, i.e., that they may render to him the cult of "latria" as they do the Father. The rest does not change.

769 Hilary calls our attention to the remarkable relationship of the passages so that the errors concerning eternal generation can be refuted. Two heresies have arisen concerning this eternal generation. One was that of Arius, who said that the Son is less than the Father; and this is contrary to their equality and unity. The other was that of Sabellius, who said that there is no distinction of persons in the divinity; and this is contrary to their origin.

So, whenever he mentions the unity and equality [of the Father and Son] , he immediately also adds their distinction as persons according to origin, and conversely. Thus, because he mentions the origin of the persons when he says, "the Son cannot do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing" (5:19), then, so we do not think this involves inequality, he at once adds: "for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise." Conversely, when he states their equality by saying: **For just as the Father raises the dead and grants life, so the Son grants life to those to whom he wishes**, then, so that we do not deny that the Son has an origin and is begotten, he adds, **the Father himself judges no one, but he has given all judgment to the Son**. Similarly, when he mentions the equality of the persons by saying. **so that all men may honor the Son as they honor the Father**. he immediately adds something about a "mission," which indicates an origin, saying: **Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him**, but not in such a way that involves a separation. Christ mentions such mission below (8:29) in saying: "He who sent me is with me, and he has not left me alone."

770 Above, our Lord showed that he had life-giving power; here he shows how someone can share in this life coming from him. First, he tells how one can share

in this life through him. Secondly, he predicts its fulfillment (v 25).

771 With respect to the first, we should point out that there are four grades of life. One is found in plants, which take nourishment, grow, reproduce, and are reproduced. Another is in animals which only sense. Another in living things that move, that is, the perfect animals. Finally, there is another form of life which is present in those who understand. Now among those grades of life that exist, it is impossible that the foremost life be that found in plants, or in those with sensation, or even in those with motion. For the first and foremost life must be that which is *per se*, not that which is participated. This can be none other than intellectual life, for the other three forms are common to a corporal and spiritual creature [as man]. Indeed, a body that lives is not life itself, but one participating in life. Hence intellectual life is the first and foremost life, which is the spiritual life, that is immediately received from the first principle of life, whence it is called the life of wisdom. For this reason in the Scriptures life is attributed to wisdom: "He who finds me finds life, and has salvation from the Lord" (Prv 8:35). Therefore we share life from Christ, who is the Wisdom of God, insofar as our soul receives wisdom from him.

Now this intellectual life is made perfect by the true knowledge of divine Wisdom, which is eternal life: "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (below 17:3). But no one can arrive at any wisdom except by faith. Hence it is that in the sciences, no one acquires wisdom unless he first believes what is said by his teacher. Therefore, if we wish to acquire this life of wisdom, we must believe through faith the things that are proposed to us by it. "He who comes to God must believe that he is and rewards those who seek him" (Heb 11:6); "If you do not believe, you will not understand," as we read in another version of Isaiah (28:16).

772 Thus, our Lord fittingly shows that the way of obtaining life is through faith, saying, **whoever hears my voice and believes in him who sent me, possesses eternal life.** First, he mentions the merit of faith. Secondly, the reward of faith, **eternal life.**

773 Concerning the merit of faith, he first indicates how faith is brought to us; and secondly, the foundation of faith, that on which it rests.

Faith comes to us through the words of men: "Faith comes through hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). But faith does not rest on man's word, but on God himself: "Abram believed God, who counted this as his justification" (Gn 15:6); "You who fear the Lord, believe in him" (Sir 2:8). Thus we are lead to believe through the words of men, not in the man himself who

speaks, but in God, whose words he speaks: "When you heard the word we brought you as God's word, you did not receive it as the word of men, but, as what it really is, the word of God" (1 Thes 2:13). Our Lord mentions these two things. First, how faith is brought to us, when he says, whoever hears my voice [literally, word], which leads to faith. Secondly, he mentions that on which faith rests, saying, **and believes in him who sent me**, i.e., not in me, but in him in virtue of whom I speak.

This text can apply to Christ, as man, insofar as it is through Christ's human words that men were converted to the faith. And it can apply to Christ, as God, insofar as Christ is the Word of God. For since Christ is the Word of God, it is clear that those who heard Christ were hearing the Word of God, and as a consequence, were believing in God. And this is what he says: whoever hears my word, i.e., me, the Word of God, and believes in him, i.e., the Father, whose Word I am.

774 Then when he says, **possesses eternal life**, he mentions the reward of faith, and states three things we will possess in the state of glory; but they are mentioned in reverse order. First, there will be the resurrection from the dead. Secondly, we will have freedom from the future judgment. Thirdly, we will enjoy everlasting life, for as we read in Matthew (c 25), the just will enter into everlasting life. He mentions these three as belonging to the reward of faith; and the third was mentioned first since it is desired more than the others.

775 So he says, whoever believes, i.e., through faith, **possesses eternal life**, which consists in the full vision of God. And it is fitting that one who believes on account of God certain things that he does not see, should be brought to the full vision of these things: "These things are written that you may believe ... and that believing you may have life in his name" (below 20:31).

776 He mentions the second when he says, **and he will not encounter judgment**. But the Apostle says something which contradicts this: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor 5:10), even the apostles. Therefore, even one who does believe will encounter judgment. I answer that there are two kinds of judgment. One is a judgment of condemnation, and no one encounters that judgment if he believes in God with a faith that is united with love [a "formed faith"]. We read about this judgment: "Do not enter into judgment with your servant, for no living man is just in your sight"; and it was said above (3:18): "Whoever believes is not judged." There is also a judgment of separation and examination; and, as the Apostle says, all must present themselves before the tribunal of Christ for this judgment. Of this judgment we read: "Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from those people who are not holy" (Ps 42:1).

777 Thirdly, he mentions a reward when he says, **but has passed from death to life**, or “will pass,” as another version says. This statement can be explained in two ways. First, it can refer to the resurrection of the soul. In this case the obvious meaning is that he is saying: Through faith we attain not only to eternal life and freedom from judgment, but also to the forgiveness of our sins as well. Hence he says, **but has passed**, from unbelief to belief, from injustice to justice: “We know that we have passed from death to life” (1 Jn 3:14).

Secondly, this statement can be explained as referring to the resurrection of the body. Then it is an elaboration of the phrase, **possesses eternal life**. For some might think from what was said, that whoever believes in God will never die, but live forever. But this is impossible, because all men must pay the debt incurred by the first sin, according to: “Where is the man who lives, and will not see death?” (Ps 88:49). Consequently, we should not think that one who believes has eternal life in such a way as never to die; rather, he will pass from this life, through death, to life, i.e., through the death of the body he will be revived to eternal life.

Or, “will pass,” might refer to the cause [of one’s resurrection] for when a person believes, he already has the merit for a glorious resurrection: “Your dead will live, your slain will rise” (Is 26:19). And then, once released from the death of the old man, we will receive the life of the new man, that is, Christ.

778 **Amen, amen, I say to you...** Since some might doubt if any would pass from death to life, our Lord predicts that this will happen, saying: I say that he [who believes] “will pass from death to life”; and I say it before it actually occurs. And this is what he states, saying: **Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming**, not determined by a necessity of fate, but by God’s decree: “It is the last hour” (1 Jn 2:18). And so that we do not think that it is far off, he adds, **and is now here** “it is now the time for us to rise from sleep” (Rom 13:11)—i.e., the hour is now here **when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear it will live.**

779 This can be explained in two ways. In one way as referring to the resurrection of the body, and so it is said that **the hour is coming, and is now here**, as if he had said: It is true that eventually all will rise, but even now is the hour when some, whom the Lord was about to resuscitate, **shall hear the voice of the Son of God**. This is the way Lazarus heard it when it was said to him, “Come forth,” as we read below (11:43); and in this way the daughter of the leader of the synagogue heard it (Mt 9:18); and the widow’s son (Lk 7:12). Therefore, he says significantly, **and is now here**, because through me the dead

already are beginning to be raised.

Another explanation is given by Augustine, according to which **and is now here** refers to the resurrection of the soul. For as was said above, resurrection is of two kinds: the resurrection of bodies, which will happen in the future; this does not take place now, but will occur at the future judgment. The other is the resurrection of souls from the death of unbelief to the life of faith, and from the life of injustice to that of justice; and this is now here. Hence he says, **the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead**, i.e., unbelievers and sinners, **shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear it will live**, according to the true faith.

780 This passage seems to imply two strange occurrences. One, when he says that the dead will hear. The other, when he adds that it is through hearing that they will come to life again, as though hearing comes before life, whereas hearing is a certain function of life. However, if we refer this to the resurrection, it is true that the dead will hear, i.e., obey the voice of the Son of God. For the voice expresses the interior concept. Now all nature obeys the slightest command of the divine will: "He calls into existence what does not exist" (Rom 4:17). According to this, then, wood, stones, all things, not just the dry bones but also the dust of dead bodies, **shall hear the voice of the Son of God** so far as they obey his slightest will. And this belongs to Christ, not insofar as he is the Son of Man, but insofar as he is the Son of God, because all things obey the Word of God. And so he significantly says, **of the Son of God**; "What kind of man is this, for the sea and winds obey him?" (Mt 8:27).

If this statement (25b) is understood as referring to the resurrection of souls, then the reason for it is this: the voice of the Son of God has a life-giving power, that voice by which he moves the hearts of the faithful interiorly by inspiration, or exteriorly by his preaching and that of others: "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (below 6:64). And so he gives life to the dead when he justifies the wicked. And since hearing is the way to life, either of nature through obedience, namely, by repairing nature, or the hearing of faith by repairing life and justice, he therefore says, **and those who hear it**, by obedience as to the resurrection of the body, or by faith as to the resurrection of souls, will live, in the body in eternal life, and injustice in the life of grace.

LECTURE 5

26 "Indeed, just as the Father possesses life in himself, so he has

given it to the Son to have life in himself. 27 And he [the Father] gave him the power to pass judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not be surprised at this, since the hour is coming when all those buried in tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God. 29 And those who have done well will come forth to a resurrection of life; those who have done evil will come forth to a resurrection of judgment [i.e., condemnation]. 30 I cannot do anything of myself, but I judge only as I hear it; and my judgment is just, because I am not seeking my own will, but the will of him who sent me."

781 Above, our Lord showed that he had the power to give life and to judge; and he explained each by its effect. Here he shows how each of these powers belongs to him. First, he shows this with respect to his life-giving power. Secondly, with respect to his power to judge (v 27).

782 So he says, first: I say that as the Father raises the dead, so I do also; and anyone who hears my word has eternal life. And I possess this because, **just as the Father possesses life in himself, so he has given it to the Son to have life in himself.**

Apropos of this, we should note that some who live do not have life in themselves: as Paul, "I am living by faith in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20); and again in the same place: "it is not I who now live, but Christ lives in me." Thus he lived, yet not in himself, but in another through whom he lived: as a body lives, although it does not have life in itself, but in a soul through which it lives. So that has life in itself which has an essential, non-participated life, i.e., that which is itself life. Now in every genus of things, that which is something through its essence is the cause of those things that are it by participation, as fire is the cause of all things afire. And so, that which is life through its essence, is the cause and principle of all life in living things. Accordingly, if something is to be a principle of life, it must be life through its essence. And so our Lord fittingly shows that he is the principle of all life by saying that he has life in himself, i.e., through his essence, when he says: **just as the Father possesses life in himself**, i.e., as he is living through his essence, so does the Son. Therefore, as the Father is the cause of life, so also is his Son.

Further, he shows the equality of the Son to the Father when he says, as **the Father possesses life in himself**; and he shows their distinction when he says, **he has given it to the Son**. For the Father and the Son are equal in life; but they are distinct, because the Father gives, and the Son receives. However, we should not understand this to mean that the Son receives life from the Father as if the Son first existed without having life, as in lower things a first matter, already existing, receives a form, and as a subject receives accidents: because in

the Son there is nothing that exists prior to the reception of life. For as Hilary says: "the Son has nothing unless it is begotten," i.e., nothing but what he receives through his birth. And since the Father is life itself, the meaning of, **he has given it to the Son to have life in himself**, is that the Father produced the Son as living. As if one were to say: the mind gives life to the word, not as though the word existed and then receives life, but because the mind produces the word in the same life by which it lives.

783 According to Hilary, this passage destroys three heresies. First, that of the Arians, who said that the Son is inferior to the Father. They were forced by what was stated earlier, that is, "For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise" (5:19), to say that the Son is equal to the Father in power; but they still denied that the Son is equal to the Father in nature. But now, this too is refuted by this statement, namely, **just as the Father possesses life in himself, so he has given it to the Son to have life in himself**. For since life pertains to the nature, if the Son has life in himself as does the Father, it is clear that he has in himself, by his very origin, a nature indivisible from and equal to that of the Father.

The second error is also Arian: their denial that the Son is coeternal with the Father, when they say that the Son began to exist in time. This is destroyed when he says, **the Son has life in himself**. For in all living things whose generation occurs in time, it is always possible to find something that at some time or other was not living. But in the Son, whatever is, is life itself. Consequently, he so received life itself that he has life in himself, so as always to have been living.

Thirdly, by saying, **he has given**, he destroys the error of Sabellius, who denied the distinction of persons. For if the Father gave life to the Son, it is obvious that the Father, who gave it, is other than the Son, who received it.

784 Then (v 27), he makes it clear that he has the power to judge. First, he reveals his judiciary power. Secondly, he gives a reason for what he has said (v 30). As to the first he does two things. First, he indicates the origin of his judiciary power. Secondly, he shows that his judgment is just (v 29).

785 With regard to the first, we should note that his statement, **he [the Father] gave him the power**, can be understood in two ways. One way is that of Augustine; the other is that of Chrysostom.

786 If we understand it as Chrysostom does, then this section is divided into two parts. First, he reveals the origin of his judiciary power. Secondly, he settles a

difficulty (v 27b).

Chrysostom punctuates this section in the following way. **He gave him the power to pass judgment.** And then a new sentence begins: **Because he is the Son of Man, do not be surprised at this.** The reason for this punctuation is that Paul of Samosata, an early heretic, who like Photius said that Christ was only a man and took his origin from the Virgin, punctuated it as: **He gave him the power to pass judgment because he is the Son of Man.** And then he began a new sentence: **Do not be surprised at this, since the hour is coming.** It was as if he thought that it was necessary for judiciary power to be given to Christ because he is the Son of Man, that is, a mere man, who, of himself, cannot judge men. And so, if Christ is to judge others, he must be given the power to judge.

But this, according to Chrysostom, cannot stand, because it is not at all in agreement with what is stated. For if it is because he is a man that he receives judiciary power, then for the same reason, since it would belong to every man to have judiciary power in virtue of his human nature, it would not belong to Christ any more than to other men. So we should not understand it this way. Rather, we should say that because Christ is the ineffable Son of God, he is on that account also judge. And this is what he says: The Father not only give him the power to give life, but **also he gave him the power**, through eternal **generation, to pass judgment**, just as he gave him, through eternal generation, to have life in himself: "He is the one appointed by God to be the judge of the living and of the dead," as we read in Acts (10:42).

He settles a difficulty when he says, **Do not be surprised at this.** First, he mentions the difficulty. Secondly, he clears it up.

787 The difficulty arose in the minds of the Jews and they were surprised because while they thought that Christ was no more than a man, he was saying things about himself that surpassed man and even the angels. So he says, **Do not be surprised at this**, that is, that I have said that the Son gives life to the dead and has the power to judge precisely **because he is the Son of Man.** They were surprised because, although they thought he was only a man, they saw that he accomplished divine effects: "What kind of man is this, for the sea and winds obey him?" (Mt 8:27). And he gives a reason why they should not be surprised, which is, because he who is the Son of Man is the Son of God. Although, as Chrysostom says, is it not said explicitly that the Son of Man is the Son of God, our Lord lays down the premises from which this statement necessarily follows: just as we notice that those who use syllogisms in their teaching do not express their main conclusion, but only that from which it follows with necessity. So our Lord does not say that he is the Son of God, but that the

Son of Man is such that at his voice all the dead will rise. From this it necessarily follows that he is the Son of God: for it is a proper effect of God to raise the dead. Thus he says, **Do not be surprised at this, since the hour is coming when all those buried in tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God.** But he does not say of this hour, as he said above, "and is now here" (5:25). Again, here he says, all, which he did not say above: because at the first resurrection he raised only some, as Lazarus, the widow's son and the young girl; but at the future resurrection, at the time of judgment, **all will hear the voice of the Son of God**, and will rise. "I will open your graves, and lead you out of your tombs" (Ez 37:12).

788 Augustine punctuates this passage in the following way. **And he gave him the power to pass judgment because he is the Son of Man.** And then a new sentence follows: **Do not be surprised at this.** In this interpretation there are two parts. The first concerns the power to judge granted to the Son of Man. In the second, the granting of an even greater power is made clear, at **Do not be surprised at this.**

789 As to the first we should note that, according to the mind of Augustine, he spoke above of the resurrection of souls, which is accomplished through the Son of God, but here he is speaking of the resurrection of bodies, which is accomplished through the Son of Man. And because the general resurrection of bodies will take place at the time of judgment, he mentions the judgment first, in saying, **And he [the Father] gave him**, i.e., Christ, **the power to pass Judgment**, and this, **because he is the Son of Man**, i.e., according to his human nature. Thus it is also after the resurrection that he says in Matthew (28:18): "All power has been given to me, in heaven and on earth."

There are three reasons why judiciary power has been given to Christ as man. First, in order that he might be seen by all: for it is necessary that a judge be seen by all who are to be judged. Now both the good and the wicked will be judged. And the good will see Christ in his divinity and in his humanity; while the wicked will not be able to see him in his divinity, because this vision is the happiness of the saints and is seedonly by the pure in heart: "Happy are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Mt 5:8). And so, in order that Christ can be seen at the judgment not only by the good, but also by the wicked, he will judge in human form: "Every eye will see him, and all who pierced him" (Rv 1:7).

Secondly, the power to judge was given to Christ as man because by the self-abasement of his passion he merited the glory of an exaltation. Thus, just as he who died arose, so that [human] form which was judged, will judge, and he who stood before a human judge will preside at the judgment of men. He who was

falsely found guilty will condemn the truly guilty, as Augustine remarks in his work, *The Sayings of the Lord*. "Your cause has been judged as that of the wicked; but cause and judgment you will recover" (Jb 3 6.17).

Thirdly, Christ as man was given judiciary power to suggest the compassion of the judge. For it is very terrifying for a man to be judged by God: "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31); but it produces confidence for a man to have another man as his judge. Accordingly, so you can experience the compassion of your judge, you will have a man as judge: "We do not have a high priest who cannot have compassion on our weakness" (Heb 4:15).

Thus, **he gave him**, Christ, **the power to pass judgment because he is the Son of Man**.

790 **Do not be surprised at this**, for he has given him a greater power, that is, the power to raise the dead. Thus he says, **since the hour is coming**, that is, the last hour at the end of the world: "The time has come, the day of slaughter is near" (Ez 7:7), **when all those buried in tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God**. Above he did not say "all," because there he was speaking of the spiritual resurrection, in which all did not rise at his first coming, for we read: "All do not have faith" (2 Thes 3:2). But here he is speaking of the resurrection of the body, and all will rise in this way, as we read in 1 Corinthians (15:20). He adds, **those buried in tombs**, which he had not mentioned above, because only bodies, not souls, are in tombs, and it is the resurrection of bodies that will then take place.

All those buried in tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God. This voice will be a sense perceptible sign of the Son of God, at whose sound all will be raised: "The Lord will come with the cry of the archangel and with the trumpet of God" (1 Thes 4:15); we find the same in 1 Corinthians (15:52) and in Matthew (25:6): "There was a cry at midnight." This voice will derive its power from the divinity of Christ: "He will make his voice a powerful voice," as the Psalm (67:34) says.

791 As we saw, Augustine says that the resurrection of the body will be accomplished through the Word made flesh, but the resurrection of the soul is accomplished through the Word. One may wonder how to understand this: whether we are talking about a first cause or a meritorious cause. If we are referring to a first cause, then it is clear that the divinity of Christ is the cause of the corporal and spiritual resurrection, i.e., of the resurrection of bodies and of souls, according to: "I will kill, and I will bring to life again" (Dt 32:39). But if we

are referring to a meritorious cause, then it is the humanity of Christ which is the cause of both resurrections: because through the mysteries accomplished in the flesh of Christ we are restored not only to an incorruptible life in our bodies, but also to a spiritual life in our souls: "He was put to death on account of our sins, and he rose for our justification" (Rom 4:25). Accordingly, what Augustine says does not seem to be true.

I answer that Augustine is speaking of the exemplary cause and of that cause by which that which is brought to life is made conformable to that which brings it to life: for everything that lives through another is conformed to that through which it lives. Now the resurrection of souls does not consist in souls being conformed to the humanity of Christ, but to the Word, because the life of the soul is through the Word alone; and so he says that the resurrection of souls takes place through the Word. But the resurrection of the body will consist in our bodies being conformed to the body of Christ through the life of glory, that is, through the glory of our bodies, according to: "He will change our lowly body so it is like his glorious body" (Phil 3:21). And it is from this point of view that he says that the resurrection of the body will take place through the Word made flesh.

792 Then (v 29), he shows the justness of his judgment: because the good will be rewarded, and so he says, **And those who have done well will come forth to a resurrection of life**, i.e., to living in eternal glory; but the wicked will be damned, and so he says, **those who have done evil will come forth to a resurrection of judgment [i.e., condemnation]**, i.e., they will rise for condemnation: "These," the wicked, "will go into everlasting punishment; but the just will go to eternal life" (Mt 25:46); "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to an everlasting life, and others to everlasting shame" (Dn 12:2).

793 Note that when he was speaking above of the resurrection of souls, he said, "those who hear it," the voice of the Son of God, "will live" (5:25); but here he says, **will come forth**. He says this because of the wicked, who will be condemned: for their life should not be called a life, but rather an eternal death. Again, above he mentioned only faith, saying, "Whoever hears my voice and believes in him who sent me, possesses eternal life; and he will not encounter judgment" (5:24). But here he mentions works, so that we do not think that faith alone, without works, is sufficient for salvation, saying: **And those who have done well will come forth to a resurrection of life**. As if to say: **Those will come forth to a resurrection of life** who do not just believe, but who have accomplished good works along with their faith: "Faith without works is dead," as we see from James (2:26).

794 Then when he says, I cannot do anything of myself, he gives the reason for

what he has just said. Now he had spoken of two things: the origin of his power, and the justness of his judgment. Consequently, he mentions the reason for each.

795 The first point, when he says, **I cannot do anything of myself**, can be understood in two ways, even according to Augustine. First, as referring to the Son of Man in this manner: You say that you have the power to raise the dead because you are the Son of Man. But do you have this power precisely because you are the Son of Man? No, because **I cannot do anything of myself, but I judge only as I hear it**. He does not say, "as I see," as he said above; "The Son cannot do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing" (5:19). But he does say, **as I hear it**: for in this context "to hear" is the same as "to obey." Now to obey belongs to one who receives a command, while to command pertains to one who is superior. Accordingly, because Christ, as man, is inferior to the Father, he says, **as I hear it**, i.e., as infused into my soul by God. We read of this kind of hearing in Psalm 84 (v 9): "I will hear what the Lord God says in me." But above he said "sees," because he was then speaking of himself as the Word of God.

796 Then when he says, **and my judgment is just**, he shows the justness of his judgment. For he had said: "Those who have done well will come forth to a resurrection of life." But some might say: Will he be partial and uneven when he punishes and rewards? So he answers: No, saying: **my judgment is just**; and the reason is **because I am not seeking my own will, but the will of him who sent me**. For there are two wills in our Lord Jesus Christ: one is a divine will, which is the same as the will of the Father; the other is a human will, which is proper to himself, just as it is proper to him to be a man. A human will is borne to its own good; but in Christ it was ruled and regulated by right reason, so that it would always be conformed in all things to the divine will. Accordingly he says: **I am not seeking my own will**, which as such is inclined to its own good, **but the will of him who sent me**, that is, the Father: "I have desired to do your will, my God" (Ps 39:9); "Not as I will, but as you will" (Mt 26:39).

If this is carefully considered, the Lord is assigning the true nature of a just judgment, saying: **because I am not seeking my own will**. For one's judgment is just when it is passed according to the norm of law. But the divine will is the norm and the law of the created will. And so, the created will, and the reason, which is regulated according to the norm of the divine will, is just, and its judgment is just.

797 Secondly, it is explained as referring to the Son of God; and then the aforesaid division still remains the same. Thus Christ, as the Divine Word showing the origin of his power, says: **I cannot do anything of myself**, in the way he

said above, "the Son cannot do anything of himself" (5:19). For his very doing and his power are his being (*esse*); but being (*esse*) in him is from another, that is, from his Father. And so, just as he is not of himself (*a se*), so of himself he cannot do anything: "I do nothing of myself" (below 8:28).

His statement, **I judge only as I hear it**, is explained as his previous statement, "only what he sees the Father doing" (above 5:19). For we acquire science or any knowledge through sight and hearing (for these two senses are those most used in learning). But because sight and hearing are different in us, we acquire knowledge in one way through sight, that is, by discovering things, and in a different way through hearing, that is, by being taught. But in the Son of God, sight and hearing are the same; thus, when he says either "sees" or "hears," the meaning is the same so far as the acquisition of knowledge is concerned. And because judgment in any intellectual nature comes from knowledge, he says significantly, **I judge only as I hear it**, i.e., as I have acquired knowledge together with being from the Father, so I judge: "Everything I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (below 15:15).

798 Showing the justness of his judgment he says: **and my judgment is just:** the reason being, **because I am not seeking my own will**. But do not the Father and the Son have the same will? I answer that the Father and the Son do have the same will, but the Father does not have his will from another, whereas the Son does have his will from another, i.e., from the Father. Thus the Son accomplishes his own will as from another, i.e., as having it from another; but the Father accomplishes his will as his own, i.e., not having it from another. Thus he says: **I am not seeking my own will**, that is, such as would be mine if it originated from myself, but my will, as being from another, that is from the Father.

LECTURE 6

- 31 "If I were to bear witness to myself,
my testimony would not be valid.
32 But there is someone else who testifies
on my behalf, and I know that the witness
he bears on my behalf is true.
33 You sent [messengers] to John;
and he bore witness to the truth.
34 I myself do not need proof from men;
but I say this in order that you may be saved.

35 He was a lamp, blazing and burning brightly.
And for a while you yourselves exulted in his light.
36 But I have testimony that is greater than that of John.
The very works which my Father has given me
to perform—those works that I myself perform—
they bear witness to me that the Father sent me.
37 Moreover, the Father who sent me has himself
given testimony on my behalf,
but you have neither heard his voice,
nor seen his image;
38 and you do not have his word abiding in your hearts,
for you do not believe in him whom he has sent.
39 Search the Scriptures,
since you think you have eternal life in them;
they too bear witness to me.
40 Yet you are unwilling to come to me
in order to possess that life.”

799 Having given us the teaching on the life-giving power of the Son, he now confirms it. First, he confirms, with several testimonies, what he had said about the excellence of his power. In the second place, he reproves them because of their slowness to believe (v 41). He does two things about the first. First, he states why there was a need to resort to such testimonies. Secondly, he invokes the testimonies (v 32).

800 The need to appeal to testimony arose because the Jews did not believe in him; for this reason he says: **If I were to bear witness to myself, my testimony would not be valid** (*verum*, valid, true). Some may find this statement puzzling: for if our Lord says of himself, “I am the truth” (below 14:6), how can his testimony not be valid? If he is the truth, in whom shall one believe if the truth itself is not believed in? We may answer, according to Chrysostom, that our Lord is speaking here of himself from the point of view of the opinion of others, so that his meaning is: **If I were to bear witness to myself, my testimony would not be valid** so far as your outlook is concerned, because you do not accept what I say about myself unless it is confirmed by other testimony: “You are bearing witness to yourself; your testimony is not valid” (below 8:13).

801 Next, he presents these testimonies: first, a human testimony; secondly, a divine testimony. He does two things about the first. First, he mentions the testimony of John; secondly, he tells why this testimony was given (v 34). With respect to the first he does two things. First, he brings in the testimony; secondly, he commends it (v 32).

802 He brings on the witness when he says: **But there is someone else who testifies on my behalf.** This is, in the opinion of Chrysostom, John the Baptist, of whom we read above: "There was a man sent by God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, that he might bear witness to the light" (1:6).

803 He commends John's testimony on two grounds: first, because of its truth; secondly, because of its authority, for the Jews had sought it (v 33).

804 He commends his testimony because of its truth, saying: **And I know**, from certain experience, that the witness he, that is, John, **bears on my behalf is true.** His father, Zechariah, had prophesied this of him: "You will go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people a knowledge of salvation" (Lk 1:76). Now it is obvious that false testimony is not a testimony that saves, because lying is a cause of death: "A lying mouth kills the soul" (Wis 1:11). Therefore, if John's testimony was for the purpose of giving knowledge of salvation to his people, his testimony is true.

805 The Gloss has a different explanation of this: **If I were to bear witness to myself, my testimony would not be valid.** For above, Christ was referring to himself as God, but here he is referring to himself as a man. And the meaning is: If I, namely, a man, were to bear witness to myself, i.e., apart from God, that is, which God the Father does not certify, then it follows that **my testimony would not be valid**, for human speech has no truth unless it is supported by God, according to: "God is true, but every man is a liar" (Rom 3:4). Thus, if we take Christ as a man separated from the Deity and not in conformity with it, we find a lie both in his essence and in his words: "Although I bear witness to myself, my testimony is true" (below 8:14); "I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (below 16:32). And so, because he was not alone but with the Father, his testimony is true.

Accordingly, to show that his testimony is true, not in virtue of his humanity considered in itself, but in so far as it is united to his divinity and to the Word of God, he says, **But there is someone else who testifies on my behalf:** not John, but the Father, according to this explanation. Because if the testimony of Christ as man is not of itself true and productive, much less is the testimony of John. Therefore, the testimony of Christ is not verified by the testimony of John, but by the testimony of the Father. So this someone else who testifies is understood to be the Father. **And I know that the witness he bears on my behalf is true**, for he is truth: "God is light," i.e., truth, "and in him there is no darkness," i.e., lie (1 Jn 1:5).

The first explanation, which is that given by Chrysostom, is nearer to the letter of the text.

806 He also commends the testimony of John by reason of its authority, because it was sought after by the Jews, saying: **You sent [messengers] to John.** As if to say: I know that his testimony is true and you should not reject it, because the great authority John enjoyed among you led you to seek his testimony about me; and you would not have done this if you did not think that he was worthy of belief: "The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to him" (above 1:19). And on this occasion, John bore witness, not to himself, but **to the truth**, i.e., to me. As a friend of the truth, he bore testimony to the truth, which is Christ: "He declared openly, and did not deny, and stated clearly, 'I am not the Messiah'" (above 1:20).

807 Then (v 34), he gives the reason why an appeal was made to the testimony of John. First, he excludes a supposed reason. Next, he presents the true reason (v 34b).

808 Someone might think that John's testimony was brought in to assure them about Christ, on the ground that Christ's own testimony was not sufficient. He excludes this reason when he says, **I myself do not need proof from men.** Here we should note that sometimes in the sciences a thing is proved by something else which is more evident to us, but which is less evident in itself; and at other times a thing is proved by something else which is more evident in itself and absolutely. Now, in this case, the issue is to prove that Christ is God. And, although the truth of Christ is, in itself and absolutely, more evident, yet it is proved by the testimony of John, which was better known to the Jews. So Christ, of himself, did not have any need of John's testimony; and this is what he says: **I myself do not need proof from men.**

809 But this seems to conflict with: "You are my witnesses, said the Lord" (Is 40:10); and with "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the remotest part of the world" (Acts 1:8). So how can he say: **I myself do not need proof from men.**

This can be understood in two ways. In the first way, the sense is: **I myself do not need proof from men**, as relying on it alone; but I have stronger testimony, that is, divine testimony: "For me, it does not matter much if I am judged by you" (1 Cor 4:3); "You know that I have not desired the day of man," i.e., human glory (Jer 17:16).

Another interpretation is: **I myself do not need proof from men**, insofar as

the one giving witness is a man, but insofar as he is enlightened by God in order to testify: "There was a man sent by God, whose name was John" (above 1:6); "We did not seek glory from men" (1 Thes 2:6); "I do not seek my own glory" (below 8:50). And so I receive the testimony of John not just as a man, but insofar as he was sent and enlightened by God in order to testify.

A third explanation, and a better one, is: **I myself do not need proof from men**, i.e., human testimony. As far as I am concerned, I receive my authority from no one but God, who proves that I am great.

810 Next (v 34b), he gives the real reason for appealing to John's testimony. First, he states the reason. Secondly, he explains it. The reason for appealing to this testimony was so that the Jews might be saved by believing in Christ, and this because of John's testimony. Thus he says: I do not need John's testimony for my sake, **but I say this in order that you may be saved**: "He desires the salvation of all men" (1 Tim 2:4). "Christ came into this world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15).

811 He explains his statement, in order that you may be saved: that is, because I am appealing to testimony you have accepted. And so he mentions that John was accepted by them: **He was a lamp, blazing and burning brightly**. First, he states that John was a witness accepted on his own merits. Secondly, he mentions to what degree he was accepted by them (v 35b).

812 Three things perfected John and show that he was a witness accepted in his own right. The first concerns the condition of his nature, and he refers to this when he says, **He was a lamp**. The second concerns the perfection of his love, because he was a **blazing** lamp. The third is related to the perfection of his understanding, because he was a lamp that was **burning brightly**.

John was perfect in his nature because he was a lamp, i.e., enriched by grace and illumined by the light of the Word of God. Now a lamp differs from a light: for a light radiates light of itself, but a lamp does not give light of itself, but by participating in the light. Now the true light is Christ: "He was the true light, which enlightens every man coming into this world" (above 1:9). John, however, was not a light, as we read in the same place, but a lamp, because he was enlightened "in order to bear witness to the light" (above 1:8), by leading men to Christ. We read of this lamp: "I have prepared a lamp for my anointed" (Ps 131:17).

Further, he was blazing and impassioned in his affections, so he says, **blazing**. For some people are lamps only as to their office or rank, but they are snuffed

out in their affections: for as a lamp cannot give light unless there is a fire blazing within it, so a spiritual lamp does not give any light unless it is first set ablaze and burns with the fire of love. Therefore, to be ablaze comes first, and the giving of light depends on it, because knowledge of the truth is given due to the blazing of love: "If any one loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him" (below 14:23); and "I have called you friends, because everything I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (below 15:15); "You who fear the Lord, love him, and your hearts will be enlightened" (Sir 2:20).

The two characteristics of fire are that it both blazes and shines. Its blazing signifies love for three reasons. First, because fire is the most active of all bodies; so too is the warmth of love (charity), so much so that nothing can withstand its force: "The love of Christ spurs us on" (2 Cor 5:14). Secondly, because just as fire, because it is very volatile, causes great unrest, so also this love of charity makes a person restless until he achieves his objective: "Its light is fire and flame" (Sg 8:6). Thirdly, just as fire is inclined to move upward, so too is charity; so much so that it joins us to God: "He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" (1Jn 4:16).

Finally, John had an intellect that was **burning brightly**. First, it was bright within, because of his knowledge of the truth: "The Lord will fill your soul with brightness," i.e., he will make it shine (Is 58:11). Secondly, it was bright without, because of his preaching: "You will shine in the world among them like stars, containing the word of life" (Phil 2:15). Thirdly, it was bright because it manifested good works: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works" (Mt 5:16).

813 And so, because John was of himself so acceptable—for he was a lamp, not smothered out but blazing, not dark but burning brightly—he deserved to be accepted by you, as indeed he was, because **for a time you yourselves exulted in his light**. He fittingly links their exulting or rejoicing with light; because a man rejoices most is that which most pleases him. And among physical things nothing is more pleasant than light, according to: "It is a delight for the eyes to see the sun" (Sir 11:7). He says, **you yourselves exulted in his light**, i.e., you rested in John and put your end in him, thinking that he was the Messiah. But you did this only **for a time**, because you wavered on this; for when you saw that John was leading men to another, and not to himself, you turned away from him. Thus we read in Matthew (21:32) that the Jews did not believe in John. They belonged to that group referred to by Matthew (13:21) as believing "for a while."

814 Then (v 36), he presents the divine testimony. First, he mentions its

greatness; and then he continues on to describe it.

815 He says: I do not need proof from men for my sake, but for your sake, for **I have testimony that is greater than that of John**, that is, the testimony of God, which is greater than the testimony of John: "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater" (1 Jn 5:9), It is greater, I say, because of its greater authority, greater knowledge, and infallible truth, for God cannot deceive: "God is not like man, a liar" (Nm 23:19).

816 God bore witness to Christ in three ways: by works, by himself, and by the Scriptures. First, he mentions his witness as given by the working of miracles; secondly, the way God gave witness by himself (v 37); thirdly, the witness given through the Scriptures (v 39).

817 He says first: **I have testimony that is greater than that of John**, that is, my works, i.e., the working of miracles, **the very works which my Father has given me to perform**. We should point out that it is natural for man to learn of the power and natures of things from their actions, and therefore our Lord fittingly says that the sort of person he is can be learned through the works he does. So, since he performed divine works by his own power, we should believe that he has divine power within him: "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin," that is, the sin of unbelief (below 15:24). And so he leads them to a knowledge of himself by appealing to his works, saying, **the very works which my Father has given me** in the Word, through an eternal generation, by giving me a power equal to his own. Or we could say, **the very works which my Father has given me**, in my conception, by making me one person who is both God and man, **to perform**, i.e., to perform them by my own power. He says this to distinguish himself from those who do not perform miracles by their own power but have to obtain it as a favor from God; thus Peter says: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth: stand up" (Acts 3:6). Thus it was God, and not themselves, who accomplished these works; but Christ accomplished them by his own power: "Lazarus, come forth," as John reports below (11:43). Accordingly, **those works that I myself perform—they bear witness to me**; "If you do not believe me, at least believe my works" (below 10:38). We see from Mark (16:20) that God bears witness by the working of miracles: "The Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that followed."

818 Then (v 37), he presents the second way God bore witness to Christ, namely, by himself. First, he mentions the way; secondly, he shows that they were not able to receive this testimony.

819 He says: It is not only the works which my Father has given me to perform that bear witness to me, but **the Father who sent me has himself given testimony on my behalf:** in the Jordan, when Christ was baptized (Mt 3:17); and on the mountain, when Christ was transfigured (Mt 17:5). For on both these occasions the voice of the Father was heard: "This is my beloved Son." And so they should believe in Christ, as the true and natural Son of God: "This is the testimony of God: he has borne witness to his Son" (1 Jn 5:9). Consequently, anyone who does not believe that he is the Son of God, does not believe in the testimony of God.

820 Someone could say that God also gave testimony to others by himself: for example, to Moses, on the mountain, with whom God spoke while others were present. We, however, never heard his testimony, as the Lord says: **you have neither heard his voice.** On the other hand, we read in Deuteronomy (4:33): Did it ever happen before that the people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of fire, as you heard, and have lived?" Then how can Christ say: **you have neither heard his voice?**

I reply, according to Chrysostom, that the Lord wishes to show those established in a philosophical frame of mind that God gives testimony to someone in two ways, namely, sensibly and intelligibly. Sensibly, as by a sensible voice only; and in this way he gave witness to Moses on Mount Sinai: "You heard his voice, and saw no form at all" (Dt 4:12). Likewise, he gives testimony by a sensible form, as he appeared to Abraham (Gn 26), and to Isaiah: "I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne" (Is 6:1). However, in these visions, neither the audible voice nor the visible figure were like anything in the animal kingdom, except efficiently, in the sense that these were formed by God. For since God is a spirit, he neither emits audible sounds nor can he be portrayed as a figure. But he does bear testimony in an intelligible manner by inspiring in the hearts of certain persons what they ought to believe and to hold: "I will hear what the Lord God will speak within me" (Ps 84:9); "I will lead her into the wilderness and there I will speak to her heart," as we read in Hosea (2:14).

Now you were able to receive the testimony given in the first of these ways; and this is not surprising, because they were the words and image of God only efficiently, as was said. But they were not able to receive the testimony given in that intelligible voice; so he says: **you have neither heard his voice,** i.e., you were not among those who shared in it. "Everyone who has heard the Father and has learned, comes to me" (below 6:45). But you do not come to me. Therefore, **you have neither heard his voice nor seen his image,** i.e., you do not have his intelligible testimony. Hence he adds: **and you do not have his word abiding in your hearts,** i.e., you do not have his word that is inwardly inspired. And the reason is, **for you do not believe in him whom he, the Father, has**

sent. For the word of God leads to Christ, since Christ himself is the natural Word of God. But every word inspired by God is a certain participated likeness of that Word. Therefore, since every participated likeness leads to its original, it is clear that every word inspired by God leads to Christ. And so, because you are not led to me, **you do not have his word**, i.e., the inspired word of God, **abiding in your hearts**. "He who does not believe in the Son of God does not have life abiding in him," as it says below (sic). He says **abiding**, because although there is no one who does not have some truth from God, they alone have the truth and the word abiding in them whose knowledge has progressed to the point where they have reached a knowledge of the true and natural Word.

821 Or we could say that, **you have neither heard his voice**, can be taken as showing the three ways in which God reveals things. This is done either by a sensible voice, as he bore witness to Christ in the Jordan and on the mountain, as in 2 Peter (1:16): "We were eyewitnesses of his greatness. For he received honor and glory from God the Father, when a voice came from the heavens." And the Jews did not hear this. Or, God reveals things through a vision of his essence, which he reveals to the blessed. And they did not see this, because "while we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord" (2 Cor 5:6). Thirdly, it is accomplished by an interior word through an inspiration; and the Jews did not have this either.

822 Then when he says, **Search the Scriptures**, he gives the third way in which God bore witness to Christ, through the Scriptures. First, he mentions the testimony of the Scriptures. Secondly, he shows that they were not able to gather the fruit of this testimony (v 40).

823 He says: **Search the Scriptures**. As if to say: You do not have the word of God in your hearts, but in the Scriptures; therefore, you must seek for it elsewhere than in your hearts. Hence, **Search the Scriptures**, that is, the Old Testament, for the faith of Christ was contained in the Old Testament, but not on the surface, for it lay hidden in its depths, under shadowy symbols: "Even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil is over their hearts" (2 Cor 3:15). Thus he significantly says, Search, probe into the depths: "If you search for her [wisdom] like money, and dig for her like a treasure, you will understand the fear of the Lord and will find the knowledge of God" (Prv 2:4); "Give me understanding and I will search your commandments" (Ps 118:34).

The reason why you should search them I take from your own opinion, because **you think you have eternal life in them**, since we read in Ezekiel (18:19): "He who has kept my commands will live." But you are mistaken; because although the precepts of the old law are living, they do not contain life in themselves. They are said to be living only to the extent that they lead to me, the Christ. Yet you use them as though they contained life in themselves, and in this

you are mistaken, for they bear witness to me, i.e., they are living to the extent that they lead to a knowledge of me. And they lead to a knowledge of me either by plain prophecies, as in Isaiah (7:14): "A virgin will conceive." or in Deuteronomy (18:15): "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you."; and so Acts (10:43) says: "All the prophets bear witness to him." The Scriptures also lead to a knowledge of Christ through the symbolic actions of the prophets; thus we read: "I have used resemblances in the ministry of the prophets" (Hos 12:10). Knowledge of Christ is also given in their sacraments and figures, as in the immolation of the lamb, and other symbolic sacraments of the law: "The law has only a shadow of the good things to come" (Heb 10:1). And so, because "the Scriptures of the Old Testament gave much testimony about Christ, the Apostle says: "He promised the Good News before, through his prophets in the holy Scriptures; the Good News of his Son, a descendant of David in his human nature" (Rom 1:2).

824 The fruit which you think you have in the Scriptures, that is, eternal life, you will not be able to obtain, because in not believing the testimonies of the Scriptures about me, **you are unwilling to come to me**, i.e., you do not wish to believe in me, in whom the fruit of these Scriptures exists, **in order to possess that life** in me, the life which I give to those who believe in me: "I give them eternal life" (below 10:28); "Wisdom infuses life into her children" (Sir 4:12); "He who finds me will find life, and will have salvation from the Lord" (Prv 8:35).

LECTURE 7

41 "Praise from men I do not need,
42 but I know you,
and you do not have the love of God in your hearts.
43 I have come in my Father's name,
and yet you do not accept me.
If someone else came in his own name,
you would be accepting him.
44 How can people like you believe,
when you crave praise from each other,
and yet not even ask for that one praise
which is from God alone?
45 Do not think that I will accuse you
before my Father.
The one who accuses you is Moses,

in whom you place your trust.

46 If you believed Moses,

you would perhaps believe me as well,

for it was about me that he wrote.

47 But if you do not believe in his written statements,

how will you believe in my spoken words?"

825 After God confirmed the greatness of his power by the testimonies of men, of God, and of the Scriptures, he here rebukes the Jews for being slow to believe. Now the Jews persecuted Christ on two grounds: for breaking the Sabbath, by which he seemed to go against the law, and for saying that he is the Son of God, by which he seemed to go against God. Thus they persecuted him on account of their reverence for God and their zeal for the law. And so our Lord wishes to show that their persecution of him was really inspired not by these motives, but by contrary reasons.

He first shows that the cause of their unbelief was their lack of reverence for God. Secondly, that another cause of their unbelief was their lack of reverence for Moses (v 45). As to the first he does two things. First, he shows their irreverence for God. Secondly, he shows that this is the cause of their unbelief (v 44). Concerning the first he does two things. First, he mentions their lack of reverence for God. Secondly, he makes this obvious by a sign (v 43). With respect to the first he does two things. First, he rejects what they might have assumed to be his intention, from what he had said before. Secondly, he presents his real intention (v 42).

826 The Jews might have assumed that Christ was seeking some kind of praise from men, since he had reminded them of so many witnesses to himself, as John, God, his own works, and the testimony of the Scriptures. Against this thought he says, **Praise from men I do not need**, i.e., I do not seek praise from men; for I have not come to be an example of one seeking human glory: "We did not seek glory from men" (1 Thes 2:6). Or, **Praise from men I do not need**, i.e., I do not need human praise, because from eternity I have glory with the Father: "Glorify me, Father, with the glory I had before the world was made" (below 17:5). For I have not come to be glorified by men, but rather to glorify them, since all glory proceeds from me (Wis 7:25) ["Wisdom is a pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God."] It is through this wisdom that I have glory. God is said to be praised and glorified by men—"Glorify the Lord as much as you are able; he will still surpass even that" (Sir 43:30)—not that he might become by this more glorious, but so that he might appear glorious among us.

827 Thus Christ presented the various testimonies to himself not for the reason they thought, but for another one: because **I know you**, i.e., I have made

known about you, that **you do not have the love of God in your hearts**, although you pretend to have it. And so you are not persecuting me because of your love for God. You would be persecuting me for the love of God if God and the Scriptures did not bear witness to me; but God himself bears witness to me by himself, his works and in the Scriptures, as has been said. Consequently, if you truly loved God, then so far from rejecting me, you would come to me. You, therefore, do not love God.

Another interpretation would be this. It is as though he were saying: I have not brought in these witnesses because I wanted your praise; but I know you do not love God and your waywardness makes me sad, and I want to lead you back to the way of truth: "Now they have seen and hated both me and my Father" (below 15:24); "The pride of those who hate you continuously rises," as the Psalm (73:23) says.

828 Here we should point out that God cannot be hated in himself by anyone, nor can he be hated with respect to all his effects, since every good in things comes from God, and it is impossible for anyone to hate all good, for he will at least love existence and life. But someone may hate some effect of God, insofar as this is opposed to what he desires: for example, he might hate punishment, and things of that sort. It is from this point of view that God is said to be hated.

829 Then (v 43), he gives a sign that they do not love God. First, a present sign; secondly, a future sign (v 43b).

830 The present sign concerns his own coming; so he says, **I have come in my Father's name**. As if to say: What I say is obvious, for if one loves his Lord, it is clear that he will honor and receive one who comes from him, and seek to honor him. But **I have come in my Father's name**, and I make his name known to the world: "I have made your name known to those you have given me" (below 17:6), **and yet you do not accept me**. Therefore, you do not love him. The Son is said to make his Father known to men because, although the Father, as God, was known—"God is known in Judah" (Ps 75:1)—yet he was not known as the natural Father of the Son before Christ came. Thus Solomon asked: "What is his name? And what is the name of his son?" Prov 30:4).

831 The future sign concerns the coming of the Antichrist. For the Jews could say: Although you come in his name, we have not accepted you, because we will not accept anyone but God the Father. The Lord speaks against this, and says that it cannot be, because you will accept another, who will come, not in the Father's name, but in his own name; and what is more, he will come, not in the name of the Father, but **in his own name**, precisely because he will not seek

the glory of the Father but his own. And whatever he does, he will attribute it, not to the Father, but to himself: "who opposes and is exalted above all that is called God, or is worshipped" (2 Thes 2:4). **You would be accepting him;** and so the Apostle continues in the same letter: "God will send them a misleading influence so that they might believe what is false" (2 Thes 2:11). And this, because they did not accept the true teaching, that they might be saved. So the Gloss says: "Because the Jews were unwilling to accept Christ, the penalty for this sin will be, fittingly enough, that they will receive the Antichrist; with the result that those who were unwilling to believe the truth, will believe a lie."

According to Augustine, however, we can understand this text as applying to heretics and false teachers: who spread a teaching that comes from their own hearts and not from the mouth of God, and who praise themselves and despise the name of God. Of such persons it is written: "You have heard that the Antichrist is coming; and now many antichrists have appeared" (1 Jn 2:18). So it is clear that your persecution of me does not spring from your love for God, but from your hatred and envy of him. And this was the reason why they did not believe.

832 He concludes: **How can people like you believe, when you crave praise from each other,** i.e., human praise, **and yet not even ask for that one praise which is from God alone?** which is true glory. The reason they could not believe in Christ was that, since their proud minds were craving their own glory and praise, they considered themselves superior to others in glory, and regarded it as a disgrace to believe in Christ, who seemed common and poor. And this was why they could not believe in him. The one who can believe in Christ is the person of humble heart, who seeks the glory of God alone, and who strives to please him. And so we read: "Many of the leaders believed in him; but they did not admit it because of the Pharisees, so that they would not be expelled from the synagogue" (below 12:42). We can see from this just how dangerous vainglory is. For this reason Cicero says: "Let a man beware of that glory that robs him of all freedom; that freedom for which a man of great spirit should risk everything." And the Gloss says: "It is a great vice to boast and to strive for human praise: to desire that others think you have what you really do not have."

833 Then (v 45), he shows that they do not have zeal for Moses. First, how Moses was against them. Secondly, he gives the reason for this opposition (v 46). As to the first he does two things First, he rejects their false zeal; secondly, he shows them true zeal, **The one who accuses you is Moses.**

834 As to the first he says: **Do not think that I will accuse you before my Father.** There are three reasons for his saying this. First, the Son of God did not come into the world to condemn the world, but to save it. So he says, **Do not**

think that I have come to condemn, I have come to free: "God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world," that is, to condemn the world, "but that the world might be saved through him" (above 3:17). And so the blood of Christ cries out, not to accuse, but to forgive: "We have the blood of Christ, crying out better than that of Abel" (Heb 12:24), whose blood cried out to accuse; "Who will accuse God's elect? It is Christ who justifies. Who is it, then, who will condemn?" (Rom 8:33). As to his second reason for saying this, he says: **Do not think that I will accuse you before my Father**, because I will not be the one to accuse you, but to judge you: "The Father has given all judgment to the Son" (above 5:22). The third reason is: **Do not think that I, i.e., I alone, will accuse you before my Father** for what you are doing to me; for even Moses will accuse you for not believing him in the things he said of me.

835 Consequently he adds: **The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you place your trust**, because you believe you are saved through his precepts. Moses accuses them in two ways. Materially, because they deserved to be accused for transgressing his commands: "Those who have sinned under the law, will be judged by the law" (Rom 2:12). Again, Moses accuses them because he and the other saints will have authority in the judgment: "The two-edged swords will be in their hands" (Ps 149:6).

836 He presents the reason for this opposition when he says: **If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe me as well**, as is clear from "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you, from your nation and your brothers; he will be like me: you will listen to him" (Dt 18:15), and from all the sacrifices, which were a symbol of Christ. He says, perhaps, to indicate that their will acts from a free judgment, and not to imply that there is any doubt on the part of God.

837 Then when he says, **But if you do not believe in his written statements, how will you believe in my spoken words?** he gives a sign of this opposition. He does this by comparing two things, and then denying of the lesser of them what is denied of the greater. First, there is a comparison between Moses and Christ: for although Christ, absolutely speaking, is greater than Moses, Moses was the greater in reputation among the Jews. Thus he says: If you do not believe Moses, you will not believe me either. Secondly, he compares the way in which they presented their teaching: Moses gave his precepts in a written form; and so they can be studied for a long time, and are not easily forgotten. Hence they impose a stronger obligation to believe. But Christ presented his teachings in spoken words. Thus he says, **But if you do not believe in his written statements, which you have preserved in your books, how will you believe in my spoken words?**

6

LECTURE 1

1 After this Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee, which is that of Tiberias. 2 And a great multitude followed him because they saw the miracles he worked on those who were sick. 3 Jesus therefore went up a mountain, and there sat down with his disciples. 4 Now the Passover was near, a festival day of the Jews. 5 Then, when Jesus lifted his eyes and saw that a great multitude had come to him, he said to Philip,

“Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?”

6 He said this, however, to test him, for he knew what he would do. 7 Philip replied, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not suffice for each to have a little bit.” 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, 9 “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fishes, but what are these for so many?” 10 Jesus then said,

“Make the people recline.”

There was much grass in the place. Therefore the men reclined, in number about five thousand. 11 Jesus then took the bread, and when he had given thanks, he distributed it to those reclining; he did likewise with the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 When they had their fill, he said to his disciples,

“Gather up the fragments that are left over,
lest they be wasted.”

13 They therefore gathered and filled twelve baskets with the leftovers, from the five barley loaves and the two fishes, that remained after all had eaten.

838 The Evangelist has presented the teaching of Christ on the spiritual life, by which he gives life to those who are born again. He now tells us of the spiritual food by which Christ sustains those to whom he has given life. First, he describes a visible miracle, in which Christ furnished bodily food. Secondly, he considers spiritual food (6:26). He does two things about the first. First, he describes the visible miracle. Secondly, he shows the effect this miracle had (6:14). He tells us

two things about this miracle. First, its circumstances, secondly, about its actual accomplishment (v 5). As to the first he does three things. First he describes the crowd that Jesus fed, secondly, the place; thirdly, the time (v 4). As to the first he does three things. First, he identifies the place where the crowd followed Jesus; secondly, the people who followed him; and thirdly, he tells why they followed him.

839 The Evangelist describes the place to which the crowd followed our Lord when he says, **After this Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee**, i.e., after the mysterious words Jesus had spoken concerning his power. This Sea of Galilee is mentioned frequently in various places in Scripture. Luke calls it a lake (Lk 5:1) because its water is not salty, but was formed from the waters flowing in from the Jordan. Yet it is still called a "Sea," because in Hebrew all bodies of water are called "seas": "God called the waters 'seas'" (Gn 1:10). It is also called Gennesaret because of the character of its location: for this water is tossed about a great deal, being buffeted by the winds that come from the vapors rising from its surface. Thus in Greek the word "Gennesaret" means "wind forming." It is called the Sea of Galilee from the province of Galilee in which it is located. Again, it is called the Sea of Tiberias from the city of Tiberias: this city was situated on one side of the sea, facing Capernaum on the opposite side. The city of Tiberias was formerly called Chinnereth, but later, when it was rebuilt by Herod the Tetrarch, it was renamed as Tiberias in honor of Tiberius Caesar.

840 The literal reason why Jesus crossed the sea is given by Chrysostom: to give ground to the anger and agitation which the Jews felt against Christ because of the things he had said about them. As Chrysostom says: just as darts strike a hard object with great force if they meet it, but pass on and soon come to rest if nothing is in their way, so also the anger of defiant men increases when they are resisted, but if we yield a little, it is easy to keep their fury within bounds. So Christ, by going to the other side of the sea, was able to soften the anger of the Jews, caused by what he had said. He thus gives us an example to act in the same way: "Do not be provoked by one who speaks evil of you" (Sir 8:14).

841 In the mystical sense, the sea signifies this present troubled world: "This great sea, stretching wide" (Ps 103:25). Our Lord crossed over this sea when he assumed the sea of punishment and death by being born, trod it under foot by dying, and then crossing over it by his rising, arrived at the glory of his resurrection. We read of this crossing: "Jesus knew that his time had come to leave this world for the Father" (below 13:1). A great crowd, composed of both peoples, has followed him in this crossing, by believing in him and imitating him: "Your heart will be full of wonder and joy, when the riches of the sea will be given to you" (Is 60:5); "Rise up, O Lord, you who demand that justice be done; and the people will gather round you" (Ps 7:7).

842 The crowd that followed him is described as large, **And a great multitude followed him.**

843 The reason why they followed him is because he was performing miracles, hence he says, **because they saw the miracles he worked on those who were sick.** We should point out that some followed Christ because of his teachings, that is, those who were better disposed. But there were others, i.e., those who were less perfect and less perceptive, who followed him because they were attracted by visible miracles; "Signs were given to unbelievers, not to believers" (1 Cor 14:22). Still others followed him out of devotion and faith, those, namely, whom he had cured of some bodily defect: for our Lord had so healed their body that they were also completely healed in soul: "The works of God are perfect" (Dt 32:4). This is clear, because he expressly said to the paralytic, "Do not sin again" (above 5:14), and in Matthew (9:2) he says, "Son, your sins are forgiven"; and these remarks concern the health of the soul rather than that of the body.

844 We might remark that although the Evangelist had mentioned only three miracles (the one at the marriage reception, the son of the official, and the paralytic), he says here in a general way, **the miracles he worked.** He does this to indicate that Christ worked many other miracles that are not mentioned in this book, as he will say below (21:25). For his main object was to present the teaching of Christ.

845 Then he gives the location of the miracle, on a mountain; hence he says: **Jesus therefore went up a mountain,** i.e., privately, **and there sat down with his disciples.** Now a mountain is a place well suited for refreshment, for according to the Psalm a mountain signifies the perfection of justice: "Your justice is like the mountains of God" (Ps 35:7). And so, because we cannot be satisfied by earthly things—indeed, "Whoever drinks this water will be thirsty again" (above 4:13)—but spiritual things will satisfy us, our Lord leads his disciples to a higher place to show that full satisfaction and the perfection of justice are found in spiritual realities. We read of this mountain: "The mountain of God is a rich mountain" (Ps 67:16). Thus he also exercised his office of teacher there, sitting with his disciples; for he is the one who teaches every man.

846 The time is mentioned when he says, **Now the Passover was near.** This time was also well suited for their refreshment, for "Passover" means "passage": "It is the Passover of the Lord, that is, his passage" (Ex 12:11). We understand from this that anyone who desires to be refreshed by the bread of the divine Word and by the body and blood of the Lord, must pass from vices to virtues:

"Our Passover, Christ, has been sacrificed, and so let us feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5:7). And again, divine Wisdom says: "Pass over to me, all who desire me" (Sir 24-26).

This is the second Passover the Evangelist has mentioned. However, our Lord did not go to Jerusalem this time, as the law commanded. The reason for this being that Christ was both God and man: as man he was subject to the law, but as God he was above the law. So, he observed the law on certain occasions to show that he was a man, but he also disregarded the law at other times to show that he was God. Further, by not going he indicated that the ceremonies of the law would end gradually and in a short time.

847 Then he considers the miracle itself (v 5). First, why it was needed. Secondly, its accomplishment. We can see the need for this miracle from our Lord's question to his disciple, and the disciple's answer. First, our Lord's question is given; and then the answer of his disciple (v 7). He does three things about the first. First, the occasion for the question is given; secondly, we have the question itself (v 5b); thirdly, we are told why Christ asked this question (v 6).

848 The occasion for Christ's question was his sight of the crowd coming to him. Hence he says, **Then, when Jesus**, on the mountain with his disciples, i.e., with those who were more perfect, **lifted his eyes and saw that a great multitude had come to him**. Here we should note two things about Christ. First, his maturity: for he is not distracted by what does not concern him, but is appropriately concerned with his disciples. He is not like those spoken of in Proverbs (30:13): "A generation whose eyes are proud." And, "A man's dress, and laughter, and his walk, show what he is" (Sir 19:27). Secondly, we should note that Christ did not sit there with his disciples out of laziness; he was looking right at them, teaching them carefully and attracting their hearts to himself: "Then he lifted his eyes to his disciples" (Lk 6:20). Thus we read: **Then, when Jesus lifted his eyes**. In the mystical sense, our Lord's eyes are his spiritual gifts; and he lifts his eyes on the elect, i.e., looks at them with compassion, when he mercifully grants these gifts to them: This is what the Psalm asks for: "Look upon me, O Lord, and have mercy on me" (Ps 85:16).

849 Our Lord's question concerns the feeding of the crowd; so he said to Philip: **Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?** He assumes one thing and asks about another. He assumes their poverty, because they did not have food to offer this great crowd; and he asks how they might obtain it, saying, **Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?**

Here we should note that every teacher is obliged to possess the means of

feeding spiritually the people who come to him. And since no man possesses of himself the resources to feed them, he must acquire them elsewhere by his labor, study, and persistent prayer: "Hurry, you who have no money, and acquire without cost wine and milk" (Is 55:1). And there follows: "Why do you spend your money," i.e., your eloquence, "for what is not bread," i.e., not the true wisdom which refreshes—"Wisdom will feed him with the bread of life and understanding" (Si 15:5)—"and why do you work for what does not satisfy you," i.e., by learning things that drain you instead of filling you?

850 Our Lord's intention is given when he says, **He said this, however, to test him.** Here the Evangelist raises one difficulty in answering another. For we could wonder, why our Lord asked Philip what to do, as though our Lord himself did not know. The Evangelist settles this when he says, **for he knew what he would do.** But it seems that the Evangelist raises another difficulty when he says, to test him. For to test is to try out; and this seems to imply ignorance.

I answer that one can test another in various ways in order to try him out. One man tests another in order to learn; the devil tests a man in order to ensnare him: "Your enemy, the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he can devour" (1 Pt 5:8). But Christ (and God) does not test us in order to learn, because he sees into our hearts; nor in order to ensnare us, for as we read in James (1:13): "God does not test [i.e., tempt] anyone." But he does test us that others might learn something from the one tested. This is the way God tested Abraham: "God tested Abraham" (Gn 22:1); and then it says (v 12): "Now I know that you fear God," i.e., I have made it known that you fear the Lord. He tests Philip in the same way: so that those who hear his answer might be very certain about the miracle to come.

851 Now we have the answer of the disciples. First, the answer of Philip; then that of Andrew (v 8).

852 With respect to the first, note that Philip was slower in learning than the others, and so he asks our Lord more questions: "Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us" (below 14:8). Here, according to the literal sense, Andrew is better disposed than Philip, for Philip does not seem to have any understanding or anticipation of the coming miracle. And so he suggests that money is the way by which they could feed all the people, saying: **Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not suffice for each to have a little bit.** And since we do not have that much, we cannot feed them. Here we see the poverty of Christ, for he did not even have two hundred denarii.

853 Andrew, however, seems to sense that a miracle is going to take place.

Perhaps he recalled the miracle performed by Elisha with the barley loaves, when he fed a hundred men with twenty loaves (2 Kgs 4:42). And so he says, **There is a boy here who has five barley loaves**. Still, he did not suspect that Christ was going to perform a greater miracle than Elisha: for he thought that fewer loaves would be miraculously produced from fewer, and more from a larger number. But in truth, he who does not need any material to work with could feed a crowd as easily with few or many loaves. So Andrew continues: **but what are these for so many?** As if to say: Even if you increased them in the measure that Elisha did, it still would not be enough.

854 In the mystical sense, wisdom is a symbol for spiritual refreshment. One kind of wisdom was taught by Christ, the true wisdom: "Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24). Before Christ came, there were two other teachings or doctrines: one was the human teachings of the philosophers; the other was the teachings found in the written law. Philip mentions the first of these when he speaks of buying: **Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not suffice**, for human wisdom must be acquired. Now the number one hundred implies perfection. Thus two hundred suggests the twofold perfection necessary for this wisdom: for there are two ways one arrives at the perfection of human wisdom, by experience and by contemplation. So he says, **Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not suffice**, because no matter what human reason can experience and contemplate of the truth, it is not enough to completely satisfy our desire for wisdom: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches. But let him who glories glory in this: that he knows and understands me" (Jer 9:23). For the wisdom of no philosopher has been so great that it could keep men from error; rather, the philosophers have led many into error.

It is Andrew who mentions the second kind of teaching [that of the law]. He does not want to buy other bread, but to feed the crowd with the loaves of bread they had, that is, those contained in the law. And so he was better disposed than Philip. So he says: **There is a boy here who has five barley loaves**. This boy can symbolize Moses, because of the imperfection found in the state of the law: "The law brought nothing to perfection" (Heb 7:19); or the Jewish people, who were serving under the elements of this world (Gal 4:3).

This boy had five loaves, that is, the teaching of the law: either because this teaching was contained in the five books of Moses, "The law was given through Moses" (above 1:17); or because it was given to men absorbed in sensible things, which are made known through the five senses. These loaves were of barley because the law was given in such a way that what was life-giving in it was concealed under physical signs: for the kernel in barley is covered with a very firm husk. Or, the loaves were of barley because the Jewish people had not yet

been rubbed free of carnal desire, but it still covered their hearts like a husk: for in the Old Testament they outwardly experienced hardships because of their ceremonial observances: "A yoke, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15:10). Further, the Jews were engrossed in material things and did not understand the spiritual meaning of the law: "A veil is over their hearts" (2 Cor 3:15).

The two fishes, which gave a pleasant flavor to the bread, indicate the teachings of the Psalms and the prophets. Thus the old law not only had five loaves, i.e., the five books of Moses, but also two fishes, that is, the Psalms and the prophets. So the Old Testament writings are divided into these three: "The things written about me in the law of Moses, and in the prophets and in the Psalms" (Lk 24:44). Or, according to Augustine, the two fishes signify the priests and kings who ruled the Jews; and they prefigured Christ, who was the true king and priest.

But what are these for so many? for they could not bring man to a complete knowledge of the truth: for although God was known in Judea, the Gentiles did not know him.

855 Next (v 10), the miracle is presented. First, we see the people arranged; secondly, the miracle itself; and thirdly, the gathering of the leftovers. He does two things about the first. First, he shows Christ directing the disciples to have the people recline; secondly, why this was appropriate; and thirdly, he tells us the number of people present.

856 Our Lord told his disciples to arrange the people so that they could eat; thus Jesus says, **Make the people recline**, i.e., to eat. For as mentioned before, in former times people took their meals lying on couches; consequently, it was the custom to say of those who sat down to eat that they were reclining. In the mystical sense, this indicates that rest which is necessary for the perfection of wisdom. Again, the people are prepared by the disciples because it is through the disciples that the knowledge of the truth has come to us: "Let the mountains receive peace for the people" (Ps 71:3).

857 The character of the place shows why it was convenient that they recline, for **There was much grass in the place**. This is the literal meaning. In the mystical sense, grass indicates the flesh: "All flesh is grass" (Is 40:6). In this sense it can refer to two things. First, to the teachings of the Old Testament, which were given to a people resting in things of the flesh and wise according to the flesh: "If you are willing, and listen to me, you will eat the good things of the land" (Is 1:19); "The posterity of Jacob dwells in a land of grain, wine and oil" (Dt 33:28). Or, it can refer to one who perceives true wisdom, which cannot be

attained without first abandoning the things of the flesh: "Do not imitate this world" (Rom 12:2).

858 There was a great number of people; thus he says, **the men reclined, in number about five thousand**. The Evangelist counted only the men, according to the custom in the law, for as mentioned in Numbers (1:3), Moses counted the people who were twenty years and older, without including the women. The Evangelist does the same, because only men can be completely instructed: "We speak wisdom to those who are mature" (1 Cor 2:6); "Solid food is for the mature" (Heb 5:14).

859 Then (v 11), the Evangelist presents the feeding of the crowd. First, we see the attitude of Christ; secondly, the food used; thirdly, that the people were satisfied. As to the attitude of Jesus, both his humility and his giving of thanks are mentioned.

860 We see his humility because he took the bread and gave it to the people. Now although in this miracle Christ could have fed the people with bread created from nothing, he chose to do so by multiplying bread that already existed. He did this, first, to show that sensible things do not come from the devil, as the Manichean error maintains. For if this were so, our Lord would not have used sensible things to praise God, especially since "The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8). He did it, secondly, to show that they are also wrong in claiming that the teachings of the Old Testament are not from God but from the devil. Thus, to show that the doctrine of the New Testament is none other than that which was prefigured and contained in the teachings of the Old Testament, he multiplied bread that already existed, implying by this that he is the one who fulfills the law and brings it to perfection: "I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it," as we read in Matthew (5:17).

861 We see that he gave **thanks, when he had given thanks**. He did this to show that whatever he had, he had from another, that is, from his Father. This is an example for us to do the same. More particularly, he gave thanks to teach us that we should thank God when we begin a meal: "Nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim 4:4); "The poor will eat and be satisfied; and they will praise the Lord" (Ps 21:27). Again, he gave thanks to teach us that he was not praying for himself, but for the people who were there, for he had to convince them that he had come from God. Accordingly, he prays before he works this miracle before them, in order to show them that he is not acting against God, but according to God's will.

We read in Mark (6:41) that Christ had the apostles distribute the bread to the

people. It says here that he distributed it because in a way he himself does what he does by means of others. In the mystical sense, both statements are true: for Christ alone refreshes from within, and others, as his ministers, refresh from without.

862 Their food was bread and fish, about which enough has been said above.

Finally, those who ate were completely satisfied, because they took **as much as they wanted**. For Christ is the only one who feeds an empty soul and fills a hungry soul with good things: "I will be satisfied when your glory appears" (Ps 16:15). Others perform miracles through having grace in a partial manner; Christ, on the other hand, does so with unlimited power, since he does all things superabundantly. Hence it says that the people **had their fill**.

863 Now we see the leftovers collected (v 12). First, Christ gives the order; secondly, his disciples obey.

864 The Evangelist says that after the people had eaten their fill, Christ said to his disciples: **Gather up the fragments that are left over**. This was not pretentious display on our Lord's part; he did it to show that the miracle he accomplished was not imaginary, since the collected leftovers kept for some time and provided food for others. Again, he wanted to impress this miracle more firmly on the hearts of his disciples, whom he had carry the leftovers: for most of all he wanted to teach his disciples, who were destined to be the teachers of the entire world.

865 His disciples obeyed him faithfully; hence he says, **They therefore gathered and filled twelve baskets with the leftovers**. Here we should note that the amount of food that remained was not left to chance, but was according to plan: for as much as Christ willed was left over, no more and no less. This is shown by the fact that the basket of each apostle was filled. Now a basket is reserved for the work of peasants. Therefore, the twelve baskets signify the twelve apostles and those who imitate them, who, although they are looked down upon in this present life, are nevertheless filled with the riches of spiritual sacraments. There are twelve because they were to preach the faith of the Holy Trinity to the four parts of the world.

LECTURE 2

14 Now when these people saw that Jesus had worked a miracle,

they said: "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

15 So Jesus, knowing that they would come to seize him and make him king, fled again into the mountains, alone. 16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea. 17 After they got into the boat, they set out across the sea to Capernaum. It was already dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 The sea became rough, agitated by a great wind. 19 After they had rowed twenty-five or thirty stadia [three or four miles] , they saw Jesus walking on the water, coming toward the boat, and they were afraid. 20 But he said to them:

"It is I. Do not be afraid."

21 They then wanted to take him into the boat; and suddenly the boat was on the land toward which they were going.

866 Above, the Evangelist told us of the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Now he shows the threefold effect this miracle had on the people. First, its effect on their faith; secondly, on their plans to honor Jesus; thirdly, how it led them (and the disciples) to search for Jesus.

867 With respect to the first, we should note that the Jews said in the Psalm: "We have not seen our signs; there is now no prophet" (Ps 73:9). For it was customary in earlier days for the prophets to work many signs; so, when these signs were absent, prophecy seemed to have ended. But when the Jews see such signs, they believe that prophecy is returning. Accordingly, the people were so impressed by this miracle they just saw that they called our Lord a prophet. Thus we read, **Now when these people**, who had been filled with the five **loaves, saw that Jesus had worked a miracle, they said: This is truly the Prophet.** However, they did not yet have perfect faith, for they believed that Jesus was only a prophet, while he was also the Lord of the prophets. Yet, they were not entirely wrong, because our Lord called himself a prophet.

868 Here we should remark that a prophet is called a seer: "He who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer" (1 Sm 9:9). Further, seeing pertains to the cognitive power. Now in Christ there were three kinds of knowledge. First of all, there was sense knowledge. And in this respect he had some similarity to the prophets, insofar as sensible species could be formed in the imagination of Christ to present future or hidden events. This was especially due to his passibility, which was appropriate to his state as a "wayfarer." Secondly, Christ had intellectual knowledge; and in this he was not like the prophets, but was even superior to all the angels: for he was a "comprehensor" in a more excellent way than any creature. Again, Christ had divine knowledge, and in this way he was the one who inspired the prophets and the angels, since all knowledge is caused

by a participation in the divine Word.

Still, these people seemed to realize that Christ was a superior prophet, for they said: **This is truly the Prophet.** For although there had been many prophets among the Jews, they were waiting for a particular one, according to: "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you" (Dt 18:15). This is the one they are speaking of here; thus it continues: **who is to come into the world.**

869 Next, we see the second effect of Christ's miracle: the honor the people planned for Christ, which he refused. First, we have the attempt by the people; secondly, Christ's flight from them.

870 The attempt of the people is mentioned when he says, **they would come to seize him and make him king.** A person or thing is seized if it is taken in a way that one does not will or is not opportune. Now it is true that God's plan from all eternity had been to establish the kingdom of Christ; but the time for this was not then opportune. Christ had come then, but not to reign in the way we ask for his reign when we say, "Your kingdom come" (Mt 6:10); at that time he will reign even as man. Another time was reserved for this: after the judgment of Christ, when the saints will appear in glory. It was about this kingdom the disciples asked when they said: "Lord, will you restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?" (Acts 1:6).

So the people, thinking he had come to reign, wanted to make him their king. The reason for this is that men often want as their ruler someone who will provide them with temporal things. Thus, because our Lord had fed them, they were willing to make him their king: "You have a mantle, be our ruler" (Is 3:6). Chrysostom says: "See the power of gluttony. They are no longer concerned about his breaking the Sabbath; they are no longer zealous for God. All these things are set in the background now that their bellies are full. Now he is regarded as a prophet among them, and they want to set him on the royal throne as their king."

871 We see Christ's flight when he says that he **fled again into the mountains, alone.** We can see from this that when our Lord had first seen the crowd of people he came down from the mountain and fed them in the valley, for we would not read that he went again into the mountains if he had not come down from them.

Why did Christ flee from the people, since he really is a king? There are three reasons for this. First, because it would have detracted from his dignity to have accepted a kingdom from men: for he is so great a king that all other kings are

kings by participating in his kingship: "It is by me that kings rule" (Prv 8:15). Another reason is that it would have been hanuful to his teaching if he had accepted this dignity and support from men; for he had worked and taught in such a way that everything was attributed to divine power and not to the influence of men: "Praise from men I do not need" (above 5:41). The third reason was to teach us to despise the dignities of this world: "I have given you an example that as I have done to you, so you should do also" (below 13:15); "Do not seek dignity from men" (Sir 7:4). And so, he refused the glory of this world, but still endured its punishment of his own will: "Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame, for the joy set before him" (Heb 12:2).

872 Matthew seems to conflict with this, for he says that "Jesus went up the mountain alone, to pray" (Mt 14:23). However, in the opinion of Augustine, there is no conflict here, because he had reason both to flee and to pray. For our Lord is teaching us that when a reason for flight draws near, there is great reason to pray.

In the mystical sense, Christ went up into the mountain when the people he had fed were ready to subject themselves to him, because he went up into heaven when the people were ready to subject themselves to the truth of the faith, according to: "A congregation of people will surround you. Return above for their sakes," i.e., return on high so a congregatation of people may surround you (Ps 7:8).

He says that Christ **fled**, to indicate that the people could not understand his grandeur: for if we do not understand something, we say that it flees or eludes us.

873 Now he considers the third effect of Christ's miracle, the search for Christ. First, by his disciples; secondly, by the people. As to the first, he does two things. First, he tells of the eagerness of the disciples; and secondly, enlarges upon this (v 17b). He does two things about the first. First, he tells that they went down to the shore. Secondly, he tells of their journey across the sea (v 17).

874 Note, about the first, that Christ went up into the mountain without the knowledge of his disciples. So, they waited there until evening came, for they expected that he would come back to them. But their love was so great that when evening came they just had to go looking for him. Thus he says, **When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea**, looking for Jesus.

In the mystical sense, "evening" signifies our Lord's passion or his ascension. For as long as the disciples enjoyed Christ's physical presence, no trouble disturbed

them and no bitterness vexed them: "Can the friends of the groom mourn as long as the groom is with them?" (Mt 9:15). But when Christ was away, then they "went down to the sea," to the troubles of this world: "This great sea, stretching wide" (Ps 103:25).

875 He adds that they crossed, saying, **After they got into the boat, they set out across the sea to Capernaum**, for the love that burned within them could not endure our Lord's absence for very long.

876 Now (17b), he enlarges upon what he had already said in summary fashion. First, on their going down to the sea; secondly, on their crossing (v 18).

877 As to the first, he says, **It was already dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them**. The Evangelist does not tell us this without a reason, for it shows the intensity of their love, since not even night or evening could stop them.

In the mystical sense, the "dark" signifies the absence of love; for light is love, according to: "He who loves his brother dwells in the light" (1 Jn 2:10). Accordingly, there is darkness in us when Jesus, "the true light" (above 1:9) does not come to us, because his presence repels all darkness.

Jesus left his disciples alone for this length of time so that they might experience his absence; and they did indeed experience it during the storm at sea: "Know and realize, that it is evil and bitter for you to have left the Lord" (Jer 2:19). He left them, in the second place, so that they might look for him more earnestly: "Where has your beloved gone, most beautiful of women? We will search for him with you" (Sg 5:17).

878 As for their crossing, first we see the storm at sea; then Christ coming to them, and the time; and thirdly, the effect this had.

879 The storm was caused by a rising wind; thus he says: **The sea became rough, agitated by a great wind**. This wind is a symbol for the trials and persecutions which would afflict the Church due to a lack of love. For as Augustine says, when love grows cold, the waves of the sea begin to swell and danger threatens the boat. Still, these winds and the storm, with its waves and darkness, did not stop (lie progress of' the boat or so batter it that it broke apart: "He who perseveres to the end will be saved" (Mt 24:13); and again: "And the rains fell. and the floods came, and the house did not collapse," as we read in Mattliew (7:25).

880 Christ did not appear to them when the storm first began, but only some

time later; thus he says, **After they had rowed twentyfive or thirty stadia, they saw Jesus.** We see from this that our Lord allows us to be troubled for a while so our virtue may be tested; but he does not desert us in the end, but comes very close to us: "God is faithful, and will not allow you to be tested beyond your strength" (1 Cor 10:13).

According to Augustine, the twenty-five stadia they rowed are the five books of Moses. For twenty-five is the square of five, since five times five is twenty-five. But a number that is multiplied in this way keeps the meaning of its root. Thus, just as five signifies the old law, so twenty-five signifies the perfection of the New Testament. Thirty, however, signifies that perfection of the New Testament which was lacking in the law: for thirty is the result of multiplying five by six, which is a perfect number. So, Jesus comes to those who row twenty-five or thirty stadia, i. e., to those who fulfill the law or the perfection taught by the Gospel; and he comes treading under foot all the waves of pride and the dignities of this present world: "You rule the might of the sea and calm its waves" (Ps 88:10). And then we will see Christ near our boat, because divine help is close: "The Lord is near to all who fear him" (Ps 144:18). Thus it is clear that Christ is near to all those who seek him rightly. Now the Apostles loved Christ very keenly: this is obvious because they tried to go to him despite the darkness, the stormy sea, and the distance to shore. Consequently, Christ was with them.

881 Now we see the effect of Christ's appearance. First, the interior effect; secondly, the exterior effect (v 2 1 b).

882 The interior effect of Christ's appearance was fear; and he mentions the fear of the disciples at the sudden appearance of Christ when he says, **and they were afraid.** This was a good fear, because it was the effect of humility: "Do not be proud; rather fear" (Rom 11:20); or it was an evil fear, because "they thought it was a ghost" (Mk 6:49); "They trembled with fear" (Ps 13:5): for fear is especially appropriate to the carnal, because they are afraid of spiritual things.

Secondly, we see Christ encouraging them against two dangers. First, they are encouraged against the danger to the faith in their intellect when he says, It is 1, to eliminate their doubts: "Look at my hands and my feet! It is really me" (Lk 24:39). Secondly, Christ encourages them against the danger of fear in their emotions, saying, **Do not be afraid:** "Do not be afraid when they are present" (Jer 1:8); "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear" (Ps 26:1).

Thirdly, we see the reaction of the disciples, for **They then wanted to take him into the boat.** This signifies that we receive Christ by love and

contemplation after servile fear has been taken out of our hearts: "I stand at the door and knock. If any one opens it for me, I will enter" (Rv 3:20).

883 There were two exterior effects: the storm abated, and their boat suddenly landed, although it had just been at a distance from the shore, for our Lord gave them a calm journey, without danger. He himself did not enter the boat because he wished to accomplish a greater miracle. So here we have three miracles: the walking on the sea, the quick calming of the storm, and the sudden arrival of the boat on the land although it had been far away. We learn from this that the faithful, in whom Christ is present, put down the swelling pride of this world, tread under their feet its waves of tribulation, and cross quickly to the land of the living: "Your good spirit will lead me to land" (Ps 142:10).

884 There are a number of difficulties here. The first concerns the literal sense: Matthew (14:22) seems to conflict with our present account for he says that the disciples were told by Christ to go the shore, while here it says the disciples went there to search for him. Another difficulty is that Matthew (14:34) says that the disciples crossed over to Gennesaret, while we read here that they came to Capernaum. The third difficulty is that Matthew (14:32) says that Christ got into the boat, but here he did not.

Chrysostom settles these difficulties quite briefly by saying that the two accounts do not deal with the same miracle. For, as he says, Christ frequently miraculously walked upon the sea in front of his disciples, but not for the people, lest they think he did not have a real body. But, according to Augustine, and this is the better opinion, John and Matthew are describing the same miracle. Augustine answers the first difficulty by saying it makes no difference that Matthew says the disciples went down to the shore because our Lord told them to. For it is possible that our Lord did so, and they went believing that he would sail with them. And that is why they waited until night, and when Christ did not come, they crossed by themselves.

There are two answers to the second difficulty. One is that Capernaum and Gennesaret are neighboring towns on the same shore. And perhaps the disciples landed at a place near both, so that Matthew mentions one and John the other. Or, it might be said that Matthew does not say that they came to Gennesaret immediately, they could have come first to Capernaum and then to Gennesaret. [The answer to the third difficulty is not given.]

LECTURE 3

22 On the next day, the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no second boat there, but only one, and that Jesus had not gone into the boat, but only his disciples had gone. 23 But other boats arrived from Tiberias, near the place where they had eaten the bread, after having given thanks to God. 24 When therefore the people saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they got into the boats and set off for Capernaum, looking for Jesus. 25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said: "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 26 Jesus replied and said:

"Amen, amen, I say to you:
you seek me not because you have seen miracles,
but because you have eaten of the bread
and have been filled.

27 Do not work for the food that perishes,
but for that which endures to eternal life,
which the Son of Man will give you,
for on him has God the Father set his seal."

28 Then they said to him: "What must we do that we may perform the works of God?" 29 Jesus replied and said to them:

"This is the work of God,
that you believe in him whom he sent."

30 They then said to him: "What sign then are you going to give that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? 31 Our fathers ate manna in the desert, as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

885 After having described how the disciples searched for Christ, the Evangelist now shows the people looking for him. First, he states their motive; secondly, the occasion; and thirdly, the search itself (v 24).

886 The crowd of people was looking for Christ because of the miracle mentioned above, that is, because he had crossed the sea without using any boat. They realized this because the other evening he had not been on the shore near where he had performed the miracle of the bread, and where there had been only one boat which had left for the opposite shore with the disciples, but without Christ. So that morning, when they could not find Christ on this side, since he was already on the other side although there was no other boat he could have used, they suspected that he had crossed by walking upon the sea. And this is what he says: **On the next day**, following the one on which he had worked the miracle of the bread, **the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea**, where he had performed this miracle, **saw that there was no second boat there, but**

only one, because the day before that was the only one there, and they had seen **that Jesus had not gone into the boat, but only his disciples had gone**. This one ship signifies the Church, which is one by its unity of faith and sacraments: "One faith, one baptism" (Eph 4:5). Again, our Lord's absence from his disciples signifies his physical absence from them at the ascension: "After the Lord Jesus spoke to them, he was taken up into heaven" (Mk 16:19).

887 It was the arrival of other boats from the opposite side of the sea that gave the people the opportunity to look for Christ; they could cross on these and search for him. He says: **But other boats arrived**, from the other side, that is, **from Tiberias, near the place where they had eaten the bread, after having given thanks to God**.

These other boats signify the various sects of heretics and of those who seek their own profit, and not the good of Jesus Christ: "You seek me ... because you have eaten of the bread and have been filled" (v 26). These groups are either separated in faith, as are the heretics, or in the love of charity, as are the carnal, who are not properly in the Church, but next to it, insofar as they have a feigned faith and the appearance of holiness: "They have the appearance of devotion, but deny its power" (2 Tim 3:5); "Do not be surprised if the ministers of Satan disguise themselves" (2 Cor 11:14).

888 The people were eager to find Christ. First, he shows how they looked for him; secondly, how they questioned him after they found him (v 25).

889 He says, **When the people saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they got into the boats**, which had come from Tiberias, **looking for Jesus**; and this is praiseworthy: "Search for the Lord while he can be found" (Is 55:6); "Seek the Lord, and your soul will have life" (Ps 68:33).

890 Once they found him, they questioned him. **When they**, the people, **found him**, Christ, **on the other side of the sea**, they asked him: **Rabbi, when did you come here?** This can be understood in two ways. In the first way, they were asking about the time only. And then, Chrysostom says, they should be rebuked for their rudeness, because, after such a miracle, they did not ask how he crossed without a boat, but only when he did so. Or, it can be said that by asking **when**, they wanted to know not just the time, but the other circumstances connected with this miraculous crossing.

891 Note that now, after they have found Christ, they do not wish to make him their king, while before, after he had fed them, they did. They wanted to make him their king then because they were emotionally excited with the joy of their

meal; but such emotions quickly pass. So it is that things that we plan according to our emotions do not last; but matters that we arrange by our reason last longer: "A wise man continues on in his wisdom like the sun; a fool changes like the moon" (Sir 27:12); "The work of the wicked will not last" (Prv 11:18)

892 Then (v 26), our Lord begins to mention a food that is spiritual. First, he states a truth about this spiritual food. In the second place, he clears up a misunderstanding (6:41). As to the first he does three things. First, he presents a truth about this spiritual food; secondly, he mentions its origin; and thirdly, he tells them how this spiritual food is to be acquired (6:34). He does two things about the first. First, he explains this spiritual food and its power; in the second place, he tells what this food is (v 28). As to the first, he does two things. First, he rebukes them for their disordered desires; in the second place, he urges them to accept the truth (v 27).

893 He says, Amen, amen, I say to you, that although you seem to be devout, **you seek me not because you have seen miracles, but because you have eaten of the bread and have been filled.** As if to say: You seek me, not for the sake of the spirit, but for the sake of the flesh, because you hope for more food. As Augustine says, these people represent those who seek Jesus not for himself, but in order to gain certain worldly advantages: as those engaged in some business call on clerics and prelates, not for the sake of Christ, but so that through their intervention they might be advanced into the ranks of those who are important; and like those who hurry to the churches, not for Christ, but because they have been urged to do so by those who are more powerful; and like those who approach our Lord for sacred orders not because they desire the merits of the virtues, but because they are looking for the satisfactions of this present life, as wealth and praise, as Gregory says in his *Moralia*. This is obvious: for to perform miracles is a work of divine power, but to eat loaves of bread which have been multiplied is temporal. Accordingly, those who do not come to Christ because of the power they see in him, but because they eat his bread, are not serving Christ but their own stomachs, as we see from Philippians (3:19); and again, "He will praise you when you are good to him," as we read in the Psalm (48:19).

894 He leads them back to the truth by calling their attention to spiritual food, saying, **Do not work for the food that perishes, but for that which endures to eternal life.** First, he mentions its power; secondly, that it comes from him, **which the Son of Man will give you.**

895 The power of this food is seen in the fact that it does not perish. In this respect we should point out that material things are likenesses of spiritual things, since they are caused and produced by them; and consequently they resemble

spiritual things in some way. Now just as the body is sustained by food, so that which sustains the spirit is called its food, whatever it might be. The food that sustains the body is perishable, since it is converted into the nature of the body; but the food that sustains the spirit is not perishable, because it is not converted into the spirit; rather, the spirit is converted into its food. Hence Augustine says in his *Confessions*: "I am the food of the great; grow and you will eat me. But you will not change me into yourself, as you do bodily food, but you will be changed into me."

So our Lord says: work, i.e., seek by your work, or merit by your works, **not for the food that perishes**, i.e., bodily food: "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach for food, but God will destroy both" (1 Cor 6:13), because we will not always need food; but **work for that which**, that is, the spiritual food, **endures to eternal life**. This food is God himself, insofar as he is the Truth which is to be contemplated and the Goodness which is to be loved, which nourish the spirit: "Eat my bread" (Prv 9:5); "Wisdom will feed him with the bread of life and understanding" (Sir 15:5). Again, this food is the obedience to the divine commands: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me" (above 4:34). Also, it is Christ himself: "I am the bread of life" (6:35); "My flesh truly is food and my blood truly is drink" (6:56): and this is so insofar as the flesh of Christ is joined to the Word of God, which is the food by which the angels live. The difference between bodily and spiritual food which he gives here, is like the one he gave before between bodily and spiritual drink: "Whoever drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I give, will never be thirsty again" (4:13). The reason for this is that bodily things are perishable, while spiritual things, and especially God, are eternal.

896 We should note that according to Augustine, in his work, *On the Labor of Monks*, that certain monks misunderstood our Lord's saying, **Do not work for the food that perishes**, and claimed that spiritual men should not perform physical work. But this interpretation is false because Paul, who was most spiritual, worked with his hands: as we read in Ephesians, there he says (4:28): "Let him who stole, steal no longer, rather let him work with his hands." The correct interpretation, therefore, is that we should direct our work, i.e., our main interest and intention, to seeking the food that leads to eternal life, that is, spiritual goods. In regard to temporal goods, they should not be our principal aim but a subordinate one, that is, they are to be acquired only because of our mortal body, which has to be nourished as long as we are living this present life. So the Apostle speaks against this opinion, saying: "If any one will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thes 3:10); as if to say: those who maintain that physical work is not to be done should not eat, since eating is physical.

897 Next (v 27), he mentions the one who gives this spiritual food. First, we see

the author of this food; secondly, the source of his authority to give us this food. Christ is the author of this spiritual food, and the one who gives it to us. Thus he says, **which**, that is, the food that does not perish, **the Son of Man will give you**. If he had said, "the Son of God," it would not have been unexpected; but he captures their attention by saying that **the Son of Man** gives this food. Yet the Son of Man gives this food in a spiritual way, because human nature, weakened by sin, found spiritual food distasteful, and was not able to take it in its spirituality. Thus it was necessary for the Son of Man to assume flesh and nourish us with it: "You have prepared a table before me" (Ps 22:5).

898 He adds the source of his authority to give us this food when he says, **for on him has God the Father set his seal**. As if to say: the Son of Man will give us this food because he surpasses all the sons of men by his unique and preeminent fullness of grace. Thus he says, on him, i.e., on the Son of Man, **has God the Father set his seal**, i.e., he has significantly distinguished him from others: "God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows" (Ps 44:8).

Hilary explains it this way. **God set his seal**, i.e., impressed with a seal. For when a seal is impressed on wax, the wax retains the entire figure of the seal, just as the Son has received the entire figure of the Father. Now the Son receives from the Father in two ways. One of these ways is eternal, and **set his seal** does not refer to this way, because when something is sealed the nature receiving the seal is not the same as the nature impressing the seal. Rather, these words should be understood as referring to the mystery of the incarnation, because God the Father has impressed his Word on human nature; this Word who is "the brightness of his glory, and the figure of his substance" (Heb 1:3).

Chrysostom explains it this way. God the Father has **set his seal**, i.e., God the Father specifically chose Christ to give eternal life to the world: "I came that they may have life" (below 10:10). For when someone is chosen to perform some great task, he is said to be sealed for that task: "After this, the Lord appointed (*designo*, appoint; *signo*, seal, mark) seventy other disciples" (Lk 10:1).

Or, it could be said that God the Father **set his seal**, i.e., Christ was made known by the Father, by his voice at Christ's baptism, and by his works, as we saw in the fifth chapter.

899 Next (v 28), we see the nature of spiritual food. First, the Jews pose their question; in the second place, we have the answer of Jesus Christ (v 29).

900 Concerning the first, we should note that the Jews, since they had been

taught by the law, believed that only God was eternal. So when Christ said that his food would endure to eternal life, they understood that it would be a divine food. Thus when they question Christ, they do not mention this food, but rather the work of God, saying: **What must we do that we may perform the works of God?** Indeed, they were not far from the truth, since spiritual food is nothing else than performing and accomplishing the works of God: "What shall I do to gain eternal life?" (Lk 18:18).

901 The Lord's answer is given when he says: **This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he sent.** Here we should reflect that in Romans (4:2), the Apostle distinguished faith from works, saying that Abraham was justified by his faith, not by his works. If this is so, why does our Lord say here that to have faith, i.e., to believe, is a work of God? There are two answers to this. One is that the Apostle is not distinguishing faith from absolutely all works, but only from external works. External works, being performed by our body, are more noticeable, and so the word "works" ordinarily refers to them. But there are other works, interior works, performed within the soul, and these are known only to the wise and those converted in heart.

From another point of view, we can say that to believe can be regarded as included in our external works, not in the sense that it is an external work, but because it is the source of these works.

Thus he significantly says: **that you believe in him** (*in illum*). Now it is one thing to say: "I believe in God," (*credere Deum*), for this indicates the object. It is another thing to say: "I believe God," (*credere Deo*), for this indicates the one who testifies. And it is still another thing to say: "I believe in God," (*in Deum*), for this indicates the end. Thus God can be regarded as the object of faith, as the one who testifies, and as the end, but in different ways. For the object of faith can be a creature, as when I believe in the creation of the heavens. Again, a creature can be one who testifies, for I believe Paul (*credo Paulo*) or any of the saints. But only God can be the end of faith, for our mind is directed to God alone as its end. Now the end, since it has the character of a good, is the object of love. Thus, to believe in God (*in Deum*) as in an end is proper to faith living through the love of charity. Faith, living in this way, is the principle of all our good works; and in this sense to believe is said to be a work of God.

902 But if faith is a work of God, how do men do the works of God? Isaiah (26:12) gives us the answer when he says: "You have accomplished all our works for us." For the fact that we believe, and any good we do, is from God: "It is God who is working in us, both to will and to accomplish" (Phil 2:13). Thus he explicitly says that to believe is a work of God in order to show us that faith is a gift of God, as Ephesians (2:8) maintains.

903 Next, we see the origin of this food. First, we have the question asked by the Jews; secondly, the answer of Christ (v 32). Three things are done about the first: first, the Jews look for a sign; secondly, they decide what it should be; and thirdly, they bring in what is narrated in Scripture.

904 They look for a sign by asking Christ: **What sign then are you going to give that we may see and believe you?** This question is explained differently by Augustine and by Chrysostom. Chrysostom says that our Lord was leading them to the faith. But the evidence that leads one to the faith are miracles: "Signs were given to unbelievers" (1 Cor 14:22). And so the Jews were looking for a sign in order to believe, for it is their custom to seek such signs: "For Jews demand signs" (1 Cor 14:22). So they say: **What sign then are you going to give?**

But it seems foolish to ask for a miracle for this reason, for Christ had just performed some in their presence which could lead them to believe, as multiplying the bread and walking on the water. What they were asking was that our Lord always provide them with food. This is clear because the only sign they mention is the one given by Moses to their ancestors for forty years, and they ask in this way that Christ always provide food for them. Thus they say: **Our fathers ate manna in the desert.** They did not say that God provided their ancestors with the manna, so that they would not seem to be making Christ equal to God. Again, they did not say that Moses fed their ancestors, so they would not seem to be preferring Moses to Christ, trying in this way to influence our Lord. We read of this food: "Man ate the bread of angels" (Ps 77:25).

905 According to Augustine, however, our Lord had said that he would give them food that would endure to eternal life. Thus, he seemed to put himself above Moses. The Jews, on the other hand, considered Moses greater than Christ; so they said: "We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this man is from" (below 9:29). Accordingly, they required Christ to accomplish greater things than Moses; and so they recall what Moses did, saying: **Our Fathers ate manna in the desert.** As if to say: What you say about yourself is greater than what Moses did, for you are promising a food that does not perish, while the manna that Moses gave became wormy if saved for the next day. Therefore, if we are to believe you, do something greater than Moses did. Although you have fed five thousand men once with five barley loaves, this is not greater than what Moses did, for he fed all the people with manna from heaven for forty years, and in the desert too: "He gave them the bread of heaven" (Ps 77:24).

LECTURE 4

32 Jesus therefore said to them:

“Amen, amen, I say to you:

Moses did not give you bread from heaven,
but my Father gives you true bread from heaven.

33 For the true bread is that which descends
from heaven, and gives life to the world.”

34 They then said to him: “Lord, give us this bread always.” 35 But Jesus said to them:

“I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me shall not hunger;
and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

36 But I have told you that you have both seen me
and do not believe.

37 All that the Father gives me shall come to me;
and the one who comes to me I will not cast out,

38 because I have come down from heaven,
not to do my own will,
but the will of him who sent me.

39 Now it is the will of him who sent me, the Father,
that of all that he has given me I should lose nothing,
but raise it up on the last day.

40 For this is the will of my Father, who sent me,
that every one who sees the Son and believes in him,
should have eternal life.

And I will raise him up on the last day.”

906 Having told us the question the Jews had asked Christ, the Evangelist now gives his answer. First, Christ tells us of the origin of this spiritual food; secondly, he proves what he has just said (v 33).

907 Concerning the first, we should note that the Jews had mentioned two things to Christ concerning the bodily food which had been given to their ancestors: the one who gave this food, Moses, and the place, that is, from heaven. Accordingly, when our Lord tells them about the origin of spiritual food, he does not mention these two, for he says that there is another who gives this food and another place. He says: **Amen, amen, I say to you: Moses did not give you bread from heaven.** There is another who gives to you, that is, **my Father**; and he

gives, not, just bodily bread, but **the true bread from heaven.**

908 But was it not true bread that their ancestors had in the desert? I answer that if you understand "true" as contrasted with "false," then they had true bread, for the miracle of the manna was a true miracle. But if "true" is contrasted with "symbolic," then that bread was not true, but was a symbol of spiritual bread, that is, of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom that manna signified, as the Apostle says: "All ate the same spiritual food" (1 Cor 10:3).

909 When the Psalm (77:24) says, "He gave them the bread of heaven," this seems to conflict with, **Moses did not give you bread from heaven.** I answer that the word "heaven" can be understood in three ways. Sometimes it can mean the air, as in "The birds of heaven ate them" (Mt 13:4); and also in, "The Lord thundered from heaven" (Ps 14:14). Sometimes "heaven" means the starry sky; as in, "The highest heaven is the Lord's" (Ps 113:16), and in, "The stars will fall from heaven" (Mt 24:19). Thirdly, it can signify goods of a spiritual nature, as in "Rejoice and be glad, because your reward is great in heaven" (Mt 5:12). So the manna was from heaven, not the heaven of the stars or of spiritual food, but from the air. Or, the manna was said to be from heaven insofar as it was a symbol of the true bread from heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ.

910 When he says, **For the true bread is that which descends from heaven, and gives life to the world,** he proves that it is from heaven by its effect. For the true heaven is spiritual in nature, and has life by its own essence; therefore, of itself, it gives life: "It is the spirit that gives life" (below 6:64). Now God himself is the author of life. Therefore, we know that this spiritual bread is from heaven when it produces its proper effect, if it gives life. That bodily bread used by the Jews did not give life, since all who ate the manna died. But this [spiritual] bread does give life, so he says: **the true bread,** not that symbolic bread, **is that which descends from heaven.** This is clear, because it **gives life to the world:** for Christ, who is the true bread, gives life to whom he wills: "I came that they may have life" (below 10:10). He also descended from heaven: "No one has gone up to heaven except the One who came down from heaven" (above 3:13). Thus Christ, the true bread, gives life to the world by reason of his divinity; and he descends from heaven by reason of his human nature, for as we said on the prior text, he came down from heaven by assuming human nature: "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil 2:7).

911 Now he considers the acquisition of this spiritual food. First, we see the Jews asking for it; secondly, he shows the way it is acquired (v 3 5).

912 We should note with respect to the first, that the Jews understood what

Christ said in a material way; and so, because they desired material things, they were looking for material bread from Christ. Hence they said to him, **Lord, give us this bread always**, which physically nourishes us. The Samaritan woman also understood what our Lord said about spiritual water in a material way, and wishing to slake her thirst, said, "Give me this water" (above 4:15). And although these people understood what our Lord said about food in a material way, and asked for it this way, we are expected to ask for it as understood in a spiritual way: "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt 6:11), because we cannot live without this bread.

913 Then, he shows how this bread is acquired. First, he shows what this bread is; secondly, how to obtain it (v 37). Concerning the first, he does three things. First, he explains what this bread is, **I am the bread of life**; secondly, he gives the reason for this, **Whoever comes to me shall not hunger**; thirdly, he shows why this had to be explained (v 36).

914 Jesus said to them: **I am the bread of life**, for as we saw above, the word of wisdom is the proper food of the mind, because the mind is sustained by it: "He fed him with the bread of life and understanding" (Sir 15:3). Now the bread of wisdom is called the bread of life to distinguish it from material bread, which is the bread of death, and which serves only to restore what has been lost by a mortal organism; hence material bread is necessary only during this mortal life. But the bread of divine wisdom is life-giving of itself, and no death can affect it. Again, material bread does not give life, but only sustains for a time a life that already exists. But spiritual bread actually gives life: for the soul begins to live because it adheres to the word of God: "For with you is the fountain of life," as we see in the Psalm (35:10). Therefore, since every word of wisdom is derived from the Only Begotten Word of God—The fountain of wisdom is the Only Begotten of God" (Sir 1:5)—this Word of God is especially called the bread of life. Thus Christ says, **I am the bread of life**. And because the flesh of Christ is united to the Word of God, it also is life-giving. Thus, too, his body, sacramentally received, is life-giving: for Christ gives life to the world through the mysteries which he accomplished in his flesh. Consequently, the flesh of Christ, because of the Word of the Lord, is not the bread of ordinary life, but of that life which does not die. And so the flesh of Christ is called bread: "The bread of Asher is rich" (Gn 49:20).

His flesh was also signified by the manna. "Manna" means "What is this?" because when the Jews saw it they wondered, and asked each other what it was. But nothing is more a source of wonder than the Son of God made man, so that everyone can fittingly ask, "What is this?" That is, how can the Son of God be the Son of Man? How can Christ be one person with two natures? "His name will be called Wonderful" (Is 9:6). It is also a cause for wonder how Christ can be

present in the sacrament.

915 Next (v 35), he gives the reason for this from the effect of this [spiritual] bread. When material bread is eaten, it does not permanently take away our hunger, since it must be destroyed in order to build us up; and this is necessary if we are to be nourished. But spiritual bread, which gives life of itself, is never destroyed; consequently, a person who eats it once never hungers again. Thus he says: **Whoever comes to me shall not hunger; and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.**

According to Augustine, it is the same thing to say, **whoever comes**, as to say, **whoever believes**: since it is the same to come to Christ and to believe in him, for we do not come to God with bodily steps, but with those of the mind, the first of which is faith. To eat and to drink are also the same: for each signifies that eternal fulness where there is no want: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for what is right, for they will be filled" (Mt 5:6); so that food which sustains and that drink which refreshes are one and the same.

One reason why temporal things do not take away our thirst permanently is that they are not consumed altogether, but only bit by bit, and with motion, so that there is always still more to be consumed. For this reason, just as there is enjoyment and satisfaction from what has been consumed, so there is a desire for what is still to come. Another reason is that they are destroyed; hence the recollection of them remains and generates a repeated longing for those things. Spiritual things, on the other hand, are taken all at once, and they are not destroyed, nor do they run out; and consequently the fulness they produce remains forever: "They will neither hunger nor thirst" (Rv 7:16); "Your face will fill me with joy; the delights in your right hand (i.e., in spiritual goods) will last forever," as the Psalm (16:11) says.

916 Then (v 36), we see why Christ had to explain these things. For someone could say: We asked for bread; but you did not answer, "I will give it to you," or "I will not." Rather, you say, I am the bread of life; and so your answer does not seem to be appropriate. But our Lord shows that it is a good answer, saying, **I have told you that you have both seen me and do not believe.** This is the same as a person having bread right in front of him without his knowing it, and then being told: Look! The bread is right before you. And so Christ says: **I have told you (I am the bread of life) that you have both seen me and do not believe**, i.e., you want bread, and it is right before you; and yet you do not take it because you do not believe. In saying this he is censuring them for their unbelief: "They have seen and hated both me and my Father" (below 15:24).

917 Then (v 37), he shows how this bread is acquired. First, he mentions the way to acquire it; secondly, the end attained by those who come to him (v 37b); thirdly, he enlarges on this (v 38).

918 Concerning the first, we should note that the very fact that we believe is a gift of God to us: "You are saved by grace, through faith; and this is not due to yourself, for it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8); "It has been granted to you not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him" (Phil 1:29). Sometimes, God the Father is said to give those who believe to the Son, as here: **All that the Father gives me shall come to me.** At other times, the Son is said to give them to the Father, as in 1 Corinthians (15~24): "He will hand over the kingdom to God and the Father." We can see from this that just as the Father does not deprive himself of the kingdom in giving to the Son, neither does the Son in giving to the Father. The Father gives to the Son insofar as the Father makes a person adhere to his Word: "Through whom (that is, the Father) you have been called into the fellowship of his Son" (1 Cor 1:9). The Son, on the other hand, gives to the Father insofar as the Word makes the Father known: "I have made known your name to those you have given me" (below 17:6). Thus Christ says: **All that the Father gives me shall come to me**, i.e., those who believe in me, whom the Father makes adhere to me by his gift.

919 Perhaps some might say that it is not necessary for one to use God's gift: for many receive God's gift and do not use it. So how can he say: **All that the Father gives me shall come to me?** We must say to this that in this giving we have to include not only the habit, which is faith, but also the interior impulse to believe. So, everything which contributes to salvation is a gift of God.

920 There is another question. If everything which the Father gives to Christ comes to him, as he says, then only those come to God whom the Father gives him. Thus, those who do not come are not responsible, since they are not given to him. I answer that they are not responsible if they cannot come to the faith without the help of God. But those who do not come are responsible, because they create an obstacle to their own coming by turning away from salvation, the way to which is of itself open to all.

921 Then (v 37b), the end attained by those who come is mentioned. For some might say, "We will come to you, but you will not receive us." To exclude this he says, **the one who comes to me**, by steps of faith and by good works, **I will not cast out.** By this he lets us understand that he is already within, for one must be within before one can be sent out. Let us consider, therefore, what is interior, and how one is cast out from it.

We should point out that since all visible things are said to be exterior with respect to spiritual things, then the more spiritual something is the more interior it is. What is interior is twofold. The first is the most profound, and is the joy of eternal life. According to Augustine, this is a sweet and most interior retreat, without any weariness, without the bitterness of evil thoughts, and uninterrupted by temptations and sorrows. We read of this: "Share the joy of your Lord" (Mt 25:21); and, "You will hide them in the secret of your face," that is, in the full vision of your essence (Ps 30:2 1). From this interior no one is cast out: "He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of the living God; and he will no longer leave it" (Rv 3:12), because "the just will go to everlasting life," as we see from Matthew (25:46). The other interior is that of an upright conscience; and this is a spiritual joy. We read of this: "When I enter into my house I will enjoy repose" (Wis 8:16); and "The king has brought me into his storerooms" (Sg 1:3). It is from this interior, that some are cast out.

So, when our Lord says, **the one who comes to me I will not cast out**, we can understand this in two ways. In one way, those who come to him are those who have been given to him by the Father through eternal predestination. Of these he says: **the one who comes to me**, predestined by the Father, **I will not cast out**: "God has not rejected his people, the people he chose" (Rom 11:2). In a second way, those who do go out are not cast out by Christ, rather, they cast themselves out, because through their unbelief and sins they abandon the sanctuary of an upright conscience. Thus we read: **I will not cast out** such; but they do cast themselves out: "You are the burden, and I will cast you aside, says the Lord" (Jer 23:33). It was in this way that the man who came to the wedding feast without wedding clothes was cast out (Mt 22:13).

922 Next (v 3 8), he gives the reason for what he just said. First, he mentions his intention to accomplish the will of the Father; secondly, he states what the will of the Father is (v 39); and thirdly, he shows the final accomplishment of this will (v 40b).

923 Concerning the first, we should note that this passage can be read in two ways: either as Augustine does, or following the interpretation of Chrysostom. Augustine understands it this way: **the one who comes to me I will not cast out**; and this is because the one who comes to me imitates my humility. In Matthew (11:29), after our Lord said, "Come to me, all you who labor," he added, "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart." Now the true gentleness of the Son of God consists in the fact that he submitted his will to the will of the Father. Thus he says, **the one who comes to me I will not cast out, because I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me**. Since a soul abandons God because of its pride, it must return in humility, coming to Christ by imitating his humility; and this

humility of Christ was in not doing his own will, but the will of God the Father.

Here we should note that there were two wills in Christ. One pertains to his human nature, and this will is proper to him, both by nature and by the will of the Father. His other will pertains to his divine nature, and this will is the same as the will of the Father. Christ subordinated his own will, that is, his human will, to the divine will, because, wishing to accomplish the will of the Father, he was obedient to the Father's will: "My God, I desired to do your will" (Ps 39:9). We ask that this will be accomplished in our regard when we say, "Your will be done" (Mt 6:10). Thus, those who do the will of God, not their own will, are not cast out. The devil, who wanted to do his own will out of pride, was cast from heaven; and so too the first man was expelled from paradise.

Chrysostom explains the passage this way. The reason I do not cast out one who comes to me is because I have come to accomplish the will of the Father concerning the salvation of men. So, if I have become incarnate for the salvation of men, how can I cast them out? And this is what he says: I will not cast out one who comes, **because I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, my human will**, so as to obtain my own benefit, **but the will of him who sent me**, that is, the Father, "He desires the salvation of all men" (1 Tim 2:4). And therefore, so far as I am concerned, I do not cast out any person: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, now much more, having been reconciled, we will be saved by his life" (Rom 5:10).

924 Then (v 39), he shows what the Father wills; and next, why he wills it (v 40).

925 He says: I will not cast out those who come to me, because I have taken flesh in order to do the will of the Father: **Now it is the will of him who sent me, the Father**, that those who come to me **I will not cast out**; and so I will not cast them out. "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thes 4:3). Therefore he says that it is the will of the Father **that of all that he**, the Father, **has given me I should lose nothing**, i.e., that I should lose nothing until the time of the resurrection. At this time some will be lost, the wicked; but none of those given to Christ through eternal predestination will be among them: "The way of the wicked will perish" (Ps 1:7). Those, on the other hand, who are preserved until then, will not be lost.

Now when he says, **lose**, we should not understand this as implying that he needs such people or that he is damaged if they perish. Rather, he says this because he desires their salvation and what is good for them, which he regards as his own good.

926 What John later reports Christ as saying seems to conflict with this: "None of them," that is, of those you have given me, "have been lost except the son of perdition" (below 17:12). Thus, some of those given to Christ through eternal predestination are lost. Accordingly, what he says here, **that of all that he has given me I should lose nothing**, is not true. We must say to this that some are lost from among those given to Christ through a present justification; but none are lost from among those given to him through eternal predestination.

927 Now he gives the reason for the divine will (v 40). The reason why the Father wills that I lose nothing of all that he has given me is that the Father wills to bring men to life spiritually, because he is the fountain of life. And since the Father is eternal, he wills, absolutely speaking, that every one who comes to me should have eternal life. And this is what he says: **For this is the will of my Father, who sent me, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him, should have eternal life**. Note that he said above: "Whoever hears my voice and believes in him who sent me, possesses eternal life" (above 5:24), while here he says: **every one who sees the Son and believes in him**. We can understand from this that the Father and the Son have the same divine nature; and it is the vision of this, through its essence, that is our ultimate end and the object of our faith. When he says here, **sees the Son**, he is referring to the physical sight of Christ which leads to faith, and not to this vision through essence which faith precedes. Thus he expressly says, **every one who sees the Son and believes in him**: "Whoever believes in him ... will not encounter judgment, but has passed from death to life" (above 5:24); "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (below 20:3 1).

928 This will of the Father will also be accomplished. So he adds: **And I will raise him up on the last day**, for he wills that we have eternal life not just in our soul alone, but also in our body, as Christ did at his resurrection: "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to an everlasting life, and others to everlasting shame" (Dn 12:2); "Christ, having risen from the dead, will not die again" (Rom 6:9).

LECTURE5

41 The Jews therefore grumbled about him because he had said, "I am the living bread that has come down from heaven." 42 And they said: "Is he not the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? How then can he say that he has come down from

heaven?" 43 Jesus responded and said to them:

"Stop grumbling among yourselves.

44 No one can come to me

unless the Father, who sent me, draws him.

And I will raise him up on the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets;

'They shall all be taught by God.'

Every one who has heard the Father and has learned,
comes to me.

46 Not that any one has seen the Father,

except the one who is from God—

he has seen the Father."

929 Those opinions that conflict with the above teaching of Christ are now rejected. First, those of the people, who were discontented; secondly, those of the disciples, who were in a state of doubt (v 61). He does two things about the first. First, we see the people grumble about the origin of this spiritual food; secondly, we see Christ check the dispute which arose over the eating of this spiritual food (v 53). As to the first he does two things. First, he mentions the grumbling of the people; secondly, how it was checked (v 43). As to the first he does two things. First, he shows the occasion for this complaining; secondly, what those complaining said (v 42).

930 He continues that some of the people were grumbling over what Christ had said, that is, because Christ had said, **I am the living bread that has come down from heaven**, a spiritual bread they did not understand or desire. And so they grumbled because their minds were not fixed on spiritual things. They were following in this case the custom of their ancestors: "They grumbled in their tents" (Ps 105:25); "Do not grumble, as some of them did" (1 Cor 10:10). As Chrysostom says, they had not complained till now because they still hoped to obtain material food; but as soon as they lost that hope, they began to grumble, although they pretended that it was for a different reason. Yet they did not contradict him openly due to the respect they had for him arising from his previous miracle.

931 He says those who complained said: **Is he not the son of Joseph?** For since they were earthly minded, they only considered Christ's physical generation, which hindered them from recognizing his spiritual and eternal generation. And so we see them speaking only of earthly things, "He who is of earth is earthly and speaks of earthly things" (above 3:3 1), and not understanding what is spiritual. Thus they said: **How then can he say that he has come down from heaven?** They called him the son of Joseph as this was the general opinion, for

Joseph was his foster father: "the son of Joseph (as was supposed)" (Lk 3:23).

932 Next (v 43), the grumbling of the people is checked. First, Christ stops this complaining; secondly, he clears up their difficulty (v 47). As to the first he does two things. First, he checks their complaining, secondly, he tells why they were doing it (v 44).

933 Jesus noticed that they were grumbling and checked them, saying, **Stop grumbling among yourselves.** This was good advice, for those who complain show that their minds are not firmly fixed on God; and so we read in Wisdom (1:11): "Keep yourselves from grumbling, for it does no good."

934 The reason for their grumbling was their unbelief, and he shows this when he says, **No one can come to me** First, he shows that if one is to come to Christ, he has to be drawn by the Father. Secondly, he shows the way one is drawn (v 45). As to the first he does three things. First, he mentions that coming to Christ surpasses human ability; secondly, the divine help we receive for this; and thirdly, the end or fruit of this help.

That we should come to Christ through faith surpasses our human ability; thus he says, **No one can come to me.** Secondly, divine help is effective in helping us to this; thus he says, **unless the Father, who sent me, draws him.** The end or fruit of this help is the very best, so he adds, **And I will raise him up on the last day.**

935 He says first: It is not unexpected that you are grumbling, because my Father had not yet drawn you to me, for **No one can come to me**, by believing in me, **unless the Father, who sent me, draws him.**

There are three questions here. The first is about his saying: **unless the Father draws him.** For since we come to Christ by believing, then, as we said above, to come to Christ is to believe in him. But no one can believe unless he wills to. Therefore, since to be drawn implies some kind of compulsion, one who comes to Christ by being drawn is compelled.

I answer that what we read here about the Father drawing us does not imply coercion, because there are some ways of being drawn that do not involve compulsion. Consequently, the Father draws men to the Son in many ways, using the different ways in which we can be drawn without compulsion. One person may draw another by persuading him with a reason. The Father draws us to his Son in this way by showing us that he is his Son. He does this in two ways. First, by an interior revelation, as in: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and

blood has not revealed this to you (that is, that Christ is the Son of the living God), but it was done so by my Father" (Mt 16:17). Secondly, it can be done through miracles, which the Son has the power to do from the Father: "The very works which my Father has given me to perform ... they bear witness to me" (above 5:36).

Again, one person draws another by attracting or captivating him: "She captivated him with her flattery" (Prv 7:21). This is the way the Father draws those who are devoted to Jesus on account of the authority of the paternal greatness. For the Father, i.e., the paternal greatness, draws those who believe in Christ because they believe that he is the Son of God. Arius—who did not believe that Christ was the true Son of God, nor begotten of the substance of the Father—was not drawn in this way. Neither was Photinus—who dogmatized that Christ was a mere man. So, this is the way those who are captivated by his greatness are drawn by the Father. But they are also drawn by the Son, through a wonderful joy and love of the truth, which is the very Son of God himself. For if, as Augustine says, each of us is drawn by his own pleasure, how much more strongly ought we to be drawn to Christ if we find our pleasure in truth, happiness, justice, eternal life: all of which Christ is! Therefore, if we would be drawn by him, let us be drawn through love for the truth, according to: "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps 36:4). And so in the Song of Solomon, the bride says: "Draw me after you, and we will run to the fragrance of your perfume" (1:4).

An external revelation or an object are not the only things that draw us. There is also an interior impulse that incites and moves us to believe. And so the Father draws many to the Son by the impulse of a divine action, moving a person's heart from within to believe: "It is God who is working in us, both to will and to accomplish" (Phil 2:13); "I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with bands of love" (Hos 11:4); "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he wills" (Prv 21:1).

936 The second problem is this. We read that it is the Son who draws us to the Father: "No one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son wishes to reveal him" (Mt 11:26); "I have made your name known to those you have given me" (below 17:6). So how can it say here that it is the Father who draws us to the Son? This can be answered in two ways: for we can speak of Christ either as a man, or as God. As man, Christ is the way: "I am the way" (below 14:6); and as the Christ, he leads us to the Father, as a way or road leads to its end. The Father draws us to Christ as man insofar as he gives us his own power so that we may believe in Christ: "You are saved by grace, through faith; and this is not due to yourself, for it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). Insofar as he is Christ, he is the Word of God and manifests the Father. It is in this way that the Son

draws us to the Father. But the Father draws us to the Son insofar as he manifests the Son.

937 The third problem concerns his saying that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him. For according to this, if one does not come to Christ, it is not because of himself, but is due to the one who does not draw him. I answer and say that, in truth, no one can come unless drawn by the Father. For just as a heavy object by its nature cannot rise up, but has to be lifted by someone else, so the human heart, which tends of itself to lower things, cannot rise to what is above unless it is drawn or lifted. And if it does not rise up, this is not due to the failure of the one lifting it, who, so far as lies in him, fails no one; rather, it is due to an obstacle in the one who is not drawn or lifted up.

In this matter we can distinguish between those in the state of integral nature, and those in the state of fallen nature. In the state of integral nature, there was no obstacle to being drawn up, and thus all could share in it. But in the state of fallen nature, all are equally held back from this drawing by the obstacle of sin; and so, all need to be drawn. God, in so far as it depends on him, extends his hand to every one, to draw every one; and what is more, he not only draws those who receive him by the hand, but even converts those who are turned away from him, according to: "Convert us, O Lord, to yourself, and we will be converted" (Lam 5:21); and "You will turn, O God, and bring us to life," as one version of the Psalm (84:7) puts it. Therefore, since God is ready to give grace to all, and draw them to himself, it is not due to him if someone does not accept; rather, it is due to the person who does not accept.

938 A general reason can be given why God does not draw all who are turned away from him, but certain ones, even though all are equally turned away. The reason is so that the order of divine justice may appear and shine forth in those who are not drawn, while the immensity of the divine mercy may appear and shine in those who are drawn. But as to why in particular he draws this person and does not draw that person, there is no reason except the pleasure of the divine will. So Augustine says: "Whom he draws and whom he does not draw, why he draws one and does not draw another, do not desire to judge if you do not wish to err. But accept and understand: If you are not yet drawn, then pray that you may be drawn." We can illustrate this by an example. One can give as the reason why a builder puts some stones at the bottom, and others at the top and sides, that it is the arrangement of the house, whose completion requires this. But why he puts these particular stones here, and those over there, this depends on his mere will. Thus it is that the prime reason for the arrangement is referred to the will of the builder. So God, for the completion of the universe, draws certain ones in order that his mercy may appear in them; and others he does not draw in order that his justice may be shown in them. But that he draws

these and does not draw those, depends on the pleasure of his will. In the same way, the reason why in his Church he made some apostles, some confessors, and others martyrs, is for the beauty and completion of the Church. But why he made Peter an apostle, and Stephen a martyr, and Nicholas a confessor, the only reason is his will. We are now clear on the limitations of our human ability, and the assistance given to us by divine help.

939 He follows with the end and fruit of this help when he says, **And I will raise him up on the last day**, even as man; for we obtain the fruit of the resurrection through those things which Christ did in his flesh: "For as death came through a man, so the resurrection of the dead has come through a man" (1 Cor 15:21). So **I**, as man, **will raise him up**, not only to a natural life, but even too the life of glory; and this on the last day. For the Catholic Faith teaches that the world will be made new: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (Rv 2 1:1), and that among the changes accompanying this renewal we believe that the motion of the heavens will stop, and consequently, time. "And the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land, raised his hand to heaven" (Rv 10:5), and then it says that he swore that "time will be no more" (v 6). Since at the resurrection time will stop, so also will night and day, according to "There will be one day, known to the Lord, not day and night" (Zec 14:7). This is the reason he says, **And I will raise him up on the last day**.

940 As to the question why the motion of the heavens and time itself will continue until then, and not end before or after, we should note that whatever exists for something else is differently disposed according to the different states of that for which it exists. But all physical things have been made for man; consequently, they should be disposed according to the different states of man. So, because the state of incorruptibility will begin in men when they arise—according to "What is mortal will put on incorruption," as it says in 1 Corinthians (15:54)—the corruption of things will also stop then. Consequently, the motion of the heavens, which is the cause of the generation and corruption of material things, will stop. "Creation itself will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:21).

So, it is clear that the Father must draw us if we are to have faith.

941 Then (v 45), he considers the way we are drawn. First, he states the way; secondly, its effectiveness (v 45b); and thirdly, he excludes a certain way of being drawn (v 46).

942 The manner in which we are drawn is appropriate, for God draws us by revealing and teaching; and this is what he says: **It is written in the prophets:**

They shall all be taught by God. Bede says that this comes from Joel. But it does not seem to be there explicitly, although there is something like it in: "O children of Zion, rejoice and be joyful in the Lord your God, because he will give you a teacher of justice" (Jl 2:23). Again, according to Bede, he says, in the prophets, so that we might understand that the same meaning can be gathered from various statements of the prophets. But it is Isaiah who seems to state this more explicitly: "All your children will be taught by the Lord" (Is 54:13). We also read: "I will give you shepherds after my own heart, and they will feed you with knowledge and doctrine" (Jer 3:15).

943 **They shall all be taught by God**, can be understood in three ways. In one way, so that all stands for all the people in the world; in another way, so that it stands for all who are in the Church of Christ, and in a third way, so it means all who will be in the kingdom of heaven.

If we understand it in the first way, it does not seem to be true, for he immediately adds, **Every one who has heard the Father and has learned, comes to me.** Therefore, if every one in the world is taught [by God], then every one will come to Christ. But this is false, for not every one has faith. There are three answers to this. First, one could say, as Chrysostom does, that he is speaking of the majority: all, i.e., very many shall be taught, just as we find in Matthew: "Many will come from the East and the West" (Mt 8:11). Secondly, it could mean, all, so far as God is concerned, shall be taught, but if some are not taught, that is due to themselves. For the sun, on its part, shines on all, but some are unable to see it if they close their eyes, or are blind. From this point of view, the Apostle says: "He desires the salvation of all men, and that all come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). Thirdly, we could say, with Augustine, that we must make a restricted application, so that **They shall all be taught by God**, means that all who are taught, are taught by God. It is just as we might speak of a teacher of the liberal arts who is working in a city: he alone teaches all the boys of the city, because no one there is taught by anyone else. It is in this sense that it was said above: "He was the true light, which enlightens every man coming into this world" (Jn 1:9).

944 If we explain these words as referring to those who are gathered into the Church, it says: They shall all, all who are in the Church, be taught by God. For we read: "All your children will be taught by the Lord" (Is 54:13). This shows the sublimity of the Christian faith, which does not depend on human teachings, but on the teaching of God. For the teaching of the Old Testament was given through the prophets; but the teaching of the New Testament is given through the Son of God himself. "In many and various ways (i.e., in the Old Testament) God spoke to our fathers through the prophets; in these days he has spoken to us in his Son" (Heb 1:1); and again in (2:3): "It was first announced by the Lord, and was

confirined to us by those who heard him." Thus, all who are in the Church are taught, not by the apostles nor by the prophets, but by God himself. Further, according to Augustine, what we are taught by men is from God, who teaches from within: "You have one teacher, the Christ" (Mt 23:10). For understanding, which we especially need for such teaching, is from God.

945 If we explain these words as applying to those who are in the kingdom of heaven, then **They shall all be taught by God**, because they will see his essence without any intermediary: "We shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2).

946 This drawing by the Father is most effective, because, **Every one who has heard the Father and has learned, comes to me**. Here he mentions two things: first, what relates to a gift of God, when he says, **has heard**, that is, through God, who reveals; the other relates to a free judgment, when he says, **and has learned**, that is, by an assent. These two are necessary for every teaching of faith. **Every one who has heard the Father**, teaching and making known, **and has learned**, by giving assent, comes to me.

He comes in three ways: through a knowledge of the truth; through the affection of love; and through imitative action. And in each way it is necessary that one hear and learn. The one who comes through a knowledge of the truth must hear, when God speaks within: "I will hear what the Lord God will speak within me" (Ps 84:9); and he must learn, through affection, as was said. The one who comes through love and desire—"If any one thirsts, let him come to me and drink" (below 7:37)—must hear the word of the Father and grasp it, in order to learn and be moved in his affections. For that person learns the word who grasps it according to the meaning of the speaker. But the Word of the Father breathes forth love. Therefore, the one who grasps it with eager love, learns. "Wisdom goes into holy souls, and makes them prophets and friends of God" (Wis 7:27). One comes to Christ through imitative action, according to: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (Mt 11:28). And whoever learns even in this way comes to Christ: for as the conclusion is to things knowable, so is action to things performable. Now whoever learns perfectly in the sciences arrives at the conclusion; therefore, as regards things that are performable, whoever learns the words perfectly arrives at the right action: "The Lord has opened my ear; and I do not resist" (Is 50:5).

947 To correct the thought that some might have that every one will hear and learn from the Father through a vision, he adds: **Not that any one has seen the Father**, that is, a person living in this life does not see the Father in his essence, according to: "Man will not see me and live" (Ex 33:20), **except the one**, that is the Son, **who is from God—he has seen the Father**, through his essence. Or, **Not that any one has seen the Father**, with a comprehensive

vision: neither man nor angel has ever seen or can see in this way; **except the one who is from God**, i.e., the Son: "No one knows the Father except the Son" (Mt 11:27).

The reason for this, of course, is that all vision or knowledge comes about through a likeness: creatures have a knowledge of God according to the way they have a likeness to him. Thus the philosophers say that the intelligences know the First Cause according to this likeness which they have to it. Now every creature possesses some likeness to God, but it is infinitely distant from a likeness to his nature, and so no creature can know him perfectly and totally, as he is in his own nature. The Son, however, because he has received the entire nature of the Father perfectly, through an eternal generation, sees and comprehends totally.

948 Note how the words used are appropriate: for above, when he was speaking of the knowledge others have, he used the word "heard"; but now, in speaking of the Son's knowledge, he uses the word "seen," for knowledge which comes through seeing is direct and open, while that which comes through hearing comes through one who has seen. And so we have received the knowledge we have about the Father from the Son, who saw him. Thus, no one can know the Father except through Christ, who makes him known; and no one can come to the Son unless he has heard from the Father, who makes the Son known.

LECTURE 6

47 "Amen, amen, I say to you:
Whoever believes in me has eternal life.
48 I am the bread of life.
49 Your fathers ate manna in the desert,
and they are dead.
50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven,
so that if anyone eats of this [bread]
he will not die.
51 I am the living bread
that has come down from heaven.
52 If anyone eats of this bread,
he will live forever.
And the bread which I will give is my flesh,
for the life of the world."

949 After our Lord quieted the grumbling of the Jews, he now clears up the

doubt they had because of his saying, "I am the bread that has come down from heaven." he intends to show here that this is true. This is the way he reasons: The bread which gives life to the world descended from heaven; but I am the bread that gives life to the world: therefore, I am the bread which descended from heaven. He does three things concerning this. First, he presents the minor premise of his reasoning, that is, **I am the bread of life**. In the second place, he gives the major premise, that is, that the bread that descended from heaven ought to give life (v 49). Thirdly, we have the conclusion (v 51). As to the first he does two things. First, he states his point; secondly, he expresses it as practically proved (v 48).

950 His intention is to show that he is the bread of life. Bread is life-giving insofar as it is taken. Now one who believes in Christ takes him within himself, according to: "Christ dwells in our hearts through faith" (Eph 3:17). Therefore, if he who believes in Christ has life, it is clear that he is brought to life by eating this bread. Thus, this bread is the bread of life. And this is what he says: Amen, amen, I say to you: **Whoever believes in me**, with a faith made living by love, which not only perfects the intellect but the affections as well (for we do not tend to the things we believe in unless we love them), **has eternal life**.

Now Christ is within us in two ways: in our intellect through faith, so far as it is faith; and in our affections through love, which informs or gives life to our faith: "He who abides in love, abides in God, and God in him" (1 Jn 4:16). So he who believes in Christ so that he tends to him, possesses Christ in his affections and in his intellect. And if we add that Christ is eternal life, as stated in "that we may be in his true Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 Jn 5:20), and in "In him was life" (above 1:4), we can infer that whoever believes in Christ has eternal life. He has it, I say, in its cause and in hope, and he will have it at some time in reality.

951 Having stated his position, he expresses it as, **I am the bread of life**, which gives life, as clearly follows from the above. We read of this bread: "The bread of Asher will be rich, he will furnish choice morsels," of eternal life, "to kings" (Gn 49:20).

952 Then when he says, **Your fathers ate manna in the desert, and they are dead**, he gives the major premise, namely, the bread that descended from heaven ought to have the effect of giving life. First, he explains this; secondly, he draws his point (v 50).

953 He explains his meaning through a contrasting situation. It was said above (909) that Moses gave the Jews bread from heaven, in the sense of from the air.

But bread that does not come from the true heaven cannot give adequate life. Therefore, it is proper to the heavenly bread to give life. So, the bread given by Moses, in which you take pride, does not give life. And he proves this when he says, **Your fathers ate manna in the desert, and they are dead.**

In this statement he first reproaches them for their faults, when he says, **Your fathers**, whose sons you are, not only according to the flesh, but also by imitating their actions, because you are grumblers just as "they grumbled in their tents" (Ps 105:25); this was why he said to them: "Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers," as we read in Matthew (23:32). As Augustine says, this people is said to have offended God in no matter more than by grumbling against God.

Secondly, he mentions for how short a time this was done, saying, **in the desert**: for they were not given manna for a long period of time; and they had it only while in the desert, and not when they entered the promised land (Jos 5). But the other bread [from the true heaven] preserves and nourishes one forever. Thirdly, he states an inadequacy in that bread, that is, it did not preserve life without end; so he says, and they are dead. For we read in Joshua (c 5) that all who grumbled, except Joshua and Caleb, died in the desert. This was the reason for the second circumcision, as we see here, because all who had left Egypt died in the desert.

954 One might wonder what kind of death God is speaking of here. If he is speaking of physical death, there will be no difference between the bread the Jews had in the desert and our bread, which came down from heaven, because even Christians who share the latter bread die physically. But if he is speaking of spiritual death, it is clear that both then among the Jews and now among the Christians, some die spiritually and others do not. For Moses and many others who were pleasing to God did not die, while others did. Also, those who eat this bread [of the Christians] unworthily, die spiritually: "He who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment upon himself" (1 Cor 11:29).

We may answer this by saying that the food of the Jews has some features in common with our spiritual food. They are alike in the fact that each signifies the same thing: for both signify Christ. Thus they are called the same food: "All ate the same spiritual food" (1 Cor 10:3). He calls them the same because each is a symbol of the spiritual food. But they are different because one [the manna] was only a symbol; while the other [the bread of the Christians] contains that of which it is the symbol, that is, Christ himself. Thus we should say that each of these foods can be taken in two ways. First, as a sign only, i.e., so that each is taken as food only, and without understanding what is signified; and taken in this way, they do not take away either physical or spiritual death. Secondly, they may be taken in both ways, i.e., the visible food is taken in such a way that spiritual

food is understood and spiritually tasted, in order that it may satisfy spiritually. In this way, those who ate the manna spiritually did not die spiritually. But those who eat the Eucharist spiritually, both live spiritually now without sin, and will live physically forever. Thus, our food is greater than their food, because it contains in itself that of which it is the symbol.

955 Having presented the argument, he draws the conclusion: **This is the bread that comes, down from heaven.** He says, **This**, the Gloss says, to indicate himself. But our Lord does not understand it this way as it would be superfluous, since he immediately adds, **I am the living bread that has come down from heaven.** So we should say that our Lord wants to say that the bread which can do this, i.e., give life, comes from heaven; but I am that bread: thus, I am that bread that comes down from heaven. Now the reason why that bread which comes down from heaven gives a life which never ends is that all food nourishes according to the properties of its nature; but heavenly things are incorruptible: consequently, since this food is heavenly, it is not corrupted, and as long as it lasts, it gives life. So, he who eats it, will not die. Just as if there were some bodily food which never corrupted, then in nourishing it would always be life-giving. This bread was signified by the tree of life in the midst of Paradise, which somehow gave life without end: "He must not be allowed to stretch out his hand and take from the tree of life and eat, and live forever" (Gn 3:22). So if the effect of this bread is that anyone who eats it will not die, and I am such, then [anyone who eats of me will not die].

956 He does two things concerning this. First, he speaks of himself in general; secondly, in particular, **And the bread which I will give is my flesh.** In regard to the first, he does two things: first, he mentions his origin; secondly his power (v 52).

957 He said, **I am the living bread**; consequently, I can give life. Material bread does not give life forever, because it does not have life in itself; but it gives life by being changed and converted into nourishment by the energy of a living organism. **That has come down from heaven:** it was explained before [4671 how the Word came down. This refuted those heresies which taught that Christ was a mere man, because according to them, he would not have come down from heaven.

958 He has the power to give eternal life; thus he says, **If anyone eats of this bread**, i.e., spiritually, **he will live**, not only in the present through faith and justice, but **forever**. "Everyone who lives and believes in me, will never die" (below 11:26).

959 He then speaks of his body when he says, **And the bread which I will give is my flesh.** For he had said that he was the living bread; and so that we do not think that he is such so far as he is the Word or in his soul alone, he shows that even his flesh is life-giving, for it is an instrument of his divinity. Thus, since an instrument acts by virtue of the agent, then just as the divinity of Christ is life-giving, so too his flesh gives life (as Damascene says) because of the Word to which it is united. Thus Christ healed the sick by his touch. So what he said above, **I am the living bread**, pertained to the power of the Word; but what he is saying here pertains to the sharing in his body, that is, to the sacrament of the Eucharist.

960 We can consider four things about this sacrament: its species, the authority of the one who instituted it, the truth of this sacrament, and its usefulness.

As to the species of this sacrament: **This is the bread**; "Come, and eat my bread" (Prv 9:5). The reason for this is that this is the sacrament of the body of Christ; but the body of Christ is the Church, which arises out of many believers forming a bodily unity: "We are one body" (Rom 12:5). And so because bread is formed from many grains, it is a fitting species for this sacrament. Hence he says, **And the bread which I will give is my flesh.**

961 The author of this sacrament is Christ: for although the priest confers it, it is Christ himself who gives the power to this sacrament, because the priest consecrates in the person of Christ. Thus in the other sacraments the priest uses his own words or those of the Church, but in this sacrament he uses the words of Christ: because just as Christ gave his body to death by his own will, so it is by his own power that he gives himself as food: "Jesus took bread, he blessed it and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: 'Take and eat it, this is my body'" (Mt 26:26). Thus he says, **which I will give**; and he says, **will give**, because this sacrament had not yet been instituted.

962 The truth of this sacrament is indicated when he says, **is my flesh**. He does not say, "This signifies my flesh," but it **is my flesh**, for in reality that which is taken is truly the body of Christ: "Who will give us his flesh so that we may be satisfied?" as we read in Job (31:3 1).

Since the whole Christ is contained in this sacrament, why did he just say, this **is my flesh**? To answer this, we should note that in this mystical sacrament the whole Christ is really contained: but his body is there by virtue of the conversion; while his soul and divinity are present by natural concomitance. For if we were to suppose what is really impossible, that is, that the divinity of Christ is separated from his body, then his divinity would not be present in this sacrament. Similarly,

if someone had consecrated during the three days Christ was dead, his soul would not have been present there [in the sacrament], but his body would have been, as it was on the cross or in the tomb. Since this sacrament is the commemoration of our Lord's passion—according to "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:26)—and the passion of Christ depended on his weakness—according to "He was crucified through weakness" (2 Cor 13:4)—he rather says, **is my flesh**, to suggest the weakness through which he died, for "flesh" signifies weakness.

963 The usefulness of this sacrament is great and universal. It is great, indeed, because it produces spiritual life within us now, and will later produce eternal life, as was said. For as is clear from what was said, since this is the sacrament of our Lord's passion, it contains in itself the Christ who suffered. Thus, whatever is an effect of our Lord's passion is also an effect of this sacrament. For this sacrament is nothing other than the application of our Lord's passion to us. For it was not fitting for Christ to be always with us in his own presence; and so he wanted to make up for this absence through this sacrament. Hence it is clear that the destruction of death, which Christ accomplished by his death, and the restoration of life, which he accomplished by his resurrection, are effects of this sacrament.

964 The usefulness of this sacrament is universal because the life it gives is not only the life of one person, but, so far as concerns itself, the life of the entire world: and for this the death of Christ is fully sufficient. "He is the offering for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the entire world" (1 Jn 2:2).

We should note that this sacrament is different from the others: for the other sacraments have individual effects: as in baptism, only the one baptized receives grace. But in the immolation of this sacrament, the effect is universal: because it affects not just the priest, but also those for whom he prays, as well as the entire Church, of the living and of the dead. The reason for this is that it contains the universal cause of all the sacraments, Christ. Nevertheless, when a lay person receives this sacrament it does not benefit others *ex opere operato* [by its own power] considered as a receiving. However, due to the intention of the person who is acting and receiving, it can be communicated to all those to whom he directs his intention. It is clear from this that lay persons are mistaken when they receive the Eucharist for those in purgatory.

LECTURE 7

53 The Jews therefore disputed among themselves, saying: "How

can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 54 Jesus then said to them:

"Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his
blood,
you will not have life in you.
55 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal
life;
and I will raise him up on the last day.
56 For my flesh truly is food,
and my blood truly is drink.
57 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood
abides in me, and I in him.
58 Just as the living Father has sent me, and I live because of
the Father,
so whoever eats me,
he also will live because of me.
59 This is the bread that has come down from heaven.
Unlike your fathers who ate manna and are dead,
whoever eats this bread shall live forever."
60 These things he said teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

965 Above, our Lord checked the grumbling of the Jews over the origin of this spiritual food; here, he stops their dispute over the eating of this same food. First, we see their dispute; secondly, our Lord stops it (v 54); thirdly, the Evangelist mentions the place where all this happened (v 60).

906 As to the first, note that the Evangelist brings in the dispute among the Jews in the form of a conclusion, **saying, The Jews therefore disputed among themselves.** And this is fitting: for according to Augustine, our Lord had just spoken to them about the food of unity, which makes into one those who are nourished on it, according to, "Let those who are just feast and rejoice before God," and then it continues, according to one reading, "God makes those who agree to live in one house" (Ps 67:4). And so, because the Jews had not eaten the food of harmony, they argued with each other: "When you fast, you argue and fight" (Is 58:4). Further, their quarreling with others shows that they were carnal: "For while you are envious and quarreling, are you not carnal?" (1 Cor 3:3). Therefore, they understood these words of our Lord in a carnal way, i.e., as meaning that our Lord's flesh would be eaten as material food. Thus they say, **How can this man give us his flesh to eat?** As if to say: This is impossible. Here they were speaking against God just as their fathers did: "We are sick of this useless food" (Nm 21:5).

967 Our Lord stops this argument. First, he states the power that comes from taking this food; secondly, he amplifies on it (v 55). As to the first he does three things. First, he states why it is necessary to eat this flesh; secondly, its usefulness; and thirdly, he adds something about its truth (v 56).

968 Jesus said: **Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you.** As if to say: You think it is impossible and unbecoming to eat my flesh. But it is not only possible, but very necessary, so much so that **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have**, i.e., you will not be able to have, **life in you**, that is, spiritual life. For just as material food is so necessary for bodily life that without it you cannot exist—"They exchanged their precious belongings for food" (Lam 1:11); "Bread strengthens the heart of man" (Ps 103:15)—so spiritual food is necessary for the spiritual life to such an extent that without it the spiritual life cannot be sustained: "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which comes from the mouth of God" (Dt 8:3).

969 We should note that this statement can refer either to eating in a spiritual way or in a sacramental way. If we understand it as referring to a spiritual eating, it does not cause any difficulty. For that person eats the flesh of Christ and drinks his blood in a spiritual way who shares in the unity of the Church; and this is accomplished by the love of charity: "You are one body, in Christ" (Rom 12:5). Thus, one who does not eat in this way is outside the Church, and consequently, without the love of charity. Accordingly, such a one does not have life in himself: "He who does not love, remains in death" (1 Jn 3:14).

But if we refer this statement to eating in a sacramental way, a difficulty appears. For we read above: "Unless one is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (3:5). Now this statement was given in the same form as the present one: **Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man.** Therefore, since baptism is a necessary sacrament, it seems that the Eucharist is also. In fact, the Greeks think it is; and so they give the Eucharist to newly baptized infants. For this opinion they have in their favor the rite of Denis, who says that the reception of each sacrament should culminate in the sharing of the Eucharist, which is the culmination of all the sacraments. This is true in the case of adults, but it is not so for infants, because receiving the Eucharist should be done with reverence and devotion, and those who do not have the use of reason, as infants and the insane, cannot have this. Consequently, it should not be given to them at all.

We should say, therefore, that the sacrament of baptism is necessary for everyone, and it must be really received, because without it no one is born again

into life. And so it is necessary that it be received in reality, or by desire in the case of those who are prevented from the former. For if the contempt within a person excludes a baptism by water, then neither a baptism of desire nor of blood will benefit him for eternal life. However, the sacrament of the Eucharist is necessary for adults only, so that it may be received in reality, or by desire, according to the practices of the Church.

970 But even this causes difficulty: because by these words of Our Lord, it is necessary for salvation not only to eat his body, but also to drink his blood, especially since a repast of food is not complete without drink. Therefore, since it is the custom in certain Churches for only the priest to receive Christ's blood, while the rest receive only his body, they would seem to be acting against this.

I answer that it was the custom of the early Church for all to receive both the body and blood of Christ; and certain Churches have still retained this practice, where even those assisting at the altar always receive the body and blood. But in some Churches, due to the danger of spilling the blood, the custom is for it to be received only by the priest, while the rest receive Christ's body. Even so, this is not acting against our Lord's command, because whoever receives Christ's body receives his blood also, since the entire Christ is present under each species, even his body and blood. But under the species of bread, Christ's body is present in virtue of the conversion, and his blood is present by natural concomitance; while under the species of wine, his blood is present in virtue of the conversion, and his body by natural concomitance.

It is now clear why it is necessary to receive this spiritual food.

971 Next, the usefulness of this food is shown: first, for the spirit or soul; secondly, for the body, **and I will raise him up on the last day.**

972 There is great usefulness in eating this sacrament, for it gives eternal life; thus he says, **Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.** For this spiritual food is similar to material food in the fact that without it there can be no spiritual life, just as there cannot be bodily life without bodily food, as was said above. But this food has more than the other, because it produces in the one who receives it an unending life, which material food does not do: for not all who eat material food continue to live. For, as Augustine says, it can happen that many who do take it die because of old age or sickness, or some other reason. But one who takes this food and drink of the body and blood of our Lord **has eternal life.** For this reason it is compared to the tree of life: "She is the tree of life for those who take her" (Prv 3:18); and so it is called the bread of life: "He fed him with the bread of life and understanding" (Sir 15:3). Accordingly, he

says, **eternal life**, because one who eats this bread has within himself Christ, who is "the true God and eternal life," as John says (1 Jn 5:20).

Now one has eternal life who eats and drinks, as it is said, not only in a sacramental way, but also in a spiritual way. One eats and drinks sacramentally or in a sacramental way, if he receives the sacrament; and one eats and drinks spiritually or in a spiritual way, if he attains to the reality of the sacrament. This reality of the sacrament is twofold: one is contained and signified, and this is the whole Christ, who is contained under the species of bread and wine. The other reality is signified but not contained, and this is the mystical body of Christ, which is in the predestined, the called, and the justified. Thus, in reference to Christ as contained and signified, one eats his flesh and drinks his blood in a spiritual way if he is united to him through faith and love, so that one is transformed into him and becomes his member: for this food is not changed into the one who eats it, but it turns the one who takes it into itself, as we see in Augustine, when he says: "I am the food of the robust. Grow and you will eat me. Yet you will not change me into yourself, but you will be transformed into me." And so this is a food capable of making man divine and inebriating him with divinity. The same is true in reference to the mystical body of Christ, which is only signified [and not contained], if one shares in the unity of the Church. Therefore, one who eats in these ways **has eternal life**. That this is true of the first way, in reference to Christ, is clear enough. In the same way, in reference to the mystical body of Christ, one will necessarily have eternal life if he perseveres: for the unity of the Church is brought about by the Holy Spirit: "One body, one Spirit ... the pledge of our eternal inheritance" (Eph 4:4; 1:14). So this bread is very profitable, because it gives eternal life to the soul; but it is so also because it gives eternal life to the body.

973 And therefore he adds, **and I will raise him up on the last day**. For as was said, one who eats and drinks in a spiritual way shares in the Holy Spirit, through whom we are united to Christ by a union of faith and love, and through him we become members of the Church. But the Holy Spirit also merits the resurrection: "He who raised Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, will raise our mortal bodies because of his Spirit, who dwells in us" (Rom 8:11). And so our Lord says that he will raise up to glory whoever eats and drinks; to glory, and not to condemnation, as this would not be for their benefit. Such an effect is fittingly attributed to this sacrament of the Eucharist because, as Augustine says and as was said above, it is the Word who raises up souls, and it is the Word made flesh who gives life to bodies. Now in this sacrament the Word is present not only in his divinity, but also in the reality of his flesh; and so he is the cause of the resurrection not just of souls, but of bodies as well: "For as death came through a man, so the resurrection of the dead has come through a man" (1 Cor 15:21). It is now clear how profitable it is to take this sacrament.

974 We see its truth when he says, **For my flesh truly is food.** I some might think that what he was saying about his flesh and blood was just an enigma and a parable. So our Lord rejects this, and says, **my flesh truly is food.** As if to say: Do not think that I am speaking metaphorically, for my flesh is truly contained in this food of the faithful, and my blood is truly contained in this sacrament of the altar: "This is my body ... this is my blood of the new covenant," as we read in Matthew (26:26).

Chrysostom explains this statement in the following way. Food and drink are taken for man's refreshment. Now there are two parts in man: the chief part is the soul, and the second is the body. It is the soul which makes man to be man, and not the body; and so that truly is the food of man which is the food of the soul. And this is what our Lord says: **my flesh truly is food,** because it is the food of the soul, not just of the body. The same is true of the blood of Christ. "He has led me to the waters that refresh" (Ps 22:2). As if to say: This refreshment is especially for the soul.

Augustine explains these words this way. A thing is truly said to be such and such a thing if it produces the effect of that thing. Now the effect of food is to fill or satisfy. Therefore, that which truly produces fulness is truly food and drink. But this is produced by the flesh and blood of Christ, who leads us to the state of glory, where there is neither hunger nor thirst: "They will neither hunger nor thirst" (Rv 7:16). And so he says: **For my flesh truly is food, and my blood truly is drink.**

975 Now our Lord proves that this spiritual food has such power, that is, to give eternal life. And he reasons this way: Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood is united to me, but whoever is united to me has eternal life: therefore, whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. Here he does three things: first, he gives his major premise; secondly, the minor premise, which he proves (v 58); and thirdly, he draws his conclusion: **This is the bread that has come down from heaven.**

976 We should note, with respect to the first, that if his statement, **He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him,** is referred to his flesh and blood in a mystical way, there is no difficulty. For, as was said, that person eats in a spiritual way, in reference to what is signified only, who is incorporated into the mystical body through a union of faith and love. Through love, God is in man, and man is in God: "He who abides in love, abides in God, and God in him" (1 Jn 4:16). And this is what the Holy Spirit does; so it is also said, "We know that we abide in God and God in us, because he has given us his Spirit" (1 Jn 4:13).

If these words are referred to a sacramental reception, then whoever eats this flesh and drinks this blood abides in God. For, as Augustine says, there is one way of eating this flesh and drinking this blood such that he who eats and drinks abides in Christ and Christ in him. This is the way of those who eat the body of Christ and drink his blood not just sacramentally, but really. And there is another way by which those who eat do not abide in Christ nor Christ in them. This is the way of those who approach [the sacrament] with an insincere heart: for this sacrament has no effect in one who is insincere. There is insincerity when the interior state does not agree with what is outwardly signified. In the sacrament of the Eucharist, what is outwardly signified is that Christ is united to the one who receives it, and such a one to Christ. Thus, one who does not desire this union in his heart, or does not try to remove every obstacle to it, is insincere. Consequently, Christ does not abide in him nor he in Christ.

977 Now he presents his minor premise, that is, whoever is united to Christ has life. He mentions this to show the following similarity: the Son, because of the unity he has with the Father, receives life from the Father; therefore one who is united to Christ receives life from Christ. And this is what he says: **Just as the living Father has sent me, and I live because of the Father.** These words can be explained in two ways about Christ: either in reference to his human nature, or in reference to his divine nature.

If they are explained as referring to Christ the Son of God, then the “as” implies a similarity of Christ to creatures in some respect, though not in all respects, which is, that he exists from another. For to be from another is common to Christ the Son of God and to creatures. But they are unlike in another way: the Son has something proper to himself, because he is from the Father in such a way that he receives the entire fulness of the divine nature, so that whatever is natural to the Father is also natural to the Son. Creatures, on the other hand, receive a certain particular perfection and nature. “Just as the Father possesses life in himself, so he has given it to the Son to have life in himself” (above 5:26). He shows this because, when speaking of his procession from the Father, he does not say: “As I eat the Father and I live because of the Father,” as he said, when speaking of sharing in his body and blood, whoever eats me, he also will live because of me. This eating makes us better, for eating implies a certain sharing. Rather, Christ says that he lives because of the Father, not as eaten, but as generating, without detriment to his equality.

If we explain this statement as applying to Christ as man, then in some respect the “as” implies a similarity between Christ as man and us: that is, in the fact that as Christ the man receives spiritual life through union with God, so we too receive spiritual life in the communion or sharing in this Sacrament. Still, there is a

difference: for Christ as man received life through union with the Word, to whom he is united in person; while we are united to Christ through the sacrament of faith. And so he says two things: **sent me** and **Father**. If we refer these words to the Son of God, then he is saying, **I live because of the Father**, because the Father himself is living. But if they are referred to the Son of Man, then he is saying, **I live because of the Father**, because the Father has sent me, i.e., made me incarnate. For the sending of the Son is his incarnation: "God sent his Son, made from a woman" (Gal 4:4).

978 According to Hilary, this is a rejection of the error made by Arius. For if we live because of Christ, because we have something of his nature (as he says, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life"), then Christ too lives because of the Father, because he has in himself the nature of the Father (not a part of it, for it is simple and indivisible). Therefore, Christ has the entire nature of the Father. It is because of the Father, therefore, that the Son lives, because the Son's birth did not involve another and different nature [from that of the Father].

979 Next (v 59), he presents his two conclusions. For they were arguing about two things: the origin of this spiritual food and its power. The first conclusion is about its origin; the second is about its power: **whoever eats this bread shall live forever**.

980 With respect to the first, we should note that the Jews had been troubled because he had said, "I am the living bread that has come down from heaven" (v 51). Therefore, in opposition to them, he arrives at this same conclusion again, from his statement, "I live because of the Father," when he says, **This is the bread that has come down from heaven**. For to come down from heaven is to have an origin from heaven; but the Son has his origin from heaven, since he lives because of the Father: therefore, Christ is the one who has come down from heaven. And so he says, **This is the bread that has come down from heaven**, i.e., from the life of the Father. **Come down**, in relation to his divinity; or **come down**, even in his body, so far as the power that formed it, the Holy Spirit, was from heaven, a heavenly power. Thus, those who eat this bread do not die; as our fathers died, who ate the manna that was neither from heaven, nor was living bread, as was said above. How those who ate the manna died is clear from what has been mentioned before.

981 The second conclusion, concerning the power of this bread, is given when he says, **whoever eats this bread shall live forever**. This follows from his statement, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (v 57). For whoever eats this bread abides in me, and I in him. But I am

eternal life. Therefore, **whoever eats this bread**, as he ought, **shall live forever**.

982 Jesus said this in the synagogue, in which he was teaching at Capernaum. He used to teach in the temple and in the synagogues in order to attract many, so that at least some might benefit: "I have proclaimed your justice in the great assembly" (Ps 39:10).

LECTURE 8

61 On hearing this, many of his disciples said: "This is a hard saying! Who can accept it?" 62 But Jesus, knowing fully that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them:

"Does this scandalize you?

63 What if you should see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?

64 It is the spirit that gives life; flesh profits nothing.

The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

65 But there are some of you who do not believe."

For Jesus knew from the beginning those who would believe in him and who it was that would betray him. 66 And he said:

"This is why I said to you, that no one can come to me, unless it be given him by my Father."

67 From this time on, many of his disciples turned back, and no longer walked with him. 68 Jesus then said to the Twelve:

"Do you too wish to leave?"

69 Simon Peter replied: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 70 We have come to believe and to know that you are the Christ, the Son of God." 71 Jesus answered him:

"Did I not choose you Twelve? And one of you is a devil."

72 Now he was talking about Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, who would betray him, since he was one of the Twelve.

983 After our Lord put an end to the complaining and arguing among the Jews, he now removes the scandal given to his disciples. First, we see the scandal of those disciples who left him; secondly, the devotion of those who remained with

him (v 68). Concerning the first, he does three things: first, we see the scandal given to his disciples; secondly, the kindly way Christ takes it away (v 62); and thirdly, the stubbornness and unbelief of those who leave him (v 67).

984 We should note, with respect to the first, that there were many Jews who adhered to Christ, believed him and followed him. And although they had not left all things as the Twelve did, they were still all called his disciples. It is of these that he says, many, that is, many of the people who believed him, **on hearing this**, what he had said above, said, **This is a hard saying!** We read of these: "They believe for a while, and in the time of testing fall away" (Lk 8:13). He says, **many**, because "The number of fools is infinite" (Ecc 1:15); and, "Many are called but few are chosen" (Mt 20:16).

They said: **This is a hard saying!** Now that is said to be hard which is difficult to divide, and which offers resistance. Accordingly, a saying is hard either because it resists the intellect or because it resists the will, that is, when we cannot understand it with our mind, or when it does not please our will. And this saying was hard for them in both ways. It was hard for their intellects because it exceeded the weakness of their intellects: for since they were earthly minded, they were incapable of understanding what he said, namely, that he would give them his flesh to eat. And it was hard for their wills, because he said many things about the power of his divinity: and although they believed him as a prophet, they did not believe that he was God. Consequently, it seemed to them that he was making himself greater than he was. "His letters are strong" (2 Cor 10:10), "Wisdom is exceedingly unpleasant to the unlearned" (Sir , 21). And so it reads on. **Who can accept it?** They said this as an excuse: for since they had given themselves to him, they should have accepted what he said. But because he was not teaching them things that were pleasing to them, they were waiting for an occasion to leave him: "A fool does not accept words of wisdom unless You tell him what he desires" (Prv 18:2).

985 Next (v 62), we see the kindly way Christ dispelled their difficulty. First, he takes notice of it; secondly, he removes its cause (v 63); and thirdly, he mentions what the cause was (v 65).

986 He had noticed that they were scandalized because they had said, although privately, so he could not hear, **This is a hard saying!** But Christ, who in virtue of his divinity knew that they had said this, mentions it. And this is what he says: **But Jesus, knowing in himself**, what they said within themselves, that is, **that his disciples were grumbling about this**—"He did not need anyone to give him testimony about men. He was well aware of what was in man's heart" (above 2:25); "God searches into the hearts and loins of men" (Ps 7:10)—said to them, **Does this scandalize you?** As if to say: You should not be scandalized at this.

Or, it can be understood less strongly, as meaning: I know that you are scandalized at this. "He will be our sanctification," i.e., those who believe in Christ, but "a stumbling-stone to the two houses of Israel," to the grumbling disciples and the crowds (Is 8:4).

987 But since teachers should avoid creating difficulties for those who are listening to them, why did our Lord mention those things that would upset the people and have them leave? I answer that Christ had to mention such things because his teaching required it. For they had pleaded with him for material food, when he had come to strengthen their desire for spiritual food; and so he had to make known to them his teaching on spiritual food.

Nevertheless, their difficulty was not caused by any defect in what Christ was teaching, but by their own unbelief. For if they had not understood what our Lord was saying, because of their own earthly mindedness, they could have questioned him, as the apostles had done in similar circumstances. According to Augustine, however, our Lord purposely permitted this situation, to give teachers a reason for consolation and patience with those who belittle what they say, since even the disciples presumed to disparage what Christ said.

988 Then (v 63), he takes away the occasion of their scandal so far as concerns the person speaking and what he said, as Chrysostom says. First, he deals with the person who was speaking; secondly, with what he said (v 64).

989 The occasion for their scandal was when they heard our Lord say divine things about himself. And so, because they believed that he was the son of Joseph, they were upset at what he said about himself. God takes away this reason by showing them his divinity more openly, and says: You are upset over the things I have said about myself; **What if you should see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?** What would you say then? As if to say: You can never deny that I came down from heaven, or that I am the one who gives and teaches eternal life. He did the same thing before with Nathanael. When Nathanael said to him, "You are the King of Israel" our Lord, wanting to lead him to more perfect knowledge, answered him: "You will see greater things than this" (above 1:50). And here too, our Lord reveals to them something greater about himself which would happen in the future, saying, **What if you should see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?** Indeed, he did ascend into heaven in the sight of his disciples (Acts 1:9). If, therefore, he does ascend to where he was before, then he was in heaven before: "No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven" (above 3:13).

990 Let us note that Christ is one person: the person of the Son of God and the

person of the Son of Man being the same person. Still, because of his different natures, something belongs to Christ by reason of his human nature, that is, to ascend, which does not belong to him by reason of his divine nature, according to which he does not ascend, since he is eternally at the highest summit of things, that is, in the Father. It is according to his human nature that it belongs to him to ascend to **where he was before**, that is, to heaven, where he had not been in his human nature. (This is in opposition to the teaching of Valentinus, who claimed that Christ had assumed a heavenly body). Thus, Christ ascended in the sight of his apostles to where he was before according to his divinity; and he ascended, by his own power, according to his humanity: "I came forth from the Father, and I have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world and am going to the Father" (below 16:28).

991 Augustine understands this passage differently. He said that the disciples were scandalized when our Lord said that he would give him them his flesh to eat because they understood this in a material minded way, as if they were literally to eat this flesh, just like the flesh of an animal. Our Lord rejected this interpretation and said. **What if you should see the Son of Man ascending**, with his entire body, **to where he was before?** Would you say that I intended to give you my flesh to eat like you do the flesh of an animal?

992 Then (v 64), he settles the offense they took at what he said. And, as Chrysostom says, he distinguished two ways in which his words could be understood. And secondly, he showed which way was appropriate here (v 64b).

With respect to the first, we should note that Christ's words can be understood in two senses: in a spiritual way, and in a material way. Thus he says, **It is the spirit that gives life**, that is, if you understand these words according to the spirit, i.e., according to their spiritual meaning, they will give life. **Flesh profits nothing**, that is, if you understand them in a material way, they will be of no benefit to you, they will, rather, be harmful, for "If you live according to the flesh you will die" (Rom 8:13).

What our Lord said about eating his flesh is interpreted in a material way when it is understood in its superficial meaning, and as pertaining to the nature of flesh. And it was in this way that the Jews understood them. But our Lord said that he would give himself to them as spiritual food, not as though the true flesh of Christ is not present in this sacrament of the altar, but because it is eaten in a certain spiritual and divine way. Thus, the correct meaning of these words is spiritual, not material. So he says, **The words that I have spoken to you**,

about eating my flesh, **are spirit and life**, that is, they have a spiritual meaning, and understood in this way they give life. And it is not surprising that they have a spiritual meaning, because they are from the Holy Spirit: "It is the Spirit who tells mysteries" (1 Cor 14:2). And therefore, the mysteries of Christ give life: "I will never forget your justifications, because through them you have brought me to life" (Ps 118:93).

993 Augustine explains this passage in a different way, for he understands the statement, flesh profits nothing, as referring to the flesh of Christ. It is obvious that the flesh of Christ, as united to the Word and to the Spirit, does profit very much and in every way; otherwise, the Word would have been made flesh in vain, and the Father would have made him known in the flesh in vain, as we see from 1 Timothy (c 4). And so we should say that it is the flesh of Christ, considered in itself, that profits nothing and does not have any more beneficial effect than other flesh. For if his flesh is considered as separated from the divinity and the Holy Spirit, it does not have different power than other flesh. But if it is united to the Spirit and the divinity, it profits many, because it makes those who receive it abide in Christ, for man abides in God through the Spirit of love: "We know that we abide in God and God in us, because he has given us his Spirit" (1 Jn 4:13). And this is what our Lord says: the effect I promise you, that is, eternal life, should not be attributed to my flesh as such, because understood in this way, **flesh profits nothing**. But my flesh does offer eternal life as united to the Spirit and to the divinity. "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25). And so he adds, **The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life**, i.e., they must be understood of the Spirit united to my flesh; and so understood they are life, that is, the life of the soul. For as the body lives its bodily life through a bodily spirit, so the soul lives a spiritual life through the Holy Spirit: "Send forth your Spirit, and they will be created" (Ps 103:30).

994 Then (v 65), he indicates the reason why they were upset, that is, their unbelief. As if to say: the cause of your difficulty is not the hardness of what I have just said, but your own unbelief. And so first, he mentions their unbelief; secondly, he excludes an incorrect interpretation; and thirdly, he gives the reason for their unbelief.

995 Our Lord indicated their unbelief when he said, **But there are some of you who do not believe**. He did not say, "who do not understand." He did more than this, for he gave the reason why they did not understand: they did not understand because they did not believe. "If you do not believe, you will not understand," as we read in another version of Isaiah (7:9). He said, **some**, in order to exclude his disciples: "All do not have faith" (2 Thes 3:2); "All do not obey the Gospel" (Rom 10:16); "They did not believe what he said" (Ps 105:24).

996 The Evangelist then rejects an incorrect interpretation when he adds, For Jesus knew. As if to say: Jesus did not say, there are some of you who do not believe, because he just recently learned it, but because **Jesus knew from the beginning**, i.e., of the world, **those who would believe in him, and who it was that would betray him**. "All things are naked and open to his eyes" (Heb 4:13); "All things were known to the Lord God before they were created," as we read in Sirach (23:29).

997 Our Lord next mentioned the cause of their unbelief, which was the withdrawal of attracting grace. Thus he said: This is why I said to you. As if to say: Thus it was necessary to tell you what I told you before: **that no one can come to me**, i.e., through faith, **unless it be given him by my Father**. It follows from this, according to Augustine, that the act of believing itself is given to us by God. Why it is not given to everyone we discussed above, where our Lord used almost the same words (6:44). They are repeated here for two reasons. First, to show that Christ received them in the faith more for their advantage and benefit than for his own: "It has been granted to you to believe in him" (Phil 1:29). As if to say: It is good for you to believe. Thus Augustine says: "It is a great thing to believe: rejoice, because you have believed." Secondly, to show that Christ was not the son of Joseph, as they thought, but of God, for it is God the Father who draws men to the Son, as is clear from what has been said.

998 Then (v 67), we see the stubbornness of the disciples: for although our Lord had rebuked them and had taken away the cause of their difficulty so far as it concerned himself, they still would not believe. Thus he says, **From this time on, many of his disciples turned back**. He did not say, "they left," but that they **turned back**, i.e., from the faith, which they had in a virtuous way; and cut off from the body of Christ, they lost life, because perhaps they were not in the body, as Augustine says. There are some who turn back in an absolute way, that is, those who follow the devil, to whom our Lord said, "Go back, Satan" (Mt 4:10). We also read of certain women that "Some turned back after Satan" (1 Tim 5:15). But Peter did not turn back in this way; he rather turned after Christ: "Follow after me, Satan" (Mt 16:23). But the others followed after Satan.

Then follows: they **no longer walked with him**, that is, even though we are required to walk with Jesus: "I will show you man what is good," and then it continues on, "to walk attentively with your God" (Mi 6:8).

999 Then (v 68), our Lord examined those disciples who remained with him. First, we see this in the question he asked them; secondly, Peter's answer shows the devotion of those who remained; and thirdly, our Lord corrects Peter's answer (v 71).

1000 Our Lord examined the Twelve who remained as to their willingness to stay on; and so he said to the Twelve, that is, to the Apostles, Do you too wish to leave? He asked them this for two reasons. First, so that they would not take pride, thinking it was due to their own goodness, in the fact that they stayed on while the others left, and think that they were doing Christ a favor. And so he showed that he did not need them by holding them off, but still giving them strength: "If you live rightly, what do you give him, or what does he receive from your hand?" (Jb 35:7). Secondly, it sometimes happens that a person would really prefer to leave another but is kept from doing so by shame or embarrassment. Our Lord did not want them to stay with him because they were forced to do so out of embarrassment (because to serve unwillingly is not to serve at all), and so he took away any embarrassment in their leaving or necessity for their staying, and left it to their own judgment whether they wanted to stay with him or leave, because "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7).

1001 Then, from Peter's answer, we see the devotion of those who did not leave. For Peter—who loved the brethren, who guarded his friendships, and had it special affection for Christ—answered for the whole group, and said, **Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.** Here he did three things. First, he extolled the greatness of Christ; secondly, he praised his teaching; and thirdly, he professed his faith.

1002 He extolled the greatness of Christ when he said, **Lord, to whom shall we go?** As if to say: Are you telling us to leave you? Give us someone better to whom we can go. But then, "There is no one like you among the strong, O Lord" (Ex 15:11); "Who is like God" (Ps 88:7). And so you will not tell us to go. "Where can I go that is away from your spirit?" (Ps 138:7). Further, according to Chrysostom, Peter's words show great friendship; for to him, Christ was more worthy of honor than father or mother.

1003 He praised his teaching when he said, **You have the words of eternal life.** Now Moses, and the prophets, also spoke the words of God; but they rarely had the words of eternal life. But you are promising eternal life. What more can we ask? "Whoever believes in me has eternal life" (above 6:47); "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life" (above 3:36).

1004 He professed his faith when he said, **We have come to believe and to know that you are the Christ, the Son of God.** For in our faith there are two things above all that must be believed: the mystery of the Trinity, and the Incarnation. And these two Peter professed here. He professed the mystery of the Trinity when he said, you are the Son of God: for in calling Christ the Son of God he mentioned the person of the Father and that of the Son, along with the

person of the Holy Spirit, who is the love of the Father and of the Son, and the bond or nexus of both. He professed the mystery of the Incarnation when he said, you are the Christ: for in Greek, the word "Christ" means "anointed"; anointed, that is, with the invisible oil of the Holy Spirit. He was not anointed according to his divine nature, because one who is anointed by the Holy Spirit is made better by that anointing. But Christ, so far as he is God, is not made better. Thus, Christ was anointed as man.

He said, **We have come to believe and to know**, because believing comes before knowing. And therefore, if we wanted to know before believing, we would neither know nor be able to believe, as Augustine says, and as in that other version of Isaiah: "If you do not believe, you will not understand" (Is 7:9).

1005 Our Lord corrected Peter's answer when he said, **Did I not choose you Twelve? And one of you is a devil**. First, we have the Lord's reply: secondly, the Evangelist's explanation of it (v 72).

1006 Because Peter was great-hearted and included all in his answer, **We have come to believe and to know that you are the Christ, the Son of God**, it seemed that all of them would arrive at eternal life. And so our Lord excluded Judas from this community of believers. This trust was commendable in Peter, who did not suspect any evil in his companions; but we must also admire the wisdom of our Lord, who saw what was hidden. Thus he says, **Did I not choose you Twelve? And one of you is a devil**; not by nature, but by imitating the devil's malice: "Death came into the world -by the envy of the devil; his disciples imitate him" (Wis 2:24); "After the morsel, Satan entered into him" (below 13:27), because Judas became like him in malice.

1007 But if Christ chose Judas, who was later to become evil, it seems that our Lord made a mistake in choosing him. First, we might answer this as Chrysostom does, and say that this choice was not for predestination, but for some task, and in reference to a condition of present justice. Sometimes a person is chosen this way, not in relation to the future, but according to present realities; for being chosen in this way does not destroy one's free choice or the possibility of sinning: hence we read, "Let him who thinks that he stands, take heed so he will not fall" (1 Cor 10:12). And so our Lord did choose Judas, but not as evil at that time; and being so chosen did not take away his possibility of sinning. Secondly, we could answer with Augustine, who said that our Lord did choose Judas as evil. And although he knew that he was evil, because it is characteristic of a good person to use evil for good, God made good use of this evil in allowing himself to be

betrayed in order to redeem us. Or, we could say that the choice of the Twelve does not refer here to the persons, but rather to the number; as if to say: I have chosen Twelve. For this number is fittingly set apart for those who would preach the faith of the Holy Trinity to the four corners of the world. And indeed, this number did not pass away, because Matthias was substituted for the traitor. Or, according to Ambrose, Jesus chose Judas as evil so that when we read that our Lord and Master was betrayed by his disciple, we might be consoled if sometimes our friends betray us.

1008 We could ask here why the disciples did not say anything after our Lord said, **one of you is a devil**; for later on, when he says, "One of you will betray me" (below 13:21), they reply, "Is it I, Lord?" (Mt 26:22). I answer that the reason for this is that our Lord was speaking here in a general way when he said that one of them was a devil; for this could mean any kind of malice, and so they were not disturbed. But later on, when they heard of such a great crime, that their Master would be betrayed, they could not keep quiet. Or, we could say that when our Lord said this, each of them had confidence in his own virtue, and so none feared for himself; but after he said to Peter, "Follow after me, Satan" (Mt 16:23), they were afraid, and realized their own weakness. That is why they asked in that indecisive way, "Is it I, Lord?"

1009 Finally, what our Lord had just said privately is explained by the Evangelist when he says, **he was talking about Judas**, as events proved and which will be clear below (c 13).

7

LECTURE 1

1 After this, Jesus walked about in Galilee, for he did not want to walk in Judea because the Jews sought to kill him. 2 Now it was close to the Jewish feast of Tabernacles. 3 So his brethren said to him: "Leave this place, and go to Judea, so that your disciples also may see your works which you perform. 4 Surely, no one works in secret if he wants to be publicly renowned. If you do these things, reveal yourself to the world." 5 For not even his brethren believed in him. 6 Jesus therefore said to them:

"My time has not yet come,
but your time is always here.

7 The world cannot hate you, but me, it hates,
because I bear witness against it, for its works are evil.

8 You yourselves go up for this feast.

I, however, will not go up for this festival, because my time is not yet completed."

1010 After our Lord considered the spiritual life and its food, he now treats of his instruction or teaching, which, as mentioned above, is necessary for those who are spiritually reborn. First, he shows the origin of his teaching; secondly, its usefulness (c 8 and onwards). As to the first, he does three things. First, he mentions the place where he revealed the origin of his teaching; secondly, the occasion for revealing this (v 11); and thirdly, his actual statement is given (v 16). Three things are done about the first. First, we see Christ invited to go to the place where he revealed the origin of his teaching; secondly, we see our Lord refuse (v 6); and thirdly, how Jesus finally did go (v 9). As to the first, he does two things. First, he gives the reasons why they encouraged Christ to go to Judea; secondly, he adds their exhortation (v 3). They were influenced by three things to encourage Christ to go to Judea: first, by his lingering on [in Galilee] , secondly, by his intention [not to travel in Judea] and thirdly, by the appropriateness of the time.

1011 They were influenced by Christ's lingering on in Galilee, which showed that

he wanted to stay there. Thus he says, **After this**, after teaching in Capernatim, **Jesus walked about in Galilee**, i.e., he set out from Capernaum, a city of Galilee, with the intention to journey throughout this region. Our Lord lingered on so often in Galilee to show us that we should pass from vices to virtues: "So you, son of man, prepare your belongings for exile, and go during the day in their sight" (Ez 12:13).

1012 Then they were influenced by Christ's intention, which he perhaps told them; hence he says, **for he did not want to walk in Judea**, the reason being, **because the Jews sought to kill him**. "The Jews tried all the harder to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath rest, but even called God his own Father, making himself equal to God" (above 5:18).

But could not Christ still have gone among the Jews without being killed by them, as he did after (c 8)? Three answers are given to this question. The first is given by Augustine, who says that Christ did this because the time would come when some Christians would hide from those who were persecuting them. And so they would not be criticized for this, our Lord wanted to console us by setting a precedent himself in this matter. He also taught this in word, saying: "If they persecute you in one town, flee to another" (Mt 10:23). Another answer is that Christ was both God and man. By reason of his divinity, he could prevent his being injured by those persecuting him. Yet, he did not want to do this all the time, for while this would have shown his divinity, it might have cast doubt on his humanity. Therefore, he showed his humanity by sometimes fleeing, as man, those who were persecuting him, to silence all those who would say that he was not a true man. And he showed his divinity by sometimes walking among them unharmed, thus refuting all those who say he was only a man. Thus, Chrysostom has another text, which reads: "He could not, even if he wanted to, walk about Judea." This is expressed in our human way, and is the same as saying: Due to the danger of treachery, a person cannot go anywhere he might wish. The third answer is that it was not yet the time for Christ's passion. The time would come when Christ would suffer, at the feast of the Passover, when the lamb was sacrificed, so that victim would succeed victim: "Jesus knew that his time had come to leave this world for the Father" (below 13:1).

1013 They were also influenced by the suitability of the time, for it was a time for going to Jerusalem. **Now it was close to the Jewish feast of Tabernacles** (*scenopegia*). *Scenopegia* is a Greek word, composed of *scenos*, which means "shade," or "tent," and *phagim*, which means "to eat." As if to say: It was the time in which they used to eat in their tents. For our Lord (Lv 23:41) had ordered the children of Israel to stay in their tents for seven days during the seventh month, as a reminder of the forty years they had lived in tents in the desert. This was the feast the Jews were then celebrating. The Evangelist

mentions this in order to show that some time had already passed since the previous teaching about spiritual food. For it was near the Passover when our Lord performed the miracle of the loaves, and this feast of Tabernacles is much later. The Evangelist does not tell us what our Lord did in the intervening five months. We can see from this that although Jesus was always performing miracles, as the last chapter says, the Evangelist was mainly concerned with recording those matters over which the Jews argued and with which they disagreed.

1014 Then (v 3), our Lord is urged on by his brethren. First, we are given their advice; secondly, the reason for it (v 3b); and thirdly, the Evangelist mentions the cause of this reason (v 5).

1015 As to the first, the ones who urge Christ are mentioned; hence he says, **So his brethren said to him**. These were not brothers of the flesh or of the womb, as the blasphemous opinion of Elvidius would have it. It is, indeed, offensive to the Catholic faith that the most holy virginal womb, which bore him who was God and man, should later bear another mortal man. Thus, they were his brothers or brethren in the sense of relatives, because they were related by blood to the Blessed Virgin Mary. For it is the custom in Scripture to call relatives "brothers," as in Genesis (13:8): "Let us not quarrel, for we are brothers," although Lot was the nephew of Abraham. And, as Augustine says, just as in the tomb in which our Lord's body had been placed no other body was placed either before or after, so the womb of Mary conceived no other mortal person either before or after Christ. Although some of the relatives of the Blessed Virgin were apostles, such as the sons of Zebedee, and James of Alphaeus, and some others, we should not think that these were among those who were urging Christ; this was done by other relatives who did not love him.

Secondly, we see their advice when they say: **Leave this place**, that is, Galilee, **and go to Judea**, where you will find Jerusalem, a sacred place, well-suited to teachers. "Seer, go, flee to the land of Ridah. There eat your bread and there prophesy" (Am 7:12).

1016 They give their reason when they say: **so that your disciples also may see your works which you perform**. Here they show, first, that they are hungry for an empty glory; secondly, that they are suspicious; and thirdly, do not believe [in our Lord] .

They show that they are hungry for all empty glory when they say, **so that Your disciples also may see your works which you perform**. For they allowed something human to Christ and wanted to share the glory of the human honor

that the people would show him. And so, they urged him to perform his works in public: for it is a characteristic of one who is seeking human glory to want publicly known whatever of his own or of his associates can bring glory. "They like to pray at street comers, so people can see them" (Mt 6:5). We read of such people: "For they loved the glory of men, more than the glory of God" (below 12:43).

They reveal that they themselves are suspicious, and first of all remark on Christ's fear, saying: **Surely, no one works in secret.** As if to say: You say that you are performing miracles. But you are doing them secretly because of fear; otherwise you would go to Jerusalem and do them before the people. Nevertheless, our Lord says below: "I have said nothing secretly" (below 18:20).

Secondly, they refer to his love of glory, saying: **if he wants to be publicly renowned.** As if to say: You want glory because of what you are doing, yet you are hiding because you are afraid. Now this attitude is characteristic of those who are evil: to think that other people are experiencing the same emotions as they are. Notice the disrespect with which the prudence of the flesh reproached the Word made flesh. Job says against them: "You reproach him who is not like you, and say what you should not" (Jb 4:3).

They show they do not believe when they say: **If you do these things, reveal yourself to the world,** doubting whether he did perform miracles. "He who does not believe is unfaithful" (Is 21:2).

1017 The Evangelist tells why they said this when he says, **For not even his brethren believed in him.** For sometimes blood relatives are very hostile to one of their own, and are jealous of his spiritual goods. They may even despise him. Thus Augustine says: "They could have Christ as a relative, but in that very closeness they refused to believe in him." "A man's enemies are in his own house" (Mi 7:6); "He has put my brethren far from me, and my acquaintances, like strangers, have gone from me. My relatives have left me, and those who knew me have forgotten me" (Jb 19:13).

1018 Then (v 6), Christ's answer is given. First, he mentions that the time was not appropriate for going to Jerusalem; secondly, the reason for this (v 7); and thirdly, we see Christ deciding not to go (v 8).

1019 We should note that all of the following text is explained differently by Augustine and by Chrysostom. Augustine says that the brethren of our Lord were urging him to a human glory. Now there is a time, in the future, when the saints do acquire glory, a glory they obtain by their Sufferings and troubles. "He has

tested them like gold in a furnace, and he accepted them as the victim of a holocaust. At the time of their visitation they will shine" (Wis 3:6). And there is a time, the present, when the worldly acquire their glory. "Let not the flowers of the time pass us by; let us crown ourselves with roses before they wither" (Wis 2:7). Our Lord, therefore, wanted to show that he was not looking for the glory of this present time, but that he wanted to attain to the height of heavenly glory through his passion and humiliation. "It was necessary for Christ to suffer, and so enter into his glory" (Lk 24:26). So Jesus says to them, i.e., his brethren: My time, i.e., the time of my glory, **has not yet come**, because my sorrow must be turned into joy: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, which will be revealed in us" (Rom 8:18); **but your time**, i.e., the time of the glory of this world, **is always here**.

1020 He gives the reason why these times are different when he says, **The world cannot hate you, but me, it hates**. The reason why the time for the glory of the worldly is here is that they love the same things the world loves, and they agree with the world. But the time for the glory of the saints, who are looking for a spiritual glory, is not here, because they want what is displeasing to the world, that is, poverty, afflictions, doing without food, and things like that. They even disparage what the world loves; in fact, they despise the world: "The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal 6:14). And so he says, **The world cannot hate you**. As if to say: Thus, the time of your glory is here, because the world does not hate you, who are in agreement with it; and every animal loves its like. **But me, it hates**, and so my time is not always here. And the reason it hates me is **because I bear witness against it**, that is, the world, **for its works are evil**; that is, I do not hesitate to reprimand those who are worldly, even though I know that they will hate me for it and threaten me with death. "They," that is, those who love evil, "hate the one who rebukes at the city gate" (Am 5:10); "Do not rebuke one who mocks, lest he hate you" (Prv 9:8).

1021 But cannot a person of the world be hated by the world, .e., by another person of the world? I answer that, in a particular case, one worldly person can hate another insofar as the latter has what the first wants, or prevents him from obtaining what relates to the glory of this world. But precisely insofar as a person is of the world, the world does not hate him. The saints, however, are universally hated by the world because they are opposed to it. And if anyone of the world does love them, it is not because he is of the world, but because of something spiritual in him.

1022 Our Lord refuses to go when he says, **You yourselves go up for this feast. I, however, will not go up for this festival**. For just as there are two kinds of glory, so there are two different feasts. Worldly people have temporal feasts, that is, their own enjoyments and banquets and such exterior pleasures.

"The Lord called for weeping and mourning ... and look at the rejoicing and gladness" (Is 22:12); "I hate your feasts" (Is 1:14). But the saints have their own spiritual feasts, which consist in the joys of the spirit: "Look upon Zion, the city of your feasts" (Is 33:20). So he says: You yourselves, who are looking for the glory of this world, **go up for this feast**, i.e., to the feasts of temporal pleasure; **I, however, will not go up for this festival**, for I will go to the feast of an eternal celebration. I am not going up now **because my time**, that is, the time of my true glory, which will be a joy that lasts forever, an eternity without fatigue, and a brightness without shadow, **is not yet completed**.

1023 Chrysostom keeps the same division of the text, but explains it this way. He says that these brethren of our Lord joined with the Jews in plotting the death of Christ. And so they urged Christ to go to the feast, intending to betray him and hand him over to the Jews. That is why he says: **My time**, that is, the time for my cross and death, **has not yet come**, to go to Judea and be killed. **But your time is always here**, because you can associate with them without danger. And this is because they cannot hate you: you who love and envy the same things they do. **But me, it hates, because I bear witness against it, for its works are evil**. This shows that the Jews hate me, not because I broke the sabbath, but because I denounced them in public. **You yourselves go up for this feast**, that is, for its beginning (for it lasted seven days, as was said), **I, however, will not go up for this festival**, that is, with you, and when it first begins: **because my time is not yet completed**, when I am to suffer, for he was to be crucified at a future Passover. Accordingly, he did not go with them then in order to remain out of sight, and so forth.

LECTURE 2

9 When he had said this, he remained in Galilee. 10 However, after his brethren had gone up, he himself went up for the feast, not publicly, but as it were in secret. 11 The Jews looked for him at the feast, and they asked: "Where is he?" 12 There was much whispering among the people concerning him, for some were saying that he was a good man, while others said, "On the contrary, he leads people astray." 13 Nevertheless, no one spoke openly about him for fear of the Jews. 14 Now when the festival was half over, Jesus went into the temple, and he taught. 15 The Jews were amazed, saying, "How did this man get his learning, since he never studied?" 16 Jesus answered and said:

"My doctrine is not mine, but his who sent me.

17 If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether this doctrine is from God, or whether I am speaking on my own.

18 Whoever speaks on his own [authority] seeks his own glory.

But the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is truthful, and there is no injustice in him.

19 Did not Moses give you the law?

And yet none of you obey the law.

20 Why do you want to kill me?"

The crowd replied and said: "You have a demon within you! Who wants to kill you?" 21 Jesus answered and said to them:

"I performed one work, and you are all amazed.

22 Therefore, Moses gave you circumcision, (not that it originated with Moses, but with the patriarchs) and you circumcise on the sabbath day.

23 If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath day, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you indignant with me because I healed a whole man on the sabbath?

24 Judge not by the appearances, but with a just judgment."

1024 After the Evangelist mentioned how our Lord's relatives urged him to go to Judea, and what Christ replied to them, he then tells us of his journey. First, of his delay in going into Judea; secondly, of the order of the events; and thirdly, the way Christ went up.

1025 He mentions our Lord's delay in going when he says, **When he had said this**, in answer to his relatives, **he remained in Galilee**, and did not go to the feast with them. He did this to keep to his word: "I, however, will not go up for this festival." As we read in Numbers (23:19): "God is not like man, a liar."

1026 He gives the order of events when he says, **However, after his brethren**, that is, his relatives, **had gone up, he himself went up for the feast**. This seems to conflict with what he had said before: "I will not go up", for the Apostle says, "Jesus Christ, whom we preached among you ... was not 'Yes' and 'No,' but only 'Yes.'" (2 Cor 1:19).

I answer, first, that the festival of Tabernacles lasted for seven days, as was mentioned. Now our Lord first stated, "I, however, will not go up for this festival," that is, for its beginning. When it says here that **he himself went up for the feast**, we should understand this to refer to the middle of the feast. This is why

we read a little further on: "Now, when the festival was half over" (v 14). So it is clear that Christ was not breaking his word. Secondly, as Augustine says, his relatives wanted him to go to Jerusalem to try for a temporal glory. So he said to them: "I, however, will not go up for this festival," for the purpose you want me to. But he did go to the festival to teach the people and to tell them about an eternal glory. Thirdly, as Chrysostom says, our Lord said, "I, however, will not go up for this festival," to suffer and die, as they wished; but he did go, not in order to suffer, but to teach others.

1027 The way he went was not **publicly, but as it were in secret**. There are three reasons for this. The first, given by Chrysostom, is so that he would not call more attention to his divinity, and so perhaps make his incarnation less certain, as was said above; and so that those who are virtuous would not be ashamed to hide from those who are persecuting them when they cannot openly restrain them. Thus he says, **in secret**, to show that this was done according to plan: "Truly, you are a hidden God" (Is 45:15). Augustine gives us another reason: to teach us that Christ was hidden in the figures of the Old Testament: "I will wait for the Lord, who has hidden his face (i.e., clear knowledge) from the house of Jacob" (Is 8:17); so, "Even to this day ... a veil is over their hearts" (2 Cor 3:15). Thus everything that was said to this ancient people was a shadow of the good things to come, as we see from Hebrews (10:1). So our Lord went up in secret to show that even this feast was a figure. *Scenopegia*, as we saw, was the feast of Tabernacles; and the one who celebrates this feast is the one who understands that he is a pilgrim in this world. Another reason why our Lord went up in secret was to teach us that we should conceal the good things we do, not looking for human approval or desiring the applause of the crowd: "Take care not to perform your good actions in the sight of men, in order to be seen by them" (Mt 6:1).

1028 Then (v 11), he mentions the opportunity Christ had to show the origin of his spiritual teaching. He mentions two such opportunities: one was due to the disagreement among the people; the other to their amazement (v 15). The people disagreed in what they thought of Christ. He does three things concerning this. First, he shows what they had in common; secondly, how they differed (v 12); and thirdly, whose opinion prevailed (v 13).

1029 What they had in common was that they **looked for him at the feast, and they asked: Where is he?** It is obvious that they did not even want to mention his name because of their hatred and hostility: "They hated him and could not speak civilly to him" (Gn 37:4).

1030 They differed, however, because some looked for him because they wished

to learn: "Seek him, and your soul will live" (Ps 68:33); others were looking for him in order to harm him: as in the Psalm (39:15): "They seek my soul to carry it away." **And so There was much whispering among the people concerning him**, because of their disagreements. And although "whispering" (*murmur*) is neuter in gender, Jerome makes it masculine (*murmur multus*) because he was following the custom of the older grammarians, or else to show that divine Scripture is not subject to the rules of Priscian.

There was disagreement: for some of the people, that is, those who were right in heart, were saying, of Christ, **that he was a good man**. "How good God is to Israel, to those whose heart is right" (Ps 72:1); "The Lord is good to those who hope in him, to the one who seeks him" (Lam 3:25). **While others**, that is, those who were badly disposed, said: On the contrary, i.e., he is not a good man. We can see from this that it was the people who thought that he was a good person, while he was considered evil by the chief priests; so they say, he leads people astray: "We found this man leading our people astray" (Lk 23:2); "We have remembered that that seducer said ..." (Mt 27:63).

1031 Here we should note that to seduce is to lead away. Now a person can be led away either from what is true or from what is false. And in either way a person can be called a seducer: either because he leads one away from the truth, and in this sense it does not apply to Christ, because he is the truth (below c 8); or because he leads one away from what is false, and in this sense Christ is called a seducer: "You seduced me, O Lord, and I was seduced. You were stronger than I, and you have won" (Jer 20:7). Would that all of us were called and were seducers in this sense, as Augustine says. But we call a person a seducer primarily because he leads others away from the truth and deceives them: because a person is said to be led away if he is drawn from the common way. But the common way is the way of truth; heresies, on the other hand, and the way of the wicked, are detours.

1032 It was the opinion of the evil, that is, of the chief priests, that finally won out. Thus he continues, **Nevertheless, no one spoke openly about him**. This was because the people were held back by their fear of the chief priests, for as stated below (9:22): "If any one should profess him to be the Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue." This reveals the wickedness with which the leaders plotted against Christ; and it shows that those who were subject to them, i.e., the people, were not free to say what they thought.

1033 Next (v 15), we see the second opportunity Christ had to present his teaching, that is, the amazement of the people. First, we see the object of their amazement; secondly, their amazement itself, and thirdly, the reason why they were amazed.

1034 The object of their amazement is the doctrine or teaching of Christ. Both the time and the place of this teaching are given. The time is mentioned when he says, **Now when the festival was half over**, that is, when as many days were left of the feast as had passed. Thus, since the feast lasted some seven days, this took place on the fourth day. As we said, when Christ hid himself, it was a sign of his humanity, and an example of virtue for us. But when he did come before them, and they could not suppress him, this showed his divinity. Further, our Lord went when the feast was half over, because at the beginning everyone would be occupied with matters relating to the feast: the good, with the worship of God, and others with trivialities and financial profit; but when it was half over, and such matters had been settled, the people would be better prepared to receive his teaching. Thus our Lord did not go to the first several days of the feast so that he would find them more attentive and better prepared for his teaching. Similarly, Christ's going to the feast at this time paralleled the arrangement of his teaching: for Christ came to teach us about the kingdom of God, not at the beginning of the world, nor at its ending, but during the intervening time. "You will make it known in the intervening years" (Hb 3:2).

The place where our Lord taught is mentioned when he says, **into the temple**. He taught there for two reasons. First, to show that he was teaching the truth, which they could not deprecate, and which was necessary for all: "I have said nothing secretly" (below 18:20). Secondly, because the temple, since it was a sacred place, was appropriate for the very holy teaching of Christ: "Come! Let us go up the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his steps," as we read in Isaiah (2:3).

The Evangelist does not mention what Christ taught, for, as was said, the Evangelists do not report everything our Lord did and said, but those which excited the people or produced some controversy. And so here he mentions the excitement his teaching produced in the people: that is, that those who had said before, "He leads people astray," were now amazed at his teaching.

1035 He mentions this amazement when he says, **The Jews were amazed**. And this is not surprising, for "Your testimony is wonderful" (Ps 118:129). For the words of Christ are the words of divine wisdom.

He adds the reason why they were amazed when he says, **How did this man get his learning, since he never studied?** For they knew that Jesus was the son of a poor woman and he was considered the son of a carpenter; as such, he would be working for a living and devoting his time, not to study, but to physical work, according to "I am poor, and have labored since my youth" (Ps 87:16). And

so when they hear him teach and debate, they are amazed, and say, **How did this man get his learning, since he never studied?** Much the same is said in Matthew (13:54): "Where did he acquire this wisdom, and these great works? Isn't he the son of the carpenter?"

1036 Having been told of the place and opportunity which Christ had to reveal the origin of his spiritual teaching, we now see the origin of this teaching. First, he shows them that God is the source of this spiritual teaching; secondly, he invites them to accept it (v 37). As to the first, he does two things. First, he shows the origin of this teaching; secondly, the origin of the one teaching it (v 25). He does two things about the first. First, he shows the origin of this teaching; secondly, he answers an objection (v 19). In regard to the first he does two things. First, he shows the origin of this teaching; secondly, he proves that it comes from God (v 17).

1037 He says, **Jesus answered and said.** As if to say: You are wondering where I gained my knowledge; but **I say, My doctrine is not mine.** If he had said: "The doctrine that I am presenting to you is not mine," there would be no problem. But he says: **My doctrine is not mine;** and this seems to be a contradiction. However, this can be explained, for this statement can be understood in several ways. Our Lord's doctrine can in some sense be called his own, and in some sense not his own. First, we can understand Christ as the Son of God. Then, since the doctrine of anyone is nothing else than his word, and the Son of God is the Word of God, it follows that the doctrine of the Father is the Son himself. But this same Word belongs to himself through an identity of substance. "What does belong to you, if not you yourself?" However, he does not belong to himself through his origin. As Augustine says: "If you do not belong to yourself (because you are from another), what does?" This seems to be the meaning, expressed in summary fashion, of: **My doctrine is not mine.** As if to say: I am not of myself'. This refutes the Sabellian heresy, which dared to say that the Son is the Father.

Or, we could understand it as meaning that **My doctrine,** which I proclaim with created words, **is not mine, but his who sent me,** i.e., it is the Father's; that is, my doctrine is not mine as from myself, but it is from the Father: because the Son has even his knowledge from the Father through an eternal generation. "All things have been given to me by my Father" (Mt 11:27).

Secondly, we can understand Christ as the Son of Man. Then he is saying: **My doctrine,** which I have in my created soul, and which my lips proclaim, **is not mine,** i.e, it is not mine as from myself, but from God: because every truth, by whomever spoken, is from the Holy Spirit.

Thus, as Augustine says in *The Trinity* (Bk 1), our Lord called this doctrine his own from one point of view, and not his own from another point of view. According to his form of God, it was his own; but according to his form of a servant, it was not his own. This is an example for us, that we should realize that all our knowledge is from God, and thank him for it: "What do you have which you have not been given? And if you have been given it, why do you glory as if you have not been given it?" (1 Cor 4:7).

1038 Then (v 17), he proves that his doctrine is from God. And he does this in two ways: first, from the judgment of those who correctly understand such matters; and secondly, from his own intention (v 18).

1039 With respect to the first, we should note that when there is a question whether someone is performing well in some art, this is decided by one who has experience in that art; just as the question whether someone is speaking French well should be decided by one who is well versed in the French language. With this in mind, our Lord is saying: The question whether my doctrine is from God must be decided by one who has experience in divine matters, for such a person can judge correctly about these things. "The sensual man does not perceive those things that pertain to the Spirit of God. The spiritual man judges all things" (1 Cor 2:14). Accordingly, he is saying: Because you are alienated from God, you do not know whether a doctrine is from God. If anyone wants to do his will, that is, the will of God, he can know whether this doctrine is from God, **or whether I am speaking on my own** (a *meipso*). Indeed, one who is speaking what is false is speaking on his own, because "When he lies, he speaks on his own," as we read below (8:44).

Chrysostom explains this text in another way. The will of God is our peace, our love, and our humility; thus Matthew (5:9) says: "Happy are the peacemakers, because they will be called sons of God. But the love of controversy often distorts a person's mind to such an extent that he thinks that what is really true is false. Thus, when we abandon the spirit of controversy, we possess more surely the certitude of truth. "Answer, I entreat you, without contention, and judge, speaking what is just" (Jb 6:29). So our Lord is saying: If anyone wishes to judge my doctrine correctly, let him do the will of God, i.e., abandon the anger, the envy and the hatred which he has for me without reason. Then, nothing will prevent him from knowing **whether this doctrine is from God, or whether I am speaking on my own**, i.e., whether I am speaking the words of God.

Augustine explains it this way. It is the will of God that we know his works, just as it is the will of a head of a household that his servants do his works. The work of God is that we believe in him whom he has sent: "This is the work of God, that

you believe in him whom he sent" (above 6:29). Thus he says: **If anyone wants to do his will**, that is, God's will, which is to believe in me, **he will know whether this doctrine is from God**: "If you do not believe, you will not understand," as that other version of Isaiah (7:9) says.

1040 Then when he says, **Whoever speaks on his own seeks his own glory**, he proves the same thing from his intention. And he presents two intentions through which we can recognize the two sources of a doctrine. Some are said to speak on their own [a se], and others not on their own. Now whoever strives to speak the truth does not speak on his own. All our knowledge of the truth is from another: either from instruction, as from a teacher; or from revelation, as from God; or by a process of discovery, as from things themselves, for "the invisible things of God are clearly known by the things that have been made" (Rom 1:20). Consequently, in whatever way a person acquires his knowledge, he does not acquire it on his own. That person speaks on his own who takes what he says neither from things themselves, nor from any human teaching, but from his own heart: "They proclaim a vision taken out of their own hearts" (Jer 23:16); "Woe to those foolish prophets who prophesy out of their own hearts" (Ez 13:3). Accordingly, when a person devises a doctrine on his own he does it for the sake of human glory: for, as we see from Chrysostom, a person who wishes to present his own private doctrine does so for no other purpose than to acquire glory. And this is what our Lord says, proving that his doctrine is from God: **Whoever speaks on his own**, about a certain knowledge of the truth, which is really from another, **seeks his own glory**. It is for this reason, and because of pride, that various heresies and false opinions have arisen. And this is a characteristic of the antichrist "who opposes and is exalted above all that is called God, or is worshipped" (2 Thes 2:4).

But the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him, as I do—"I do not seek my own glory" (below 8:50)—**is truthful, and there is no injustice in him**. I am truthful because my doctrine contains the truth; there is no injustice in me because I do not appropriate the glory of another. As Augustine says: "He gave us a magnificent example of humility when, in the form of a man, he sought the glory of the Father, and not his own. O man, you should do the same! When you do something good, you seek your glory; when you do something evil, you insult God." It is obvious that he was not looking for his own glory, because if he had not been an enemy of the chief priests, he would not have been persecuted by them. So Christ, and everyone who is looking for the glory of God, has knowledge in his intellect, "Master, we know that you are truthful" (Mt 22:16): thus he says, he **is truthful**. And he has the correct intention in his will: thus he says, **and there is no injustice in him**. For a person is unjust when he takes for himself what belongs to another; but glory is proper to God alone; therefore, he who seeks glory for himself is unjust.

1041 Then (v 19), he answers an objection. For someone could tell Christ that his doctrine was not from God because he broke the sabbath, according to, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath" (below 9:16). This is what he intends to answer; and he does three things. First, he clears himself, by arguing from the actions of those who are accusing him; secondly, we see their vicious reply (v 20); and thirdly, he vindicates himself with a reasonable explanation (v 21).

1042 He says: Even granting, as you say, that my doctrine is not from God because I do not keep the law, breaking the sabbath, nevertheless, you do not have any reason to accuse me since you do the same thing. Thus he says: **Did not Moses give you the law?** i.e., did he not give it to your people? **And yet none of you obey the law.** "You received the law through the angels, and have not kept it" (Acts 7:53). This is why Peter says: "A yoke, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15:10). Therefore, if you do not keep the law, why do you want to kill me for not keeping it? You are not doing this because of the law, but out of hatred. If you were acting out of devotion for the law, you would keep it yourselves. "Let us lie in wait for the just man, because he is unfavorable to us, and against our works, and he reproaches us for breaking the law" (Wis 2:12); and a little further on we read: "Let us condemn him to a most shameful death" (Wis 2:20).

Or, it could be explained this way: You do not keep the law that Moses gave you; and this is obvious from the fact that you want to kill me, which is against the law: "You shall not kill" (Ex 20:13). Another explanation, following Augustine, is: You do not keep the law because I myself am included in the law: "If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe me as well, for it was about me that he wrote" (above 5:46). But you want to kill me.

1043 Then we see the vicious reply of the crowd, when he says, **The crowd replied and said: You have a demon within you!** As Augustine says, their reply indicates disorder and confusion, rather than any order: for they are saying that the one who casts out devils has one himself (Mt c 12).

1044 Then when he says, **I performed one work, and you are all amazed,** our Lord, at peace in his own truth, answers them, and justifies himself with a reasonable explanation. First, he recalls the incident that is troubling them; secondly, he shows that this should not bother them (v 22); and thirdly, he shows the way to a judgment that is just (v 24).

1045 Jesus answered them: **I performed one work, and you are all amazed.**

He does not trade one insult for another, nor rebuff it, because "When he was derided, he did not deride in return" (1 Pt 2:23). He rather recalls for them his cure of the paralytic, which was the cause of their amazement. But their amazement was not one of devotion, as in "Your heart will be amazed and expanded" (Is 60:5), but a kind of agitation and disturbance, as in "Those who see it will be afflicted with terrible fear, and will be amazed" (Wis 5:2). So, if you are amazed over one of my works, i.e., if you are disturbed and troubled, what would you do if you saw all of my works? For, as Augustine says, his works were those which they saw in the world: even all the sick are healed by him. "He sent his word, and healed them" (Ps 106:20); "It was neither a herb nor a poultice that healed them, but your word, O Lord, which heals all" (Wis 16:12). Thus, the reason why you are disturbed is that you have seen only one of my works, and not all of them.

1046 Then (v 22), he shows that there is no reason why they should be disturbed. First, he recalls the command given to them by Moses; secondly, he states their customary behavior; and thirdly, he presents an argument based on the first two.

1047 The command of Moses was about circumcision; so he says: **Therefore**, i.e., to signify my works, **Moses gave you circumcision**. For circumcision was given as a sign, as we read, "it will be a sign of the covenant between me and you" (Gn 17:11). For it signified Christ. This is the reason why it was always done on the genital organ, because Christ was to descend, in his human nature, from Abraham; and Christ is the one who spiritually circumcises us, i.e., both in mind and body. Or, it was done to the genital organ because it was given in opposition to original sin.

We do not find it explicitly stated that Moses gave circumcision, unless in Exodus (12:44): "Every slave who is bought shall be circumcised." And although Moses did tell them to circumcise, he was not the one who established this practice, because he was not the first one to receive the command to circumcise; this was Abraham, as we see from Genesis (17:10).

1048 Now it was the custom among the Jews to circumcise on the sabbath. And this is what he says: **you circumcise on the sabbath day**. They did this because Abraham was told that a boy should be circumcised on the eighth day: "He circumcised him on the eighth day, as God had commanded him" (Gn 21:4). On the other hand, they were told by Moses not to do any work on the sabbath. But it sometimes happened that the eighth day was a sabbath. And so, in circumcising a boy on that day, they were breaking a command of Moses for a command of the patriarchs.

1049 Our Lord is arguing from those facts when he says: **If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath day, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you indignant with me because I healed a whole man on the sabbath?**

We should note here that three things make this argument effective: two of these are explicit, and the other implied. First, although the command given to Abraham [about circumcision] was the first to be given, it was not canceled by the command given to Moses concerning observing the sabbath. "I say that the covenant, confirmed by God, is not canceled by the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later" (Gal 3:17). And so Christ is arguing from this: Although when dealing with human laws, the later ones cancel the earlier laws, in the case of divine laws, the earlier ones have greater authority. And so the command given to Moses about observing the sabbath does not cancel the command which was given to Abraham concerning circumcision. Therefore, much less does it interfere with me, who am only doing what was decided by God before the creation of the world, for the salvation of mankind; and this salvation was symbolized by the sabbath.

Another point is that the Jews were commanded not to work on the sabbath; yet they did do things that were related to the salvation of the individual. So Christ is saying: If you people, who were commanded not to work on the sabbath, circumcise on that day (and this concerns the salvation of the individual, and thus it was done to an individual organ) and you do this **so that the law of Moses may not be broken** (from which it is clear that those things that pertain to salvation should not be omitted on the sabbath), it follows with greater reason that a man should do on that day those things that pertain to the salvation of everyone. Therefore, you should not be indignant with me **because I healed a whole man on the sabbath.**

The third point is that each command was a symbol: for "all these things happened to them in symbol" (1 Cor 10:11). Thus, if one symbol, i.e., the command to observe the sabbath, does not cancel the other symbol, i.e., the command to circumcise, much less does it cancel the truth. For circumcision symbolized our Lord, as Augustine says.

Finally, he says, **a whole man**, because, since God's works are perfect, the man was cured so as to be healthy in body, and he believed so as to be healthy in soul.

1050 Then when he says, **Judge not by the appearances, but with a just judgment**, he guides them to a fair consideration of himself, so that they do not judge him according to appearances, but give a judgment which is just. There are

two ways in which one is said to judge according to appearances. First, a judge may reach his decision relying on the allegations: "Men see the things that are evident" (1 Kgs 15:7). But this way can lead to error; thus he says, **Judge not by the appearances**, i.e., by what is immediately evident, but examine the matter diligently: "I diligently investigated the stranger's cause" (Jb 29:16); "He will not judge by appearances" (Is 1 1:3). In the second way, **Judge not by the appearances**, i.e., do not show partiality or favoritism in your judgment: for all judges are forbidden to do this. "You will not show favoritism when judging a person who is poor" (Ex 23:6); "You have shown partiality in your judgment" (Mal 2:9). To show partiality in a judgment is not to give a judgment that is just because of love, or deference, or fear, or the status of a person, which things have nothing to do with the case. So he says: **Judge not by the appearances, but with a just judgment**, as if to say: Just because Moses is more honored among you than I am, you should not base your decision on our reputations, but on the nature of the facts: because the things I am doing are greater than what Moses did.

But it should be noted, according to Augustine, that one who loves all equally does not judge with partiality. For when we honor men differently according to their rank, we must beware of showing partiality.

LECTURE 3

25 Some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem then said: "Is he not the man they want to kill? 26 Look, he is speaking publicly, and they say nothing to him! Could it be that the rulers feally know that he is the Christ? 27 We know where this man comes from; but when the Christ comes, no one will know where he comes from." 28 So as Jesus was teaching in the temple, he cried out and said:

"You do indeed know me,
and you know where I come from.
And I have not come of my own accord.
But the one who sent me is truthful,
whom you do not know.
29 I know him.
And if I were to say that I do not know him,
I would be like you, a liar.
But I do know him, because I am from him,
and he sent me."

30 They therefore wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. 31 Many of the people, however, believed in him, and they said: "When the Christ comes, will he work more wonders than this man has done?" 32 The Pharisees heard the people saying these things about him, so the rulers and Pharisees sent officers to apprehend Jesus.

1051 Having considered the origin of his doctrine, he now tells us about the origin of its teacher. First, Christ shows his source, from which he comes secondly, he shows his end, to which he goes (v 33). He does three things concerning the first. First, we see the doubt of the people about his origin; secondly, we have Christ's teaching concerning his origin (v 28); and thirdly, we see the effect this teaching had (v 30). He does two things about the first. First, we see the amazement of the people; secondly, their conjecture (v 26). The people were amazed over two things: at the unjust statements of their leaders, and at the public teaching of Christ (v 25).

1052 As we said before, Christ went up to this feast in secret to show the weakness of his human nature; but he publicly taught in the temple, with his enemies being unable to restrain him, to show his divinity. And so, as Augustine remarks, what was thought to be a lack of courage turned out to be strength. Accordingly, **Some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem then said**, in amazement, for they knew how fiercely their leaders were looking for him, as they lived with them in Jerusalem. Thus Chrysostom says: "The most pitiable of all were they who saw a very clear sign of his divinity and, leaving everything to the judgment of their corrupt leaders, failed to show Christ reverence." "As the ruler of a city is, so are its inhabitants" (Sir 10:2). Yet they were amazed at the power he had which kept him from being apprehended. So they said: **Is he not the man they**, i.e., their leaders, want. This agrees with what was said before: "For reasons like this the Jews began to persecute Jesus, because he performed such works on the sabbath" (above 5:16); "Evil has come out of the elders of the people, who ruled them" (Dn 13:5). This also shows that Christ spoke the truth, while what their leaders said was false. For above, when our Lord asked them: "Why do you want to kill me?" they denied it and said: "You have a demon within you! Who wants to kill you?" But here, what their leaders had denied, these others admit when they say, **Is he not the man they want to kill?** Accordingly, they are amazed, considering the evil intentions of their leaders.

1053 Again, they were amazed that Christ was openly teaching; so they said: **Look, he is speaking publicly**, i.e., Christ was teaching, an indication of the secure possession of the truth, "I have spoken publicly" (below 18:20), **and they say nothing to him**, held back by divine power. For it is a characteristic of God's power that he prevents the hearts of evil men from carrying out their evil

plans. "When the Lord is pleased with the way a man is living he will make his vneinies be at peace with him" (Ps 16:7); and again, "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he wills" (Prv 21:1).

1054 We see their conjecture when he says, **Could it be that the rulers really know that he is the Christ?** As if to say: Before, they sought to kill him; but now that they have found him, they do not say anything to him. Still, the leaders had not changed their opinion about Christ: "If they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:8), but were restrained by divine power.

1055 Their objection to this conjecture is then added: We **know where this man comes from**. As if to argue: The Christ should have a hidden origin; but the origin of this man is known; therefore, he is not the Christ. This shows their folly, for granted that some of their leaders believed Christ, they did not follow their opinion, but offered another, which was false. "This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations" (Ez 5:5). For they knew that Christ took his origin from Mary, but they did not know the way this came about: "Isn't Joseph his father, and Mary his mother?" as we read in Matthew (13:55).

1056 Why did they say, when the Christ comes, **no one will know where he comes from**, since it says in Micah (5:2): "Out of you [Bethlehem-Ephrathah] will come a leader, who will rule my people Israel."? I answer that they took this opinion from Isaiah, who said: "Who will make known his origin?" (Is 53:8). Thus, they knew from the prophets where he was from, according to his human origin; and they also knew from them that they did not know it, according to his divine origin.

1057 Then (v 28), he shows his origin. First, he shows in what sense his origin is known, and in what sense it is not known; in the second place, he shows how we can acquire a knowledge of his origin (v 29). He does two things about the first. First, he shows what they knew about his origin; secondly, what they did not know about it (v 28b).

1058 They did know the origin of Jesus; and so he says of Jesus that **he cried out**. Now a cry comes from some great emotion. Sometimes it indicates the upheaval of a soul in interior distress; and in this sense it does not apply to Christ: "He will not cry out" (Is 42:2); "The words of the wise are heard in silence" (Ecc 9:17). Sometimes it implies great devotion, as in, "In my trouble I cried to the Lord" (Ps 119:1). And sometimes, along with this, it signifies that what is to be said is important, as in, "The Seraphim cried to each other and said: 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts'" (Is 6:3); and in, "Does not wisdom

cry out?" (Prv 8:1). This is the way preachers are encouraged to cry out: "Cry out, do not stop!. Raise you voice like a trumpet" (Is 58:1). This is the way Christ cried out here, teaching in the temple.

And he said: **You do indeed know me**, according to appearances, **and you know where I come from**, that is, as to my bodily existence: "After this he was seen on earth" (Bar 3:38). For they knew that he was born from Mary in Bethlehem, and brought up in Nazareth; but they did not know about the virgin birth, and that he had been conceived through the Holy Spirit, as Augustine says. With the exception of the virgin birth, they knew everything about Jesus that pertained to his humanity.

1059 They did not know his hidden origin; and so he says: And I have not come of my own accord. First, he gives his origin; and secondly, he shows that it is hidden from them.

His origin is from the Father, from eternity. And so he says: **I have not come of my own accord**, as if to say: Before I came into the world through my humanity, I existed according to my divinity: "Before Abraham came to be, I am" (below 8:58). For he could not have come unless he already was. And although I have come, **I have not come of my own accord** [*a me ipso*], because the Son is not of himself [*a se*], but from the Father. "I came from the Father and have come into the world" (below 16:28). Indeed, his origin was foretold by the Father, who promised to send him: "I beg you, O Lord, send him whom you are going to send" (Ex 4:13); "I will send them a Savior and a defender, to free them" (Is 19:20). And so he says: **the one who sent me is truthful**, as if to say: I have not come from another but from him who promised and kept his promise, as he is truthful: "God is truthful" (Rom 3:4). Consequently, he teaches me to speak the truth, because I have been sent by one who is truthful. But they do not know this, because they do not know him who sent me; and so he says: whom you do not know.

1060 But since every man, although born in a bodily condition, is from God, it seems that Christ could say that he is from God; and consequently, that they do know where he comes from. I answer, according to Hilary, that the Son is a (from) God in a different way than others: for he is from God in such a way that he is also God; and so God is his consubstantial principle. But others are a (from) God, but in such a way that they are not *ex* (from) him. Thus, it is not known where the Son is from because the nature *ex* (from) which he is, is not known. But where men are from is not unknown: for if something exists *ex* (from) nothing, where it is from cannot be unknown.

1061 Then when he says, I know him, he teaches us how to know him from whom he is. For if a thing is to be learned, it must be learned from one who knows it. But only the Son knows the Father. And so he says: If you wish to know him who sent me, you must acquire this knowledge from me, because **I alone know him**. First, he shows that he knows him; secondly, he shows the perfection of his knowledge; and thirdly, the nature of his knowledge.

1062 He shows that he knows him when he says, I know him. Now it is true that "All men see him" (Jb 36:25), but they do not see him in the same way, for in this life we see him through the intermediary of creatures: "The invisible things of God are clearly known through the things that have been made" (Rom 1:20). Thus we read: "Now we see in a mirror, in an obscure manner" (1 Cor 13:12). But the angels and the blessed in heaven see him through his essence:—"Their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 18:10): "We shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2). The Son of God, on the other hand, sees him in a more excellent way than all, that is, with a comprehensive or all-inclusive vision: "No one has ever seen God," i.e., in a comprehensive way; "it is the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, who has made him known" (above 1:18); "No one knows the Father but the Son" (Mt 11:27). It is of this vision that he is speaking of here, when he says: I know him, with a comprehensive knowledge.

1063 He shows the perfection of his knowledge when he says: And if I were to say that I do not know **him, I would be like you, a liar**. This is mentioned for two reasons. Intellectual creatures do know God, though from a distance and imperfectly, for "All men see him, from a distance" (Jb 36:25). For divine truth transcends all our knowledge: "God is greater than our hearts" (1 Jn 3:20). Therefore, whoever knows God can say without lying: "I do not know him," because he does not know him to the full extent that he is knowable. But the Son knows God the Father most perfectly, just as he knows himself most perfectly. Thus he cannot say: I do not know him.

Again, because our knowledge of God, especially that which comes through grace, can be lost—"They forgot God, who saved them" (Ps 105:21)—men can say, I do not know him, as long as they are in this present life: because no one knows whether he deserves love or hatred. The Son, on the other hand, has a knowledge of the Father that cannot be lost; so he cannot say: I do not know him.

We should understand, I would be like you, as a reverse likeness. For they would not be lying if they said they did not know God; but they would be if they said that they did know him, since they did not know him. But if Christ said that he did not know him, he would be lying, since he did know him. So the meaning of this

statement is this: If I were to say that I do not know him, then since I really do know him, I would be like you, a liar, who say that you know him, although you do not.

1064 Could not Christ have said: I do not know him? It seems he could, since he could have moved his lips and said the words. And so he could have lied. I reply that Christ did say this and still was not lying. We should explain it this way: If he were to say, **I do not know him**, declaratively, meaning, "I believe in my heart what I profess by my lips," [then he would have been a liar]. Now to say as the truth what is false comes from two defects: from a defect of knowledge in the intellect; and Christ could not have this since he is the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:30); or it could come from a defect of right will in the affections; and this could not be in Christ either since he is the power of God, according to the same text. Thus he could not say the words **I do not know him**, declaratively. Yet this entire conditional statement is not false, although both its parts are impossible.

1065 The reason for this singular and perfect knowledge of Christ is given when he says: **I do know him, because I am from him, and he sent me**. Now all knowledge comes about through some likeness, since nothing is known except insofar as there is a likeness of the known in the knower. But whatever proceeds from something has a likeness to that from which it proceeds; and so, all who truly know have a varied knowledge of God according to the different degrees of their procession from him. The rational soul has a knowledge of God insofar as it participates in a likeness to him in a more imperfect way than other intellectual creatures. An angel, because it has a more explicit likeness to God, being a stamp of resemblance, knows God more clearly. But the Son has the most perfect likeness to the Father, since he has the same essence and power as he does; and so he knows him most perfectly, as was said. And so he says: **But I do know him**, that is, to the extent that he is knowable. And the reason for this is because I am from him, having the same essence with him through consubstantiality. Thus, just as he knows himself perfectly through his essence, so I do know him perfectly through the same essence. And so that we do not understand these words as referring to his being sent into this world, he at once adds, and he sent me. Consequently, the statement, **I am from him**, refers to his eternal generation, through which he is consubstantial with the Father. But then when he says, and he sent me, he is saying that the Father is the author of the incarnation: "God sent his Son, made from a woman, made under the law" (Gal 4:4). Now just as the Son has a perfect knowledge of the Father because he is from the Father, so because the soul of Christ is united to the Word in a unique way, it has a unique and more excellent knowledge of God than other creatures, although it does not comprehend him. And so Christ can say, according to his human nature: I know him in a more excellent way than other creatures do, but without comprehending him.

1066 Then (v 30), he considers the effect of his teaching. First (in the people; then on the Pharisees (v 32). He does two things with the first. First, he shows the effect of this teaching on those of the people who were ill-willed; secondly, on those who were favorable (v 31). He does three things concerning the first. First, he mentions the evil intention of the people; secondly, that they were hindered in carrying out their plan; and thirdly, he mentions the reason why they were hindered.

1007 he presents their evil intention when he says, **They therefore wanted to seize him**. Because our Lord said to them, "whom you do not know," they became angry, feigning that they did know him. And so they formed the evil plan of seizing him, so that they could crucify and kill him: "Go after him, and seize him" (Ps 70:11). Yet there are some who have Christ within themselves, and still seek to seize him in a reverent manner: "I will go up into the palm tree and seize its fruit" (Sg 7:8). And so the Apostle says: "I will go after it to seize it" (Phil 3:12).

1068 He mentions that they were hindered in their plans when he says, **but no one laid a hand on him**: for their rage was invisibly checked and restrained. This shows that a person has the will to inflict injury from himself, while the power to inflict injury is from God. This is clear from the first chapters of Job, where Satan was unable to torment Job except to the extent that he was permitted to do so by God.

1069 The reason they were hindered was **because his hour had not yet come**. Here we should note that "There is a time and fitness for everything" (Ecc 8:6). However, the time for anything is determined by its cause. Therefore, because the heavenly bodies are the cause of physical effects, the time for those things that act in a physical way is determined by the heavenly bodies. The soul, on the other hand, since it is not subject to any heavenly body in its intellect and reason (for in this respect it transcends temporal causes) does not have times determined by the heavenly bodies; rather, its times are determined by its cause, that is, God, who decrees what is to be done and at what time: "Why is one day better than another? ... They are differentiated by the knowledge of the Lord" (Si,33:7). Much less, therefore, is Christ's time determined by these bodies. Accordingly, his hour must be regarded as fixed not by fatal necessity, but by the entire Trinity. For as Augustine says: "You should not believe this about yourself; and how much less should you believe it about he who made you? If your hour is his will, that is, God's, what is his hour but his own will? Therefore, he was not speaking here of the hour in which he would be forced to die, but rather of the hour in which he thought it fitting to be killed." "My time has not yet come," as he said before (above 2:4); "Jesus knew that his time had come to leave this

world for the Father" (below 13:1).

1070 Then he mentions the effect his teaching had on those who were favorable. First, he shows their faith: **Many of the people, however, believed in him.** He does not say, "of the leaders," because the higher their rank, the further away they were from him. So there was no room in them for wisdom: "Where there is humility, there is wisdom" (Prv 11:2). But the people, because they were quick to see their own sickness, immediately recognized our Lord's medicine: "You have hidden these things from the wise and the prudent, and have revealed them to little ones" (Mt 11:25). This is why in the beginning, it was the poor and the humble who were converted to Christ: "God chose what is lowly and despised in the world, and things that are not, to destroy those things that are" (1 Cor 1:28).

Secondly, he gives the motive for their faith when he says, **When the Christ comes, will he work more wonders than this man has done?** For it had been prophesied that when the Christ came, he would work many miracles: "God himself will come, and save us. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will hear" (Is 35:4). And so when they saw the miracles Christ was accomplishing, they were led to believe. Yet their faith was weak, because they were led to believe him not by his teaching, but by his miracles; whereas, since they were already believers, and instructed by the law, they should have been influenced more by his teaching: "Signs were given to unbelievers; while prophecies were given to believers, not to unbelievers" (1 Cor 14:22).

Secondly, their faith was weak because they seemed to be expecting another Christ; thus they say: **When the Christ comes, will he work more wonders than this man has done?** From this it is obvious that they did not believe in Christ as in God, but as in some just man or prophet. Or, according to Augustine, they were reasoning this way: **When the Christ comes, will he work more wonders than this man has done?** As if to say: We were promised that the Christ would come. But he will not work more signs than this man is doing. Therefore, either he is the Christ, or there will be several Christs.

1071 Then when he says, **The Pharisees heard the people saying these things about him,** we see the effect this had on the Pharisees. And as Chrysostom says, Christ said many things, and yet the Pharisees were not aroused against him. But when they saw that the people were accepting him, they were immediately fired up against him; and in their madness they wanted to kill him. This shows that the real reason why they hated him was not that he broke the sabbath; what provoked them the most was the fact that the people were honoring Christ. And this is clear below: "Do you not see that we can do nothing? Look, the entire world has gone after him!" (12:19). Because they were

afraid of the danger they did not dare to seize Christ themselves, but they sent their officers, who were used to such things.

LECTURE 4

33 Jesus then said to them:

“For still a short time I am with you;
then I am going to him who sent me.

34 You will look for me,
and you will not find me;
and where I am, you will not be able to come.”

35 The Jews therefore said to one another: “Where is he going that we cannot find him? Is he going to those dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? 36 What does he mean by saying, ‘You will look for me, and you will not find me’; and ‘where I am, you will not be able to come’?”

1072 After our Lord told the principle of his origin, he then mentions his end, i.e., where he would go by dying. First, the end of Christ’s life is given; secondly, we see that the people are puzzled by what he says (v 35). As to the first he does three things. First, the end of his life is mentioned; secondly, he predicts what they will desire in the future (v 34); and thirdly, he mentions one of their deficiencies (v 34b). He does two things about the first. First, he predicts the delay of his death until later; and secondly, he states where he will go by dying (v 33b). And so, in the first, he shows his power; and in the second, his will to suffer.

1073 Our Lord shows his power by the delaying of his death until later; because, although the Jews wanted to seize him, they could not do this until Christ willed. “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself” (below 10:18). And so Jesus said: **For still a short time I am with you.** As if to say: You want to kill me; but this does not depend on your will, but on my will. And I have decided that **For still a short time I am with you;** so wait a while. You will do what you want to do. These words of our Lord first of all satisfied those people who honored him, and made them more eager to listen to him because there was only a short time left to receive his teaching, as Chrysostom says. “While you have the light, believe in the light” (below 12:36). Secondly, he satisfied those who were persecuting him. As if to say: Your desire for my death will not be delayed long; so be patient, because it is **a short time.** For I must accomplish my mission: to

preach, to perform miracles, and then to come to my passion. "Go and tell that fox that I will work today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will finish my course" (Lk 13:32).

1074 There are three reasons why Christ wished to preach for only a short time. First, to show his power, by transforming the entire world in such a brief time: "One day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere" (Ps 83:11). Secondly, to arouse the desire of his disciples, i.e., to desire him more (him whose physical presence they would have for only a short time): "The days will come when you will desire to see one day of the Son of Man" (Lk 17:22). Thirdly, to accelerate the spiritual progress of his disciples. For since the humanity of Christ is our way to God, as it says below, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6), we should not rest in it as a goal, but through it tend to God. And so that the hearts of his disciples, which were moved by the physical presence of Christ, would not rest in him as man, he quickly took his physical presence from them; thus he said: "It is advantageous for you that I go" (below 16:7); "If we knew Christ according to the flesh (i.e., when he was physically present to us) now we no longer know him in this way" (2 Cor 5:16).

1075 He shows his desire for his passion when he says, **I am going to him who sent me**, that is, willingly, by my passion: "He was offered because it was his own will" (Is 53:7); "He gave himself for us, an offering to God" (Eph 5:2). I am going, I say, to the Father, to him who sent me. And this is appropriate, for everything naturally returns to its principle: "Rivers return to the place from which they come" (Ecc 1:7); "Jesus ... knowing that he came from God, and was going to God" (below 13:3). And again: "I am going to him who sent me" (below 16:5).

1076 When he says, **You will look for me, and you will not find me**, he is predicting what the Jews will desire in the times to Come. As if to say: You can enjoy my teaching for a short time; but this brief time, which you are now rejecting, you will look for later, and you will not find it: "Search for the Lord while he can be found" (Is 55:6); and "Seek the Lord (at the present time), and your soul will live" (Ps 68:33).

1077 This statement, **You will look for me, and you will not find me**, can be understood either as a physical search for Christ or as a spiritual search. If we understand it as a physical search, then, according to Chrysostom, this is the way he was sought by the daughters of Jerusalem, i.e., the women who cried for him, as Luke (23:27) mentions; and no doubt many others were affected at the same time. It is not unreasonable to think that when trouble was near, especially when their city was being captured, the Jews remembered Christ and his miracles and wished that he were there to free them. And in this way, **You will look for me**, i.

e., for me to be physically present, **and you will not find me.**

If we understand this as a spiritual search for Christ, then we should say, as Augustine does, that although they refused to recognize Christ while he was among them, they later looked for him, after they had seen the people believe and had themselves been stung by the crime of his death; and they said to Peter: "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). In this way, they were looking for Christ (whom they saw die as a result of their crime) when they believed in him who forgave them.

1078 Then when he says, **and where I am, you will not be able to come**, he points out one of their deficiencies. He does not say, "and where I am going," which would be more in keeping with the earlier thought, "I am going," to the Father, "to him who sent me." He says rather, where I am, to show that he is both God and man. He is man insofar as he is going: "I am going to him who sent me" (below 16:5). But insofar as Christ had always been where he was about to return, he shows that he is God: "No one has gone up to heaven except the One who came down from heaven" (above 3:13). And so, as Augustine says, just as Christ returned in such a way as not to leave us, so he came down to us, when he assumed visible flesh, but in such a way as still to be in heaven according to his invisible greatness.

He does not say, "You will not find," because some were about to go; but he does say, you will not be able to come, i.e., as long as you keep your present attitude; for no one can obtain the eternal inheritance. unless he is God's heir. And one becomes an heir of God by faith in Christ: "he gave them power to become the sons of God, to all who believe in his name" (above 1:12). But the Jews did not yet believe in him; and so he says, **you will not be able to come.** In the Psalm it is asked: "Who will ascend the mountain of the Lord?" And the answer given is: "Those whose hands are innocent and whose hearts are clean" (Ps 23:3). But the hearts of the Jews were not clean, nor were their hands innocent, because they wanted to kill Christ. And so he says: you are not able to ascend the mountain of the Lord.

1079 Then (v 35), we see that this was bewildering to the Jews, who, although they thought of Christ in a worldly way, still did believe to a certain extent. And three things happen here. First, they are bewildered; secondly, they form an opinion, and thirdly, they argue against their own opinion.

1080 They are perplexed when they say to each other: **Where is he going that we cannot find him?** For, as was said, they understood this in a physical way: "The sensual man does not perceive those things that pertain to the Spirit of

God" (1 Cor 2:14).

1081 And so they came to the opinion that Christ was going to go in a physical way, not by dying, to some place where they would not be permitted to go. Thus they say: **Is he going to those dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?** For the Gentiles were separated from the way of life of the Jews: "separated from Israel's way of life, strangers to the covenants, without hope in the promise, and without God in this world" (Eph 2:12). And so they said, in a way reproaching him, to those dispersed among the Gentiles, who had settled in many different places: "These are the families of Noe ... and they settled among the nations on the earth after the flood" (Gn 10:32). But the Jewish people were united by place, by their worship of the one God, and by the observance of the law: "The Lord builds up Jerusalem, and he will gather the dispersed of Israel" (Ps 146:2).

They did not say that he would go to the Gentiles to become a Gentile himself, but to bring them back; and so they said, and teach the Gentiles. They probably took this from Isaiah (49:6): "I have given you to be a light to the Gentiles, to be my salvation to the ends of the earth." However, even though they did not understand what they were saying (just as Caiphas did not understand his own words: "It is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the entire nation does not perish"), what they said was true, and they were predicting the salvation of the Gentiles, as Augustine says, for Christ would go to the Gentiles, not in his own body, but by his feet, i.e., his apostles. For he sent his own members to us to make us his members. "And I have other sheep that are not of this fold, and I must bring them also ... and there will be one fold and one Shepherd" (below 10:16). And so Isaiah says, speaking for the Gentiles: "He will teach us his ways" (Is 2:3).

1082 Finally, they saw an objection to their own opinion when they said: **What does he mean by saying ... ?** As if to say: If he had said only, **You will look for me, and you will not find me**, we could think that he was going to the Gentiles. But he seems to exclude this when he adds, **where I am, you will not be able to come**, for we can go to the Gentiles.

LECTURE 5

37 On the last and greatest day of the festival Jesus stood up and cried out, saying:

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scriptures say,
out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water."

39 (He said this concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed in him would receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.) 40 From that moment some of the people, hearing these words of his, said: "Truly, this is the Prophet." 41 Others said: "This is the Christ." But others said: "Would the Christ come from Galilee? 42 Does not Scripture say that the Christ will come from the seed of David, and from David's town of Bethlehem?" 43 And so there was dissension among the people because of him. 44 Although some of them wanted to apprehend him, no one laid a hand on him. 45 So the officers returned to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them: "Why have you not brought him?" 46 The officers replied: "Never has any man spoken like this man." 47 The Pharisees then retorted: "Have you too been seduced? him, or any of the Pharisees? 48 Has any one of the rulers believed in 49 But these people, who do not know the law, they are accursed." 50 Nicodemus (the same one who came to him at night, and was one of them) said: 51 "Does our law judge a man without first hearing from him and knowing what he has done?" 52 They answered and said to him: "Are you too a Galilean? Look at the Scriptures and see that the Prophet will not come from Galilee." 53 Then every man returned to his own house.

1083 After our Lord told them about the origin of his doctrine and of the teacher, as well as his end, he now invites them to accept his teaching itself. First, we see Christ's invitation; secondly, the dissension among the people (v 40). He does three things about the first. First, he tells us the manner of this invitation; secondly, we see the invitation itself (v 37); and thirdly, he explains what it means (v 39). The manner of the invitation is described in three ways: by its time; by the posture of the one inviting; and by his efforts.

1084 As to the time, we see that it was **the last and greatest day of the festival**. For as we saw before, this feast was celebrated for seven days, and the first and the last day were the more solemn; just as with us, the first day of a feast and its octave are the more solemn. Therefore, what our Lord did here he did not do on the first day, as he had not yet gone to Jerusalem, nor in the intervening days, but on the last day. And he acted then because there are few who celebrate feasts in a spiritual way. Consequently, he did not invite them to his teaching at the beginning of the festival so that the trifles of the following days would not drive it from their hearts; for we read that the word of the Lord is choked by thorns (Lk 8:7). But he did invite them on the last day so that his

teaching would be more deeply impressed on their hearts.

1085 As to his posture, **Jesus stood up**. Here we should note that Christ taught both while sitting and standing. He taught his disciples while sitting (Mt 5:1); while he stood when he taught the people, as he is doing here. It is from this that we get the custom in the Church of standing when preaching to the people, but sitting while preaching to religious and clerics. The reason for this is that since the aim in preaching to the people is to convert them, it takes the form of an exhortation; but when preaching is directed to clergy, already living in the house of God, it takes the form of a reminder.

1086 As to his effort we read that he **cried out**, in order to show his own assurance: "Raise up your voice with strength ... raise it up, and do not be afraid" (Is 40:9); and so that all would be able to hear him: "Cry out, and do not stop; raise your voice like a trumpet" (Is 58:1); and to stress the importance of what he was about to say: "Listen to me, for I will tell you about great things" (Prv 8:6).

1087 Next (v 37b), we see Christ's invitation: first, those who are invited; secondly, the fruit of this invitation.

1088 It is the thirsty who are invited. Thus he says: **If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink**; "Come to the waters, all you who thirst" (Is 55:1). He calls the thirsty because such people want to serve God. For God does not accept a forced service: "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7). So we read: "I will sacrifice freely" (Is 53:8). And such people are described in Matthew this way: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for what is right" (Mt 5:6). Now our Lord calls all of these people, not just some; and so he says: **It anyone thirsts**, as if to say: whoever it is. "Come to me, all you who desire me, and be filled with my fruits" (Sir 24:26); "He desires the salvation of all" (1 Tim 2:4).

Jesus invites them to drink; and so he says, **and drink**. For this drink is spiritual refreshment in the knowledge of divine wisdom and truth, and in the realization of their desires: "My servants will drink, and you will be thirsty" (Is 65:13), "Come and eat my bread, and drink the wine I have mixed for you" (Prv 9:5), "She [wisdom] will give him the water of saving wisdom to drink" (Sir 15:3).

1089 The fruit of this invitation is that good things overflow upon others; thus he says: **Whoever believes in me, as the Scriptures say, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water**. According to Chrysostom, we should read this as follows: **Whoever believes in me, as the Scriptures say**. And then a new sentence begins: **Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water**. For

if we say: **Whoever believes in me**, and follow this with, **as the Scriptures say, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water**, it does not seem to be correct, for the statement, **out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water**, is not found in any book of the Old Testament. So we should say: **Whoever believes in me, as the Scriptures say**; that is, according to the teaching of the Scriptures. "Search the Scriptures ... they too bear witness to me" (above 5:39). And then there follows: **Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water**. He says here, **Whoever believes in me**, while before he said, "He who comes to me," because to believe and to come are the same thing: "Come to him and be enlightened," as we read in the Psalm (33:6).

But Jerome punctuates this in a different way. He says that after **Whoever believes in me**, there follows, **as the Scriptures say, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water**. And he says that this phrase was taken from Proverbs (5:15): "Drink the water from your own cistern, and from the streams of you own well. Let your fountains flow far and wide."

1090 We should note, with Augustine, that rivers come from fountains as their source. Now one who drinks natural water does not have either a fountain or a river within himself, because he takes only a small portion of water. But one who drinks by believing in Christ draws in a fountain of water; and when he draws it in, his conscience, which is the heart of the inner man, begins to live and it itself becomes a fountain. So we read above: "The water that I give will become a fountain within him" (4:14). This fountain which is taken in is the Holy Spirit, of whom we read: "With you is the fountain of life" (Ps 35:10). Therefore, whoever drinks the the gifts of the graces, which are signified by the rivers, in such a way that he alone benefits, will not have living water flowing from his heart. But whoever acts quickly to help others, and to share with them the various gifts of grace he has received from God, will have living water flowing from his heart. This is why Peter says: "According to the grace each has received, let them use it to benefit one another" (1 Pet 4:10).

He says, **rivers**, to indicate the abundance of the spiritual gifts which were promised to those who believe: "The river of God is full of water" (Ps 64:10) ; and also their force or onrush: "When they rush to Jacob, Israel will blossom and bud, and they will fill the surface of the earth with fruit" (Is 27:6); and again, "The rush of the rivers gives joy to the city of God" (Ps 45:5). Thus, because the Apostle was governed by the impulsive force and fervor of the Holy Spirit, he said: "The love of Christ spurs us on" (2 Cor 5:14); and "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God" (Rom 8:14). The separate distribution of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is also indicated, for we read, "to one the gift of healing ... to another the gift of tongues" (1 Cor 12:10). These gifts are "rivers of living water" because they flow directly from their source, which is the indwelling

Holy Spirit.

1091 Then (v 39), he explains what he said. First we see the explanation; secondly, the reason behind this explanation (v 39b).

1092 Christ had said: "out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." The Evangelist tells us that we should understand this **concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed in him would receive**, because the Spirit is the fountain and river of life. He is the fountain of which we read: "With you is the fountain of life; and in your light we will see light" (Ps 35:10). And the Spirit is a river because he proceeds from the Father and the Son: "The angel then showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rv 22:1). "He gave the Spirit," that is, to those who obey him (Is 42:1).

1093 He gives the reason behind this explanation, saying, **for as yet the Spirit had not been given**. And he says two things. **as yet the Spirit had not been given**, and that **Jesus had not yet been glorified**.

There are two opinions about the first of these. For Chrysostom says that before the resurrection of Christ the Holy Spirit was not given to the apostles with respect to the gifts of prophecy and miracles. And so this grace, which was given to the prophets, was not to be found on earth until Christ came, and after that it was not given to anyone until the above mentioned time. And if anyone objects that the apostles cast out devils before the resurrection, it should be understood that they were cast out by that power which was from Christ, not by the Spirit; for when he sent them out, we do not read that he gave them the Holy Spirit, but rather that "he gave them power over unclean spirits" (Mt 10:1).

However, this seems to conflict with what our Lord says in the Gospel of Luke: "If I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out?" (Lk 11:19). But it is certain that our Lord cast out devils by the Holy Spirit, as the children did also, that is, the apostles. Therefore, it is clear that they had received the Holy Spirit. And so we must say, with Augustine, that the apostles had the Holy Spirit before the resurrection, even with respect to the gifts of prophecy and miracles. And when we read here that **as yet the Spirit had not been given**, we should understand this to refer to a more abundant giving, and one with visible signs, as the Spirit was given to them in tongues of fire after the resurrection and ascension.

1094 But since the Holy Spirit sanctifies the Church and is even now received by those who believe, why does no one speak in the languages of all nations as

then? My answer is that it is not necessary, as Augustine says. For now the universal Church speaks the languages of all the nations, because the love of charity is given by the Holy Spirit: "The love of God is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5); and this love, making all things common, makes everyone speak to everyone else. As Augustine says: "If you love unity, then you have everything that anyone else has in it (i.e., in the Church). Give up your envy, and what I have is also yours; ill-will divides, the love of charity unites. If you have this love, you will have everything." But at the beginning, before the Church was spread throughout the world, because it had few members, they had to speak the languages of all so that they could establish the Church among all.

1095 With regard to the second point, we should note that Augustine thinks the statement, **Jesus had not yet been glorified**, should be understood as the glory of the resurrection. As if to say: Jesus had not yet risen from the dead or ascended into heaven. We read about this below: "Father, glorify me" (17:5). And the reason why Christ willed to be glorified before he gave the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit is given to us so that we might raise our hearts from the love of this world in a spiritual resurrection, and turn completely to God. To those who are afire with the love of the Holy Spirit, Christ promised eternal life, where we will not die, and where we will have no fear. And for this reason he did not wish to give the Holy Spirit until he was glorified, so that he might show in his body the life for which we hope in the resurrection.

1096 For Chrysostom, however, this statement does not refer to the glory of the resurrection, but to the glorification of the passion. When his passion was near, our Lord said: "Now the Son of Man is glorified" (below 13:3 1). So, according to this view, the Holy Spirit was first given after the passion, when our Lord said to his apostles: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (below 20:22). The Holy Spirit was not given before the passion because, since it is a gift, it should not be given to enemies, but to friends. But We were enemies. Thus it was necessary that first the victim be offered on the altar of the cross, and enmity be destroyed in his flesh, so that by this we might be reconciled to God by the death of his Son; and then, having been made friends, we could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1097 The Evangelist, having shown us Christ's invitation to a spiritual drink, now presents the disagreement of the people. First, the disagreement among the people themselves; secondly, that of their leaders (v 45). He does two things about the first. First, he states what those who disagreed said; secondly, he states the fact that there was a disagreement (v 43).

What the people said varied according to their different opinions about Christ. And he gives three of their opinions: two of these were the opinions of those who were coming for spiritual drink; and the third was held by those who shrank from

it.

1098 The first opinion was that Christ was the Prophet. So he says, **From that moment**, i.e., from the time Christ had spoken on the great day of the feast, **hearing these words of his, some of the people said**, i.e., those who had now begun to drink that water spiritually, **Truly, this is the Prophet**. They did not just call him a prophet, but **the Prophet**, thinking that he was the one about whom Moses foretold: "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you from your brothers ... you will listen to him" (Dt 18:15).

1099 Another opinion was of those who said, **This is the Christ**. These people had drawn closer to that [spiritual] drink, and had slaked the thirst of unbelief to a greater extent. This is what Peter himself professed: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16).

1100 The third opinion conflicts with the other two. First, those who hold this disagree with those who say that Jesus is the Christ; secondly, they support their opinion with an authority. So he says: **But others said**, those remaining in the dryness of unbelief, **Would the Christ come from Galilee?** For they knew that it was not predicted by the prophets that the Christ would come from Galilee. And they said what they did because they thought that Jesus had been born in Nazareth, not knowing that it was really in Bethlehem: for it was well known that he had been brought up in Nazareth, but only a few knew where he was born. Nevertheless, although the Scripture does not say that the Christ would be born in Galilee, it did foretell that he would first start out from there: "The people who walked in darkness saw a great light, and on those who lived in the region of the shadow of death, a light has risen" (Is 9:1). It even foretold that the Christ would come from Nazareth: "A flower will rise up from his roots" (Is 11:1), where the Hebrew version reads: "A Nazarene will rise up from his roots."

1101 They support their objection by the authority of Scripture when they say, **Does not Scripture say that the Christ will come from the seed of David, and from David's town of Bethlehem?** We read in Jeremiah (23:5) that Jesus would come from the seed of David: "I will raise up a just branch for David." And we see that David was "the anointed of God" (2 Sm 23:1). In Micah (5:2) we read that Jesus would come from Bethlehem: "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah: from you there will come forth, for me, a ruler of Israel."

1102 Then (v 43), the disagreement among the people is mentioned; secondly, the attempt of some of them to seize Christ; and thirdly, the failure of their attempt.

1103 **And so there was dissension among the people because of him**, that is, Christ. For it often happens that when the truth is made known, it causes dissensions and uneasiness in the hearts of the wicked. So Jeremiah says, representing Christ: "Woe is me, my mother! Why did you give birth to me as a man of strife and dissension for all the earth" (Jer 15:10). And our Lord said: "I have not come to send peace, but the sword" (Mt 10:34).

1104 Some of them attempted to seize Christ; so he says, some of them, that is, those who had said, "Would the Christ come from Galilee?" **wanted to apprehend him**, to kill him out of hatred: "Pursue and seize him" (Ps 70:11); "The enemy said: 'I will pursue and seize'" (Ex 15:9). On the other hand, those who are good and those who believe want to seize Christ to enjoy him: "I will go up into the palm tree and seize its fruit" (Sg 7:8).

1105 But they were frustrated by the power of Christ. So he says: **no one laid a hand on him**, that is, because Jesus was not willing that they do so, for this depended on his power: "No one takes my soul from me, but I lay it down of myself" (below 10. 18). Accordingly, when Christ did will to suffer, he did not wait for them, but he offered himself to them: "Jesus stepped forward and said to them: 'Whom are you looking for?'" (below 18:4).

1106 Then (v 45), we see the dissension of the leaders of the people: first, their disagreement with their officers; and secondly, the disagreement among themselves (v 50). He does three things about the first: first, he shows the leaders rebuking their officers; secondly, the testimony the officers gave about Christ; and thirdly, we see the leaders reprimanding their own officers.

1107 As to the first, let us note the evil of the leaders, that is, the chief priests and Pharisees, when they say to their officers. **Why have you not brought him?** For their evil was so great that their own officers could not please them unless they injured Christ: "They cannot sleep unless they have done something evil" (Prv 4:16).

There is a problem here about the literal meaning of the text. For since it was said before that the officers were sent to apprehend Jesus when the festival was half over (v 32), that is, on the fourth day, and here we read that they returned on the seventh day, "On the last and greatest day of the festival" (v 37), it seems that the Evangelist overlooked the days inbetween. There are two answers to this: either the Evangelist anticipated the disagreement among the people, or the officers had returned before, but it is just mentioned now to show the reason why there was dissension among the leaders.

1108 As to the second point, let us realize how good these officers were in giving this praiseworthy testimony about Christ, saying: **Never has any man spoken like this man.** They deserve our praise for three reasons. First, because of their admiration: for they admired Christ because of his teachings, not his miracles. And this brought them nearer to the truth, and further from the custom of the Jews, who looked for signs, as is said in 1 Corinthians (1:22). Secondly, we should praise them because of the ease with which they were won over: because with just a few words, Christ had captivated them and had drawn their love. Thirdly, because of their confidence: because it was to the Pharisees, who were the enemies of Christ, that they said: **Never has any man spoken like this man.** And these things are to be expected, for Jesus was not just a man, but the Word of God; and so his words had power to affect people. "Are not my words like fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer breaking a rock?" (Jer 23:29). And so Matthew says: "He was teaching them as one who had authority" (Mt 7:29). And his words were sweet to contemplate: "Let your voice sound in my ears, for your voice is sweet" (Sg 2:14); "How sweet are your words to my tongue!" (Ps 118:103). And his words were useful to keep in mind, because they promised eternal life: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (above 6:69); "I am the Lord, who teaches you things that are useful" (Is 48:17).

1109 As to the third point, see the treachery of the Jews in living to alienate the officers from Christ; **The Pharisees then reforted, to the officers, Have you too been seduced?** Here they do three things. First, they attack what they consider a mistake of their officers; secondly, they hold up their leaders as an example; and in from him and the third place, they reject the example of the people.

1110 They attack the officers when they say, **Have you too been seduced?** As if to say: We see that what he said was pleasing to you. As a matter of fact, they had been seduced, but in an admirable way, because they left the evil of unbelief and were brought to the truth of the faith. We read about this: "You seduced me, O Lord, and I was seduced" (Jer 20:7).

1111 Then they appeal to their rulers as an example, to turn the officers further from Christ, saying: **Has any one of the rulers believed in him, or any of the Pharisees?** There are two reasons why a person should be believed: either because of some authority or because of a religious disposition. And they say that none of these are found with Christ. As if to say: If Christ were worthy to be received, then our rulers, who have authority, would have accepted him; and so would the Pharisees, who have a religious disposition. But none of these believe in him; and so neither should you believe in him. This fulfills the saying: "The stone that the builders (that is, the rulers and the Pharisees) rejected has become

the cornerstone (that is, in the hearts of the people). The Lord has done this," because his goodness is greater than man's evil (Ps 117:22).

1112 They reject the statements of the people because they are a rebuke to their own evil. So they say: **But these people, who do not know the law, they are accursed;** therefore, you should not agree with them. This thought was found in Deuteronomy: "Accursed are they who do not live within the law and do not act according to it" (Dt 27:26). But they did not understand this correctly, because even those who do not have a knowledge of the law but act in harmony with it, live more within the law than those who do have a knowledge of the law yet do not keep it. It is said about such people: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mt 15:8); and in James (1:22): "Be a doer of the word, and not just a hearer."

1113 Next, we see the dissension among the rulers. First, the advice of Nicodemus is given; secondly, the opposition of the rulers; and thirdly, the outcome of the whole affair. The Evangelist does two things about the first: first, he tells us something about Nicodemus; secondly, he gives his advice.

1114 He tells us three things about Nicodemus: the first two show us the attitude of Nicodemus himself; and the second reveals the malice of the rulers. The first concerns the faith of Nicodemus, and he says: **Nicodemus, who came to him,** i.e., who believed, for to come to Christ is the same as to believe in him. The second shows the imperfection of his faith, because he came **at night**. For if he had believed perfectly, he would not have been fearful, for as we read below (12:42): "Many of the rulers believed in him, but they did not admit it because of the Pharisees, so that they would not be expelled from the synagogue." And one of these was Nicodemus.

The third thing the Evangelist tells us shows us that the rulers did not speak the truth: for they said that none of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed in Christ. And so the Evangelist says about Nicodemus that he was one of them: as if to say: If Nicodemus, who was one of the rulers, believed in Christ, then the rulers and Pharisees are speaking falsely when they say that none of the rulers believed in him. "Truly, a lie was spoken" (Jer 16:19).

1115 The advice of Nicodemus is given when he says: **Does our law judge a man without first hearing from him and knowing what he has done?** For according to the civil laws, a judgment was only to be given after a complete investigation. This is why we read: "It is not the custom of the Romans to condemn any man before he has his accusers face him, and can defend himself from the charges" (Acts 25:16). "I diligently investigated the stranger's cause" (Jb

29:16). And so the law of Moses says: "Do not condemn one who is innocent and just, because I hate the wicked" (Ex 23:7).

Nicodemus said what he did because he believed in Christ and wanted to convert them to Christ; yet because he was afraid, he did not act very candidly. He thought that if they would only listen to Christ, the words of Christ would be so effective that perhaps they would be changed like those whom they sent to Jesus, and who, when they heard Christ, were turned aside from the very act for which they had been sent.

1116 We see the opposition of the rulers to Nicodemus when he says, **They answered and said to him.** First, they think that he has been seduced; and secondly, that he does not know the law.

As to the first, they say: **Are you too a Galilean?** that is, one who has been seduced by this Galilean. For they considered Christ a Galilean because he lived in Galilee. And so anyone who followed Christ they derisively called a Galilean. "The girl servant said to Peter: 'You are a Galilean, are you not' (Mt 26:69), "Do you also want to become his disciples?" (below 9:27).

About his ignorance of the law, they say: **Look at the Scriptures and see that the Prophet will not come from Galilee.** But since Nicodemus was a teacher of the law, he did not have to look again. It is as if they were saying: Although you are a teacher, you do not know this. Something like this was said before: "You are a teacher in Israel and you do not know these things?" (above 3:10). Now even though the Old Testament does not explicitly say that a prophet will come from Galilee, it does say that the Lord of the prophets would come from there, according to: "A flower (i.e., a Nazarene) will arise from his root ... and the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon him," as we read in Isaiah (11:1).

1117 The outcome of this dissension is seen to be useless. So he says: **Then every man returned,** leaving the matter unfinished, to his own house, i.e., to what belonged to him, empty of faith and frustrated in his evil desires. "He frustrates the plans of the wicked" (Jb 5:13); "God destroys the plans of rulers, and frustrates the schemes of the people" (Ps 3 2:10).

Or, each returned **to his own house**, i.e., to the evil of his unbelief and irreverence. "I know where you live: where the throne of Satan is. You hold to my name, and you have not denied my faith" (Rv 2:13).

9

LECTURE I

1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parent, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, 7 saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. [\[1\]](#)

1293 After showing the enlightening power of his teaching by his own words [cf. 1 118], our Lord confirms this by his action, when he gives sight to one physically blind. In regard to this three things are presented: first, the man's infirmity; secondly, his healing (v 6); thirdly, a discussion among the Jews about this health (v 8). In regard to the first he does two things: first, the man's infirmity is mentioned; secondly, we see an inquiry about its cause (v 2).

1294 It should be noted in regard to the first that Jesus hid himself and left the temple, and while passing by he saw this blind man, as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. Three things are considered here. First, he passed by to avoid the anger of the Jews: "Do not kindle the coals of a sinner lest you be burned in his flaming fire" (Sir 8:10). Secondly, he wanted to try and soften their hardness of heart by working a miracle: "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin" (15:24). Thirdly, he went on his way in order to confirm his words by working a sign; for our Lord's works produce faith in the things that he says: "He confirmed the message by the sign that attended it" (Mk 16:20).

In the mystical sense, according to Augustine, this blind man is the human race. [\[2\]](#) Sin is a spiritual blindness: "Their wickedness blinded them" (Wis 2:21). The human race is blind from birth, because it contracted sin from its origin, for

the blindness occurs through sin in the first man, from whom all of us draw our origin. We read, "We were by nature," by natural origin, "children of wrath" (Eph 2:3).

1295 Then (v2), the cause of this man's infirmity is discussed: first, the disciples ask about its cause; secondly, Christ explains it.

1296 In regard to the first, three things are to be considered. The first is the reason for the disciples questioning Christ. According to Chrysostom, this was because Jesus, leaving the temple and seeing this blind man, looked at him intently, as though seeing in him an opportunity to manifest his power. And so the disciples seeing him look so intently at the blind man were impelled to question him. [3]

Secondly, we see the seriousness of the disciples, because they say, **Rabbi**, calling him Teacher, to indicate that they are questioning him in order to learn. Thirdly, we see why they asked, **who sinned?** when they inquire into the reason for the man's blindness.

It must be said, according to Chrysostom, that because the Lord said to the paralytic, when he healed him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you," the disciples thought that his infirmity was due to sin. [4] They also thought that every human illness arose from sin, as Eliphaz said: "Think now, who that was innocent ever perished?" (Jb 4:7). Therefore, they asked whether he had been born blind on account of his own sin or that of his parents. It does not seem to have been on account of his own sin, because no one sins before he is born, since souls do not exist before their bodies, nor do they sin, as some mistakenly think: "Though they were not yet born and had done nothing, either good or bad ... not because of works but because of his call, she was told 'The elder will served the younger'" (Rom 9:11). Nor does it seem that he suffered on account of a sin of his parents, for we read: "The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for the fathers" (Deut 24:16).

Note that people are punished with two kinds of punishment. One is spiritual and concerns the soul; the other is bodily and concerns the body. A child is never punished on account of his father with a spiritual punishment, because the soul of a child is not from his father but from God: "All souls are mine," that is, by creation, "the soul of the father as well as the soul of the child is mine: the soul that sins shall be punished" [Ez 18:4]. Augustine also says this in one of his letters. [5] But a child is punished on account of his father with a bodily punishment, since he is of his father as far as his body is concerned. This is

expressly shown in Genesis (c 19) where when Sodom was destroyed the children of the inhabitants of Sodom were killed on account of the sins of their parents. Again, the Lord very often threatened to destroy the children of the Jews on account of the sins of their parents.

1297 To understand why one person is punished on account of the sins of another, we must realize that a punishment has two aspects: it is an injury and a remedy. Sometimes a part of the body is cut off to save the entire body. And a punishment of this kind causes an injury insofar as a part is cut off, but it is a remedy insofar as it saves the body itself. Still, a doctor never cuts off a superior member to save one which is inferior, but the other way around. Now in human matters, the soul is superior to the body, and the body is superior to external possessions. And so it never happens that someone is punished in his soul for the sake of his body, but rather he is punished in his body as a curing remedy for his soul. Therefore, God sometimes imposes physical punishments, or difficulties in external concerns, as a beneficial remedy for the soul. And then punishments of this kind are not given just as injuries, but as healing remedies. Thus, the killing of the children of Sodom was for the good of their souls: not because they deserved it, but so they would not be punished more severely for increasing their sins in a life spent in imitating their parents. And in this way some are often punished for the sins of their parents. [\[6\]](#)

1298 Then when he says, **Jesus answered**, our Lord reveals the reason for the man's infirmity: first, he excludes the reason they assumed; secondly, he mentions the real reason; and thirdly, he explains it.

1299 He excludes the reason they assumed when he says, **it was not that this man sinned, or his parents**: for the disciples had assumed that this was the reason for his infirmity, as was said. But a contrary statement is found in Romans [3:23]: "All have sinned and are in need of God's glory." And again we read that sin has passed into all men from Adam. I answer to this that both the blind man and his parents did contract original sin and even added other actual sins during their life, for we read: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 Jn 1:8). But when the Lord says, **it was not that this man sinned, or his parents**, he means that his blindness did not come as a result of their sins.

1300 He mentions the real reason when he says, **but that the works of God might be made manifest in him**, for through the works of God we are led to a knowledge of him: "his invisible nature has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (Rom 1:20); "The very works which my Father has given me to perform...they bear witness to me" (5:36). But the knowledge of God is

man's greatest good, since his happiness consists in this: "This is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent" (17:3); "Let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me" (Jer 9:24). If, therefore, an infirmity occurs in order that God's works be manifested, and God is made known through this manifestation, it is clear that such bodily infirmities occur for a good purpose.

1301 It might seem that the manifestation of God's works is not a sufficient reason for such an infirmity, especially since neither he nor his parents sinned. Therefore, some say that the words **but that** do not indicate the reason but merely the sequence of events. The sense then being: the man was blind, and the works of God were manifested in his cure. But this does not seem to be reasonable; and so it is better to say that the reason is being given. For evil is twofold: the evil of fault and the evil of punishment. Now God does not cause the evil of fault, but permits it; yet he would not permit it unless he intended some good from it. So Augustine says in his *Enchiridion*: "God is so good that he would never permit any evil to occur, unless he was so powerful as to draw some good from every evil."[\[7\]](#) Therefore, he allows certain sins to be committed because he intends some good; in this way, he allows the rage of tyrants so that martyrs may be crowned. Much more, therefore, should it be said that the evil of punishment, which he causes - as Amos (3:6) says: "Does evil befall a city, unless the Lord has done it?" - is never applied except for the good he intends. And among these goods the best is that the works of God be manifested, and from them that God be known. Therefore, it is not unfitting if he sends afflictions or allows sins to be committed in order that some good come from them.[\[8\]](#)

1302 It should be noted, as Gregory says in *I Morals*, that God sends afflictions to men in five ways.[\[9\]](#) Sometimes they are the beginning of damnation, according to Jeremiah: "Strike them with a double punishment." A sinner is struck with this kind of punishment in this life so that without interruption or end he might be punished in the other life. For example, Herod, who killed James, was punished in this life and also in hell (Acts 12:23). Sometimes afflictions are sent as a correction, as we read: "Your discipline will teach me" [Ps 17:36]. And sometimes a person is afflicted not to correct past wrongs, but to preserve him from future ones, as we read of Paul: "And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated" (2 Cor 12:7). Again, sometimes it is done to encourage virtue: as when a person's past sins are not being corrected, nor future ones hindered, but he is led to a stronger love by knowing the power of the one who unexpectedly delivered him from some difficulty: "Virtue is made perfect in infirmity" [2 Cor 12:9]; "Patience has a perfect work" [Jas 1:4]. And finally, sometimes afflictions are sent to manifest the

divine glory; thus we read here, **that the works of God might be made manifest in him.**

1303 Next he explains the true reason. And because he had mentioned God's works, first he states the opportunity for manifesting God's works; secondly, the reason for this opportunity or need, **night comes**; and thirdly, he explains this (v 5).

1304 He says, therefore, this man was born blind **that the works of God might be made manifest in him.** And it was necessary that they be manifested, for **we must work the works of him who sent me**, that is, the works entrusted to me by my Father: "I have come to do the will of him who sent me" (6:38). And below he says: "Father, I have accomplished the work you gave me to do" (17:4). Or, these words can refer to Christ insofar as he is God; and then they indicate the equality of his power with that of the Father. Then the meaning is, **we must work the works of him who sent me**, that is, the works which I have from the Father. For everything that the Son does, even according to his divine nature, he has from his Father: "The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing" (5:19).

1305 I say we must work **while it is day**. Our natural day is produced by the presence of the sun to the earth. But the Sun of Justice or Righteousness is Christ, our God: "But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise" (Mal 4:2). Therefore, as long as this Sun is present to us, the works of God can be done in us, for us, and by us. At one time this Sun was physically present to us; and then it was day: "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps 118:24). Therefore, it was fitting to do the works of God. He is also present us by grace; and then it is the day of grace, when it is fitting to do the works of God, **while it is day**; "The night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Rom 13:12); "Those who sleep, sleep at night" (1 Thess 5:7).

1306 If the presence of the sun produces day, and its absence night, then, since the sun is always present to itself, it is always day for the sun; and so for the sun, it is always the time for acting and illuminating. But with regard to ourselves, to whom it is sometimes present and at other times absent, it is not always acting and illuminating. In the same way for Christ, the Sun of Justice, it is always day and the time for acting; but not with respect to us, because we are not always able to receive his grace due to some obstacle on our part.

1307 He mentions why this is our opportunity when he says, **night comes, when no one can work.** Just as there are two kinds of day, so there are two

kinds of night. One is by the physical departure of the Sun of Justice, which is what the Apostles experienced when they were demoralized at the time of the passion, when Christ was physically taken from them: "you will all fall away because of me this night" (Mt 26:31). Then it was not the time for acting, but for suffering.

But it is better to say that even when Christ was physically absent because of his ascension, it was still day for the Apostles insofar as the Sun of Justice shone on them, and it was a time for working. And so night in this passage refers to that night which comes from the spiritual separation from the Sun of Justice, that is, by the separation from grace. This night is of two kinds. One is by the loss of actual grace through mortal sin: "Those who sleep, sleep at night" (1 Thess 5:7). When this night comes, no one can perform works that merit eternal life. The other night is total, when one is deprived not only of actual grace by mortal sin, but even of the ability of obtaining grace because of an eternal damnation in hell. Here there is a vast night for those to whom it will be said: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire" (Mt 24:41). During this night no one can work, because it is not the time for meriting, but for receiving according to one's merits. Therefore, while you are living, do now what you will want to have done then: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or thought of knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going" (Eccl 9:10).

1308 He gives the reason for what he has just said, saying, **as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world**. This is like saying: If you want to know what is that day and what is that night of which I speak, I say that **I am the light of the world**, for my presence makes day, and my absence night; "I am the light of the world" (8:12). **As long as I am in the world** by my bodily presence - "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father" (16:28) - **I am the light of the world**. And thus this day lasted until the ascension of Christ. Or again, **as long as I am in the world** spiritually by grace - "I am with you until the consummation of the world" [Mt 28:20] - **I am the light of the world**. And this day will last until the consummation of the world.

1309 Next, when the Evangelist says, **as he said this, he spat on the ground**, he describes the healing of the blind man. Here five things were done by Christ. First, he moistens the earth, **he spat on the ground**. Secondly, he made the clay, as we read, he **made clay of the spittle**. Thirdly, Christ smeared the man's eyes **and anointed the man's eyes**. Fourthly, he commands the man to wash, with **go, wash in the pool of Siloam**. And fifthly, the man's sight is restored, **and he came back seeing**. Each of these has both a literal and a mystical explanation.

1310 The literal meaning is explained by Chrysostom in this way. [\[10\]](#) Christ restored the man's sight by spittle in order to show that he accomplished this by a power coming from himself, and that the miracle should not be attributed to anything else: "Power came forth from him" (Lk 6:19). Although our Lord could have performed all his miracles by his mere word, because "he commanded and they were created" (Ps 148:5), he frequently used his body in them to show that as an instrument of his divinity it held a definite healing power. He made clay from his spittle to show that he who had formed the entire first man can reshape the deficient members of a man. Thus, just as he formed the first man from clay, so he made clay to re-form the eyes of the one born blind.

He rubbed the clay on the eyes of the one born blind to show, by healing what is most important in bodies, that he was the creator of bodies. For man is more excellent than all other bodily substances; and among his members, the head is the more excellent; and among the organs of the head, the eye is more excellent than the others: "The eye is the lamp of the body" (Mt 6:22). Therefore, by repairing the eye, which is more excellent than the other bodily members, he showed that he was the creator of the entire man and of all corporeal nature. He said, **go, wash in the pool of Siloam**, so that it would not seem that the clay he rubbed on the eyes had the power to heal them. Thus, as long as he had the clay on his eyes, the man did not see, but saw only after he washed.

He sent him some distance to wash, to the pool of Siloam, first, to overcome the obstinacy of the Jews. For he had to cross the city, and so all would see the blind man going with the clay on his eyes, and then returning with his sight restored. Secondly, he did this to acclaim the obedience and faith of the blind man; for perhaps he had frequently had clay put on his face, and had often washed in the pool of Siloam, and yet had not seen. So he could have said: "Clay usually makes me worse, and I have often washed in the pool but was never helped," as we read of Naaman in 2 Kings (5:10). Yet he did not argue, but simply obeyed. Thus it follows, **so he went and washed**. The reason why he sent him to the pool of Siloam was because the Jewish people were signified by that water: "Because this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently" (Is 8:6). Therefore, he sent him to Siloam to show that he still loved the Jewish people.

The effect follows, because **he came back seeing**. This was predicted in Isaiah (35:5): "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened."

1311 Augustine gives the mystical and allegorical explanation. He says that the spittle, which is saliva that descends from the head, signifies the Word of God, who proceeds from the Father, the head of all things: "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High" (Sir 24:3). Therefore, the Lord made clay from spittle

and the earth when the Word was made flesh. [\[11\]](#) He anointed the eyes of the blind man, that is, of the human race. And the eyes are the eyes of the heart, anointed by faith in the incarnation of Christ. But the blind man did not yet see, because the anointing produced a catechumen, who has faith but has not yet been baptized. So he sends him to the pool of Siloam to wash and receive his sight, i.e., to be baptized, and in baptism to receive full enlightenment. Thus, according to Dionysius, baptism is an enlightenment: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness" (Ezek 36:25). [\[12\]](#) And so this Gospel is appropriately read in Lent, on Holy Saturday, when those about to be baptized are examined. Nor is it without reason that the Evangelist adds the meaning of the pool, saying, **which means Sent**, because whoever is baptized must be baptized in Christ, who was sent by the Father: "As many of you as were baptized in Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27). For if Christ had not been sent, none of us would have been freed from sin.

According to Gregory, however, the spittle signifies the savor of intimate contemplation, which flows from the head into the mouth, because due to the love of our Creator we have been touched even in this life with the savor of revelation. [\[13\]](#) Thus the Lord mixed spittle with earth and restored sight to the man born with his contemplation, and heals our understanding from its original blindness.

LECTURE 2

8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some said, "It is he"; others said, "No, but he is like him." He said, "I am the man." 10 They said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went and washed and received my sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." 13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15 The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There was a division among them. 17 So they again said to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." 18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents

of the man who had received his sight, 19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age, ask him." **[14]**

1312 After the description of the miraculous healing of the blind man, the Evangelist tells of the miracle being examined. First, the miracle is examined by the people; secondly, by the Pharisees (v 13); and thirdly, on account of his confession the blind man is instructed and commended by Christ (v 35). In regard to the first, the Evangelist mentions three things: first, we see an inquiry about the person who received his sight; secondly, about the restoration itself (v 10); and thirdly about the one who restored his sight (v 1). In regard to the first he does three things: first, we have a question about the one who received his sight; secondly, the different opinions about this are given; thirdly, the question is settled.

1313 The question is asked by the people. He says, **the neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar said: Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?** Here two things are to be considered. One is that due to the greatness of the miracle, it was considered incredible. So we read below: "Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind" (9:32). This fulfills for them what is said in Habakkuk (1:5), "I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told." Secondly, we should note the wonderful compassion of God, because our Lord performs miracles not only for the powerful, but also for outcasts, since he healed, with great pity, those who begged. This shows that he who came for our salvation rejected no one because of their poverty: "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom?" (Jas 2:5). Thus they explicitly say, **Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?** This is like saying: He is an outcast and does not deserve to be cured. But Baruch says the opposite: "The giants who were born there...God did not choose them" (3:26).

1314 The opinions of the people are presented when he says, **Some said:** It is he, the beggar, because they had often seen him begging, and later hurrying through the town when he went to the pool with the clay on his eyes. Thus they could not deny that it was he. But others were on the contrary opinion, so they said, **No, but it is like him.** The reason for this, as Augustine says, is that the man's appearance changed when he regained his sight, for nothing is so

characteristic as the expression a person gets from his eyes: "A sensible man is known by his face" (Sir 19:29).[\[15\]](#)

1315 The question is settled by the blind man because **he said**, the blind man, **I am the man**, the one who used to beg. His voice was grateful. For since he could not be ungrateful for such a great favor and was unable to show any other sign of gratitude than to constantly declare that he had been cured by Christ, he said, **I am the man**, the one who was blind and begged; and now I see: "Praise God and give thanks to him...for what he has done for you" (Tob 12:6).

1316 Then (v 10), we see the investigation of the act, which was the restoration of the man's sight. First, we have the question asked by the Jews; secondly, the answer of the blind man (v 11).

1317 They continue: If you are the blind man who used to beg, then tell us, **how were your eyes opened?** This question came from their vain curiosity because neither the one who was cured nor we ourselves know how it was done: "Do not meddle in what is beyond your tasks" (Sir 3:23).

1318 The blind man's answer was remarkable; he says, **the man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes**...In his answer he first points out the person who gave him his sight, saying **the man called Jesus**. He was right in calling him a man; he knew that he was a man, and he was a true man: "Born in the likeness of man" (Phil 2:7). For although he had not seen Jesus, because he had left while still blind to go to Siloam, he knew him from his voice and from the conversations of others about him.

Secondly, he tells what was done, saying, **he made clay and anointed my eyes**. Here he shows that he is truthful, not asserting what is not certain. For our Lord had made clay from spittle, but he did not know this; yet through his sense of touch he recognized the clay which was made and placed over his eyes. So he did not say, "He made clay from spittle," but only, he **made clay and anointed my eyes**: "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands...we proclaim also to you" (1 Jn 1:1).

Thirdly, he mentions the command, saying, **and he said to me, Go to Siloam and wash**. This was also necessary for us, for if we wish to be cleansed from our blindness of heart, it is necessary that we be spiritually washed; "Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean" (Is 1:16).

Fourthly, he shows his obedience, saying, **so I went and washed**. He is saying

in effect: Because I heard this command and desired to see, I obeyed. And it is no wonder, because we read: "For the commandment," that is, when obeyed, "is a lamp and the teaching a light" (Prov 6:23).

Fifthly, he mentions the good effect, saying, **and I received my sight**. It was fitting that he be enlightened after obeying, because as it says in Acts (5:32): "It is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him." Notice the perseverance of the blind man. As Augustine says: "Look at him! He became a preacher of grace. See him! He preaches and testifies to the Jews. This blind man testified, and the hearts of the wicked were vexed, because they did not have the light in their hearts which he had in his face."[\[16\]](#)

1319 Next, we have the inquiry about the person who restored his sight (v 12). First, there is the question asked by the Jews, **Where is he?** They asked this maliciously, as they were thinking of killing him; for they had already formed a conspiracy against Christ: "But now you seek to kill me" (8:40).

Secondly, we have the answer of the blind man, **I do not know**. As Augustine says, from these words it is clear that what was accomplished in him physically represents what is accomplished spiritually at different stages.[\[17\]](#) For at first, the blind man is anointed, and then sees after his washing. The anointing represents the beginning of his physical health, and the washing leads to complete health. In particular, an anointing produces a catechumen; and the washing, that is, baptism, perfects and enlightens him. Thus we have a representation of the difference in faith found at different stages. For when he says, **I do not know**, this represents the imperfect faith of catechumens: "You worship what you do not know" (4:22). This can also signify our faith: "For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect" (1 Cor 13:9).

1320 Then when he says, **they brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind**, we see his examination by the Pharisees. First, they question the man born blind; secondly, his parents (v 18). He does three things with the first. First, we see the person to be examined; secondly, he mentions the intention of the examiners; and thirdly we have the interrogation itself.

1321 The one to be examined, the blind man, is led to the Pharisees by the people. **They brought**, that is, the crowd, **to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind**. They did this because the crowd was trying to find out from him where Jesus was, so that if they found him they could bring him to the Pharisees and accuse him of breaking the Sabbath. So because they did not have Christ they took the blind man, so that by questioning him more roughly they might force him by fear to make up something false about Christ: "I will go

to the great, and will speak to them; for they know the way of the Lord, the law of their God. But they all alike had broken the yoke, they had burst the bonds" (Jer 5:5).

1322 The Evangelist shows that their intention was perverse, saying, **it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay**. He says this to show their evil intention and the reason why they sought Jesus, that is, to find a charge against him and detract from his miracle by his supposed violation of the law. Nevertheless, it should be said that "The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Mt 12:8).

1323 His examination is conducted by the Pharisees, since it is said, **The Pharisees again asked him**. First, they question him about what was done; secondly, about the person who did it (v 16).

1324 The Evangelist does two things about the first: first, he presents their interrogation; secondly, the blind man's answer. They ask him about the sign he received, **the Pharisees again asked him**, not in order to learn, but to find a reason to accuse him of lying. The blind man answers them, not contradicting what he said before, nor deviating from the truth. **He**, that is, the blind man, **said to them, He put clay on my eyes**. We must, first, admire the perseverance of this blind man, for although it may not seem such a great thing to have spoken the truth when he, without danger, was questioned by the crowd, he showed remarkable perseverance when in greater danger before the Pharisees he neither denied what he had said before nor changed his account: "I will also speak of thy testimonies before kings, and shall not be put to shame" (Ps 119:46). Secondly, we should admire his skill, for it is good practice to first relate an event in detail and with all its circumstances, and then if it has to be repeated, to speak more concisely. So here, he does not repeat the name of the one who spoke to him, nor that he was told to go and wash. But without hesitation he relays only the essential, and says, **He put clay on my eyes**.

1325 Next (v 16), an inquiry is made about the one who restored the man's sight. First, the different opinions of the Pharisees concerning Christ are given; secondly, the opinion of the blind man is sought (v 17). In regard to the first he does three things: first, he presents the opinion of those who were blaspheming Christ; then, the opinion of those who were commending him; thirdly, he concludes with the fact that they were arguing and disagreeing among themselves.

1326 We should note, concerning the first, that those who act maliciously against someone keep silent if they see anything good in his work, and they reveal the

evil, if any is seen, even turning what is good into evil, according to "Beware of a scoundrel, for he devises evil, lest he give you a lasting blemish" (Sir 11:33). This is what they are doing here: for they do not mention what seemed good, that is, the restoration of the blind man's sight, but stress what they can against Christ, that is, his breaking of the Sabbath. Thus **some of the Pharisees said**, that is, those who were malicious and corrupt, **this man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath**. But Christ did keep the Sabbath, for when the Lord forbade work on the Sabbath he had in mind servile work, which is a sin: "Every one who does sinful works on the Sabbath breaks the Sabbath. So Christ, who was without sin, rather than they, kept the Sabbath.

1327 The opinion of those commending him is presented when he reports them as saying, **How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?** These others had some faith due to the signs that Christ worked, but were still weak and imperfect; it was out of fear of the Pharisees and the elders that they asked with hesitation, **How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?** We read below that "Many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it" (12:42). They should have shown how our Lord had not broken the Sabbath, and have appropriately replied in defense of Jesus.

1328 The difference of opinion among them is mentioned when he says, **there was a division among them**; and this division was also found in the people. This was a sign of their destruction: "Their heart is false; now they must bear their guilt" (Hos 10:2); "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste" (Mt 12:25).

1329 Next (v 17), they ask the blind man for his opinion. And first we have the question the Pharisees asked; secondly, the blind man's answer.

They question him, saying, **what do you say about him?** According to Chrysostom, this question was not asked by those who were blaspheming Christ, but by those favorably disposed.[\[18\]](#) This is clear from the way they questioned him; for they call his attention to the gift he received, saying, **since he has opened your eyes**. If the others had been doing the questioning, they would not have said this, but would rather recall that Christ broke the Sabbath. But these remind him of the benefit that he received to make him grateful and lead him to testify to Christ.

But according to Augustine, this question was asked by Christ's enemies, who wanted to deprecate this man who constantly professed the truth; or they were trying to get him to change his opinion out of fear; or at least were attempting to exclude him from the synagogue.[\[19\]](#)

The answer of the blind man remained the same, **he said, He is a prophet.** Although up to this time, as though unanointed in heart, he did not yet profess that Christ was the Son of God, he firmly expressed what he thought and did not lie. For our Lord said of himself: "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country" (Mt 13:57); "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet... him shall you heed" (Dt 18:15).

1330 Next (v 18), we see his parents questioned. First, we have the reason why they were questioned; secondly, the question itself (v 19); thirdly their answer (v 20); and fourthly, the reason for this answer (v 22).

1331 The reason for this second questioning was the unbelief of the Pharisees. He says, **the Jews**, that is, the Pharisees, **did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man.** They did this in an attempt to nullify the miracle of Christ and to preserve their own glory: "How can you believe, who receive glory from one another?" (Jn 5:44).

1332 The Pharisees now question his parents. Here they ask about three things. First, about their son, saying **Is this your son?** Secondly, about his blindness; and so they add, **who you say was born blind.** They did not say, "who at one time was blind," but **who you say**, implying that they made this up. What father would lie in such a way about his son? Yet they were trying to make him say he did.

Thirdly, they ask how he had obtained his sight, **How then does he now see?** This was like saying: Either it is false that he now sees, or that he was once blind; but obviously the truth is that he sees; therefore it was false to say that he had been blind: "The powerful man will test you through much talking, and while he smiles he will be examining you" (Sir 13:11).

1333 Then, the answer of his parents is given (v 20). The Pharisees had asked about three things; they answer firmly about two and in regard to the third they refer them to their son. First, they admit the first, namely, that he is their son; so they say, **we know that this is our son.** They also admit the second when they add, **and that he was born blind.** This shows that the truth always conquers what is false, as we read in the apocryphal 3 Esdras (3:13): "Truth conquers all." Yet as to the third question, how their son sees, they **answer, but how he now sees we do not know.**

They reply, secondly, about the person who gave him his sight, **now do we know who opened his eyes.** They answer this way because the question was

directed against the one who gave sight to their son, and so they refer this to their son, saying, **Ask him, he is of age**. This was like saying: He was born blind, not mute; thus he can speak for himself in this matter. The testimony about this miracle was from several sources so as to make it more believable: the parents told what they knew, and their blind son confirmed that he had been cured.

1334 The reason for their answer is given when he says, **his parents said this because they feared the Jews**; for they were still imperfect and did not dare do what our Lord says: "Do not fear those who kill the body" (Mt 10:28). The reason for their fear was **that the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue**. "I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues" (Jn 16:11). As Augustine says, it was no longer an evil to be cast out of the synagogue, for the ones they rejected Christ welcomed.[\[20\]](#)

LECTURE 3

24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." 25 he answered, "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, I now see." 26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?" 28 And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if any one is a worshipper of God and does his will, God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.[\[21\]](#)

1335 After the questioning of the blind man and his parents, an attempt is made to make him deny the truth and affirm what is false. First, they attempt to make him deny the truth; secondly, they revile him (v 28); and thirdly, they condemn him (v 34). The Evangelist does two things about the first. First, he shows how they tried to get the man born blind to deny the truth; secondly, how they

continued to question him in order to malign him (v 26). In regard to the first he does two things: first, he shows their malice; and secondly, the steadfastness of the man born blind (v 25). The malice of the Pharisees is shown by their attempt to have him deny the truth, while the steadfastness of the blind man appears by his resolute profession of the truth.

1336 In regard to the first he says, **for the second time they called the man who had been blind**, for his parents had referred them to the blind man, **and said to him: Give God the praise**. They say one thing but mean another. For they wish to force him to say that his sight was not restored by Christ, or if they are unable to do this, to force him to admit that he was cured by him through sorcery. They do not say this openly, but implicitly, with an appearance of devotion. They attempt this by saying, **Give God the praise**. As if to say: Your sight has been given to you. But only God can do this. Therefore, you should not attribute this to anyone but God, and not to this man, that is, Christ, because if you do this you are indicating that you have not received the gift of your healing from God, for the reason that God does not perform miracles through sinners. Thus they add, **we know that this man is a sinner**. But, as Augustine says, if he had done this, he would not be giving glory to God but rather, being ungrateful, would be blaspheming.[\[22\]](#) But in truth, the Pharisees were lying when they said, **we know that this man is a sinner**; for above (8:46), they could not convict him of sin, and he said: "which of you convicts me of sin?" And no wonder, because "He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips" (1 Pet 2:22).

1337 Here we see the steadfastness of the blind man. For amazed at the hardness of the Pharisees, and impatient with what they were saying, he says, in all truth, **Whether he is a sinner, I do not know**.

Yet because he had said before that "He is a prophet," is he not now saying, **Whether he is a sinner I do not know**, out of fear, as if he were doubtful? Not at all! Rather, he is angry and mocking the Pharisees. He is saying in effect: You say that he is a sinner; but I do not know that he is a sinner, and I am amazed that you say this, because he accomplished a work which does not seem to be the work of a sinner, because **though I was blind, now I see**, by his kindness. According to Augustine, he said this in order not to be maligned nor to conceal the truth. For perhaps if he had said, "I know that he is a just man," which was true, they would have maligned him.[\[23\]](#) But according to Chrysostom, he said this to give them a more impressive testimony to the miracle, and to make his answer believable by calling attention to the gift itself he received.[\[24\]](#)

1338 They again question the man born blind in order to malign him. First, we have the cunning interrogation of the Pharisees; and secondly, the contemptuous reply of the blind man (v 27).

1339 He says, with respect to the first, **They said to him: What did he do to you?** The blind man had said that he had received his sight from Christ, which the Pharisees had not asked about. It was their intention to malign Christ, so they now ask rather how he did it. So they did not ask "How is it that you see?" but **How did he open your eyes?** It was like saying: "He did this by some trick or sorcery, didn't he?" "Those who seek my hurt speak of ruin, and meditate treachery all the day long" (Ps 38:12).

1340 Now the man's answer is given. The man born blind, because he really had received his sight, answers them further, not timidly, but with boldness. He first belittles the repeated questioning of the Pharisees, saying, **I have told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again?** This was like saying: I told you once. Why do you want to hear it again? That's foolish! It looks like you are not paying attention to what I am saying. So, I have nothing further to say to you because your questioning is useless, and you want to cavil rather than learn. "He who tells a story to a fool tells it to a drowsy man; and at the end he will say: 'What is it'" (Sir 22:8).

Secondly, he mocks the presumptuous intention of the Pharisees, saying, **Do you too want to become his disciples?** When someone carefully investigates a matter, he does so either with a good intention, to accept it, or with an evil intention, to condemn it. Now because the Pharisees were carefully investigating this, and because the man born blind did not dare impute an evil intention to them, he takes the alternative, saying, **Do you too want to become his disciples?** He means by this: If you are not investigating this maliciously, you therefore wish to join him: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil" (Jer 13:23). As Augustine says: The one who had received his sight gladly desired to give them light.^[25] Thus, he significantly says, **you too**, implying that he himself was a disciple. He is saying in effect: **Do you want to become his disciples** as I am? I already see, and do not envy your coming to the light. And as Chrysostom says, from the steadfastness of the blind man we can see how strong truth really is, for when it convinces the lowly, it makes them noble and strong. And we can see how weak is a lie, which even if it is maintained by the powerful, shows and makes them weak.^[26]

1341 Next, the Pharisees revile the man born blind. First, we see them revile him; then, secondly, the defense of the blind man (v 30). He does two things

concerning the first: first, he presents the revilement of the Pharisees; secondly, the reason behind it (v 28b).

1342 With respect to the first he says, **and they reviled him, saying, You are his disciple**. This is, indeed, scornful, if you consider their vicious hearts. But if you consider their words, it is the greatest blessing. May we and our children be treated with such scorn! "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples" (Jn 8:31). Still, the Evangelist stated that they reviled him by saying this because what they said came from their evil hearts: "Like the glaze covering an earthen vessel are smooth lips with an evil heart" (Prov 26:23). We read about this revilement in the Psalm 109 (v 28): "let them curse, but do thou bless"; and in Matthew (5:11): "Blessed are you when men revile you."

1343 He next adds the reason for their reviling when he says, **we are disciples of Moses**. They were thinking of how they were ridiculed by the man born blind when he asked if they wanted to become Christ's disciples; for they took pride in being disciples of Moses, whom they thought was greater. First, they set forth their own situation, saying, **we are disciples of Moses**. But this pride of theirs is false, because they neither followed Moses nor fulfilled his commands: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me" (Jn 5:46); this was like saying: You do not follow the servant [Moses], and later go against his Lord.

Secondly, they praise the dignity of Moses when they say, **we know that God has spoken to Moses**. Here they are telling the truth, for as we read: "The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Ex 33:11); and "If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth" (Num 12:6). Thus God spoke to Moses in a more excellent way than to the other prophets. And it is about this that they are speaking. However, it is clear that since God spoke his Word to Moses, the dignity of Moses came from the Word of God. And so the Word of God is of greater dignity than Moses: "Yet Jesus has been counted worthy of as much more glory than Moses as the builder of a house has more honor than the house" (Heb 3:3).

Thirdly, they hint at the dignity of Christ in a veiled manner when they say, **as for this man, Christ, we do not know where he comes from**. This is true, but not the way they understood it: for they did not know the Father, and Christ was from the Father: "you know neither me nor my Father" (8:19). But their statement is false as they understood it, for when they said, we do **not know where he comes from**, they meant he had no authority and was unverified, so that it was not clear whether or not he came from God. They seem to be applying to him the words of Jeremiah: "I did not send you prophets, yet they

ran" (23:21).

1344 Now, the blind man's argument against the Pharisees is presented. First, he is amazed at their hardness of heart; secondly, he refutes their false opinion (v 31).

1345 Concerning the first, we must recall that we are not amazed at what happens frequently, and in the usual way; but we are amazed at what is unusual and great, whether this be good or evil. We are struck by unusual and great good: "you are wonderful, my Lord, and your countenance is full of grace," as we read in Esther [15:17]. We are also amazed at great evil: "Be appalled, O heavens, at this...for my people have committed two evils" (Jer 2:12). In line with this, the blind man says in answer, **Why this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from.** He is saying in effect: It would not be remarkable if you regarded someone insignificant and like me as having no authority. But it is extremely amazing that you can see an explicit and evident sign of divine power in Christ and say that you do not know where he comes from, especially because he did open my eyes.

1346 The man born blind refutes their false opinion by saying, **we know that God does not listen to sinners.** He is reasoning this way: Whomever God hears is from God; but God heard Christ; therefore, Christ is from God. He first states his main premise; then the minor premise (v 32); and thirdly, he draws his conclusion (v 33). He does two things about the first: first, he mentions those whom God does not hear; secondly, those he does hear (v 31b).

1347 God does not hear sinners. In regard to this he says, **we know that God does not hear sinners.** He is saying: Both you and I agree that sinners are not heard by God. Thus a Psalm says, "They cried to the Lord and he did not hear them"; and again, "Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer" (Prov 1:28). But there are statements which contradict this: "If they sin against thee - for there is no man who does not sin - but later repent with all their heart, then hear thou from heaven and forgive thy people" [2 Chron 6:36-39]; and in Luke (18:14) we read that the tax collector "went down to his house justified."

Because of this Augustine says that this blind man is speaking as one who has not been anointed, as one who does not yet have complete knowledge. For God does hear sinners, otherwise it would have been futile for the tax collector to have prayed: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Accordingly, if we wish to save the statement of the blind man we must say that God does not hear those sinners who persist in their sinning; but he does hear those sinners who are sorry for their sins, and who should be regarded more as repentant than as sinners.

[\[27\]](#)

1348 Yet there is a difficulty here. It is clear that miracles are not accomplished by us due to our own power, but through prayer. But sinners often perform miracles: "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name...and do many might works in your name?" (Mt 7:22); and yet God did not know them. Thus, what the blind man said does not seem to be true, namely, **we know that God does not listen to sinners**.

There are two answers to this. The first is general. Prayer has two characteristics, that is, it can obtain [what it asks for] and it can merit. Thus, sometimes it obtains what it asks, and does not merit; at other times, it merits and does not obtain. And so nothing prevents the prayer of a sinner from obtaining what it asks although it does not merit. This is the way that God hears sinners; not as a matter of merit, but they obtain what they ask from the divine power, which they acknowledge. The other answer is special and applies to this particular case, when the miracle that was done makes known the person of Christ.

1349 It should be mentioned that every miracle is a sort of testimony. Sometimes, a miracle is accomplished as a testimony to the truth that is being preached; at other times, it is a testimony to the person performing it. We must also realize that no true miracle happens except by the divine power, and that God is never a witness to a lie. I say, therefore, that whenever a miracle is performed in testimony to a doctrine that is being preached, that doctrine must be true, even if the person who is preaching it is not good. And when it is performed in testimony to the person, it is also necessary that the person be good. Now it is evident that the miracles of Christ were performed in testimony to his person: "The works which the Father has granted me to accomplish...bear me witness that the Father has sent me" (5:36). It was with this meaning that the blind man said that **God does not listen to sinners**, that is, so that they could perform miracles as a testimony to their supposed holiness. [\[28\]](#)

1350 Then when he says, **but if any one is a worshiper of God**...he shows that God hears the just through merit. We must realize that the performing of miracles is attributed to faith: "If you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will be done" (Mt 21:21). The reason for this is that miracles are accomplished by the omnipotence of God, on which faith relies. Therefore, whoever wishes to obtain something from God has to have faith: "Let him ask in faith" (Jas 1:6). However, if he wishes to obtain it through merit, he must do God's will. And these two conditions are mentioned here. As to the first, he says,

If any one is a worshipper of God by sacrifices and offerings: "They will worship him with sacrifice and burnt offering" (Is 19:21). These belong to the worship of *latria*, which attests to one's faith. As to the second he says, **and does his will** by obeying his commandments, **God listens to him**.

1351 Here he takes the minor premise of his argument. He is saying: Because of what Christ did, which no man has ever done, it is obvious that he did this by the action of God, and that he has been heard by God: "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin" (Jn 15:24).

1352 Next, he draws his conclusion. He is saying, in effect: From the kind of works that Christ does, it is obvious that he is from God. For **if this man were not from God, he could do nothing**, that is, freely, often and truly, because "apart from me you can do nothing" (15:5).

1353 Here the Pharisees condemn the blind man. In this condemnation they fall into three defects or sins, namely, untruth, pride, and injustice. They fall into untruth in reviling the blind man, **saying, you were born in utter sin**. Here it should be noted that the Jews were of the opinion that all infirmities and temporal adversities beset us on account of our previous sins. This was the opinion given by Eliphaz: "Think now, who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? As I have seen those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same. By the breath of God they perish" (Job 4:7). The reason for this opinion is that in the Old Law temporal goods were promised to the good, and temporal punishment to the evil: "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land" (Is 1:19). Therefore, seeing that this man had been born blind, they believed that this happened on account of his sins, and so they say, **you were born in utter sin**. But they were wrong, because the Lord said: "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents."

They say **in utter sin** to show that he is defiled by sins not only in his soul, insofar as all of us are born sinners, but even as regards the traces of sin which appear in his body, as blindness. Or according to Chrysostom, **in utter sin** means that he was in sin all his life, from his earliest years.[\[29\]](#)

They are guilty of pride by rejecting what the man born blind was teaching, when they say, **Would you teach us?** This was like saying: You are not worthy. This makes their pride clear: for no person, no matter however wise, ought to reject being taught by any inferior. Thus the Apostle teaches (1 Cor 14:30) that if something is revealed to one who is inferior, those who are greater should keep silent and listen. In Daniel we read that all the people, and the elders, listened to the judgment of a young boy, Daniel, whose spirit has been raised up by God.

They are guilty of injustice by unjustly casting him out. Thus we read, **and they cast him out**, that is, because he spoke the truth. However, in this man born blind there is already fulfilled what our Lord had said: "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man!" (Lk 6:22).

LECTURE 4

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" 36 He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you." 38 He said, "Lord, I believe"; and he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this, and they said to him, "Are we also blind?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'we see', your guilt remains." [\[30\]](#)

1354 After the Evangelist showed how the Jews cast out the man born blind because he persisted in the truth, he here shows how Jesus received him and taught him. First, we see Christ teaching him; secondly, the devotion of the man born blind (v 38); thirdly, the approval of his devotion (v 39). He does three things about the first. First, he shows the eagerness of Christ to teach him; secondly, we see the desire of the man born blind to believe (v 36); and thirdly, the teaching of the faith is given to perfect him (v 37).

1355 Christ's eagerness to teach is described in three ways. First, by his attentive consideration to what was done to the man born blind. For just as a trainer carefully considers what his athlete undergoes for his sake, so Christ attentively considered what the man born blind underwent for the sake of the truth and because of his assertions. And so he says that **Jesus heard**, attentively considered, that the Pharisees **had cast him out**, of the temple: "Give heed to me, O Lord, and to the voices of my adversaries" [Jer 18:19].

Secondly, we see Christ's eagerness from his efforts in searching for him, for the Evangelist says, **and having found him**; for we are said to find what we diligently seek: "She seeks diligently, until she finds it" (Lk 15:8). It is clear from this that Christ was looking for him alone, because he found more faith in him alone than in all the others. And we can see from this that God loves one just person more than ten thousand sinners: "I will make men more rare than fine gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir" (Is 13:12). And in Genesis we read

that God was willing to spare Sodom for the sake of ten just men.

Thirdly, our Lord's eagerness is seen from the seriousness of his question; he said, **Do you believe in the Son of God?** The blind man was an image of those to be baptized. Thus the custom arose in the Church of questioning those to be baptized about their faith: "Baptism...now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a clean conscience" (1 Pet 3:21). When asked about his faith he does not say, "Do you believe in Christ?" but **Do you believe in the Son of God?** He does this, as Hilary says, because it would develop that some would profess Christ, and yet deny that he was the Son of God and God, as Arius erred.^[31] These words clearly exclude this error: for if Christ were not God, we would not have to believe in him, since God alone is the object of faith, which rests on the first truth. Thus he significantly says, **in the Son** (*in Filium*); for I am certainly able to believe some creature, such as Peter and Paul (*credere Petro et Paulo*), yet I do not believe in Peter (*credere in Petrum*), but in God (*in Deum*) alone as the object of faith [cf. no. 901]. Thus it is clear that the Son of God is not a creature: "You believe in God, believe also in me" (Jn 14:1).

1356 Next he mentions the desire of the man born blind to believe. We have to recall that this man had not yet physically seen Christ: for he had not seen him when Christ anointed his eyes and sent him to the pool of Siloam, and when he wanted to go back to him he was detained by the Pharisees and the Jews. However, although he had not physically seen Jesus, he believed that the one who opened his eyes was the Son of God. And so he breaks out in words of desire and intense longing, and says, **And who is he, sir**, namely, the Son of God, who opened my eyes, **that I may believe in him?** It is clear from this that he knew something about Jesus, and did not know other things about him. For if he had not known him, he would not have argued so firmly on his behalf; and if he had not been ignorant of other things, he certainly would not have said, **Who is he, sir?** "My soul yearns for you in the night," that is, the night of ignorance (Is 26:9).

1357 Because, as we read in Wisdom (6:16), "She," that is, Wisdom, "goes about seeking those worthy of her," Christ reveals himself to the man born blind, who desired her, when he says, **You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.** Here Christ is giving him a teaching of faith. First, he mentions the gift he received, saying **you have seen him**, that is, you, who did not see before, have now seen him. He is saying in effect that the man born blind received the ability to see from him: "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see" (Lk 10:23); "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace...for my eyes have seen your salvation" [Lk 2:29]. Secondly, the teaching itself is given when he says, **It is he who speaks to you:** "In these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb 1:2).

These words refute the error of Nestorius, who said that in Christ the *suppositum* [or person] of the Son of God is different from the *suppositum* of the Son of man. They refute it because the one who spoke these words was born from Mary and was the son of man, and the very same one is the Son of God, as our Lord says. Therefore, there are two *supposita* [persons] in Christ, although the natures [the divine and the human] are not the same.[\[32\]](#)

1358 Then when the Evangelist says, **he said, Lord, I believe**, we see the devout faith of the man born blind. And first, he professes with his lips the faith in his heart, saying, **Lord, I believe**: "Man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved" (Rom 10:10). Secondly, he shows it in his conduct, **and he worshipped him**. This shows that he believes in the divine nature of Christ, because those whose consciences have been cleansed know Christ not only as the son of man, which was externally obvious, but as the Son of God, who had taken flesh: for adoration is due to God alone: "You will adore the Lord, your God" [Dt 6:13].

1359 Next (v 39), the devotion of the man born blind is commended: first, his devotion is commended; secondly, we see the grumbling of the Jews (v 40); and then they are answered (v 41).

1360 The man born blind is commended for his faith. We read, **for judgment I came into this world**. But on the other hand, we also read: "God sent the Son into the world, not to judge the world" [Jn 3:17]. My answer is this: In the second statement [3:17] he is speaking of the judgment of condemnation, about which we read: "Those who have done evil [will rise] to the resurrection of judgment" (Jn 5:29), that is, to a judgment of condemnation. And God did not send his Son for this purpose at his first coming; he was sent to save us. But here in the present statement [9:39], he is speaking of the judgment of distinction, about which we read: "Vindicate me, O Lord, and distinguish my cause" [Ps 43:1]. For Jesus came to distinguish the good from the evil. The words which follow show this: **that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind**.

According to Augustine, those who think they see do not see, and those who do not think they see, see. Now, we are said to be blind, spiritually, insofar as we sin: "Their wickedness blinded them" (Wis 2:21).[\[33\]](#) Thus, the one who does not recognize his own sins regards himself as seeing; while one who recognizes himself as a sinner regards himself as not seeing. The first is characteristic of the proud; the second, of the humble. So the meaning is this: I have come to distinguish the humble from the proud, so that the humble, **who do not see**,

that is, who regard themselves as sinners, **may see**, having been illuminated by faith, **and that those who see**, that is, the proud, **may become blind**, that is, may remain in the darkness.

1361 Chrysostom understands this passage in terms of the judgment of condemnation, so that the statement, **for judgment I came into this world** is not understood in a causal sense, but it indicates the sequence of events. [\[34\]](#) It is like saying: After my coming into the world, there follows for some the judgment of condemnation increases in them. In Luke (2:23) we find something similar: "This child is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel," not because Christ is the cause of their fall, but because this follows his coming. He adds, **that those who do not see**, that is, the Gentiles, who lacked the light of divine knowledge, **may see**, i.e., be admitted to the knowledge of God: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Is 9:2); **and that those who see**, the Jews, who did have a knowledge of God - "In Judah God is known" (Ps 76:1) - **may become blind**, fall away from the knowledge of God. The Apostle explicitly mentions this: "The Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it" (Rom 9:30).

1362 Now we see the grumbling of the Jews. They had understood our Lord's words in a bodily sense because they had seen the man born blind physically restored to sight, and had thought that our Lord was concerned only with the light in his eyes rather than in his mind. And so they believed that he was warning and threatening them with physical blindness when he said **may become blind**. Therefore, the Evangelist says, **some of the Pharisees near him heard this**, the above words. He says who were **near him**, to show their vacillation: for sometimes they were with him because of some miracles which they saw, and then would leave when the truth was made known to them: "They believe for a while, and in time of tribulation fall away" (Lk 8:13). **And they said to him, Are we also blind**, i.e., physically? Yet they were spiritually blind: "Let them alone; they are blind guides" (Mt 15:14).

1363 Next, we see the Jews silenced. According to Augustine, this shows the meaning of the previous passage, that is, that our Lord was referring to spiritual blindness. [\[35\]](#) He says, **If you were blind, you would have no guilt**, because you would be running to the remedy. For sin is taken away by grace, which is given only to the humble: "God gives grace to the humble" (Jas 4:6). **But now that you say, We see**, i.e., proudly thinking that you do see, you do not recognize that you are sinners, **your guilt remains**, i.e., is not taken away: "God opposes the proud" (Jas 4:6).

Chrysostom understands this passage as referring to physical blindness. [\[36\]](#) The

meaning is then: **If you were blind**, physically, you would have no guilt, because since blindness is a physical defect, it does not have the nature of sin. **But now that you say, We see**, your sin is clear, because while seeing the miracles that I do, you do not believe me: "Blind the heart of this people" [Is 6:10].

Here is another explanation. **If you were blind**, i.e., ignorant of the judgments of God and of the sacraments of the law; **you would have no guilt**, i.e., so much. As if to say: If you were sinning out of ignorance, your sin would not be so serious. **But now that you say, We see**, i.e., arrogate to yourselves an understanding of the law and a knowledge of God, and still sin, then **your guilt remains**, i.e., becomes greater: "That servant who knew is master's will, but did not make ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating" (Lk 12:47).

[1] St. Thomas refers to Jn 9:3 in the *Summa Theologiae*: I-II, q. 87, a. 7, obj. 1; III, q. 40, a. 4, ad 1; Jn 9:4: *ST* III, q. 35, a. 8, obj. 3; q. 83, a. 2, ad 4; Jn 5: *ST* III, q. 46, a. 9, obj. 4; q. 83, a. 2, ad 4; Jn 9:6: *ST* III, q. 44, a. 3, ad 2.

[2] *Tract. in Io.*, 44, ch. 1, col. 1713; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:1-7.

[3] *In Ioannem hom.*, 56, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 305; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 8:1-7.

[4] Ibid; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 8:1-7.

[5] Augustine, *Epistola XLIV*, ch. V no. 12, PL 33, col. 179.

[6] summa-punishment as a corrective.

[7] cf. Augustine, *Epistola CLV*, ch. I, no. 3; PL 33, col. 668

[8] Summa-evil of fault and evil of punishment

[9] *Moralia*, Praefatio, ch. 5 no. 12; PL 75, col. 523A, B; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:1-7.

[10] *In Ioannem hom.*, 57, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 311; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:1-7.

[11] *Tract. in Io.*, 44, ch. 2, col. 1714; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:1-7.

[12] Dionysius.

[13] *Moralia*, Lib. 8, ch. 30, no. 49; PL 75. col. 832 C; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:1-7.

[14] St. Thomas refers to Jn 9:16 in the *Summa Theologiae*: I-II, q. 107, a. 2, obj. 3; III, q. 40, a. 4, ad 1.

[15] *Tract. in Io.*, 44, ch. 8, col. 1716; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:8-17.

[16] *Ibid.*, 8; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:8-17.

[17] See *Tract in Io*, 44, ch. 8, col. 1716-17.

[18] *In Ioannem hom.*, 58, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 58; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:8-17.

[19] *Tract. in Io.*, 44, ch. 9, col. 1717; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:8-17.

[20] *Tract. in Io.*, 44, 10, col. 1717; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:18-23.

[21] St. Thomas refers to Jn 9:31 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 83, a. 16, obj. 1; q. 178, a. 2, obj. 1; III, q. 64, a. 1, obj. 2; Jn 9:32: *ST* III, q. 43, a. 4.

[22] *Tract. in Io.*, 44, ch. 11, col. 1718; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:24-34.

[23] Augustine-this is not in *Tract in Io*. (so far as I could tell)

[24] *In Ioannem hom.*, 58, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 317; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:24-34.

[25] *Tract. in Io*, 44, ch. 11, col. 1718.

[26] *In Ioannem hom.*, 58, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 318; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:24-34.

[27] *Tract. in Io.*, 44, ch. 13, col. 1718; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:24-34.

[28] *Summa-sc* 138-139 way in which God hears the prayers of sinners; miracles can testify to a doctrine or to a person.

[29] *In Ioannem hom.*, 58, ch. 3; PG 59, col., 319; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:24-34.

[30] St. Thomas refers to Jn 9:39 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 51, a. 2, obj. 2; Jn 9:41: *ST* II-II, q. 15, a. 1, obj. 1.

[31] *De Trinitate*, 6 ch. 48; PL 10, col. 196B; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:35-41.

[32] Ought this to be concluding that there are two persons in Christ?

[33] *Tract. in Io.*, 44, 16, col. 1719; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:35-41.

[34] *In Ioannem hom.*, 59, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 323; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:35-41.

[35] *Tract. in Io.*, 44, ch. 17, col. 1719; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:35-41.

[36] *In Ioannem hom.*, 59, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 323; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 9:35-41.

10

LECTURE I

1 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; 2 but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

1364 After our Lord showed that his teaching had power to enlighten, he here shows that he has power to give life. First, he shows this by word; secondly, by a miracle (chap 11). Concerning the first he does three things. First, he shows that he has life-giving power; secondly, his manner of giving life (v 11); thirdly, he explains his power to give life (v 19). The first part is divided into three parts. First, our Lord relates a parable; secondly, the Evangelist mentions the necessity for explaining it (v 6); thirdly, our Lord explains the parable (v 7).

He relates the parable to them, saying, **Truly, truly, I say to you.** It concerns two things, a thief and the shepherd of the sheep. Thus he does three things. First, he mentions the mark of a thief and robber; secondly, a characteristic of the shepherd (v 2); thirdly, the effect each of these has (v 4).

1365 To understand this parable we must consider who the sheep are, namely, that they are the faithful of Christ and those in the grace of God: "We are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand" (Ps 95:7); "You, the people, are the sheep of my pasture" [Ez 34:31]. And so the sheepfold is the multitude of the faithful: "I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob, I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold" (Mic 2:12). The door of the sheepfold is explained in different ways by Chrysostom and by Augustine.

1366 According to Chrysostom, Christ calls Sacred Scripture the door, according to "Pray for us also that God may open to us a door for the word" (Col 4:3).

Sacred Scripture is called a door, as Chrysostom says, first of all, because through it we have access to the knowledge of God: "which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures" (Rom 1:2). Secondly, for just as the door guards the sheep, so Sacred Scripture preserves the life of the faithful: "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life" (5:39). Thirdly, because the door keeps the wolf from entering; so Sacred Scripture keeps heretics from harming the faithful: "Every scripture inspired by God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction" (2 Tim 3:16). So, the one who does not enter by the door is the one who does not enter by Sacred Scripture to teach the people. Our Lord says of such: "In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men" (Matt 15:9); "You have made void the word of God" (Matt 15:6). This, then, is the mark of the thief: he does not enter by the door, but in some other way. [\[1\]](#)

He adds that the thief **climbs**, and this is appropriate to this parable because thieves climb the walls, instead of entering by the door, and drop into the sheepfold. It also corresponds to the truth, because the reason why some teach what conflicts with Sacred Scripture is due to pride: "If any one teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching which accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit, he knows nothing" (1 Tim 6:3). Referring to this he says that such a person **climbs**, that is, through pride. The one who **climbs in by another way, that man is a thief**, because he snatches what is not his, **and a robber**, because he kills what he snatches: "If thieves came to you, if plunderers by night - how you have been destroyed" (Obad v 5).

According to this explanation, the relation with what preceded is made in this way: Since our Lord had said, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt," the Jews might have answered: "We do not believe you, but this is not due to our blindness. It is because of your own error that we have turned away from you." And so our Lord rejects this, and wishes to show that he is not in error because he enters by the door, by Sacred Scripture, that is, he teaches what is contained in Sacred Scripture.

1367 Against this interpretation is the fact that when our Lord explains this further on, he says, **I am the door**. So it seems that we should understand the door to be Christ. In answer to this, Chrysostom says that in this parable our Lord refers to himself both as the door and the shepherd; but this is from different points of view, because a door and a shepherd are different.[\[2\]](#) Now aside from Christ nothing is more fittingly called a door than Sacred Scripture, for the reasons given above. Therefore, Sacred Scripture is fittingly called a door.

1368 According to Augustine, the door is Christ, because one enters through him: "After this I looked, and lo, in heaven an open door!" (Rev 4:1). Therefore, any one who enters the sheepfold should enter by the door, that is, by Christ, and not by another way. [\[3\]](#)

Note that both the sheep and their shepherd enter into the sheepfold: the sheep in order to be secure there, and the shepherd in order to guard the sheep. And so, if you wish to enter as a sheep to be kept safe there, or as a shepherd to keep the people safe, you must enter the sheepfold through Christ. You must not enter by any other way, as did the philosophers who treated the principle virtues, and the Pharisees who established the ceremonial traditions. These are neither sheep nor shepherds because, as our Lord says, **he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door**, i.e., does not enter by Christ, **but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber**, because he destroys both himself and others. For Christ and no one else is the door into the sheepfold, that is, the multitude of the faithful: "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1); "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

According to this exposition, the connection with what went before is made in this way: Because they said that they could see without Christ - "now that you say, 'We see'" - our Lord shows that this is not true, because they do not enter by the door. Thus he says, **Truly, truly, I say to you...**

It should be noted that just as one who does not enter by the door as a sheep cannot be kept safe, so one who enters as a shepherd cannot guard the sheep unless he enters by the door, namely, by Christ. This is the door through which the true shepherds have entered: "And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was" (Heb 5:4). Evil shepherds do not enter by the door, but by ambition and secular power and simony; and these are thieves and robbers: "They set up princes, but without my knowledge," that is, without my approval (Hos 8:5). Further, he says such a person **climbs in by another way**, because the door, namely, Christ, since it is small through humility - "Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Matt 11:29) - can be entered only by those who imitate the humility of Christ. Therefore, those who do not enter by the door but climb in by another way are the proud. They do not imitate him who, although he was God, became man; and they do not recognize his lowering of himself.

1369 Now he considers the shepherd. First, he mentions the mark of the shepherd; secondly, he shows through signs that he is the shepherd (v 3).

1370 The mark of the true shepherd is to enter by the door, that is, by the testimony of Sacred Scripture. Thus Christ said: "Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44). He is called a shepherd: "I am not troubled when I follow you as my shepherd" [Jer 17:16]; "He rebukes and trains and teaches them, and turns them back, as a shepherd his flock" (Sir 18:13).

But if the door is Christ, as Augustine explains it, then in entering by the door, he enters by himself. [4] And this is special to Christ: for no one can enter the door, i. e., to beatitude, except by the truth, because beatitude is nothing else than joy in the truth. But Christ, as God, is the truth; therefore, as man, he enters by himself, that is, by the truth, which he is as God. We, however, are not the truth, but children of the light, by participating in the true and uncreated light. Consequently, we have to enter by the truth which is Christ: "Sanctify them in the truth" (17:17); "If any one enters by me, he will be saved" (10:9). If one wishes to enter even as a shepherd, he must enter by the door, that is, Christ, according to his truth, will and consent. Thus we read in Ezekiel (24:23): "And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them." This is like saying: They must be given by me, and not by others or themselves.

1371 Now he mentions the signs of a good shepherd; and there are three. The first relates to the gatekeeper, and is that the good shepherd is let in by him. As to this he says, **to him the gatekeeper opens**. This gatekeeper, according to Chrysostom, is the one who opens the way to a knowledge of Sacred Scripture. [5] The first one to do this was Moses, who first received and established Sacred Scripture. And Moses opened to Christ, because as was said above: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me" (5:46).

Or, according to Augustine, the gatekeeper is Christ himself, because he brings us himself. [6] He says, "He opens himself who reveals himself, and we enter only by his grace." "For by grace you have been saved" (Eph 2:8). It does not matter if Christ, who is the door, is also the gatekeeper; for certain things are compatible in spiritual matters that cannot occur in physical reality. Now there seems to be a greater difference between a shepherd and a door than between a door and a gatekeeper. Therefore, since Christ can be called both a shepherd and a door, as was said, much more so can he be called a door and a gatekeeper. But if you prefer that someone other than Moses or Christ be the gatekeeper, then consider the Holy Spirit the gatekeeper, as Augustine says. [7] For it is the office of a gatekeeper to open the door, and it says below of the Holy Spirit that "He will guide you into all the truth" (16:13). And Christ is the door insofar as he is the Truth.

1372 The second sign relates to the sheep, and it is that they obey the shepherd. This is what he says, **the sheep hear his voice**. This is reasonable if the resemblance to a natural shepherd is considered: because just as sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd due to familiar experience, so righteous believers hear the voice of Christ: "O that today you would harken to his voice" (Ps 95:7).

1373 But what of the fact that many who are Christ's sheep did not hear his voice, as Paul; or that some who were not his sheep did here it, as Judas? One might reply that Judas was Christ's sheep for that time as to his present righteousness. And Paul, when he did not hear the voice of Christ, was not a sheep but a wolf; but when the voice of Christ came it changed the wolf into a sheep. This reply could be accepted if it were not contrary to a statement in Ezekiel (34:4): "The crippled you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back." It seems from this that even when they were crippled and strayed they were sheep. Therefore, one must say that here our Lord is speaking of his sheep not only according to their present righteousness but even according to their eternal predestination. For there is a certain voice of Christ that only the predestined can hear, i.e., "He who endures to the end" (Matt 10:22).

Again, he says, **the sheep hear his voice**, because they might offer as an excuse for their unbelief the fact that not only they, but none of the leaders believed in him. So he says in answer to this, **the sheep hear his voice**, as if saying: They do not believe because they are not my sheep.

1374 The third sign is taken from the actions of the shepherd. Here he mentions four actions of a good shepherd: the first being that he knows his sheep. He says, **he calls his own sheep by name**, which shows his knowledge of and familiarity with his sheep, for we call by name those whom we know familiarly: "I know you by name" (Ex 33:17). This is part of the office of a shepherd according to: "Be diligent to know the countenance of your flock" [Prv 27:23]. This applies to Christ according to his present knowledge, but even more so considering eternal predestination, by which he knew them by name from eternity: "He determined the number of the stars, he gives to all of them their names" (Ps 147:4); "The Lord knows those who are his" (2 Tim 2:19).

The second action of a good shepherd is that he **leads them out**, i.e., he separates them from the society of those who are evil: "He brought them out of darkness and gloom" (Ps 107:14).

The third is that having separated them from evil and having brought them into the sheepfold, **he has brought out all his own**, from the sheepfold. He does

this, first, for the salvation of others: "I will send survivors to the nations" (Is 66:19); "Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matt 10:16), so that they can make sheep out of the wolves. Secondly, they are to show the direction and way to eternal life: "To guide our feet into the way of peace" (Lk 1:79).

Fourthly, the good shepherd goes before his sheep by the example of a good life; so he says, **he goes before them**, although this is not what the literal shepherd does, for he follows, as in "I took him from following the ewes" [Ps 78:70]. But the good shepherd goes before them by example, "not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:3). And Christ does go before them: for he was the first to die for the teaching of the truth - "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24); and he went before all into everlasting life - "He who opens the breach will go up before them" (Mic 2:13).

1375 Now he considers the effect that both the thief and the shepherd have upon the sheep. First, he mentions the effect of the good shepherd; secondly, the effect of the wolf and the thief (v5).

1376 He says, first, that **the sheep follow him** who goes before them. This is easy to see, because subjects follow in the steps of their leaders, as is stated: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Pet 2:21); "My foot has held fast to his steps" (Job 23:11). The sheep follow **for they know his voice**, i.e., they know it and take delight in it: "Let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet" (Song 2:14).

1377 The effect that the thief has is that the sheep do not follow him for very long, but only for a time; so he says, **a stranger they will not follow**, i.e., they do not follow a false and heretical teacher: "The children who are strangers have lied to me" [Ps 17:46]. Thus Paul did not follow false teachers for long. But **they will flee from him**, because "Bad company ruins good morals" (1 Cor 15:33). They flee **for they do not know**, that is, do not approve of, **the voice of strangers**, meaning their teaching, which spreads stealthily like a cancer.

LECTURE 2

6 This figure Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. 7 So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them. 9 I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved,

and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." [8]

1378 Here the Evangelist tells why it was necessary to explain the above similitude; and this necessity was caused by the failure of his listeners to understand. First, he mentions the reason why they failed to understand; secondly, he says they failed to understand.

1379 The cause of their failure to understand was that Christ was speaking in figures. The Evangelist says, **This figure [proverbium] Jesus used with them.** A figure [proverbium], properly speaking, is the use of one word in place of another, when it is intended that one word be understood from its likeness to the other. This is also called a parable [parabola]. Our Lord spoke in figures, first of all, because of the wicked, in order to conceal from them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables" (Lk 8:10). Secondly, because of the good, so that his figures might stir them up to make further inquiry. So, after our Lord spoke his figures or parables to the crowds, his disciples questioned him in private, as mentioned in Matthew (13:10) and Mark (4:10). This is the reason why Augustine says: "Our Lord feeds" the believing crowds "with clear words, and stirs up" his disciples "with things that are obscure." [9]

1380 The Evangelist discloses their failure to understand when he says, **but they did not understand what he was saying to them.** The ignorance which resulted from Christ's figures was both useful and harmful. For the good and the just [who tried to understand them] it was useful for giving praise to God; for although they did not understand, they believed and praised the Lord and his wisdom which was so far above them: "It is the glory of God to conceal the word" [Prv 25:2]. But for the wicked, it was a source of harm, because, failing to understand, they blasphemed: "But these men revile whatever they do not understand" (Jude 10). As Augustine observes, when both the good and the wicked hear the words of the Gospel, and neither of them understands, the good person says that what was said was true and good, but that he does not understand it. Such a person is knocking and deserves to have the door opened, provided he perseveres. But the wicked person says that what was said had no meaning or was evil. [10]

1381 Now our Lord explains the similitude. If the above similitude is examined correctly, it contains two principal clauses, followed by others. The first is: "He who does not enter the sheepfold by the door...is a thief and a robber." The

second is: "He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep."

Accordingly, this section is divided into two parts. First, he explains the first clause; then the second clause (v 11). Concerning the first he does two things: first, he explains the first clause; secondly, he proves it (v 7). The first clause mentions a door, a thief and a robber; so first he explains the door, then the thief and then the robber (v 8).

1382 Concerning the first he says, **So Jesus again said to them**, to gain their attention and have them understand the similitude: "The man of understanding may acquire skill to understand a proverb and a figure" (Prv 1:6). Jesus said, **Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door**. Now the purpose of a door is to conduct one into the inner rooms of a house; and this is fitting to Christ, for one must enter into the secrets of God through him: "This is the gate of the Lord," that is, Christ, "the righteous shall enter through it" (Ps 118:20). He says, **I am the door of the sheep**, because through Christ not only the shepherds are brought into the present Church or enter into everlasting happiness, but the sheep also. Thus he says below: "My sheep hear my voice...and they follow me; and I give them eternal life" (10:27).

1383 Then when he says, **All who came before me are thieves and robbers**, he explains what he had said about thieves and robbers. First, he shows who the thieves and robbers are; secondly, their sign.

1384 In regard to the first, we should avoid the error of the Manicheans, who rejected the Old Testament on the ground that it says here **that all who came before me are thieves**. They maintained that the fathers of the Old Testament, who came before Christ, were evil and have been damned.

The falsity of this view is clear from three things. First, from what this parable says. For the statement, **all who came before me**, is intended as a description of the previous statement, which mentioned those who do not enter by the door. Therefore, **all who came before me**, but not through me, that is, not entering by the door, **are thieves and robbers**. It is clear that all the patriarchs and prophets, whom the Christ-to-come had sent forerunners, entered by the door, i. e., Christ. For although he took flesh and became man in time, he was the Word of God from all eternity: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever" (Heb 13:8). Indeed, the prophets were sent by the Word and Wisdom of God: "In every generation she," the Wisdom of God, "passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets" (Wis 7:27). Accordingly, we expressly read in the prophets that the word of God came to this or that prophet, who prophesied by participating in the Word of God.

Secondly, the falsity of the teaching of the Manicheans is seen when our Lord says, **all who came before me**, implying that they were thrusting themselves forward on their own authority and were not sent by God: "I did not send the prophets, yet they ran" (Jer 23:21). Indeed, such prophets have not come from the Word of God: "Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing" (Ez 13:3). But the fathers of the Old Testament were not of this type, as has been said.

Thirdly, this falsity is seen from the fact that he shows what effect their words had, for we read, **but the sheep did not heed them**. Therefore, those whom the sheep did heed were not thieves and robbers. Now the people of Israel did listen to the prophets, and those who did not heed them were rebuked in Sacred Scripture: "Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?" (Acts 7:52); "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you!" (Matt 23:37).

1385 Having excluded this error, it must be said that **all who came before me**, that is, independently of me, without divine inspiration and authority, and not with the intention of seeking the glory of God but acquiring their own, **are thieves**, insofar as they take for themselves what is not theirs, that is, the authority to teach - "Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves" (Is 1:23) - **and robbers**, because they kill with their corrupt doctrine - "You make it a den of robbers" (Matt 21:13); "As robbers lie in wait for a man...they murder on the way" (Hos 6:9). **But the sheep**, that is, the predestined, **did not heed them**, the thieves and robbers, otherwise they would not have been Christ's sheep, because, as was said before, "A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him." Furthermore, this is commanded in Deuteronomy: "You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of dreams" (13:3).

1386 **I am the door**. Here he clarifies his explanation: first, of the door; secondly, of the thief (v 10). Concerning the first, he does two things: first, he repeats what he intends to explain; and secondly, he gives the explanation (v 9).

1387 He repeats what he had already said, namely, **I am the door**: "If she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar" (Song 8:9), that is, let us grant her an incorruptible power.

1388 He explains this when he says, **if any one enters by me, he will be saved**. First, he shows that the purpose of a door, which is to keep the sheep safe, applies to himself; secondly, he mentions the manner in which they are kept safe (v 9b).

1389 The door safeguards the sheep by keeping those within from going out, and by protecting them from strangers who want to come in. And this applies to Christ, for he is our safeguard and protection. And this is what he says: **if any one**, not with insincerity, **enters**, into the fellowship of the Church and of the faithful, **by me, the door, he will be saved**, i.e., if he perseveres: "For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12); "We shall be saved by his life" (Rom 5:10).

1390 The way the sheep are safeguarded is set forth when he says that **he will go in and out and find pasture**. This statement can be explained in four ways. First of all, according to Chrysostom, it simply affirms the security and freedom of those who cling to Christ. [\[11\]](#) For one who enters some other way than by the door does not have free entry and exit; but one who does enter by the door has free exit, because he can leave freely. Therefore, when he says, **he will go in and out**, the meaning is that the Apostles adhering to Christ enter with security by living with the faithful, who are within the Church, and with unbelievers who are outside, when they became masters of the whole world and no one wished to cast them out: "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh appoint a man over the congregation, who shall go out before them and come in before them...that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep which have no shepherd" (Num 27:16). **And find pasture**, find delight in converting others, and find joy even when persecuted by unbelievers for the name of Christ: "Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name," as we read in Acts (5:41).

1391 Secondly, this can be explained as Augustine does in his *Commentary on John*. [\[12\]](#) Two things are incumbent upon anyone who acts well, namely to be well-ordered to the things that are within him, and to those that are without. Within a person is the spirit, and without is the body: "Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day" (2 Cor 4:16). Therefore, a person who clings to Christ **will go in** through contemplation, to protect his conscience - "When I enter my house," i.e., my conscience, "I shall find rest with her," i.e., with wisdom (Wis 8:16) - **and out**, namely, by good actions, to tame the body - "Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until the evening" (Ps 104:23) - **and find pasture**, in a clean and sincere conscience - "I will appear before your sight: I will be satisfied when your glory appears" [Ps 16:15]. Again, by his actions he will **find pasture**, i.e., fruit - "He shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps 126:6).

1392 The third explanation is also Augustine's as well as that given by Gregory in

his *Commentary on Ezekiel*.[\[13\]](#) The meaning, then, is this. Such a one **will go in**, i.e., into the Church, by believing - "I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle" [Ps 41:5], and this is to enter the Church Militant; **and out**, from the Church Militant into the Church Triumphant - "Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of the wedding" (Song 3:11); **and find pasture**, that is, the pastures of doctrine and grace in the Church Militant - "He makes me lie down in green pastures"; and the pastures of glory in the Church Triumphant: "I will feed them with good pasture" (Ez 34:14).

1393 Fourthly, there is an explanation found in the work, *On the Spirit and the Soul*, which has been incorrectly attributed to Augustine.[\[14\]](#) Here it is said that such a one **will go in**, that is, the saints will go in to contemplate the divinity of Christ, **and out**, to consider his humanity; and they will **find pasture** in both, because in both they will taste the joys of contemplation: "Your eyes shall see the king in his beauty" (Is 33:17).

1394 Now he considers the thief. First, he mentions the mark of the thief; secondly, he says that he himself has the opposite characteristic, **I came that they may have life**.

1395 He says that those who do not enter by the door, i.e., those who have come independently of me, are thieves and robbers; and they are evil. For in the first place, **the thief comes only to steal**, i.e., to usurp what is not his; these are the agitators and heretics, who fasten on to those who belong to Christ: "He lies in ambush to catch the ones who are poor" [Ps 9:4]. Secondly, the thief comes to kill, and he kills by bringing in perverse teachings and evil practices: "As robbers lie in wait for a man...they murder on the way" (Hos 6:9). Thirdly, the thief comes to **destroy**, by casting into everlasting destruction: "My people have been lost sheep" (Jer 50:6). But these traits are not in me.

1396 **I came that they may have life**. This is like saying: The above have not come in by me, otherwise they would do as I do. But they do the contrary, because they steal, and kill and destroy. **I came that they may have life**, that is, the life of righteousness, by entering into the Church Militant through faith: "My righteous one shall live by faith" (Heb 10:38). We read of this life in 1 John (3:14) that "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren." **And have it abundantly**, that is, have eternal life, when they leave the body. We read below of this life: "This is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God" (17:3).

LECTURE 3

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep."[\[15\]](#)

1397 Here he explains the second clause of the parable, "he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep" (10:2). First, he gives the explanation; secondly, he makes it clear (v 14). First, he explains that he is the good shepherd; secondly, he states the office of a good shepherd (v 11b); thirdly, he shows that the opposite is found in an evil shepherd (v 12).

1398 He says, in regard to the first, **I am the good shepherd**. That Christ is a shepherd is clear enough, for as a flock is led and fed by the shepherd, so the faithful are nourished by Christ with spiritual food, and even with his own body and blood: "For you were straying like sheep, but now have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls" (1 Pet 2:25); "He will feed his flock like a shepherd" (Is 40:11). To distinguish himself from an evil shepherd and thief, he adds, **good**. Good, I say, because he fulfills the office of a shepherd, just as a soldier is called good who fulfills the office of a soldier. But since Christ had said above that the shepherd enters by the door, and here he says that he is the shepherd, and before he said he was the door (v 9), then he must enter through himself. And he does enter through himself, because he manifests himself and through himself knows the Father. We, however, enter through him, because it is by him that we are led to happiness.

Note that only he is the door, because no one else is the true light, but only shares in the light: "He," John the Baptizer, "was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light" (1:8). But we read of Christ that "He was the true light, which enlightens every man" [1:9]. Therefore, no one else refers to himself as a door; Christ reserved this for himself. But being a shepherd he did share with others, and conferred it on his members: for Peter was a shepherd, and the other apostles were shepherds, as well as all good bishops: "I will give you shepherds after my own heart" (Jer 3:15). Now, although the Church's rulers, who are her children, are all shepherds, as Augustine says, yet he expressly says, **I am the good shepherd**, in order to emphasize the virtue of charity.[\[16\]](#) For no one is a good shepherd unless he has become one with Christ by love, and has become a member of the true shepherd.

1399 The office of a good shepherd is charity; thus he says, **the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep**. It should be noted that there is a difference

between a good shepherd and an evil one: the good shepherd is intent upon the welfare of the flock, but the evil one is intent upon his own. This difference is touched upon by Ezekiel (34:2): "Ho, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep?" Therefore, one who uses the flock only to feed himself is not a good shepherd. From this it follows that an evil shepherd, even over animals, is not willing to sustain any loss for the flock, since he does not intend the welfare of the flock, but his own. But a good shepherd, even over animals, endures many things for the flock whose welfare he has at heart. Thus Jacob said in Genesis (31:40): "By day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night." However, when dealing with mere animals it is not necessary that a good shepherd expose himself to death for the safety of the flock. But because the spiritual safety of the human flock outweighs the bodily life of the shepherd, when danger threatens the safety of the flock the spiritual shepherd ought to suffer the loss of his bodily life for the safety of the flock. This is what our Lord says, **the good shepherd lays down his life**, i.e., his bodily life, **for the sheep**, the sheep who are his by authority and charity. Both are required, for they must belong to him and he must love them; the first without the second is not enough. Furthermore, Christ has given us an example of this teaching: "He laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 Jn 3:16).

1400 Now he considers the evil shepherd, showing that he possesses characteristics contrary to those of the good shepherd. First, he mentions the marks of an evil shepherd; secondly, he shows how these marks follow one another (v 12). Concerning the first he does two things: first, he gives the marks of an evil shepherd; secondly, he mentions the danger which threatens the flock because of an evil shepherd: **the wolf snatches them and scatters them.**

1401 Note that from what has been said about the good and evil shepherd, there are three differences in their traits: first in their intentions; secondly, in their solicitude; and thirdly in their affections.

1402 First, they differ in their intentions, and this is implied by their very names. For the first is called a good shepherd, and this implies that he intends to feed the flock: "Should not shepherds feed the sheep?" (Ez 34:2). But the other one, the evil shepherd, is called a hireling, as though he were intent on his wages. Thus they differ in this: the good shepherd looks to the benefit of the flock, while the hireling seeks mainly his own advantage. This is also the difference between a king and a tyrant, as the Philosopher says, because when a king rules he intends to benefit his subjects, while a tyrant seeks his own interest. [\[17\]](#) So a tyrant is like a hireling: "If it seems right to you, give me my wages" (Zech 11:12).

1403 But may not even good shepherds seek a wage? It seems so, for "Reward those who wait for thee" (Si 36:16); "The Lord God comes...his reward is with him" (Is 40:10); "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare!" (Lk 15:17).

I answer that wages can be taken in a general sense and in a proper sense. In a general sense, a wage is anything conferred by reason of merits. And because everlasting life, which is God - "This is true God and eternal life" (1 Jn 5:20) - is conferred by reason of merits, everlasting life is said to be a wage. And this is a wage that every good shepherd can and should seek. In the strict sense, however, a wage is different from an inheritance, and a wage is not sought after by a true child, who is entitled to the inheritance. A wage is sought after by servants and hirelings. Thus, since everlasting life is our inheritance, any one who works with an eye towards it is working as a child; but any one who aims at something different (for example, one who longs for worldly gain, or takes delight in the honor of being a prelate) is a hireling.

1404 Secondly, they differ in their solicitude. We read of the good shepherd that the sheep are his own, not only as a trust, but also by love and solicitude: "I hold you in my heart" (Phil 1:7). On the other hand, it is said of the hireling, **whose own the sheep are not**, i.e., the hireling has no care for them: "My shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves" (Ez 34:8).

1405 Thirdly, they differ in their affections. For the good shepherd, who loves his flock, **lays down his life** for it, i.e., he exposes himself to dangers that affect his bodily life. But the evil shepherd, because he has no love for the flock, flees when he sees the wolf. Thus he says, **he sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees**. Here, the wolf is understood in three ways. First, for the devil as tempting: "What fellowship has a wolf with a lamb? No more has a sinner with a godly man" (Si 13:17). Secondly, it stands for the heretic who destroys: "beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matt 7:15); "I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). Thirdly, it stands for the raging tyrant: "Her princes in the midst of her are like wolves" (Ez 22:27). Therefore, the good shepherd must guard the flock against these three wolves, so that when he sees the wolf, i.e., the devil tempting, the deceiving heretic and the raging tyrant, he can oppose him. Against those who do not, we read, "You have not gone up into the breaches, or built up a wall for the house of Israel" (Ez 13:5).

Accordingly, we read of the evil shepherd that he **leaves the sheep and flees**:

"Woe to my worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock" (Zech 11:17). As if to say: You are not a shepherd, but only appear to be one: "Even her hired soldiers in her midst are like fatted calves; yea, they have turned and fled together, they do not stand" (Jer 46:21).

1406 But in Matthew (10:23) we find the contrary: "When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next." Therefore, it seems to be lawful for a shepherd to flee. I reply that there are two answers to this. One is that given by Augustine in his *Commentary on John*.[\[18\]](#) There are two kinds of flight: that of the soul and that of the body. When we read here, he **leaves the sheep and flees**, we can understand it to mean the flight of the soul: for when an evil shepherd fears personal danger from a wolf, he does not dare to resist his injustices but flees, not by running away, but by withdrawing his encouragement, refusing to care for his flock.

This should be the explanation when considering the first kind of wolf [the tempting devil], because it is not necessary to physically flee from the devil.

But since sometimes a shepherd does flee physically because of certain wolves, such as powerful heretics and tyrants, another answer must be given, as found in Augustine's *Letter to Honoratus*.[\[19\]](#) As he says, it seems lawful to flee, even physically, from the wolves, not only because of the authority of our Lord, as cited above, but because of the example of certain saints, as Athanasius and others, who fled from their persecutors. For what is censured is not the flight itself, but the neglect of the flock; so, if the shepherd could flee without abandoning his flock, it would not be blameworthy. Sometimes it is the prelate himself who is the one sought, and at other times, it is the entire flock. It is obvious that if the prelate alone is sought, others can be assigned to guard the flock in his territory, and console and govern the flock in his place. So if he flees under these circumstances, he is not said to leave the sheep. In this way, it is lawful to flee in certain cases. But if the whole flock is sought, then either all the shepherds should be with the people, or some should remain while the others leave. But if all desert the flock, then these words apply, **he sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees**.

1407 Here he mentions the twofold danger that threatens. One is the ravaging of the sheep; so he says, **and the wolf snatches them**, i.e., takes for himself what belongs to another, for the faithful are Christ's sheep. Therefore, leaders of sects and wolves snatch the sheep when they entice Christ's faithful to their own teachings: "My sheep have become food for all the wild beasts" (Ez 34:8). The other danger is that the sheep be scattered; so he says, **and scatters them**, insofar as some are led astray and others persevere: "My sheep were scattered

over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them" (Ez 34:6).

1408 Now he shows how the above-mentioned marks are related, for the third follows from the first two. Since the evil shepherd seeks his own advantage and has no love or solicitude for the flock, it follows that he is not willing to endure any inconvenience for them. Thus he says of the hireling, **he flees**, for this reason, **because he is a hireling**, that is, he seeks his own advantage, which is the first mark; **and cares nothing for the sheep**, i.e., he does not love them, and is not solicitous for them, which is the second mark. So we read in Job (39:16) about the evil shepherd: "She deals cruelly with her young, as if they were not hers." The opposite is true of the good shepherd, for he seeks the welfare of his flock, and not his own: "Not that I seek the gift; but I seek the fruit which increases to your credit" (Phil 4:17). Furthermore, he is concerned for his sheep, that is, he loves them and is solicitous for them: "I hold you in my heart" (Phil 1:7).

LECTURE 4

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me,
15 as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down
my life for the sheep. 16 And I have other sheep, that are not of this
fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there
shall be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves
me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. 18 No one
takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power
to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have
received from my Father." [\[20\]](#)

1409 Here our Lord proves his explanation. First, he restates what he intends to prove; secondly, he gives the proof, **I know my own**...(v 14b); and thirdly, he amplifies on it (v 17).

1410 He says, **I am the good shepherd**, which has been explained above: "As a shepherd seeks out his flock...so will I seek out my sheep" (Ez 34:12).

1411 Then he says, **I know my own**, he proves what he says. Now he says two things about himself, that he is a shepherd, and that he is good. First, he proves that he is a shepherd; secondly, that he is a good shepherd.

1412 He proves he is a shepherd by the two signs of a shepherd already mentioned. The first of these is that he calls his own sheep by name. Concerning this he says, **I know my own**: "The Lord knows those who are his" (2 Tim

2:19). **I know**, I say, not just with mere knowledge only, but with a knowledge joined with approval and love: "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins" (Rev 1:5). The second sign is that the sheep hear his voice and know him. And concerning this he says, **and my own know me. My own**, I say, by predestination, by vocation and by grace. This is like saying: They love me and obey me. Thus, we must understand that they have a loving knowledge about which we read: "They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest" (Jer 31:34).

1413 He shows that he is a good shepherd by mentioning that he has the office of a good shepherd, which is to lay down his life for his sheep. First, he shows the reason for this; secondly, he gives a sign of it; and thirdly, he shows the fruit of his sign.

1414 The reason for this sign, that is, of his laying down his life for his sheep, is the knowledge he has of the Father. Concerning this he says, **as the Father knows me and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep**. This statement can be explained in two ways. In one way, so that "as" indicates just a similarity in knowledge; and taken this way, such knowledge can be given to a creature: "I shall know even as I am known" [1 Cor 13:12], i.e., as I am known without obscurity, so I will know without obscurity. In another way, the "as" implies an equality of knowledge. And then to know the Father as he is known by him is proper to the Son alone, because only the Son knows the Father comprehensively, just as the Father knows the Son comprehensively: "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son" (Matt 11:27), that is, with a comprehensive knowledge. Our Lord says this because in knowing the Father, he knows the will of the Father that the Son should die for the salvation of the human race. He is also saying here that he is the mediator between God and man. For as he is related to the sheep as known by them and as knowing them, so also he is related to the Father, because as the Father knows him, so he knows the Father.

1415 Then when he says, **and I lay down my life for the sheep**, he gives the sign: "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us" (1 Jn 3:16). But since there are three substances in Christ, namely the substance of the Word, of the soul, and of the body, one might ask who is speaking when he says, **I lay down my life** ["my life" can also be literally translated as "my soul"]. If you say that the Word is speaking here, it is not true, because the Word never laid down his soul, since He was never separated from his soul. If you say that the soul is speaking, this too seems impossible, because nothing is separated from itself. And if you say that Christ says this referring to his body, it does not seem to be so, because his body does not have the power to take up its soul. Therefore, one must say that when Christ died, his soul was separated from his flesh, otherwise

Christ would not have been truly dead. But in Christ, his divinity was never separated from his soul or his flesh; but was united to his soul, as it descended to the lower world, and to his body, as it lay in the tomb. And therefore, his body, by the power of his divinity, laid down his soul [or life] by the power of his divinity, and took it up again.[\[21\]](#)

1416 Then when he says, **and I have other sheep**, he sets down the fruit of Christ's death, which is the salvation not only of the Jews but of the Gentiles as well. For since he had said, "I lay down my life for the sheep," the Jews, who regarded themselves as God's sheep - "We thy people, the flock of thy pasture" (Ps 79:13) - could have said that he laid down his life for them alone. But our Lord adds that it is not only for them, but for others too: "He prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (11:51).

1417 In regard to this fruit our Lord does three things. First, he mentions the predestination of the Gentiles; secondly, their vocation through grace; and thirdly their justification.

As to the first he says, **and I have other sheep**, that is, the Gentiles, **that are not of this fold**, i.e., of the family of the flesh of Israel, which was in a way a flock: "I will surely gather all of you, O Jacob" (Mic 2:12). For as sheep are enclosed in a fold, so the Jews were kept enclosed within the precepts of the Law, as we read in Galatians (c 3). These other sheep, I say, that is, the Gentiles, I have from my Father through an eternal predestination: "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage" (Ps 2:8); "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Is 49:6).

1418 As to the second he says, **I must bring them also**, i.e., according to the plans of divine predestination it is time to call them to grace.

This seems to conflict with what our Lord says in Matthew (15:24): "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." I answer that Jesus was sent only to the sheep of the house of Israel in the sense of preaching to them personally, as we read in Romans (15:8): "Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs." It was through the apostles that he brought in the Gentiles: "From them I will send survivors to the nations" (Is 66:19).

1419 In regard to the third he says, **and they will heed my voice**. Here he mentions three things necessary for righteousness in the Christian religion. The first is obedience to the commandments of God. Concerning this he says, **and**

they will heed my voice, i.e., they will observe my commandments: "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20); "People whom I had not known," i.e., whom I did not approve, served me. As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me" (Ps 18:43).

The second is the unity of charity, and concerning this he says, **so there shall be one flock**, i.e., one Church of the faithful from the two peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles: "One faith" (Eph 4:5); "For he is our peace, who has made us both one" (Eph 2:14).

The third is the unity of faith, and in regard to this he says, **one shepherd**: "They shall all have one shepherd," that is, the Jews and the Gentiles (Ez 37:24).

1420 Now our Lord explains his proof: first, he amplifies on the reason for the sign [his death for his sheep]; secondly, he explains the sign, or the effect (v 18); thirdly, he shows that the reason is appropriate (v 18b).

1421 Our Lord says that the reason for his death is the knowledge he has of the Father, saying, "as the Father knows me and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep." In explaining this he says, **for this reason the Father loves me**. From this it is clear that the Father knows him with a knowledge joined with approval, **for this reason**, I say, **because I lay down my life, that I may take it again**.

1422 But is it true that his death is the cause of the Father's love? It seems not, because something temporal is not the cause of something eternal. But Christ's death is in the temporal order, while the love of God for Christ is eternal. I answer that Christ is speaking here of the Father's love for him as having a human nature. Accordingly, this passage can be understood in three ways. In one way, so that **because** indicates a cause, while in the other way it indicates the term or sign of love.

If it is taken casually, then the meaning is: **because I lay down my life**, i.e., endure death, **for this reason the Father loves me**, that is, he grants me the effect of his love, which is the glory and exaltation of my body: "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him a name which is above every name" (Phil 2:8).

But one might object to this that good works cannot merit the divine love. For since our works are meritorious to the extent that they are given life by charity - "If I give away all I have...but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor 13:3) - and

since God is the first to love - "In this is love, not that we love God but that he first loved us" [1 Jn 4:10] - it is clear that his love precedes all our merit. This can be answered by saying that no one can merit God's love; nevertheless, we can merit by our good works the effect of God's love, that is, an increase of grace and the reception of the good of glory, both of which God bestows on us because of his love. Thus we can say that for this reason God loves this or that person, that is, bestows on him the effect of his love, because he obeys his commandments. And so we can say about Christ as man, that for this reason the Father loves him, that is, has exalted him and given him the brightness of glory, because he laid down his life in death.

But if **because** indicates a sign of love, then the meaning is this: **for this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life**, as if to say: This is a sign that the Father loves me, **because I lay down my life, that I may take it again**, that is, I fulfill his commands and will and endure death. For an obvious sign of love is that a person, out of charity, fulfills the commands of God. [\[22\]](#)

1423 Now he explains the effect of the sign. And since the sign was "I lay down my life for the sheep," he explains how he lays it down. First, he excludes violence; secondly, he speaks of his power.

1424 The violence he excludes is that which could be employed in taking a life: such violence was not accomplished in Christ. Concerning this he says, **no one takes it from me**, that is, my life, by violence, **but I lay it down**, by my own power, that is, **of my own accord**: "Can the prey be taken from the mighty?" (Is 49:24).

But did not the Jews use violence against Christ? They did insofar as it was in them; but this violence was not in Christ because he laid down his life voluntarily, when he willed. Thus we read above (7:30) that the Jews wanted to arrest him but were unable "because his hour had not yet come." It was voluntary "not as though he was forced to die, but he condescended to be killed," [\[23\]](#) as Augustine says.

1425 He adds something about his power when he says, **I have power to lay it down**. Apropos of this it should be noted that since the union of the soul and body is natural, their separation is natural. And although the cause of this separation and death can be voluntary, yet among human beings death is always natural. Now nature is not subject to the will of any mere human, since nature, as well as the will, are from God. Therefore, the death of any mere human person must be natural. But in Christ, his own nature and every other nature are subject to his will, just like artifacts are subject to the will of the artisan. Thus,

according to the pleasure of his will, he could lay down his life when he willed, and he could take it up again; no mere human being can do this, although he could voluntarily use some instrument to kill himself. This explains why the centurion, seeing that Christ did not die by a natural necessity, but by his own [will] - since "Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit" (Matt 27:50) - recognized a divine power in him, and said: "Truly, this was the Son of God" (Matt 27:54). Again, the Apostle says in 1 Corinthians (1:18): "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God," that is, his great power was revealed in the very death of Christ. [\[24\]](#)

1426 Here he shows that the above-mentioned reason is appropriate, for to fulfill a command shows love for the one commanding. Thus he says, **this charge I have received from my Father**, that is, to lay down my life and take it up again: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him" (14:23).

LECTURE 5

19 There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. 20 Many of them said, "He has a demon, and he is mad; why listen to him?" 21 Others said, "These are not the sayings of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" 22 It was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem; 23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered round him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness to me; 26 but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; 28 and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. 29 What my Father has given to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one." [\[25\]](#)

1427 After showing that he has power to give life and showing his manner of doing so, our Lord here shows how this power to give life belongs to him. First, the Evangelist mentions the dispute which arose among the crowd on his point; secondly, he gives the discussion between the Jewish leaders and Christ (v 22). Concerning the first he does three things. First, he mentions the dispute within the crowd; secondly, he gives the opinion of one side; and then states the

reasonable position of the other side.

1428 The dispute arose within the crowd which was listening to Christ because of what he said. The Evangelist says, **There was again a division among the Jews because of these words**. Since some of them understood his words correctly, and others did not, they argued among themselves: "I have not come to bring peace, but a sword," that is, the sword of gospel teaching, which some believed and others deny (Matt 10:34). "He pours contempt upon princes" (Ps 107:40).

1429 The opinion of one party to the argument was false. About this he says, **Many of them said**...He says, **Many**, because as we read in Ecclesiastes [1:15]: "The number of fools is infinite." They said, **He has a demon, and he is mad**, for it is the habit of the foolish to always give an evil interpretation to matters about which they are in doubt; whereas the opposite should be done. Thus they revile whatever they do not know, as we read in the letter of Jude. And so because they were incapable of understanding our Lord's words - for "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" [1:5] -they blasphemed, saying, **he has a demon, and he is mad**. And they try to turn others away from him, saying **Why listen to him?**

These blasphemers accuse Christ of two things. First, that he has a demon. As if to say: He is not speaking due to the Holy Spirit, but from a wicked spirit. Something similar is found in Acts about Paul: "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities [demons]" (17:18). Now the fact is that a person who has his own and familiar demon is always spiritually mad, but not always mad in a bodily way. But some can be possessed by a demon, and these are always mad even in a bodily way. Thus it was said of Christ "He has become mad" (Mk 3:21). Secondly, to show that Christ has a demon in this way, they say, **and he is mad**. "Your great learning is turning you mad" (Acts 26:24). Yet their blasphemy is not surprising, because they are sensual and, as we read in 1 Corinthians [2:14]: "The sensual person does not perceive those things that pertain to the Spirit of God."

1430 This opinion is refuted by the statements of the other side, and this is in two ways. First, by the profundity of Christ's words. Thus he says, **Others**, that is, those who rightly understood, **said, These are not the sayings of one who has a demon**. This was like saying: It is clear from what he is saying that he is not mad, because his words are orderly and profound: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (6:69). And Paul says, "I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth" (Acts 26:25). Secondly, this opinion is refuted by the greatness of the miracle worked by Christ. Thus they say, **Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?** This means: Was not this

one of the greatest of miracles? They were correct in believing that it could be performed only by the power of God: "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing" (9:33).

1431 It should be noted that there are certain "miracles" which can be performed by the power of demons and angels, and there are others which in no way can be accomplished by their power. Those things which are above the order of nature no creature whatever can perform by its own power, since the creature itself is subject to the laws of nature. God alone, who is above nature, can act above the order of nature. Therefore, whatever any creature performs must remain within the order of nature, an angel, either good or wicked, is able to do, when it is permitted. Thus, by using the seeds which in natural things are ordered to the generation of certain animals, they are able to effect the generation of these animals, as Pharaoh's magicians did (Ex 7:11). Again, they can produce changes affecting the nature of a thing; thus, they can heal the sick who could be helped by the power of nature.

But things that absolutely transcend the order of nature can be performed by God alone, or by good angels and saintly men through God's power, which they obtain through prayer. Such would be the conferring of sight on the blind and the raising of the dead; for the power of nature cannot extend to the restoring of sight or to the raising of the dead. Consequently, a demon cannot open the eyes of a blind man or raise the dead, because this is done by God alone, and by the saints through the power of God.

1432 Here we see the dispute which the Jewish leaders initiated with Christ. First, the Evangelist gives the question asked by the Jews; secondly, Christ's answer (v 25); and thirdly, the effect of this answer (v 31). Concerning the first he does two things: first, he describes the circumstances of the questioning; secondly, he gives the question itself (v 24). The circumstances of the questioning are described with respect to three things: the time, the place, and the persons who ask the question.

1433 He mentions the specific time first, saying, **it was (*encaenia*) the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem**. To understand this we have to know, as Augustine says, that an "encaenia" was the feast of the dedication of a church. [26] The Greek word, *caenos*, is the same as the Latin word for "new." Thus an *encaenia* is the same as a renewal; and even in everyday speech, when something is dedicated to some use, it is said to be "encaeniated," which is the same thing as being renewed. Thus the *encaenia*, the feast of the Dedication, was the feast and commemoration of the dedication of the temple, for when we newly dedicate some church to the divine worship, we celebrate its being set

aside for a sacred purpose; and in memory of this we celebrate it every year on the same day. Thus every year the Jews celebrated the *encaenia*, the remembrance of the dedication of the temple.

1434 To understand why there is a feast for the consecration of a church, we should note that all the feasts in the Church are celebrated in remembrance of God's blessings: "I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord" (Is 63:7). Again in Psalm 117 [v 1], after David called to mind God's many blessings, saying, "Give praise to the Lord, for he is good," he adds, "Solemnize this day, with shady boughs, even to the horn of the altar" [v 26].

We recall God's benefits to us as being of three kinds. Sometimes, as they are found in our head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus we celebrate the feast of his birth, and of his resurrection, and so on. Sometimes we recall them as found in our fellow members, that is, in the saints, who are members of the Church. This is fitting, for as the Apostle says: "If one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Cor 12:26). Thus we celebrate the feasts of Saints Peter and Paul, and the other saints. But at times we recall God's benefits as found in the entire Church: for example, the benefits of the sacraments and other things granted to the Church in general. Now a material church building is like a sign of the gathering of the faithful of the Church, and in this building all the sacraments of grace are dispensed. So it is in memory of these benefits that we celebrate the feast of the dedication of a church. Indeed, such a feast is greater than the feast of any saint, just as the benefits conferred upon the whole Church, which benefits we celebrate, exceed the benefits conferred on some saint and recalled during his feast.

1435 Recall that the temple at Jerusalem had been consecrated three times: first by Solomon (1 Kgs c 8); secondly, during the time of Ezra by Zerubbabel and Jesus, the high priest (Ezra c 6); thirdly, by the Maccabees, for it says in 1 Maccabees (c 4) that they went up to Jerusalem to cleanse the holy places. Now this feast was not celebrated in memory of the dedication by Solomon, because that took place in the fall, i.e., in the seventh month; nor was it in memory of the dedication made at the time of Ezra, for this took place during the spring, i.e., the ninth day of March. But it was in memory of the dedication made by the Maccabees, which took place during the winter. And so to show this he mentions the specific time, saying, **it was winter**.

There is also a mystical reason for mentioning the time. As Gregory says (*Morals* 2), the Evangelist took care to mention the season as winter in order to indicate the chill of evil in the hearts of those listening, that is, the Jews: "As a well keeps its water cold, so she keeps cold her wickedness" [Jer 6:7]; and we read of this

winter: "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone" (Song 2:11).[\[27\]](#)

1436 Then he describes the place, **and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon**. He describes it first in a general way, **in the temple**: "The Lord is in his holy temple" (Ps 11:4); secondly, in more detail, saying, **in the portico of Solomon**. We have to know that the temple included not just its main building, but the surrounding porticos as well; it was on these porticos that the people stood and prayed, for only the priests prayed in the temple. It was called the portico of Solomon because it was the place where Solomon stood and prayed when the temple was being dedicated: "Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel" (1 Kgs 8:22).

1437 One might object that the temple which Solomon built was destroyed, and so was his portico. I answer that the temple was rebuilt according to the specifications of the previous one; and so just as that portico was called the portico of Solomon in the first instance, it was called the same later out of respect for him.

1438 The persons who question Christ are described as to their malice; thus he says, **so the Jews gathered round him**, unwarmed by loving charity, but burning with the desire to harm him. They came to attack him, surrounding and pressing him in on all sides: "Many bulls encompass me" (Ps 22:12); "Ephraim has encompassed me" (Hos 11:12).

1439 Then when he says, **and said to him**...we see the Jews questioning him. First, he mentions the pretended reason for their questions when he says, **How long will you keep us in suspense?** Their manner is flattering because they want it to appear that they desire to know the truth about him. It is like they were saying: We are hanging in anticipation. How long will you keep us unsatisfied? "Hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Prv 13:12).

Secondly, they state their question, **If you are the Christ, tell us plainly**. Note their perversity; for since they resent Christ's calling himself the Son of God (5:18), they do not ask him if he is the Son of God, but **If you are the Christ, tell us plainly**. They hoped by this to obtain grounds for accusing him before Pilate for inciting sedition and making himself king - which was in opposition to Caesar and offensive to the Romans. Thus it was that when the Jews accused Christ of making himself the Son of God, Pilate was not very impressed; but when they said: "Every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar" (19:12), he was swayed against Christ. This is why they say, **If you are the Christ, or a king, or anointed, tell us plainly**.

Secondly, notice their wickedness, because they say, **plainly**. It was like saying: Up to now you have not taught in public, but more or less in secret; but in reality, Christ said everything openly and was present for the festival days, and said nothing in secret: "I have spoken openly to the world...I have said nothing secretly" (18:20).

1440 Now we have the answer of Christ, where he shows their unbelief, proving they were deceitful in saying they wished to know the truth when they said, "How long will you keep us in suspense?" He shows this in two ways. First, because they did not believe his words; and about this he says, **I told you, and you do not believe**. As if to say: You say to me, "If you are the Christ," the king, "tell us." But **I told you**, that is, I told you the truth, **and you do not believe**. "If I tell you, you will not believe" (Lk 22:67).

He shows this in a second way because they do not believe his works. And about this he says: **the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness to me**. He first shows their unbelief in his works; secondly, the reason for their unbelief (v 26).

1441 As to the first he says, **the works that I do....** This was like saying: You cannot be persuaded and satisfied by my words, nor even by those great works which I do **in my Father's name**, i.e., for his glory. **They bear witness to me**, because they can be performed by God alone. Thus they clearly show that I have come from God: "The tree is known by its fruit" (Matt 12:33); "These very works which I am doing, bear witness" (5:36). **But you do not believe**: "Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him" (12:37). For this reason they are inexcusable: "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father (15:24).

1442 The reason for their unbelief is that they are separated from Christ's sheep. So he says, **but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep**. He does three things concerning this. First, he says that they are excluded from membership in the sheep of Christ; secondly, he shows the dignity of his sheep (v 27); thirdly, he proves that no one will snatch his sheep out of his hands (v 29).

1443 He mentions that they are not among his sheep when he says, **you do not belong to my sheep**, i.e., you are not predestined to believe, but foreknown to eternal destruction. For the very fact that we believe is due to God: "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake" (Phil 1:29); "For by grace you have been saved

thorough faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). And this is given only to those for whom it was prepared from eternity; thus, only those believe in him who have been ordained to this by God through an eternal predestination: "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48); "We believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 15:11).

1444 But should anyone be told that he is not predestined? It seems that he should not be told: for since no one can be saved unless he is predestined, if one is told that he is not predestined, he would be driven to despair. And so our Lord was driving the Jews to despair when he said to them, **you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep**. My answer to this is that in this group there was something common to all, that is, they were not preordained by God to believe at that time; and there was also something special, that is, some of them were preordained to believe later. Thus, some of them did believe later, for we read in Acts (c 2) that three thousand of them believed in one day. But some were not preordained to do this. Therefore, it did not militate against hope to say to a group, some of whom were preordained to believe later, that they did not belong to his sheep, because no one of them could apply this definitely to himself. But it would militate against hope if Christ had said this to some definite person. [\[28\]](#)

1445 Now he reveals the dignity of his sheep when he says, **my sheep hear my voice**. He here mentions four things: two of them are what we do in reference to Christ; the other two, which correspond to the first two are what Christ does in us.

1446 The first thing we do is to obey Christ. Concerning this he says, **my sheep**, through predestination, **hear my voice**, by believing and obeying my precepts: "O that today you would harken to his voice! Harden not your hearts" (Ps 95:7).

1447 The second thing, corresponding to this, is what Christ does, which is to give his love and approval. Concerning this he says, **and I know them**, that is, I love and approve of them: "The Lord knows those who are his" (2 Tim 2:19). This is like saying: The very fact that they hear me is due to the fact that **I know them** by an eternal election.

But if a person cannot believe unless God gives this to him, it seems that unbelief should not be imputed to anyone. I answer that it is imputed to them because they are the cause why it is not given to them. Thus, I cannot see the light unless I am enlightened by the sun. Yet if I were to close my eyes, I would not see the light; but this is not due to the sun but to me, because by closing my eyes I am

the cause of my not being enlightened. Now sin, for example, original sin, and in some persons actual sin, is the cause why we are not enlightened by God through faith. This cause is in everyone. Thus, all who are left by God are left by reason of the just judgment of God, and those who are chosen are lifted up by God's mercy.

1448 The third thing, which is what we do, concerns our imitation of Christ. So he says, **and they follow me**: "My foot has held fast his steps" (Job 23:11); "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Pet 2:21).

1449 The corresponding fourth part, which is what Christ does, is the bestowing of a reward. Concerning this he says, **and I give them eternal life**. This is like saying: They follow me by walking the path of gentleness and innocence in this life, and I will see that afterwards they will follow me by entering into the joys of eternal life.

Our Lord shows in three ways that this reward will never end. Something can end in three ways. First of all, by its very nature, for example, if it is corruptible. But this reward is incorruptible of its very nature. Thus He says, **I give them eternal life**, which is incorruptible and ever-living enjoyment of God: "This is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (17:3). As Augustine says, this is the pasture which he spoke before (v 9).[\[29\]](#) Indeed, eternal life is called a good pasture because it is entirely verdant and nothing withers away. Secondly, a thing can end because the one receiving it ends, or does not guard it well. But this will not happen to that reward; so he says, **and they shall never perish**, that is, the sheep will never perish. This conflicts with Origen, for he said that the saints in glory are able to sin.[\[30\]](#) Yet our Lord says, **they shall never perish**, because they will be preserved forever: "He who conquers I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he go out of it" (Rev 3:12). Thirdly, a thing can end by being snatched by force: for perhaps Adam would not have been cast out if the Deceiver had not been there. But this will not happen in eternal life, and so he says, **and no one shall snatch them**, that is, the sheep, **out of my hand**, that is, from my protection and loyalty: "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God" (Wis 3:1). As Augustine says: "There the wolf does not snatch, nor the thief steal, nor the robber kill."[\[31\]](#)

1450 He now proves what he had said above about the dignity of his sheep, namely, that no one can snatch them from his hand. His reason is this: No one can snatch what is in the hand of my Father; but the Father's hand and mine are the same; therefore, no one can snatch what is in my hand. Concerning this he

does three things: first, he gives the minor premise by showing that the Father had communicated divinity to him, saying, **what my Father has given to me**, through an eternal generation, **is greater than all**. "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself" (5:26). It is **greater** than any power: "He has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man" (5:27); it is **greater** than any reverence and honor: "God had bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil 2:9). Therefore, **what my Father has given to me**, that is, that I am his Word, his only begotten, and the splendor of his light, **is greater than all**.

Secondly, he mentions the greatness of the Father's power, which concerns the major premise, when he says, **and no one is able to snatch**, take by violence or secretly pilfer, **out of my Father's hand**, from the power of my Father, or from me, who am the might of the Father - although as Augustine says, it is better to say "from the power of the Father" than "from me." [32] Now **no one is able to snatch out of my Father's hand**, because he is the almighty One who is not subject to violence, and he is all-wise from whom nothing is hidden: "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength" (Job 9:4).

Thirdly, he affirms his unity with the Father, and from this the conclusion follows. Thus he says, **I and the Father are one**. As if to say: **no one shall snatch them out of my hand**, because **I and the Father are one**, by a unity of essence, for the Father and the Son are the same in nature.

1451 This statement rejects two errors: that of Arius, who distinguished the essence [of the Father from that of the Son], and that of Sabellius, who did not distinguish the person [of the Father from the person of the Son]. We escape both Charybdis and Scylla, for by the fact that Christ says, **one**, he saves us from Arius, because if one, then they are not different [in nature]. And by the fact that he says, **we are**, he saves us from Sabellius, for if we are, then the Father and the Son are not the same [person].

Yet the Arians, deceived by their wickedness, try to deny this, and say that a creature can in some sense be one with God, and in this sense the Son can be one with the Father. The falsity of this can be shown in three ways. First, from our very manner of speaking. For it is clear that "one" is asserted as "being"; thus, just as something is not said to be a being absolutely except according to its substance, so it is not said to be one except according to its substance or nature. Now something is asserted absolutely when it is asserted with no added qualification. Therefore, because **I and the Father are one**, is asserted absolutely, without any qualifications added, it is plain that they are one

according to substance and nature. But we never find that God and a creature are one without some added qualification, as in 1 Corinthians (6:17): "He who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him." Therefore, it is clear that the Son of God is not one with the Father as a creature can be. [\[33\]](#)

Secondly, we can see this from his previous statement, **what my Father has given me is greater than all**. He draws the conclusion from this: **I and the Father are one**. This is like saying: We are one to the extent that the Father has given me that which is greater than all.

Thirdly, it is clear from his intention. For our Lord proves that no one will snatch the sheep from his hand precisely because no one can snatch from the hand of his Father. But this would not follow if his power were less than the power of the Father. Therefore, the Father and Son are one in nature, honor and power.

LECTURE 6

31 The Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?" 33 The Jews answered him, "We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God." 34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken), 36 do you say of him whom the Father consecrated [sanctified] and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; 38 but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand [believe] that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." 39 Again they tried to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. 40 He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John at first baptized, and there he remained. 41 And many came to him; and they said, "John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." 42 And many believed in him there. [\[34\]](#)

1452 We have seen the teaching of Christ; and now we see the effect this teaching has on the Jews. First, Jesus reproves their fierceness; secondly, he defends himself against the charge of blasphemy; and thirdly, he escapes from their violence (v 39).

1453 Concerning the first, two things are done. First, we see the violence of the Jews inciting them to stone Christ. The Evangelist says, **The Jews took up stones again to stone him**. They were hard of heart and unable to understand

his profound message; and so, being like stones, they resort to stones: "When I spoke to them they fought against me without cause" [Ps 119:7].

1454 Secondly, we see our Lord reprove their violence, saying, **I have shown you many good works**. First, he reminds them of the benefits given to them; secondly, he reproves their violence. He recalls the benefits he granted in healing the sick, in teaching them and performing his miracles. So he answered them saying, **I have shown you many good works**, by healing, teaching and working miracles - "He has done all things well" (Mk 7:37) - **from the Father**, whose glory I have sought in all these things - "Yet I do not seek my own glory" (8:50). And he reproves their violence when he says, **for which of these do you stone me?** This was like saying: You should honor one who does good to you, not stone him: "Is evil a recompense for good?" (Jer 18:20).

1455 Now our Lord defends himself from the charge of blasphemy. First, we see him accused of blasphemy by the Jews; and secondly, Christ proves his innocence (v 34).

1456 With respect to the first, the Evangelist says, **The Jews answered him, We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy**. There are five things to be considered here. First, what seems to be the motive for their stoning him, namely, his blasphemy. For Leviticus commands that blasphemers be stoned: "Bring out of the camp him who has blasphemed; and let all who heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let the congregation stone him" [24:14]. Mentioning this motive, they say, **We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy**.

Secondly, they specify his blasphemy. It is blasphemy not only to attribute to God what is not appropriate to him, but also to attribute to another what belongs to God alone. So, it is blasphemy not only to say that God is a body, but also to say that a creature can create: "It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mk 2:7). Thus the Jews were saying that our Lord was a blasphemer not in the first way, but for usurping for himself what is proper to God: **because you, being a man, make yourself God**.

The third thing to be considered is that the Jews understood the words of Christ, **I and the Father are one**, better than the Arians did. Thus they were incensed because they understood that **I and the Father are one** could only be said if the Father and Son are equal. This is what they say, **you make yourself God**, claiming by your words that you are God, which is not true, you, **being a man**.

The fourth point to consider is that the distance between God and man is so

great that it was unbelievable to them that someone with a human nature could be God. So they significantly say, **because you, being a man, make yourself God**. Yet this unbelief could have been dispelled by what is read in the Psalm, "What is man that you are mindful of him? Or the son of man that you visit him?" [Ps 8:5]; and in Habakkuk (1:5): "For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told," this is, the work of the incarnation, which surpasses every mind.

The fifth thing to consider is that they do not agree with themselves: for on the one hand, they say that Christ does good works, saying, **we stone you for no good work**; and on the other hand, they accuse him of blasphemy, usurping for himself the honor of God. Now these conflict with each other, for he could not accomplish miracles from God if he blasphemed God, because "A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit" (Mt 7:18). And this applied especially to Christ.

1457 Here our Lord defends himself against the charge of blasphemy. First, he gives his defense; secondly, he shows them the truth (v 37). He defends himself by divine authority, and so first, he mentions the authority of Scripture; secondly, he explains its meaning; and thirdly, he draws his conclusion.

1458 The Evangelist says, **Jesus answered them: Is it not written in your law** (in Psalm 82:6): **I said, you are gods?** Here we should note that "law" is understood in three ways in Scripture. Some times it is taken in a general sense for the entire Old Testament, containing the five books of Moses, the prophets and the hagiographies. This is the way **in your law** is understood here, meaning in the Old Testament. For this quotation is from the psalms which are referred to as the law because the entire Old Testament is considered to have the authority of law. Sometimes "law" is understood as distinct from the prophets, psalms, and the hagiographies; this is the way Luke uses it in "Everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44). Again, at other times it is distinguished from the prophets. In this sense the psalms and the other books of the Old Testament, other than the Pentateuch, are included within the prophets, on the ground that the Old Testament was produced by a prophetic spirit. This is the way it is understood in Matthew: "On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" (Mt 23:40).

1459 The word "God" is also used in three senses. Sometimes it signifies the divine nature itself, and then it is used only in the singular: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut 6:4). At other times it is taken in a denominative sense: in this way idols are called gods: "All the gods of the peoples are idols" (Ps 96:5). And sometimes someone is called a god because of a certain participation in divinity, or in some sublime power divinely infused. In this way, even judges

are called gods in Scripture: "If the thief is not known, the owner of the house shall be brought to the gods," that is, to the judges [Ex 22:8]; "You shall not speak ill of the gods," that is, of the rulers [Ex 22:28]. This is the way the word "god" is taken here, when he says, **I said, you are gods**, i.e., you share in some divine power superior to the human.

1460 Then when he says, **If he called them gods to whom the word of God came**, he shows the meaning of the authority he cited. This was like saying: He called them gods because they participated in something divine insofar as they participated in God's word, which was spoken to them. For due to God's word a person obtains some participation in the divine power and purity: "You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you" (15:3); and in Exodus (c 34) we read that the face of Moses shone when he heard the words of the Lord.

From what has been said above, one might argue in this way: It is clear that a person by participating in the word of God becomes god by participation. But a thing does not become this or that by participation unless it participates in what is this or that by its essence: for example, a thing does not become fire by participation unless it participates in what is fire by its essence. Therefore, one does not become god by participation unless he participates in what is God by essence. Therefore, the Word of God, that is the Son, by participation in whom we become gods, is God by essence. But our Lord, rather than argue so profoundly against the Jews, preferred to argue in a more human way. He says, **and scripture cannot be broken**, in order to show the irrefutable truth of Scripture: "O Lord, your word endures forever" [Ps 118:89].[\[35\]](#)

1461 Then when he says, **do you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, You are blaspheming**, he draws his conclusion. If, with Hilary, we refer this to Christ insofar as he has a human nature, the meaning is this: Some people are called gods only because they participate in God's word. How then can you say, **you are blaspheming**, that is, how can you consider it blasphemy, if that man who is united in person to the Word of God is called God? [\[36\]](#) This is why he says, **whom the Father sanctified**. For although God sanctifies all who are sanctified - "Sanctify them in truth" (17:17) - he sanctified Christ in a special way. He sanctifies others to be adopted children - "You have received the spirit of adoption" (Rom 8:15) - but he sanctified Christ to be the Son of God by nature, united in person to the Word of God. These words, **whom the Father sanctified**, show this in two ways. For if God sanctifies as Father, it is clear that he sanctifies Christ as his Son: "He was predestined to be the Son of God by the Spirit of sanctification" [Rom 1:4]. We can also see this by his saying, **and sent into the world**. For it is not fitting for a thing to be sent some place

unless it existed before it was sent there. Therefore, he whom the Father sent into the world in a visible way, is the Son of God, who existed before he was visible: for as we saw above, "He was in the world, and the world was made through him" (1:10); and "God sent the Son into the world" (3:17). **Do you say of him whom the Father sent into the world, you are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?** This was like saying: I, who am united in person to the Word, have much more reason to say this than those **to whom the word of God came**.

1462 But how did the Jews realize that he was claiming to be the Son of God? Our Lord did not say this expressly. I answer that although our Lord did not say this expressly, yet from what he did say - **I and the Father are one and what my Father has given to me is greater than all** - they understood that he received his nature from the Father and was one in nature with him. But to receive the same nature from another, and to be it, is to be a son.

1463 But if, with Augustine, we refer **him whom the Father sanctified** to Christ as God, then the meaning is this: **him whom the Father sanctified** is he whom he has begotten holy, or sanctified, from eternity.[\[37\]](#) The other things which follow should be explained in the same way as Hilary does. Yet the better explanation is to refer everything to Christ as man.

1464 Then when he says, **If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me**, he proves the truth of the foregoing. This is like saying: Although in your opinion I am only human, yet I am not blaspheming when I say that I am truly God, because I truly am. He does two things concerning this: first, he presents the argument of his works; secondly, he draws his conclusion (v 38b).

1465 He does two things concerning the first. In the first place he says that in the absence of his works they would have an excuse. He says, **If I am not doing the works of my Father**, i.e., the same ones that he does, and with the same might and power, **then do not believe me**. "Whatever he [the Father] does, that the Son does likewise" (5:19).

Secondly, he says that they are convicted by his very works: **but if I do them**, the same works the Father does, then **even though you do not believe me**, who appears as a son of man, **believe the works**, i.e., these works show that I am the Son of God: "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin" (15:24).

1466 Now he draws his conclusion, saying, **that you may know and believe**

that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. For the clearest indication of the nature of a thing is taken from its works. Therefore, from the fact that he does the works of God it can be clearly known and believed that Christ is God. Accordingly he says: I will argue from my works themselves, **that you may know and believe** what you cannot see with your own eyes, that is, **that the Father is in me and I am in the Father**: "I am in the Father and the Father in me," by a unity of essence (14:10). **The Father is in me and I am in the Father** and "I and the Father are one," have the same meaning.

Hilary explains this well by saying that there is this difference between God and man: man being a composite, is not his own nature; but God, being entirely simple, is his own existence and his own nature. Therefore, in whomever the nature of God is, there is God. [38] And so, since the Father is God and the Son is God, where the nature of the Father is, there is the Father, and where the nature of the Son is, there is the Son. Therefore, since the nature of the Father is in the Son, and conversely, the Father is in the Son, and conversely. But as Augustine remarks, although God is in man and man is in God - "He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jn 4:16) - this does not mean that they are one in essence. Rather, man is in God, that is, under the divine care and protection, and God is in man, by the likeness of his grace. [39] However, the only Son is in the Father and the Father is in him as equals.

1467 Now our Lord turns away from the obstinacy of the Jews. First, the Evangelist shows they were obstinate; secondly, we see that Christ turns away from this; thirdly, we see what effect this had.

1468 The Evangelist shows their inflexibility by the fact that after so many confirmations of the truth, after the evidence of so many miracles and wonders, they still persist in their evil. So **again they tried to arrest him**, to apprehend him, not in order to believe and understand, but in their rage to do him harm; they were even the more enraged because he had more clearly expressed his equality with the Father: "They hold fast to deceit, they refuse to return" (Jer 8:5).

1469 But our Lord turns away from their rage, and so the Evangelist says, **but he escaped from their hands**. Here we see, first, that he left them by escaping from their hands. He did this for two reasons. To show that he could not be restrained unless he willed: "Passing through the midst of them he went away" (Lk 4:30); "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (10:18). Secondly, to give us the example of turning away from persecution when this can be done without endangering the faith: "Do not make your stand against one who can injure you" [Sir 8:14].

We see, secondly, where he went when the Evangelist says, **he went away again across the Jordan to the place where John at first baptized**. The mystical reason for this is that at some time, through the apostles, Jesus would go to convert the Gentiles. The literal reason is twofold. First, this place was near Jerusalem, and since his passion was near, he did not wish to be too far away. Secondly, he wanted to recall the witness which John had given there, when he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29), as well as the Father's testimony to his Son, Christ, at the time of his baptism.

1470 The effect of this turning away was that many were converted to the faith. Three points are made about this conversion. First, many imitated his works; so he says, **and many came to him**, namely, by imitating his works: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28). Secondly, many professed him in word, **and they said, John did no sign**. By this they profess Christ's superiority to John. The reason for this was that John was sent as a witness to Christ; thus he should show that he was worthy to be believed and his testimony would be shown to be true. Now this is fittingly done by holiness of life. On the other hand, Christ came as God; consequently, it was fitting that he show the signs of divine power. And so John stood out by the sanctity of his life; Christ, however, in addition to this, performed works which manifested his divine power. This was in accord with the practice of the rulers of antiquity that when in the presence of a higher power a lesser power did not display the insignia of its power. Thus, in the presence of the Dictator, the Consuls took down their insignia. So it was not fitting that John, who possessed less power, because he was a precursor and witness, should employ the insignia of divine power; only Christ should have done this. They profess the truth of John's witness to Christ, saying, **but everything that John said about this man, Christ, was true**. They were saying: Although John did no sign, he nevertheless said all things truthfully about Christ. Thirdly, he reveals the faith in their hearts, saying, **and many believed in him there**. As Augustine remarks, they grasped Christ remaining, whom the Jews wanted to seize waning, because through the lamp they had come to the day. For John was that lamp and gave testimony to the day. [\[40\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) *In Ioannem hom.*, 59, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 324; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:1-5.

[\[2\]](#) *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:1-5.

[3] *Tract. in Io.*, 45, ch. 2, col. 1720; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:1-5.

[4] loc. cit; also *Tract. in Io.*, 47, ch. 1, col. 1733; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:11-13.

[5] *In Ioannem hom.*, 59, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 324; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:1-5.

[6] *Tract. in Io.*, 46, ch. 2, col. 1728; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:1-5.

[7] Ibid.; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:1-5.

[8] St. Thomas refers to Jn 10:10 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 50, a. 1, obj. 3; q. 55, a. 5, obj. 3.

[9] *Tract. in Io.*, 45, ch. 6, col. 1721; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:6.

[10] *Tract. in Io.*, 45, ch. 7, col. 1722.

[11] *In Ioannem hom.*, 59, ch. 3; PG 59, col. 325; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:7-10.

[12] *Tract. in Io.*, 45, ch. 15, col. 1726-27; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:7-10.

[13] Gregory, *Super Ezek. Hom*, 13; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:7-10.

[14] *De Spiritu et Anima*, ch. IX; PL 40, col. 785.

[15] St. Thomas refers to Jn 10:11 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 184, a. 5; q. 185, a. 4; Jn 12: *ST* II-II, q. 185, a. 5, obj. 1.

[16] *Tract. in Io.*, 46, ch. 1, col. 1727-28; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:11-13.

[17] Aristotle.

[18] Augustine, *Tract. in Io.*, 46, ch. 8, col. 1732; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:11-13.

[19] Augustine, *Epistola CCXXVII*, ch. 2; PL 33, col. 1014. cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:11-13.

[20] St. Thomas refers to Jn 10:16 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 35, a. 8, ad 1; Jn 10:17: *ST* III, q. 5, a. 4, s. c.; Jn 10:18: *ST* III, q. 5, a. 3; q. 47, a. 1, obj. 1; q. 47, a. 2, ad 1; q. 50, a. 3, obj. 1; q. 53, a. 4, s. c.

[21] summa-three substances in Christ; his body and soul were separated at death but his divinity remained united to both.

[22] Summa-- God's love is the cause of human love, but works done in charity merit the increase of the effects of God's love.

[23] *Tract., in Io.*, 31, ch. 5, col. 1638.

[24] summa-Christ's entire nature was subject to His will.

[25] St. Thomas refers to Jn 10:27 in the *Summa Theologiae*: I-II, q. 108, a. 4, ad 3; Jn 30: *ST* III, q. 17, a. 1, obj. 5.

[26] *Tract. in Io.*, 48, ch. 2, col. 1741; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:22-30.

[27] *Moralia*, II, ch. 2, no. 2; PL 75, col. 555C; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:22-30.

[28] 1443, 1444, Summa-predestination and preordination. He begins to mention predestination in 1373, but says more about it here, also 1447, why it is the fault of some why it is not given to them to believe.

[29] *Tract. in Io.*, 48, ch. 5, col. 1742; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:22-30.

[30] Origen

[31] *Tract. in Io.*, 48, ch. 6, col. 1743; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:22-30.

[32] *Ibid*, 48, ch. 6, col. 1743; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:22-30.

[33] Summa, Christ is one with the Father absolutely, creatures can only become one with God in a qualified sense.

[34] St. Thomas refers to Jn 10:36 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 34, a. 1, s. c.; Jn 10:38: *ST* III, q. 43, a. 1; Jn 10:41: *ST* III, q. 27, a. 5, ad 3; q. 38, a. 2, obj. 2.

[35] Summa-because we become gods by participating in the Word of God, the Word must be divine.

[36] *De Trin.*, 7, ch. 24; PL 10; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:31-38.

[37] *Tract. in Io.*, 48, ch. 10, col. 1745; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:31-38.

[38] Hilary, *De Trin.*, 9, ch. 61; PL 10, col. 330B.

[39] *Tract. in Io.*, 48, ch. 10, col. 1745; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:31-38.

[40] *Tract. in Io.*, 48, ch. 12, col. 1746; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 10:39-42.

11

LECTURE I

1 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4 But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.[\[1\]](#)

1471 Above, our Lord shows his life-giving power by word; here he confirms it with a miracle, by raising Lazarus from the dead. First, we see the illness of Lazarus; secondly, his being raised from the dead (v 6); and thirdly, the effect this produced (v 45). The Evangelist does three things concerning the first: first, the illness of Lazarus is mentioned; secondly, his illness is made known (v 3); thirdly, we see the reason for his illness (v 4). Concerning the first he does three things: first, he describes the person who was ill; secondly, where he was living; and thirdly, he mentions one of his relatives.

1472 The one who was ill was Lazarus; **Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus.** This presents to us a believer who hopes in God, but still suffers the weakness introduced by sin, of whom we read: "Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing" (Ps 6:2). For Lazarus means "one who is helped by the Lord"; and so this name signifies one who has confidence in divine help: "My help comes from the Lord" (Ps 121:2).

1473 Lazarus was at Bethany, **of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.** The village of Bethany was near Jerusalem, and our Lord was often a guest there, as has been said above many times. It means "a house of obedience," and leads us to understand that if one who is ill obeys God, he can easily be cured by him, just as one who is sick and obeys his doctor gains his health. In 2 Kings (5:13) the servants of Naaman said to him: "My father, if the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not have done

it?"

Bethany was the home of Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus. Martha and Mary represent two ways of life, the active and the contemplative. And we can understand from the above that it is by obedience that one becomes perfect, both in the active and in the contemplative life.

1474 His relative was Mary, **it was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair**. The Evangelist describes this Mary by her most famous action so we can distinguish her from the many other women with the same name. Still, there is some disagreement among the saints about this Mary. Some, like Jerome and Origen, say that this Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is not the same as the sinner mentioned in Luke (7:37): "A woman of the city, who was a sinner...brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head."^[2] So, as Chrysostom says, she was not the prostitute mentioned in Luke.^[3] The Mary mentioned by John was an honorable woman, eager to receive Christ, while the name of the woman who was the sinner was kept secret. Furthermore, the Mary mentioned here by John could have done for Christ at the time of his passion because of her special devotion and love something similar to what was done for him by the sinner out of remorse and love. John, in order to praise her, is mentioning here, in anticipation, the action she would perform later [Jn 12:1-8].

Others, such as Augustine and Gregory, say that this Mary, mentioned by John, is the same as the sinner mentioned by Luke.^[4] Augustine bases his reason on this text. For the Evangelist is speaking here of the time before Mary anointed our Lord [for the second time] at the time of the passion; as John says further on: "Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus." So he says that what the Evangelist has mentioned here is the same event mentioned by Luke (7:37). [Ambrose maintains both sides.] 11.Opt;font-family:"Times New Roman">^[5] So, according to the opinion of Augustine, it is clear that the sinner mentioned by Luke is this Mary **whose brother Lazarus was ill**. [Augustine says] a consuming fever was wasting his wretched body with its furnace-like flames.^[6]

1475 The sisters of Lazarus, who were taking care of him, inform Jesus of his illness. Grief-stricken at the misfortune of the ailing youth, **the sisters sent to him**, Jesus, **saying, Lord, he whom you love is ill**. This message brings to mind three things for consideration. First, we see that the friends of God are sometimes afflicted with bodily illness; thus, if someone has a bodily illness, this is not a sign that the person is not a friend of God. Eliphaz mistakenly argued

against Job that it was: "Think now, who that was innocent every perished? Or where were the upright cut off?" (Job 4:7). Accordingly, they say, **Lord, he whom you love is ill**: "For the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights" (Prv 3:12).

The second thing to note is that his sisters do not say, "Lord, come and heal him," but simply to mention his sickness, he **is ill**. This indicates that it is enough merely to state one's need to a friend, without adding a request. For a friend, since he wills the good of his friend as his own good, is just as interested in warding off harm from his friends as he is in warding it off from himself. And this is especially true of the one who most truly loves: "The Lord preserves all who love him" (Ps 145:20).

The third thing to consider is that these two sisters, who wanted the cure of their sick brother, did not come in person to Christ, as did the paralytic (Lk 5:18), and the centurion (Matt 8:5). This was because of the confidence they had in Christ due to the special love and friendship which he had shown for them; or, perhaps it was their grief that kept them away: "A friend, if he is steadfast, will be to you as yourself" [Sir 6:11].

1476 Now we have the reasons for the foregoing: first, the illness of Lazarus; secondly, the reason why, according to Augustine, his sisters did not come in person to Christ (v 5).[\[7\]](#)

1477 The reason for the illness of Lazarus is the glorification of the Son of God; thus the Evangelist says, **when Jesus heard it he said, This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God**. Here we should note that some physical illness is unto death and some is not. Those are unto death which are not ordained to something else. Further, every evil of punishment is inflicted by divine providence: "Does evil befall a city, unless the Lord has done it?" (Amos 3:6). But as for the evil of fault, God is not the author, but the punisher. Now all things that are from God are ordered. Consequently, every evil of punishment is ordered to something: some to death, and some to something else. This illness was not ordered to death, but to the glory of God.

1478 But Lazarus did die! Yes, otherwise he would not have had the odor of one four days in the tomb, nor would his raising have been a miracle. I answer that his illness was not ordained to death as a final end, but to something else, as has been said, that is, that he who was raised, chastened as it were, might live a holy life for the glory of God, and that the Jewish people who saw this miracle might be converted to the faith: "The Lord has chastened me sorely but he has not given me over to death" (Ps 118:18). Thus he adds, **it is for the glory of God**,

so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it.

In this passage, according to Chrysostom, the words "for" and "that" do not indicate the reason for the events, but their sequence. For Lazarus was not made ill so that from it God might be glorified; rather, his illness came from some other cause, and from it the fact followed that the Son of God would be glorified insofar as Christ used it for the glory of God by raising Lazarus. [8]

This is true in one way, but not in another. It is possible to consider two reasons for Lazarus' illness. One is the natural cause, and from this point of view the statement of Chrysostom is true, because Lazarus' illness, considering its natural causes, was not ordained to his rising from the dead. But we can consider another reason, and this is divine providence; and then Chrysostom's statement is not true. For under divine providence an illness of this kind was ordained to the glory of God. And so according to this, the "for" and the "that" do indicate the reason. It is the same as saying: **it is for the glory of God**, because although it was not ordained to this from the intent of its natural cause, yet from the intent of divine providence it was ordained to the glory of God, insofar as, once the miracle had been performed, people would believe in Christ and escape real death. So he says, **so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it.**

Here our Lord clearly calls himself the Son of God: for he was to be glorified in the resurrection of Lazarus because he is true God: "that we may be in his true Son" [1 Jn 5:20]; "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (9:3).

1479 Here, according to Augustine, the Evangelist gives the reason why Lazarus' two sisters did not come to Christ, and it was due to their confidence in him because of the special love he had for them; so the Evangelist remarks, **now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.** [9] Indeed, he who is the Consoler of the sorrowful loved the sorrowing sisters, and he who was the Savior of the weary loved the weary and dead Lazarus: "Yea, he loved his people; all those consecrated to him were in his hand" (Deut 33:3).

LECTURE 2

6 So when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. 7 Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." 8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the

day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if any one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

1480 Here the Evangelist presents the raising of the dead Lazarus. First, we see that Christ desired to do this; and secondly, the sequence of events surrounding the raising are given (v 17). We see three things related to the first. First, our Lord allows the death; secondly, he states his intention to go to the place where Lazarus died (v 7); and thirdly, he reveals his intention to raise him (v 11).

1481 Christ allowed this death by prolonging his stay beyond the Jordan: **so when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.** One may infer from this that Lazarus died on the very day that Jesus received the message from his sisters: for when Christ went to the place where he died, it was already the fourth day. After receiving the message, Christ then remained two days in the same place, and on the day after these two days, he went to Judea. He delayed these few days for two reasons. First, so that the death of Lazarus would not be prevented by his presence; for where life is present, death has no entry. In the second place, in order to make the miracle more credible, and so that people would not say that Christ revived Lazarus, not from death, but only from a coma.

1482 Here (v 7) our Lord declares his intention to go to the place where Lazarus died. First, we see our Lord's plan; secondly, we see the fear in the disciples (v 8); and thirdly, we have our Lord dispelling their fear (v 9).

1483 With respect to the first the Evangelist says, **Then after this,** the prolonged delay, **he said,** Jesus did, **to the disciples, Let us go into Judea again.** One might ask here why Christ made a point of mentioning to the apostles that he was about to go into Judea again, since he had not done this on other occasions. The reason for this was that the Jews had just recently persecuted Christ in Judea and had almost stoned him; indeed, that is why he had left. So it was to be expected that when Christ wanted to go there again, the disciples would become fearful. And because "Darts that are foreseen do not strike and foreseen evils are more easily borne,"[\[10\]](#) as Gregory says, our Lord mentioned his planned journey to them to calm their fears. As to the mystical sense, we can understand by the fact that Christ is returning once again to Judea, that he will return again at the end of the world to the Jews, who will be converted to Christ: "A hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in" (Rom 11:25).

1484 The fear of the disciples is mentioned when the Evangelist says, **the**

disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone you, and you are going there again? This was like saying: It seems that you are deliberately going to your death. Yet their fear was unreasonable, because the disciples had God with them as their protector, and one who is with God should not fear: "Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary?" (Is 50:8); "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?" (Ps 26:2).

1485 Our Lord dispels this fear by strengthening them. The Evangelist says, **Jesus answered**, his disciples, **Are there not twelve hours in the day?** First, we see something about the time; secondly, what time is suited for walking; thirdly, what time is not.

1486 To understand this passage we should note that it has been explained in three ways. The first way is that of Chrysostom, and is this. **Are there not twelve hours in the day?** is like saying: You hesitate to go up to Judea because the Jews recently wanted to stone me; but the day has twelve hours, and what happens at one hour does not happen in another. So, although they would have stoned me before, they would not want to do this at another hour: "For everything there is a season" (Eccl 3:1); "Every matter has its time and way" (Eccl 8:6).[\[11\]](#)

1487 A literal question arises because he is speaking here either of the natural or of the artificial day. If he is speaking of the natural day, then what he says is false: because the natural day does not have twelve but twenty-four hours. Again, if he is speaking of the artificial day, his statement is false: because it is true only at the equinox, for not all artificial days have twelve hours. I answer that we should understand this to refer to the artificial day, because all artificial days have twelve hours. For the hours of such days are distinguished in two ways. Some are equal in length and some are not. Those equal in length are distinguished according to the circle of the equator: and according to this not all days have twelve hours, but some have more and some less, except at the equator. The hour not equal in length are more distinguished according to the ascensions of the zodiac on account of its obliquity: because the zodiac does not ascend equally in all its parts, but at the equator equally. Now each artificial day has twelve of these unequal hours, because every day has six signs which ascend during the day, and six at night; but those which ascend in summer have a slower motion than those which ascend in winter, and of course the ascent of each sign makes up two hours.

1488 **If any one walks in the day**, that is, honorably, and without consciousness of any evil - "Let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in that day" (Rom 13:13) - **he does not stumble**, that is, he does not come upon

anything that might harm him. And this is **because he sees the light of this world**, i.e., the light of righteousness is in him: "Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart" (Ps 97:11). It is like our Lord were saying: We can go securely because we are walking during the day.

1489 **But if any one walks in the night**, that is, in the night of iniquities, he will easily find dangers. Concerning this night we read: "Those who sleep at night" (1 Thess 5:7). But such a one, **he stumbles**, that is, strikes against something, **because the light**, of righteousness, **is not in him**.

1490 A certain Greek, Theophylactus, explains this another way.[\[12\]](#) Beginning at **If any one walks in the day**, he says that the "day" is the presence of Christ in the world, and the "night" is the time after Christ's passion. So the meaning is this: The Jews are not to be feared because as long as I am in the world it is not you, but I, who am in danger. Thus, when the Jews wanted to arrest Christ, he said to the crowd: "If you seek me, let these men go. This was to fulfill the word which he had spoken, 'Of those whom you gavest me I lost not one'" (18:8). **But if any one walks in the night**, that is, in the time after the passion, you should be afraid to go into Judea, because you will suffer persecution from the Jews: "Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered."

1491 Augustine explains it another way, so that the "day" indicates Christ: "We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day" (9:4), and "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (9:5).[\[13\]](#) The twelve hours of this day are the twelve apostles: "Did I not choose you, the twelve?" (6:71). But what should we say of what follows: "And one of you is a devil?" Judas, therefore, was not an hour of this day because he gave no light. We should say that our Lord spoke these words [about the twelve] not in reference to Judas, but to his successor, who was Matthias. Thus, the sense of **Are there not twelve hours in the day?** is as though he were saying: You are the hours, I am the day. Just as the hours follow the day, so you must follow me. So, if I wish to go to Judea you ought not to precede me or change my will, but you should follow me. He said something similar to Peter: "Get behind me, Satan!" (Matt 16:23), i.e., do not go ahead of me, but follow me by imitating my will. **If any one walks in the day** is the same as saying: You should not fear any danger, because you are going with me who am the day. So just as one who walks in the day does not run into anything, that is, **does not stumble**, so also you who walk with me: "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom 8:31). And this is **because he sees the light of this world** in me. **But if any one walks in the night**, in the darkness of ignorance and sin, then **he stumbles**; and this is **because the spiritual light is not in him**, not because of a defect in the light, but because of his own rebellion: "There are those who rebel against the light" (Job 24:13).

LECTURE 3

11 Thus he spoke, and then he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep." 12 The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." 13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead; 15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." 16 Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

1492 Above, our Lord mentioned his intention of going to the place where Lazarus had died; now he reveals his intention to raise him. The Evangelist first mentions this intention; secondly, the attitude of the disciples (v 16). First, we see our Lord stating his intention implicitly and rather obscurely; secondly, the Evangelist mentions how slow the disciples were to understand this (v 12); and thirdly, we see our Lord stating his intention plainly (v 14).

1493 The Evangelist says, **Thus he spoke, and then he said to them**, that is, having said those things already mentioned, Jesus now says to his disciples, **Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep**. According to Chrysostom, this seems to be a second reason for the disciples not to fear: the first was based on their innocence, because he who walks in the day does not stumble; but this reason is based on current necessity, it being necessary to go there.[\[14\]](#)

1494 We see three things about this. First, he recalls his previous friendship with the dead man, saying, **Our friend Lazarus**. This was to say: He was a friend because of the many things and favors he did for us; so we should not neglect him in his needs: "He who overlooks his own advantage for the sake of a friend is just" [Prv 12:26].

1495 Secondly, he mentions that help is needed now, saying, **has fallen asleep**, and so should be helped: "A brother is born for adversity" (Prv 17:17). **Lazarus has fallen asleep**, with respect to the Lord, as Augustine says; but with respect to men he was dead, as they were unable to revive him.[\[15\]](#) We should note that the word "sleep" can be understood in several ways. Sometimes it refers to a natural sleep: "So Samuel went and lay down [slept] in his place" (1 Sam 3:9); and "You shall sleep securely" [Job 11:18]. Sometimes it indicates the sleep of death: "We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are

asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope" (1 Thess 4:13). Sometimes it is understood as some kind of negligence: "Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps 121:4). And sometimes it means the sleep of sin: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead" (Eph 5:14). Again, it can mean the repose of contemplation: "I slept, but my heart was awake" (Song 5:2). It can also signify the rest of future glory: "In peace I will both lie down and sleep" (Ps 4:8).

Death is called a sleep because of the hope we have of a resurrection; so death has come to be called a sleep from the time that Christ died and arose: "I lie down and sleep" (Ps 3:6).

1496 Thirdly, he shows his power to raise one from death when he says, **but I go to awake him out of sleep**. By this he tells us that he woke him from the grave with as little effort as you wake a person who is sleeping in bed. This is not surprising because he is the one who raises the dead and gives life; so it was said above (5:28): "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God."

1497 The Evangelist now mentions that the disciples were slow to understand this (v 12). First, he gives a sign of their slowness, and this is that they did not answer our Lord in accord with his meaning. Secondly, their slowness is clearly shown (v 13).

1498 Concerning the first note that although our Lord was speaking of the sleep of death, they understood him to mean a natural sleep. And because it is a sign of health when the sick sleep, the disciples said, **if he has fallen asleep, he will recover**. They were saying: This is clearly a sign of health; and since he is sleeping, it does not seem to be helpful to go and awake him.

1499 The Evangelist mentions their slowness to understand, saying, **now Jesus had spoken of his death**, since they did not realize this. Our Lord said to them, according to Matthew, "Are you also still without understanding?" And we read of the wise: "The wise man may also hear...and understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles" (Prv 1:5-6)

1500 Then our Lord explicitly states his intention to raise him (v 14). First, he tells them that Lazarus has died, which shows his knowledge; secondly, he mentions his attitude towards his death, which shows his providence; and thirdly, he makes known his intention to go to the place where he died, which shows his compassion or mercy.

1501 He states that Lazarus has died when he says plainly, **Lazarus is dead**, i. e., he has submitted to the common law of death which no one can escape: "What man can live and never see death?" (Ps 89:48).

1502 He shows his own attitude towards this death, saying, **and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe**. This can be explained in two ways.

The first way is this. We have heard that Lazarus was sick. And although I was not there I have told you that he has died **and for your sake I am glad**, i.e., because it is for your benefit, so that you may experience my divinity, because even though I was not there I saw all this: "All are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have do to" (Heb 4:13). This is not surprising, because the divinity is present to all things: "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" (Jer 23:24). So that you may believe not as though they were to believe for the first time, but in order that they might believe more firmly and more strongly, in the sense of "I believe; help my unbelief" (Mk 9:23).

The other explanation is this: **I am glad** that he is dead and this is **for your sake**, for our benefit, **so that you may believe**. Accordingly, **I am glad that I was not there**, for if I had been there, he would not have died. But because he is now dead, it will be a greater miracle when I raise one already decomposing. As a result, your faith will be get stronger, for it is greater to raise one who is dead than to keep him from dying.

We can learn from this that evils are sometimes a reason for joy, insofar as they are directed to some good: "We know that everything works for good with those who love him" (Rom 8:28).

1503 He mentions his plan to go when he says, **but let us go to him**. Here we see God's mercy, for in his mercy he takes the initiative and draws to himself those living in sin, who are dead and unable of themselves to come to him: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore have I drawn you, taking pity on you" [Jer 31:3].

1504 Now the attitude of the disciples is given, and this can be interpreted in two ways; in one way as indicating a lack of confidence; and in the other as indicating love. Chrysostom interprets it in the first way. As was mentioned above, all the disciples feared the Jews, but especially Thomas. Indeed, before the passion he was weaker than the others and had less faith, but after he became stronger and was beyond reproach, traveling the whole world alone. [16] So, because of this lack of confidence he says to his fellow disciples, **Let us also go, that we may**

die with him. This was like saying: He does not fear death; he fully wants to go, willing to deliver both himself and us over to death.

Augustine interprets it in the second way. For Thomas and the other disciples loved Christ so much that they wanted either to live with him while he was here, or die with him, so that they would not find themselves again without consolation if he left them alone by dying. [17] It was with this feeling that Thomas said to his fellow disciples, **Let us also go, that we may die with him.** He was saying: He wants to go, and is in danger of death. Shall we stay here to live? No. **Let us also go, that we may die with him:** "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him" [Rom 8:17]; "One has died for all; therefore all have died" (2 Cor 5:14).

LECTURE 4

17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of [the living] God, he who is coming into the world."

1505 The Evangelist, after telling us that Lazarus was to be raised, now describes the events surrounding it. First, he mentions some others; secondly, he reveals Christ's feelings (v 33); thirdly, he describes the actual raising of Lazarus (v 38). As for the others, he first mentions the condition of Lazarus; secondly, the consolation the Jews were giving to his sisters (v 19); and thirdly, the devotion of these sisters (v 20).

1506 The condition of Lazarus is described as to the time of his death and to his location; **Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.** This makes it clear, as we said above, that Lazarus

had died the very day Christ was told about his illness.

1507 According to Augustine, these four days signify four deaths.[\[18\]](#) The first day indicates the death of original sin, which we humans contract as offspring: "Sin came in to the world through one man and death through sin" (Rom 5:12). The other three days refer to death by actual sin: for every mortal sin is called a death: "Evil shall slay the wicked" (Ps 34:21). These days are differentiated according to which law is transgressed.

Thus the second day indicates the transgression of the law of nature: "They have transgressed the laws...broken the everlasting covenant," that is, the law of nature (Is 24:5). The third day signifies the transgression of the written law: "Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law" (7:19). The fourth day represents the transgression of the Law of the Gospel and of grace; and this is more serious than the others: "A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?" (Heb 10:28-29).

Another interpretation would be this: The first day is the sin of the heart: "Remove the evil of your thoughts from before my eyes" [Is 1:16]. The second day is the sin of speech: "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths" (Eph 4:29). The third day is the sin of deed: "Cease to do evil" (Is 1:16). The fourth day is customary sin arising from evil habit: "You can do good who are accustomed to do evil" (Jer 13:23).

But no matter how it is interpreted, our Lord sometimes heals those who have been dead four days, that is, those who have transgressed the law of the Gospel, and those who are held fast by habits of sin.

1508 Next we are told what favored the presence of the visitors and how many there were. Their presence was facilitated due to the fact that the deceased was near Jerusalem; the Evangelist says, **Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles [fifteen stadia] off**. This was almost two miles, because a mile contains eight stadia. Thus it was easy for many of the Jews to go there from Jerusalem.

The mystical interpretation is this: Bethany means "the house of obedience," and Jerusalem means "the vision of peace." Thus we may understand that those who are in the state of obedience are near the peace of eternal life: "My sheep hear my voice...and I give them eternal life" (10:27). He says **fifteen stadia**, because

anyone who wishes to go from Bethany, i.e., the state of obedience, to the heavenly Jerusalem, must pass through fifteen stadia. The first seven belong to the observance of the Old Law, for the number seven pertains to the Old Law, which keeps the seventh day holy. The other eight belong to the fulfilling of the New Testament, for the number eight refers to the New Testament because of the octave of the resurrection.

Their number is mentioned as being many; **and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them.** This was an act of piety: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15); "Do not fail those who weep, but mourn with those who mourn" (Sir 7:34).

1509 Now the Evangelist describes the sisters: first, Martha; then Mary. He describes Martha in three ways: as going to meet Christ; the devotion she showed to Christ (v 21); and thirdly, the degree of enlightenment to which Christ raised her.

1510 We are told that Martha immediately went to meet Jesus, **when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him** without delay. The Evangelist says, **was coming**, perhaps because when Christ was drawing near someone went ahead and told Martha that Jesus was on his way; and when she heard this, she at once ran to meet him. The reason why Martha was the first to hear about this and hurry out alone was due to her anxiety; thus our Lord says in Luke (10:41), "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things." And so, since she was occupied with every detail, she was constantly coming and going and was more likely to meet the messengers. But Mary sat with those who had come from Jerusalem, and the news would not have reached her as soon. Chrysostom thinks that Martha did not tell Mary about this at once because Mary was with the Jews, and Martha knew that they were persecuting Christ and had already planned his death. So, she was afraid that if she told her, and Mary also came to meet Christ, they too would have come with her. For this reason she preferred not to tell her. [\[19\]](#)

But if the Jews were conspiring against Christ, why were they there with Lazarus and his sisters, who were intimate friends of Christ, and like his disciples? Chrysostom answers that they were there in spite of the orders of their leaders, to comfort them, because they were good women and in great need. Or again, they were there because they were not evil men, but were well-disposed toward Christ; for a great number of the people were believers. [\[20\]](#)

Mystically, these events signify the active life, which is signified by Martha, who went to meet Christ in order to serve his members; and the contemplative life,

which is signified by Mary, who sat at home dedicating herself to the repose of contemplation and to purity of conscience: "When I enter my house, I shall find rest with her" (Wis 8:16).

1511 Martha is shown to have an extraordinary devotion; **Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.** Here she reverently mentions two things to Christ: one of these look to the past, and the other to the future. She looks to the past when she says, **Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died:** for she believed that there would be no place for death when the Lord was present, since she had seen the woman healed by merely touching the fringe of Jesus' garment (Matt 9:20). This was reasonable, for life is contrary to death; but Christ is life and the tree of life: "She [wisdom] is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her" (Prv 3:18). So if the tree of life could preserve one from death, much more could Christ. However, her faith was as yet imperfect, for she thought that Christ had less power when he was absent than when he was present. Thus she said, **Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.** Of course, this can be said of a limited and created power, but it should not be said of the infinite and uncreated power which is God, because God is equally related to things both present and absent; indeed, all things are present to him: "Am I a God at hand, says the Lord, and not a God afar off?" (Jer 23:23).

She looks to the future when she adds, **and even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.** In saying this she spoke the partial truth - for it belonged to Christ as having a human nature to petition God; thus we read that he often prayed, and above it is said, "If any one is a worshipper of God and does his will, God listens to him" (9:31). Yet it was less than the whole truth; for by saying this she seemed to be thinking of Christ as a saintly man who could by his prayer revive one already dead, just as Elisha by his prayer raised one who was dead.

1512 We see how she advanced when the Evangelist adds, **Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again.** Because she was still imperfect in her understanding, our Lord raised her to higher things by his teaching. First, he foretells the resurrection of her brother; secondly, he shows that he has the power to resurrect (v 25). Concerning the first, he does two things. First, he foretells the coming miracle; secondly, we see Martha's understanding of the resurrection (v 24).

1513 The miracle our Lord foretold is the raising of Lazarus; thus he says, **Your brother will rise again:** "Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise" (Is 26:19). We should note here that Christ raised three persons from death: the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue (Matt 9:25); the widow's son, who was being carried

outside the gate of the city (Lk 7:12); and Lazarus, who had been four days in the tomb. The girl was still in her home, the youth was outside the gate, and Lazarus was in the tomb. He raised the girl in the presence of only a few witnesses: the girl's father and mother, and the three disciples, Peter, James, and John. He raised the young man in the presence of a large group. And Lazarus was raised with a number of people standing by, and when Christ was deeply affected. These three persons represent three kinds or genera of sins. Some sin by consenting in their hearts to mortal sin; and these are signified by the girl who was dead in her own home. Others sin by outside signs and acts, and these are signified by the dead youth who was being carried outside the city gate. Finally, those who are firmly habituated to sin are buried in the tomb. Yet, our Lord raises all of them. But those who sin only by consent, and die by sinning mortally, are more easily raised. And because their sin is private, it is healed with a private corrective. When sin advances without, it needs public remedy.

1514 Martha's understanding of the promised resurrection is given when the Evangelist says, **Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.** It had never been heard that anyone had raised a person who had been four days in the tomb, so it would not have entered Martha's heart that Jesus would raise Lazarus from the dead then and there. But she did believe that this would happen at the general resurrection. Therefore, she says, **I know**, that is, I hold it with the greatest certainty, **that he will rise again at the last day**: "I will raise him up at the last day" (6:40).

1515 When the Evangelist says, **Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life**, our Lord raises Martha to higher things. First, Jesus shows his own might and power; secondly, he mentions the effect of his power, **he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live**; and thirdly, he demands faith, **Do you believe this?**

1516 His power is life-giving; thus he says, **I am the resurrection and the life**. It is as though he were saying to Martha: Do you believe that your brother will rise on the last day? But this general event, that all will rise, will be caused by my power. Consequently, I, by whose power all will rise at that time, am also able to raise your brother now.

He is saying two things, namely, that he is **the resurrection and the life**. We should note that some need to share in the effect of life: some, indeed, because they have lost life; and others, not because they have lost it, but in order that the life they have may be preserved. In regard to the first he says, **I am the resurrection**, because those who have lost their life by death are restored. In regard to the second he says, **and the life**, by which the living are preserved.

We should note further that the statement, **I am the resurrection**, is a causal one. It is the same as saying: I am the cause of the resurrection, for this manner of speaking is usually applied only to those who are the cause of something. Now Christ is the total cause of our resurrection, both of bodies and souls; and so the statement, **I am the resurrection**, indicates the cause. He is saying: The entire fact that everyone will rise in their souls and in their bodies will be due to me: "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor 15:21).

Furthermore, the fact that **I am the resurrection** is due to the fact that **I am the life**: for it is because of life that they are restored to life, just as it is because of fire that something aflame which has been extinguished is rekindled: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (1:4).

1517 However, the effect corresponds to the power; thus he says, **he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die**. First, he treats of the effect which corresponds to the first power [the power to resurrect]; secondly, the effect which corresponds to the second power [the power to give life].

The first thing he said about his power is that he is the resurrection. The effect which corresponds to this is that the dead are brought to life by him. Referring to this he says, **he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live**. The reason for this is that I am the cause of the resurrection, and the effect of this cause is obtained by believing in me. He says, **he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live**, because by believing he has me within himself - "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:17). And one who has me, has the cause of the resurrection. **Therefore, he who believes in me shall live**. We saw before (5:25) that some will rise through faith: "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live," with a spiritual life, by rising from the death of sin, and they will also live with a natural life by rising from the penalty of [physical] death.

The second thing he says of his power is that he is life. The effect which corresponds to this is the preservation of life. Thus he says, **and whoever lives and believes in me**, whoever lives a life of righteousness, "the righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:4), **shall never die**, that is, with an eternal death. But they will have eternal life: "For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life" (6:40). This should not be understood to mean that one will not physically die; he will die, but he will be raised up in a soul to a never-ending life, and his flesh will rise and he will never die again. Thus John continued, "and I will raise him up at the last day" (6:40).

1518 Jesus requires faith so he can bring her to perfection: thus he says, **Do you believe this?** First, our Lord's question is given. Our Lord does not ask this out of ignorance, because he knew her faith. Indeed, it was he who had infused the faith into her: for the act of faith is from God. But he asks this question in order that she might profess outwardly the faith she had in her heart: as we read, "For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved" (Rom 10:10).

1519 Secondly, we are given the woman's answer, **Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.** Yet this answer seems to be unrelated to what our Lord had said. For he had said, **I am the resurrection and the life**, and then he asked her whether she believed this. She did not answer: "I believe that you are the resurrection and the life," but **I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**

There are two explanations for this. Chrysostom thinks that Martha did not understand the profound words of Christ and answered as one bewildered: Lord, I do not understand what you are saying, namely, that you are the resurrection and the life; but I do believe this, **I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**[\[21\]](#) Augustine, on the other hand, says that Martha answers this way because it gives the reason for all that our Lord had said.[\[22\]](#) It is as though she were saying: Whatever you say about your power and the effect of salvation, I believe it all; because I believe something more, which is the root of all these things, that is, **that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**

1520 Martha's profession is complete, for she professes Christ's dignity, his nature and his mission, that is, to be made flesh. She professes his dignity, both royal and priestly, when she says, **you are the Christ.** Now "Christ" means "anointed." And kings and priests are anointed. Consequently, Christ is king and priest. So the angel said: "To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). Furthermore, he is a "Christ" in a unique way, for others are anointed with a visible oil, but he is anointed with an invisible oil, that is, with the Holy Spirit, and more abundantly than others: "God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows" (Ps 45:7). Indeed, he was anointed above his fellows "for it is not by measure that he gives the Spirit" (3:34).

Then she professes that Christ's nature is divine and equal to the Father; she says, **the Son of the living God.** In calling him uniquely the Son of the living God, she affirms the truth of his sonship: for he is not the true Son of God unless he is of the same nature as his Father. Thus it is said of Christ: "That we may be in his true Son, Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" [1 Jn 5:20].

She professes the mystery of his mission when she says, **he who is coming into the world**, by assuming flesh. Peter professed the same: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16); and Christ says, "I came from the Father and have come into the world" (16:28).

LECTURE 5

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying quietly, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 29 And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled [himself]; 34 and he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." 37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying."

1521 The Evangelist, after describing Martha, now describes Mary. First, he mentions how she was called; secondly, her meeting with Christ; and thirdly, the devotion she showed him (v 32).

1522 Mary was called by Martha, who had been consoled and instructed by Christ, as she did not want her sister to miss such consolation. **When she had said this**, the previous words, to the Lord, **she went and called her sister Mary, saying quietly, The Teacher is here and is calling for you**. She called her sister quietly: "The words of the wise heard in quiet..." (Eccl 9:17). She did this because a number of Jews were with her sister, as has been said; and perhaps there were some among them who did not like Jesus, or would have left, or who, if they had heard what Martha said, would not have followed her. As for the mystical sense, we may understand that one more efficaciously calls upon Christ in quiet or in private: "In quietness and in trust shall be your strength" (Is 30:15).

1523 There is a problem about her saying, **the Teacher is here and is calling for you**. This seems to be false, because our Lord did not tell Martha to call Mary. Augustine says that the Evangelist omitted this detail from his account for the sake of brevity, for perhaps our Lord did tell Martha to call her. [\[23\]](#) However, others say that Martha considered the very presence of Christ as a call. Martha was thinking: If he is here, it would be inexcusable for one not to go to meet him.

1524 Next, the Evangelist describes Mary going to meet Christ. He does three things about this: first, he mentions her promptness; secondly, the place where she meets Christ; and thirdly those who came with her (v 31).

1525 Mary went to Christ promptly, not delaying on account of her sorrow, or hesitating because of those who were with her. But **when she heard it, she rose quickly** from the house where she was **and went to him**, Jesus. It is clear from this that Martha would not have arrived before Mary if Mary had been immediately told of Jesus' coming. Further, this furnishes us with the example that we are not to delay when called to Christ: "Do not delay to turn to the Lord, nor postpone it from day to day" (Sir 5:7); "I will hear him as a teacher" [Is 50:4].

1526 Mary meets Christ at the same place where Martha had spoken to him; **Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him**. The Evangelist mentions this so that we do not think that Mary's trip was unnecessary, for Christ could have reached her village just as quickly as Martha did. But Christ remained where he was so as not to appear to be thrusting himself into a miracle. Yet once he is asked and prompted, he does perform a miracle, once they realize that Lazarus is dead, and so the miracle cannot be denied. We can also understand from this that when we wish to have the advantage of Christ we should go to meet him, and not wait until he accommodates himself to us; rather, we should accommodate ourselves to him: "They shall turn to you, but you shall not turn to them" (Jer 15:19).

1527 Those who followed Mary are described when the Evangelist says, **the Jews who were with her in the house...followed her**. The reason they followed her is given when he says, **supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there**. They thought that her action was inspired by her grief, since they had not heard what Martha had said to her. This was a commendable thing for the Jews to do, for as Sirach (7:34) says: "Do not fail those who weep." Still, that they did follow Mary was an effect of divine providence, and it was, as Augustine says, so that with all these present when Lazarus was raised, this great miracle of raising one who had been dead for four days would have many

witnesses. [\[24\]](#)

1528 Then when he says, **then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet**, we see Mary's devotion to Jesus. First, we see the devotion she showed by her actions and secondly, the devotion she showed by her words.

1529 In regard to the first, notice her security and humility. She is secure because, contrary to the orders of the leaders that no one profess Christ, she is neither shamed by the crowd nor does she show any regard for the Jews' mistrust of Christ. Even though some of Christ's enemies are present, she runs to him: "The righteous are bold as a lion" (Prv 28:1).

She shows her humility because **she fell at his feet**, which was not said about Martha: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you" (1 Pet 5:6); "Let us worship at his foot stool" (Ps 132:7).

1530 She shows her devotion in words when she says to him, **Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died**. For she believed that he was the life, and where he was there would be no place for death: "What fellowship has light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14). It is like saying, says Augustine: "As long as you were present with us, no sickness or infirmity dared to appear among those with whom Life was a guest. O faithless fellowship! While you were still living in the world, your friend died. If a friend dies, what will an enemy suffer?" [\[25\]](#)

1531 Next (v 33), Christ's feelings are presented. Christ did not answer Mary in the same way that he answered Martha; because of the crowd which was present he did not say anything, but showed his power by his actions. First, we see Christ's affection for Mary; secondly, the remarks of the Jews about Christ's affection (v 36). Concerning the first, the Evangelist does three things. First, he mentions the affection present in the heart of Christ; secondly, how he expressed it in words (v 34); and thirdly, how he revealed it by his tears (v 35).

1532 With regard to the first, he says, **When Jesus saw her weeping**...We should note here that Christ is truly divine and truly human. And so in his actions we find almost everywhere that the divine is mingled with the human, and the human with the divine. And if at times something human is mentioned about Christ, something divine is immediately added. Indeed, we read of no weakness of Christ greater than his passion; yet as he hangs on the cross divine events are manifested: the sun is obscured, rocks are rent, the bodies of the saints that had been asleep arise. Even at his birth, as he lay in the manger, a star shines in the

heavens, the angels sing his praises, and the Magi and kings offer gifts. We have a similar situation here: for Christ experiences a certain weakness in his human affections, becoming disturbed over the death of Lazarus. We read, **he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled himself**.

1533 In regard to this disturbance, we should note his compassion; secondly, his discernment; and thirdly, his power. There is compassion for a right reason, for one is rightly troubled by the sadness and the evils which afflict others. About this the Evangelist says, **When Jesus saw her weeping**. "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15).

1534 There is discernment, because Jesus is troubled in harmony with the judgment of reason. Thus the Evangelist says that **he was deeply moved in spirit**, that is, observing the judgment of reason. In the Scriptures the spirit is also called the mind or reason, as in Ephesians (4:23): "Be renewed in the spirit of your minds." Sometimes these emotions of the sensitive part are neither evoked by the spirit, nor preserve the moderation of reason; rather, they go against it. But this did not happen in Christ because he was deeply moved in spirit.

But what does it indicate to say that he was deeply moved in spirit (*fremuit spiritu*)? It seems that it indicates anger: "A king's wrath is like the growling (*fremitus*) of a lion" (Prv 19:12). It also seems to indicate indignation or resentment, according to Psalm 112 (v 10): "He gnashes (*fremet*) his teeth and melts away." I answer that Christ's being deeply moved indicates a certain anger and resentment of the heart. For all anger and resentment are caused by some kind of pain and sadness. Now there are two things involved here: the one about which Christ was troubled was death, which was inflicted upon the human race on account of sin; the other, which he resented, was the cruelty of death and of the devil. Thus, just as when one wants to repel an enemy he is saddened by the evils inflicted by him, and indignant at the very thought of him, so too Christ was saddened and indignant.

1535 There was power here because Christ troubled himself by his own command. Sometimes such emotions arise for an inappropriate reason, as when a person rejoices over something evil, or is saddened over what is good: like they "who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil" (Prv 2:14). But this was not the case with Christ; thus he says, **When Jesus saw her weeping...he troubled himself**. And sometimes such emotions arise for a good reason, but are not moderated by reason. So he says, **he was deeply moved in spirit**. Further, although these emotions are moderated, they sometimes spring up before the judgment of reason, as when they are sudden. This was not the case with Christ either, because every movement of his sensitive

appetite was according to the control and command of reason.

Thus he says, **he troubled himself** (*turbovit semetipsum*). This was like saying: He took on this sadness by a judgment of reason.

But how does this agree with the statement of Isaiah [42:4]: "He will not be sad nor troubled"? I answer that this refers to a sadness which precedes the judgment of reason and is immoderate. Christ willed to be troubled and to feel sadness for three reasons. First, to show the condition and the truth of his human nature. Secondly, so that by controlling his own sadness, he might teach us to moderate our own sadness. The Stoics had taught that a wise man is never sad. But it seems very inhuman not to be sad at the death of another. However, there are some who become excessively sad over the evils which afflict their friends. Now our Lord willed to be sad in order to teach us that there are times when we should be sad, which is contrary to the opinion of the Stoics; and he preserved a certain moderation in his sadness, which is contrary to the excessively sad type. Thus the Apostle says: "But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope" (1 Thess 4:13). "Weep for the dead, for he lacks the light" (Si 22:11), and then it continues, "Weep less bitterly for the dead, for he has attained rest." The third reason is to tell us that we should be sad and weep for those who physically die: "I am utterly spent and crushed" (Ps 38:8). [\[26\]](#)

1536 Then our Lord shows the emotion in his own heart by words; he says, **Where have you laid him?** Was our Lord really ignorant of the place where he had been buried? It seems not, for just as in his absence he knew, because of his divinity, of Lazarus' death, so in the same way he knew where his tomb was. Why did he ask about something he already knew? I answer that he did not ask as though he did not know, but upon being shown the tomb by the people, he wanted them to admit that Lazarus had died and was buried. In this way he could prevent the miracle from being doubted.

There are also two mystical reasons for this. One is that a person who asks a question does not seem to know the things he asks about. Now, Lazarus in his tomb signifies those who are dead in their sins. And so our Lord presents himself as ignorant of where Lazarus is to have us understand that he does not, in a way, know sinners, according to: "I never knew you" (Matt 7:23); and in Genesis God said to Adam, "Where are you?" (3:9). The other reason is that if anyone rises from sin to the state of divine righteousness, it is due to the depths of divine predestination, the depths of which we are ignorant: "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" (Rom 11:34); "For who among them has stood in the council of the Lord to perceive and hear his word" (Jer

23:18). And so our Lord, implying this, acts as one who does not know, since we also do not know this. Thus our Lord's question is given, and the answer of the people, when the Evangelist says, **They said to him, Lord, come and see. Come**, by showing mercy; **and see**, by giving your attention: "Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins" (Ps 25:18).

1537 Next, our Lord reveals his emotion with tears; the Evangelist says, **he wept**. Now his tears did not flow from necessity, but out of compassion and for a purpose. Christ was a well-spring of compassion, and he wept in order to show us that it is not blameworthy to weep out of compassion: "My son, let your tears fall for the dead" (Sir 38:16). He wept with a purpose, which was to teach us that we should weep because of sin: "I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears" (Ps 6:6).

1538 The Evangelist mentions the remarks that were made about Christ's affection when he says, **So the Jews said, See how he loved him!** First, he mentions those who sympathize with Christ's affection; secondly, those who doubted his previous miracle (v 37).

The Evangelist infers that some sympathize with Christ's affection when he says, **So the Jews said**, after Christ showed his affections by his words and tears, **See how he loved him!**: for love is especially manifested when people are afflicted: "A brother is born for adversity" (Prv 17:17). As for the mystical sense, we understand by this that God loves us even when we are sinners, for if he did not love us he would not have said: "For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt 9:13). So we read in Jeremiah (31:3): "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you."

1539 Those who doubted his previous miracle were from the group which envied Christ. The Evangelist says, **But some of them, the Jews, said, Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?** It was the same as saying: If he loved him so much that he now weeps over his death, it seems that he did not want him to die, for sadness concerns things that we do not want. So, if he died against Christ's wishes, it seems that Christ was not able to prevent his death; and all the more it seems that he could not open the eyes of the man born blind. Or, one could say that the Jews were speaking out of wonder or astonishment, as Elisha spoke when he said, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" (2 Kings 2:14); and David in "Lord, where is thy steadfast love of old?" (Ps 89:49).

LECTURE 6

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead for four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42 I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me." 43 When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." 44 [Immediately] the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." [27]

1540 The Evangelist, after having given certain preambles to the raising of Lazarus, now presents the raising itself. He considers four things: first, Christ's arrival at the tomb; second, the removal of the stone (v 39); third, Christ's prayer; and fourth, the actual raising of the dead Lazarus (v 43).

1541 In regard to the first he says, **Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb**. The Evangelist is careful to frequently mention that Christ wept and was deeply moved because, as Chrysostom says, he will later show the power of his divinity. [28] And so he affirms that Christ experienced the weaker and humbler marks of our nature so that we do not doubt the reality of his human nature. And just as John shows his divine nature and power more explicitly than the other Evangelists, so he also mentions his weaker aspects, and other such things which especially reveal the affections of Christ's human nature.

As for the mystical sense, he was deeply moved in order that we might understand that those who rise from sin should continue to weep without interruption, according to: "All the day I go about mourning" (Ps 38:6).

Or, one could say that while Christ was deeply moved before due to the death of Lazarus, he is deeply moved now because of the unbelief of the Jews. Thus the Evangelist mentioned their doubt about his previous miracle, when they said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying." Indeed, he was deeply moved with compassion and pity for these Jews: "He saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them" (Matt 14:14).

1542 The Evangelist next mentions the removal of the stone; and he does four

things about this. First, he describes the stone; secondly, he mentions the order of Christ to remove it; thirdly, he adds the objection to taking away the stone; fourthly, he states that the order was carried out.

1543 The stone is described as being over the tomb; he says, **it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it**. Note that in those regions they had certain cavities in the form of caves that were used as human burial places, and in them they could bury many bodies over the course of time. So they have an entrance which they could close and open with a stone when necessary. Thus we read, **a stone lay upon it**, i.e., over the entrance to the cave. We read the same in Genesis (c 23) when Abraham purchased a field and a cave for the burial of his wife Sarah.

In the mystical sense, the cave signifies the depths of sin, which it is said: "I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me" (Ps 69:2). The stone laid upon the cave signifies the Law, which was written on stone, and which did not take away sin, but held them in sin, because they sinned more gravely in acting against the Law. Thus we read in Galatians (3:22): "The scripture consigned all things to sin" (Gal 3:22).

1544 Then when he says, **Jesus said, Take away the stone**, he gives Christ's order to remove the stone. One might ask: Since it is a greater thing to raise the dead than to remove a stone, why did not Christ also use his power to remove the stone? Chrysostom says that this was done in order to secure greater certitude about this miracle, that is, to make them such witnesses to the miracle that they could not, like they did in the case of the blind man, say and maintain that this was not the same person. [\[29\]](#)

As for the mystical sense, according to Augustine, the removing of the stone signifies the removal of the weight of the legal observances from Christ's faithful who came into the Church from the Gentiles, for some wanted to impose these observances on them. [\[30\]](#) Thus St. James says: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things" (Acts 15:28); and Peter says in the same work: "Why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear" (Acts 15:10). Concerning this our Lord says, **Take away the stone**, i.e., the burden of the Law, and preach peace.

Or, the stone signifies those in the Church who live wickedly, and so are a scandal to those who would believe, because they hinder their conversion. We read about this stone in Psalm 91 (v 12): "Lest you dash your foot against a stone." This is the stone that our Lord orders removed: "Remove every obstruction from my people's way" (Is 57:14).

1545 Next, we see Martha's objection. First, we see what she said; secondly, the words of Christ's answer.

1546 The Evangelist mentions Martha's words when he says, **Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.** As for the literal sense, this happened in order to show the truth of the miracle, as his members were already beginning to corrupt and dissolve. As for the mystical sense, one who habitually sins is said to smell, that is, the foul odor of his reputation is spread abroad by his sins. For just as good works spread a good odor, as the Apostle says - "We are the aroma of Christ to God" (2 Cor 2:15) - so from evil works there arises an evil odor and a stench. Such a person is aptly described in terms of "four days," for he is pressed by the weight of earthly sins and sensual desires, and earth is the last of the four elements: "The stench and foul smell of him will rise" (Joel 2:20).

1547 Christ answers her, saying, **Did not I tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?** Here our Lord seems to reprove Martha for not remembering what Christ had said to her: "He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." For Martha was not certain that Christ could raise a person who had been dead four days. Although Christ had recently raised certain dead persons, this seemed impossible to believe of her brother because of the long time he had been dead. And so our Lord said, **Did not I tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?** that is, the raising of your brother, by which God will be glorified.

Although our Lord had said to his apostles before that this miracle would be for his glory, saying, "so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it" (11:4), that is, by means of this death, he now says to Martha that this miracle will be for the glory of God. The reason for this is that the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is the same. However, he did not mention the glory of the Son here so as not to excite the Jews who were present and ready to dispute him.

1548 These words of our Lord suggest two fruits of our faith. The first is the performing of miracles, which is due to faith: "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move hence to yonder place,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you" (Matt 17:19). The Apostle also says: "If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains..." (1 Cor 13:2); and in Mark (16:20) we read: "And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it." Now this working of miracles is for the glory of God; thus he says, **if you would believe you would see the glory of God.**

The second fruit is the vision of eternal glory, which is due as a reward to faith; thus he says, **you would see the glory of God**: "If you do not believe, you will not understand," as we read in Isaiah [7:9], in an alternate version; and in 1 Corinthians it is said: "For now we see in a mirror dimly," by faith, "but then face to face."

1549 Next, the Evangelist mentions that the command was carried out, saying, **So they took away the stone**. We may consider here, according to Origen, that the delay in removing the stone was caused by the sister of the deceased. [31] Consequently, the raising of her brother was delayed as long as she detained Christ with her talk; but as soon as the command of Christ was obediently carried out, her brother was raised. And we can learn from this not to interpose anything between the commands of Christ and their execution if we desire the effect of salvation to follow at once: "As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me" (Ps 18:44).

1550 Then he considers the prayer of Christ, in which he gives thanks. The Evangelist mentions four things in this regard. First, he mentions his way of praying; secondly, the efficacy of his prayer; thirdly, he excludes Christ's need to pray; and fourthly he mentions the usefulness of his prayer.

1551 Christ's way of praying is appropriate, because **Jesus lifted up his eyes**, that is, he lifted up his understanding, directing it in prayer to the Father above. As for us, if we wish to pray according to the example of Christ's prayer, we have to raise the eyes of our mind to him by turning them from the memories, thoughts and desires of present things. We also lift our eyes to God when we do not rely on our own merits, but hope in his mercy alone: "To thee I lift up my eyes, O thou who art enthroned in the heavens! Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he have mercy upon us" (Ps 123:1); and "Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven" (Lam 3:41).

1552 He mentions the efficacy of this prayer when he says, **Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me**. Here we have a sign that God is quick to give, as we read: "Lord, thou wilt hear the desire of the meek" (Ps 10:17), so that he hears our desires even before they are put into words: "He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when he hears it, he will answer you" (Is 30:19); and again in the same book: "While they are yet speaking I will hear" (65:24). Therefore, with much more reason we can think that God the Father, anticipating the prayer of our Lord, the Savior, would have heard him: for the tears which Christ shed at the death of Lazarus acted as a prayer.

By giving thanks at the beginning of his prayer, Christ gives us the example that when we pray, we should thank God for the benefits we have already received before asking for new ones: "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thess 5:18).

1553 If the phrase, **that thou hast heard me**, is interpreted as applying to Christ insofar as he is human, there is no difficulty: for as having a human nature Christ is less than the Father and, accordingly, it is appropriate for him to pray to the Father and be heard by him. But if, as Chrysostom wants, it is applied to Christ as God, then there is a problem: for as God, it is not fitting that he pray or be heard, but rather that he hear the prayers of others.^[32] Consequently, it should be said that one is heard when his will is fulfilled. Now the will of the Father is always fulfilled, because "He does whatever he pleases" (Ps 115:3). Therefore, since the will of the Father is the same as the will of the Son, whenever the Father fulfills his own will, he fulfills the will of the Son. Thus, the Son says, as Word, **that thou hast heard me**, i.e., that you have done those things which were in your Word to be done. For he spoke and they were done.

1554 Christ's need to pray is excluded when he says, **I knew that thou hearest me always**. Here our Lord vaguely shows his own divinity. As if to say: In order that my will be done I do not need prayer, because from eternity my will has been fulfilled: "In all things he was heard for his reverence" [Heb 5:7]. **I knew** with certitude **that thou hearest me**, the Word, **always**: because whatever you do, these things are in me to be done.

1555 Again, **thou hearest me** in my human nature **always**, because my will is always conformed to your will. **But I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me**. We understand from this that our Lord did and said many things for the benefit of others: "For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (13:15). For every action of Christ is a lesson for us. In particular, Christ wanted to show by his prayer that he was not separated from the Father, but recognized him as his principle. And so he added, **that they may believe that thou didst send me**: "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent" (17:3); "God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law" (Gal 4:4). And this is the benefit coming from his prayer.

1556 Now the Evangelist considers the raising of Lazarus; and he does three things. First, he mentions the voice of the one awakening him; secondly, the effect of his voice (v 44); and thirdly, the command to unbind the one awakened.

1557 The voice of the one awakening Lazarus is described as loud: **When he**

had said this, that is, Jesus, **he cried with a loud voice**. As for the literal sense, this was done to refute the error of certain Jews and of the Gentiles that the souls of the dead lingered in the tombs with their bodies. So, **he cried with a loud voice**, as though summoning from afar the soul which was not present in the tomb.

Or, and this is a better explanation, it might be said that Christ's voice is described as loud because of its great power: for its power was so great that it raised Lazarus who had been dead four days, just as one asleep is roused from sleep: "He gave power to his voice" [Ps 67:34]. Further, this loud voice represents that loud voice which will sound at the general resurrection and by which all will be roused from their graves: "At midnight there was a cry" (Matt 25:6).

He cried out, I say, saying, **Lazarus, come out**. He called him by his own name because such was the power of his voice that all the dead without distinction would have been awakened if he had not limited it to one by mentioning his name, as Augustine says when speaking of the Word of the Lord.[\[33\]](#) Again, we understand from this that Christ calls sinners to come out from living in sin: "Come out of her, my people" (Rev 18:4). We are also called to let our sins come out of concealment by revealing them in confession: "If I have concealed my transgressions from men" (Job 31:33).

1558 Then (v 44), the effect of this voice is given: first, the resurrection of the dead man; secondly, his condition. The resurrection of the dead man was immediately after our Lord's command: **immediately the dead man came out**. For such was the power of Christ's voice that it gave life without any delay, as will happen at the general resurrection when the dead will rise in the twinkling of an eye when they hear the sound of the trumpet: "And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thess 4:16). For Christ's mission was already being anticipated, as it was stated above: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (5:25). In this way what our Lord said was fulfilled: "I go to awake him" (11:11).

As to the condition of the one rising, he is described as having **his hands and feet bound with bandages**, with which the people of ages past wrapped their dead, **and his face wrapped with a cloth**, in order to hide his gruesome appearance. He was commanded to rise bound and wrapped to provide a greater proof of the miracle.

1559 When Jesus says, **Unbind him and let him go**, he orders that he be unbound so that those who do this may be more reliable witnesses to the miracle

and have it more forcefully impressed on their memory. Furthermore, when they approach and touch him, they can see that is really he. He adds, **and let him go**, to show that this miracle is not an illusion: for at times certain magicians have seemed to raise the dead, but those who were raised could not live as they formerly had because their raising was not real but illusory.

1560 Augustine gives a mystical explanation to this entire verse beginning at **The dead man came out**. He does this in two ways, depending on two ways of coming out. The sinner comes out when by repenting he passes from the practice of sin to the state of righteousness: "Come out from them, and be separate from them" (2 Cor 6:17). However, his hands are bound with bandages, i.e., with carnal desires, because, although he is rising from his sins, he cannot escape such annoyances as long as he lives in the body. Thus the Apostle says: "I of myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin" (Rom 7:25). His face being wrapped with a cloth signifies that in this life we cannot have full knowledge of God: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face" (1 Cor 12:12). Christ commands them to unbind him and let him go because after this life all the veils are lifted from those who rise from sin, so that they may contemplate God "face to face" (1 Cor 12:12). Then we will be unbound from the corruptibility of the flesh which is like a chain binding and weighing down the soul and keeping it from full and clear contemplation: "Loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion" (Is 52:2). This is one way to come out in a spiritual manner, and is given by Augustine in his work, *The Book of Eighty-Three Questions*.[\[34\]](#)

Another way to come out is by confession, about which it is said: "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (Prv 28:13). One comes out in this way by leaving his secret sins by disclosing them in confession. Now that one confesses is due to God calling him with a loud voice, that is, by grace. And the one who confesses, as still guilty, is the dead person still wrapped in bandages. In order for his sins to be loosed, the ministers are commanded to loose him and let him go. For the disciples loose those whom Christ by himself vivifies inwardly, because they are absolved, being vivified by the ministry of the priests: "Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt 16:19).

1561 Some who consider this mystery say that just as Christ by himself vivified Lazarus, and once he was vivified he was ordered to be loosed by the disciples, so God vivifies a soul from within by grace by remitting its guilt and absolving it from the debt of eternal punishment; but priests, by the power of the keys, absolve in regard to the temporal punishment. But this position attributes too little to the keys of the Church. For it is proper to the sacraments of the New Law that in them grace is conferred. But the sacraments exist in the administration of

the ministers. Thus, in the sacrament of penance, contrition and confession behave materially on the part of the one receiving the sacrament; but the causative power of the sacrament lies in the absolution of the priest, by the power of the keys, through which he somehow applies the effect of our Lord's passion to the one he absolves so that he obtains remission. Therefore, if the priest only absolved the punishment, the sacrament of penance would not confer a grace by which guilt is remitted; and consequently it would not be a sacrament of the New Law. Therefore, one must say that just as in the sacrament of baptism, the priest, by pronouncing the words and washing outwardly, exercises the ministry of baptism, while Christ baptizes inwardly, so the priest, by the power of the keys, outwardly administers the ministry of absolution, while Christ remits the guilt by grace.[\[35\]](#)

1562 Yet a difficulty arises from the fact that those who usually come for baptism are children who have not been justified before baptism, but obtain the grace of remission in baptism, whereas those who come for absolution are adults, who usually have obtained the remission of their sins beforehand by contrition; consequently, the absolution that follows seem to contribute nothing to the remission of sins.

If this matter is carefully considered as affecting adults, in both cases it will be seen that there is a perfect parallel. For it happens that certain adults having a desire to be baptized obtain the remission of their sins by the baptism of desire before they actually receive the sacrament of baptism; and yet the baptism which follows, so far as what it is of itself is concerned, effects the remission of sins, although it does not so function in a person whose sins are already remitted, but he obtains only an increase of grace. However, if an adult was not perfectly disposed before baptism to obtain the remission of his sins, still in the very act of being baptized he obtains their remission by the power of baptism, unless he places some obstacle to the Holy Spirit by his insincerity. The same must be said of penance. For if a person was fully contrite before the absolution of the priest, he obtains the remission of his sins by having the desire to subject himself to the keys of the Church, without which there would not be true contrition. But if there was not beforehand a full contrition sufficient for remission, he obtains the remission of his guilt in the absolution, unless he puts an obstacle to the Holy Spirit. And the same is true in the Eucharist and in the Anointing of the Sick, and in the other sacraments.

LECTURE 7

45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary [to Mary and Martha] and had seen what he did, believed in

him; 46 but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. 48 If we let him go on thus, every one will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our place and our nation." 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all; 50 you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." 51 He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. 53 So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death. [\[36\]](#)

1563 After describing the death and resurrection of Lazarus, the Evangelist now sets forth the effect of his resurrection. First, its effect on the people; secondly, its effect on their leaders (v 47).

1564 He does two things concerning the first. First, he says that certain ones among them believed, **Many of the Jews therefore, who had come to Mary and Martha** to console them, **and had seen what he did, believed in him.** And no wonder, because such a miracle had not been heard of from the beginning of time, that is, that one dead four days in the tomb should be raised to life. Also, our Lord had said that he would perform this miracle for those standing by, so that they might believe in him. And so his words were not empty, but many believed because of the miracle they saw: "Jews demand signs" (1 Cor 1:22).

1565 Secondly, he mentions that some were spreading news of the miracle, saying, **but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.** This can be understood in two ways. In one way, they told the chief priests what Jesus had done in order to soften them towards Christ and to reproach them for conspiring against Jesus, who had worked such marvels. In another way, and this is better, they told them these things in order to incite them against Christ: for they were unbelievers and were scandalized at the miracle. This is clear from the way the Evangelist describes it, for after saying that **many of the Jews...believed in him**, he adds in contrast, **but some of them went to the Pharisees.** These are the ones of whom we read: "Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him...For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (12:37, 43).

1566 Next (v 47), the Evangelist mentions the effect of the miracle on the leaders. First, we have their evil conspiracy against Christ; secondly, we see how Christ escaped it (v 54). He does three things concerning the first. First, he mentions the gathering of the council; secondly, the problem that confronted them (v 47); and thirdly, their solution of this problem (v 49).

1567 In regard to the first, three things are mentions about the wickedness of the chief priests. First of all, their status: for they were not the common people, but **the chief priests and the Pharisees**. Chief priests, because they were in charge of sacred matters; and they were Pharisees because they had the appearance of religion. Thus was fulfilled what was stated in Genesis (49:5): "Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords": for the founders of the sect of the Pharisees were descended from Simeon, and the chief priests were clearly from the tribe of Levi.

Secondly, we see that their wickedness was deliberate; thus he says, they **gathered the council** in order to make their plans: "O my soul, come not into their council" (Gen 49:6); "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked" (Ps 1:1). But we also read: "No counsel can avail against the Lord" (Prv 21:30).

Thirdly, we see their evil intention, because it was against Jesus, i.e., the Savior: "All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me" (Ps 41:7); "Come, let us make plots against Jeremiah" (Jer 18:18).

1568 Now (v 47b), he mentions their problem: first, he gives the reason for this problem; secondly, the core of the problem (v 48).

1569 It was the miracles of Christ that raised their problem; so they said, **What are we to do? For this man performs many signs**. They were blind, for they still called him a man after such a great demonstration of his divinity. As he himself said: "The works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness" (5:35). In truth, they were no less foolish than the blind because they wondered what they should do, whereas there was nothing for them to do but believe: "What signs do you do, that we may see, and believe you?" (6:30). See how many signs he did work! Even they said, **this man performs many signs**: "Their wickedness blinded them" (Wis 2:21).

1570 The root of their problem was that they feared the losses that would follow. The Evangelist mentions two things referring to this. First, their loss of spiritual

leadership. He says about this, **If we let him go on thus, every one will believe in him.** This, of course, would be the best for all concerned, because it is faith in Christ that saves and leads to eternal life: "But these are written that you may believe...and that believing you may have life in his name" (20:31). But in relation to their wicked intention this was terrifying to them, for they believed that no one who believed in Christ would obey them. And so, because of their ambition, they backed away from salvation and took others with themselves: "But Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first does not acknowledge my authority" (3 Jn 1:9).

1571 Secondly, he mentions their ambition for temporal possessions when he says, **and the Romans will come and destroy both our place and our nation.** This seems to follow from the other, as Augustine says, for if all believed in Christ, there would be no one left to defend the temple of God against the Romans, because they would have abandoned the holy temple and the laws of their fathers, as they thought the teaching of Christ was directed against these. [37] But this does not really seem to have much bearing on the issue, since they would still be subject to the Romans and would not be planning to war against them. Thus, it seems better to say, with Chrysostom, that they said this because they observed that Christ was being honored by the people as a king. [38] And because the Romans had ordered that no one could be king unless they had appointed him, they were afraid that if the Romans heard that they were regarding Christ as a king, they would look upon the Jews as rebels. Then they would move against them and destroy their city and nation: "Every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar" (19:12).

1572 Notice their pitiable state, for they fear nothing but the loss of temporal things, and do not think of eternal life: "The fountain of Jacob alone, in a land of grain and wine" (Deut 33:28). But as we read in Proverbs (10:24): "What the wicked dreads will come upon him"; and so after our Lord's passion and glorification, the Romans overcame and displaced them, taking their land and nation.

1573 The Evangelist sets down the resolution of the problem when he says, **But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them.** First, we have the decision; secondly, the explanation of the decision (v 51); and thirdly, its acceptance by the assembly (v 53). Concerning the first he does two things. First, he describes the one making the decision; secondly, he gives the words of the decision.

1574 The one making the decision is described by his name and office. By his name, that is, **Caiaphas**. This name was appropriate to his wickedness for it

means, first of all, "investigator," and it attests to his presumption: "He who is a searcher of majesty shall be overwhelmed by glory" [Prv 25:27]. For he was presumptuous when he said, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt 26:63). Secondly, it means "sagacious," which testifies to his cunning, because he strove to procure the death of Christ. Thirdly, it means "vomiting," which attests to his foolishness: "Like a dog that returns to his vomit" (Prv 26:11).

He is described by his office, namely, as **high priest that year**. Here we should note, as stated in Leviticus (c 8), that the Lord appointed one high priest, at whose death another was to succeed and was to exercise the office of high priest throughout his life. But later, as ambition and quarrels grew among the Jews, it was agreed that there should be a number of high priests, and that all who had attained to this office would exercise it in turn, year by year. (And sometimes they obtained this office by money; as Josephus says.) And to indicate this situation he says of the time, **that year**.

1575 Next (v 49b), the Evangelist gives the words of the one making the decision, who first reproaches them for their sluggishness, saying, **You know nothing at all; you do not understand**. This was like saying: You are sluggish and you understand this affair even more sluggishly. And so, secondly, he reveals his wickedness, saying, **it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people**.

These words have one meaning according to the intention of Caiaphas, and another according to the explanation of the Evangelist. In order to explain them according to the evil intention of Caiaphas, we should note that, as mentioned in Deuteronomy (13:1), the Lord had commanded: "If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer of dreams...and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,'...that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death." And so, according to this law, Caiaphas believed that Christ would turn the people from the worship of God: "We found this man perverting our nation" (Lk 23:2). Thus he says, **You know nothing at all**, that is, the Law. **You do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man**, this man, **should die**, so that the whole nation is not deceived. This is like saying: The welfare of one man must be ignored for the public good. Thus Deuteronomy (13:5) continues: "So you shall purge the evil from the midst of you." "Drive out the wicked person from among you" (1 Cor 5:13).

1576 But the Evangelist explains this another way, saying, **He did not say this of his own accord**. He mentions three things: first, the author of these words; secondly, their correct meaning (v 51b); and thirdly, the Evangelist adds to the words of Caiaphas (v 52).

1577 In regard to the first we should note that because one might suppose that Caiaphas spoke these words by his own impulse, the Evangelist rejects this, saying, **He did not say this of his own accord**. By this he lets us understand that at times a person does speak of his own accord. For a human being is what is the chief thing in him; but this is the intellect and reason. Thus a human being is what he is because of reason. Therefore, when a human being speaks from his own reason, he speaks of his own accord. But when he speaks under a higher and external impulse he does not speak of his own accord. Now this happens in two ways. Sometimes one is moved by the divine Spirit: "It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matt 10:20). But sometimes one is moved by a wicked spirit, as those who rave. And both of these are sometimes said to prophesy. That those who are moved by the Holy Spirit prophesy is asserted in 2 Peter (1:21): "No prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." Again, that those moved by a wicked spirit prophesy is found in Jeremiah (29:26): "The Lord has made you a priest instead of Jehoiada the priest, to have charge in the house of the Lord over every madman [one who raves] who prophesies."

Note also that at times some may speak by an impulse of the Holy Spirit or of an evil spirit in such a way that they lose the use of reason and are somehow seized. At other times, the use of reason can remain and they are not seized. When the sense powers are overflowing due to a higher impression, the reason is hindered, and disturbed and seized. An evil spirit has the power of affecting the imagination, since it is a power united to a physical organ. And such an evil spirit can so affect the imagination by a strong impression that as a result the reason is hindered; yet it is not forced to consent. This is the condition of those seized by an evil spirit.

1578 We have to decide, therefore, whether Caiaphas spoke these words by the impulse of the Holy Spirit or of an evil spirit. It seems that he did not speak by the impulse of the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth (cf. Jer 15), and the wicked spirit is the spirit of lying: "I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets" (1 Kgs 22:22). But it is obvious that Caiaphas spoke a lie, saying, **it is expedient for you that one man should die**. Therefore, he did not speak by an impulse of the Holy Spirit, as it seems, but he prophesied by the impulse of a raving wicked spirit.

However, this does not seem to agree with the words of the Evangelist, for if it were such John would not have added, **who was high priest that year**. He mentions the dignity of Caiaphas in order to suggest that he spoke by an impulse of the Holy Spirit to speak truths about the future for the precise benefit of their

subjects. Apropos of what is said in opposition to this, namely, that the statement, **it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people**, is false, this can be answered this way. The death of Christ considered in itself was expedient for all, even for those who killed him: "who is the savior of all men, especially of those who believe" (1 Tim 4:10); "So that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one" (Heb 2:9). In another way, one can take **it is expedient for you** as meaning "for the people." Hence the Evangelist, where Caiaphas says **that one man should die for the people**, uses below the words **for the nation**.

1579 The words of the Evangelist seem to indicate that he was a prophet, since he says, **he prophesied**; for if a person prophesies, it follows that he is a prophet. According to Origen, however, it does not follow that every one who prophesies is a prophet; but if one is a prophet, he does prophesy. [\[39\]](#) For sometimes an act is granted to a person, but not the state to which it is appropriate: for example, not every one who does something just is just, but one who is just does just things.

Furthermore, it should be noted that two acts concur in order that someone prophesy: namely, seeing - "He who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer" (1 Sam 9:9) - and announcing - "He who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement" (1 Cor 14:3). Now it sometimes happens that a person has both, and yet is not properly speaking a prophet: for sometimes a person has a prophetic vision, as Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh, and similarly announces the vision to others; yet they cannot be called prophets because they lack something, namely, an understanding of the vision, which is necessary in a vision, as stated in Daniel [10:1]: "A word was revealed to Daniel... and he understood the word: for there is need of understanding a vision." Caiaphas, however, although he did not have a prophetic vision, did announce a prophetic matter insofar as he announced the benefit of Christ's death. For sometimes the Holy Spirit moves one to all that pertains to prophecy, and sometimes to something only. In the case of Caiaphas, he enlightened neither his mind nor his imagination. Consequently, his mind and imagination remained intent on evil; yet he moved his tongue to tell the manner in which the salvation of the people would be accomplished. Thus, he is not called a prophet except insofar as he performed a prophetic act in announcing, his imagination and reason remaining fixed in the contrary. It is clear from this that he was no more a prophet than was Balaam's donkey.

1580 When the Evangelist says, **and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad**, the Evangelist adds to the words of the high priest, and says that Jesus was to die not only for the nation of the Jewish people, as Caiaphas said - "So Jesus also suffered

outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood" (Heb 13:12) - but he adds, even for the whole world. Thus he added, **to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad**.

Here one must guard against the error of the Manichees, who said that certain souls are the divine substance and are called the children of God, and that God came to gather together these children into one. This is erroneous because it is stated in Ezekiel (18:4): "All souls are mine," that is, by creation. Consequently, the statement, **to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad**, does not mean that they have already received the spirit of adoption, because, as Gregory says, they were as yet neither his sheep nor children of God by adoption. [\[40\]](#) Rather it should be taken according to predestination. It is as though he were saying: **to gather into one**, namely, into the unity of the faith - "And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also...so there shall be one flock, one shepherd" (10:16); "The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts [the dispersed] of Israel" (Ps 147:2) - **the children of God**, predestined from eternity - "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born of many brethren" (Rom 8:29), the brethren, that is, **who are scattered abroad** in diverse ceremonies and nations.

1581 Then when he says, **So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death**, the Evangelist sets down the agreement among the Jews on the death of Christ. But did they not previously think of putting him to death? It seems so, because before in many places it is stated that the Jews sought to kill him. I answer that they previously did have some desire to kill him, but **from that day on**, incited to anger by the words of Caiaphas, they ended with a firm proposal to kill him "For their feet run to evil" (Prv 1:16).

LECTURE 8

54 Jesus therefore no longer went about openly among the Jews, but went from there to the country near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim; and there he stayed with the disciples. 55 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. 56 They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast?" 57 Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if any one knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

1582 Here the Evangelist sets down how Christ escaped from their malice: first, the way he escaped; secondly, the effect this had on the people of making them question (v 56).

1583 The way he escaped was to hide himself and leave the presence of the Jews: for after their plan, he moved more cautiously and **no longer went about openly among the Jews**. He did not withdraw to a populated city, but into a remote region, a **country near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim; and there he stayed with his disciples**.

1584 But did he lack the power by which, if he had wished, he could have lived publicly among the Jews and they would not do anything to him? Of course not. He did not do this because he did not have the power, but as an example for the disciples. This shows that it is not a sin if his faithful withdraw from the sight of their persecutors, choosing rather to evade the fury of the wicked by hiding, than kindle it more by showing themselves: "When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next" (Matt 10:23).

Moreover, Origen says that no one should place himself in danger; but when dangers are immediately threatening, it is very praiseworthy not to run from professing Christ or not to refuse to suffer death for the sake of the truth.[\[41\]](#) No one should place himself in danger for two reason. First, because it is very presumptuous to place oneself in danger, both on account of a lack of experience of one's own virtue, which is sometimes found to be fragile, and on account of the uncertainty about the outcome; "Let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor 10:12). Secondly, lest by presenting ourselves to our persecutors, we give them the occasion to be more wicked and culpable: "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God" (1 Cor 10:32).

1585 Now the effect of his leaving, that the people questioned, is set down: first, the occasion for their questioning; secondly, their questioning; and thirdly, the reason for their questioning.

1586 Two occasions for their questioning and wondering are mentioned. The first was the nature of the time, because the **Passover of the Jews was at hand**, when the flight of the Hebrews out of Egypt was recalled: "It is the Lord's Passover" (Ex 12:11). He adds, **of the Jews**, because they celebrated their Passover in an unholy and unbecoming way: for when one celebrates the Passover in a devout way it is called the Passover of God: "Your assemblies I will not abide," as we read in Isaiah (1:13).

The second occasion was gathering of the people, **and many went up from the country to Jerusalem**. For as we see from Exodus (c 23), the children of Israel were to present themselves to the Lord three times a year on the three festivals, and the foremost of these was the Passover. And so a great number traveled to Jerusalem, where the temple was located. But because it was not yet actually the Paschal time, when they were obliged to go, the Evangelist tells why they went then, adding, **before the Passover, to purify themselves**. For no one dared to eat the lamb if he was unclean, and so they went before the Passover so that, by purifying themselves in the meantime, they could fittingly eat the lamb on the Passover. This gives us an example that we should purify ourselves during Lent by fasts and good works, so that on the Passover we might receive the body of our Lord in a fitting manner.

1587 The reason for their questioning is mentioned as due to Christ's absence: **they were looking for Jesus**, not to honor him, but to tell him, **and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, what do you think? That he will not come to the feast?** But note that when a festival day is celebrated in a holy manner, Christ is always present: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt 18:20). And so let us, when we gather together in the house of God, seek Jesus by consoling each other and by praying that he come to our festival day. But Jesus does not come when a feast is not celebrated in a holy manner: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates" (Is 1:4).

1588 He adds the reason for their questioning and for the absence of Jesus, saying, **the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if any one knew where he was**, that is, Jesus, **he should let them know, so that they might arrest him**, to kill him. "You will seek me and die in your sin" (8:21). As Augustine says, we who know where Christ is, that is, at the right hand of the Father, should tell them so that they may truly apprehend him by faith.[\[42\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) St. Thomas refers to Jn 11:3 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 83, a. 17.

[\[2\]](#) cf. Jerome, *Evang. Ioan.*; PL 29, col. 670; Origen.

[\[3\]](#) *In Ioannem hom.*, 62, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 342; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:1-5.

[\[4\]](#) Augustine, *De consensus evangelistarum*, 2, ch. 79; PL 34; cf. *Catena Aurea*,

11:1-5.

Gregory, *Epistola V ad Theoctistam*; PL 77; col. 449C.

[5] Ambrose, *Expos. sec. Lucam*, I, ch. 8; PL 15, col. 1537B.

[6] *Sermones de Verbis Domini* 52; PL 38; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:1-5.

[7] *Tract. in Io.*, 49, ch. 5, col. 1749; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:1-5.

[8] *In Ioannem hom.*, 62, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 343; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:1-5.

[9] *Tract. in Io.*, 49, ch. 7, col. 1749; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:1-5.

[10] See *Moralia*, Lib. 7, ch. 28, no. 34; PL 75, col. 784C

[11] Chrysostom-did not seem to be in *In Ioannem*.

[12] Theophylactus; probably (*Enarratio in Evangelium S. Ioannis*; PG 124;) cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:6-10.

[13] *Tract. in Io.*, 49, ch. 8, col. 1750; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:6-10.

[14] *In Ioannem hom.*, 62, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 343; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:11-16.

[15] *Tract. in Io.*, 49, ch. 9, col. 1751; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:11-16.

[16] *In Ioannem hom.*, 62, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 344; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:11-16.

[17] See *Tract. in Io.*, 49, ch. 12; PL 35, col. 1752.

[18] *Tract. in Io.*, 49, ch. 12, col. 1752-3; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:17-27.

[19] *In Ioannem hom.*, 62, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 345.

[20] *In Ioannem hom.*, 62, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 345; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:17-27.

[21] *In Ioannem hom.*, 62, ch. 3; PG 59, col. 346; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:17-27.

[22] *Tract. in Io.*, 49, ch. 15, col. 1745; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:17-27.

[23] *Tract. in Io.*, 49, 16; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:17-27.

[24] *Tract. in Io.*, 49, ch. 17, col. 1754; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:28-32.

[25] *Sermones de Verbis Domini* 52; PL 38; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:28-32.

[26] Summa-Christ's weeping proves the appropriateness of human emotions to some situations; Christ's emotions as wholly under the control of His reason.

[27] St. Thomas refers to Jn 11:41 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 21, a. 3; q. 43, a. 1; q. 43, a. 2, obj. 2; Jn 42, III, q. 21, a. 1, ad 1; q. 21, a. 3, ad 1; q. 43, a. 2, ad 2.

[28] *In Ioannem hom.*, 63, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 350; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:33-41.

[29] *In Ioannem hom.*, 63, ch. 2; PG 59, col 350-351; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:33-41.

[30] *Tract. in Io.*, 49 ch. 22, col. 1756; also *De diversis quaest.* 83, q. 61; Cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:33-41.

[31] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXVIII, ch. 3; PG 14, col. 371; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:33-41.

[32] *In Ioannem hom.*, 64, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 357; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 41-46.

[33] *Sermones de Verbis Domini* 52; PL 38; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:41-46.

[34] *De diversis quaest.* 83, q. 65; PL 40, col. 60; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:41-46.

[35] Summa-in the sacrament of penance, sins are forgiven and punishment remitted through the ministry of the priest.

[36] St. Thomas refers to Jn 11:47 in the *Summa Theologiae*: q. 43, a. 1, s. c.; Jn 11:50: *ST* III, q. 50, a. 1, s. c.; Jn 11:51: *ST* II-II, q. 173, a. 4, s. c.

[37] *Tract. in Io.*, 49, ch. 26, col. 1757; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:47-53.

[38] *In Ioannem hom.*, 64, ch. 3; PG 59, col 359; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:47-53.

[39] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXVIII, ch. 12; PG 14, col. 384; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:47-53.

[40] See *Hom. IV*, ch. 1; PL 76, col. 1089-90.

[41] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXVIII, ch. 18; PG 14, col. 397; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 54-57.

[42] *Tract. in Io.*, 50, ch. 4, col. 1759; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:54-57.

12

LECTURE I

1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. 3 Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. [\[1\]](#)

1589 So far the Evangelist has been showing the power of Christ's divinity by what he did and taught during his public life. Now he begins to show the power of his divinity as manifested in his passion and death.

First, he treats of Christ's passion and death; secondly, of his resurrection (c 20). The first is divided into three parts: in the first he states what caused or occasioned Christ's passion and death; in the second, how Christ prepared his disciples, since his death involved his physical separation from them (c 13); in the third, he describes his passion and death (c 18).

Now there were two things which caused or occasioned the passion of Christ: the glory of Christ, which aroused the envy of the Jews, and their disbelief, which blinded them. So first, he treats of the glory Christ received; secondly, of the unbelief of the Jews (v 37). In regard to the first he does two things: first, he shows how Christ received glory from other people; secondly, how he received glory from God (v 27). Concerning the first he does three things: first, he shows how Christ received glory from his intimate friends; secondly, from the crowd of the Jewish people (v 9): thirdly, from the Gentiles (v 20). Concerning the first he does two things: first, he shows the glory Christ received by being ministered to by his friends; secondly, how this kindled the indignation of the one who was to

betray him (v 4). In regard to the first he does three things: first, he describes the time; secondly, the place (v 1); and thirdly, the kindness shown to Christ (v 2).

1590 He says first, what we have already stated: that before the Passover Christ went into a region near the wilderness, and since the feast was drawing near, the Jews began to look for him. Thus, when the paschal season was at hand, during which the symbolic lamb was immolated, he, as the true lamb, came to the place where he would suffer and of his own free will be immolated for the salvation of the world: "He was offered because it was his own will," as we read in Isaiah [53:7].

The Evangelist says Christ came there **six days before the Passover**, to inform us that by the day of the Passover he did not mean the fourteenth day of the first month (when according to the twelfth chapter of Exodus, the Passover lamb was slain in the evening), but the fifteenth day. This entire day was festive, and that year it fell on the Friday our Lord suffered. Thus the sixth day before the Passover was the first day of the week, i.e., the Palm Sunday on which our Lord entered Jerusalem. Consequently, Christ came to Bethany on the previous day, that is, on the Sabbath. This is what he means by the phrase, **six days before the Passover**.

1591 This number is very appropriate to the mystery to be enacted. First of all, because of the number itself, for six is a perfect number. For God completed the works of creation in six days. For this reason it was appropriate that it should take six days to accomplish the work of the passion, which would restore all things: "to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20); "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5:19).

Secondly, it is appropriate to the mystery, considering its foreshadowing. For Exodus (v 12) commanded that on the tenth day of the first month every man was to take a lamb for his household and keep it for the sacrifice. Thus it was also on the tenth day of the first month, i.e., on the sixth day before the fifteenth day, that our Lord decided to enter Jerusalem, drawing near to the place where he would be sacrificed. This is clear from what follows: "The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him" (12:12).

1592 Then when he says, **Jesus came to Bethany**, the place is mentioned. Bethany was a village near Jerusalem, and it means the "house of obedience." This also is appropriate to the mystery. First, as regards a reason for the passion:

"He became obedient unto death" (Phil 2:8). Secondly, with respect to the fruit of the passion, which is obtained only by those who obey Christ: "He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him" (Heb 5:9).

It is significant that he added, **where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead**, because in the house of obedience those who are spiritually dead are raised to life by being restored to the way of righteousness: "By one man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Rom 5:19). According to the literal sense, however, this was written to show that Christ came to Bethany in order to revive the memory of the resurrection of Lazarus: "He has caused his wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and merciful" as we read in the Psalm (11:4).

1593 Then when he says, **there they made him a supper**, he mentions the kindness shown to Christ by his friends: first, by his friends in general; secondly, in particular. **Martha served**, etc.

1594 It was also appropriate to this mystery that they served him a supper there, at Bethany, because the Lord is spiritually refreshed in the house of obedience since our obedience pleases him, according to: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Rev 3:20).

1595 Next he mentions the three people who attended or sat with Jesus: Martha, Lazarus and Mary. Martha signifies the prelates who are appointed to serve in the churches: "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewardess of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1). Thus we read that **Martha served**: "Martha was busy with much serving" [Lk 10:40]. Lazarus, who had been raised to life, signifies those who have been brought from sin to the state of righteousness by the ministry or service of the prelates; and they, alone with the other righteous, feast spiritually with the Lord. Thus he says, **and Lazarus was one of those at table with him**: "Let the just feast and rejoice before God and be delighted with gladness" [Ps 67:4]. Mary signifies the contemplatives, for we read in Luke (10:39): "Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching."

1596 Three things are mentioned about Mary's kindness: first, the ointment she used; secondly, the kindness she offered; thirdly, its effect.

With regard to the ointment, three things are noted. First, the amount, and it was a large amount, **a pound** of ointment: "If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion" (Tobit 4:8). Secondly, its matter, for it was made of **nard**: "While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its

fragrance" (Song 1:11). Recall that nard is a short black aromatic herb; and the ointment which is made from it has a fragrance which has the power to give strength and comfort. Thirdly, its composition is noted, for the nard is described as *pisticus*. According to Augustine, the word *pisticus* is taken from the place where nard originates.^[2] However, it is better to interpret this word as meaning "true" or "pure," that is, as not adulterated: for *pistis* in Greek is the same as our *fides* [truthful, honest]. He adds that it was **costly**, because it was made from nard, which is used in costly ointments, and perhaps other expensive ingredients were added to it. This teaches us that we should offer to God those things we regard as most precious: "I will offer to thee burnt offerings of fatlings, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams" (Ps 66:15); "Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished" (Mal 1:14).

See Mary's humility, for she fell down at the feet of Jesus **and anointed the feet of Jesus**, according to, "Let us worship at his footstool" (Ps 132:7). Secondly, see her devotion, for she **wiped his feet with her hair**, in this way making an offering of herself: "Yield your members to God as instruments of righteousness" (Rom 6:13).

He mentions the effect of her ministering when he says, **and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment**. This tells us of the goodness of this ointment, which filled the entire house: "We will run after thee to the odor of thy ointments" [Song 1:3].

1597 The question is raised as to whether this woman is the same woman who anointed our Lord as mentioned in Luke (7:37), Matthew (26:7) and Mark (14:3). We learn from Jerome and Chrysostom that many think that the sinful woman mentioned by Luke is not the sister of Lazarus, Mary, who is said [in John] to have anointed the Lord.^[3] Origen adds that [in John] she is also not the woman of whom Matthew and Mark speak, but they were speaking of some other woman.^[4] He gives three reasons for this opinion. The first is based on the time: for the woman in John anointed the Lord six days before the Passover, while the woman mentioned by Matthew and Mark did so some time during the two days preceding the Passover. For Matthew prefaces his account by stating that the Lord said: "You know that after two days the Passover is coming" (Matt 26:2); and in Mark we read: "It was now two days before the Passover and the feast of the Unleavened Bread" (Mk 14:1). The second reason is based on the place: for in Matthew and Mark the woman is said to have anointed the Lord in the house of Simon the leper, but in John she seems to be in the house of Martha, for we read that Martha was serving the guests. And Augustine agrees with this. The third reason is from the action itself: for the woman in Matthew and Mark anointed the

head of our Lord, while the one in John anointed his feet.

On the other hand, Augustine and Gregory claim that the four Evangelists are speaking of one and the same woman, but that she anointed our Lord twice.^[5] The first time, mentioned by Luke, was at the beginning of her conversion, some time during the middle of Christ's public life. The second time, mentioned by the other three Evangelists, was a few days before Christ's passion. Thus the same act is mentioned here in John and in Matthew and Mark.

As for the discrepancy in the time, Augustine says that John preserved the historical order, while Matthew and Mark merely remembered that it took place just prior to Judas' betrayal, which was believed to have been occasioned by this event. As for the argument based on the difference of place, there is no reason why the house of Simon the leper could not be the house of Mary and Martha, since Simon might have been the head of the house. He is called a leper because at one time he was a leper, but was cured by Christ. As far as the act itself is concerned, Augustine says that the woman anointed both the head and feet of Jesus.

1598 If the objection is raised that according to Mark she broke the alabaster jar and poured ointment on the head of Jesus, one might answer this in two ways. First, that it was broken in such a way that some remained for anointing his feet; secondly, she could have anointed his feet first, and then, breaking the jar, poured the rest on his head.

1599 Mystically, the pound Mary used denotes the work of justice, for it belongs to justice to weigh things and give pound for pound: "Their weight shall be equal" [Ezek 45:11]. Now four other virtues must be added if the work of justice is to be perfect. First, compassion: and so he says, **ointment**, which, because it is soothing, represents mercy: "For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy" (James 2:12). Secondly, humility is needed: so he says, **nard**, which, since it is a small herb, signifies humility: "The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself" (Si 3:18). Thirdly, faith is needed: thus he says, **pure** (*pisticus*), that is believing (*fidelis*): "The righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:4). Fourthly, charity must be present: so he says, **costly**, for charity alone pays the price for eternal life: "If I give away all I have...but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor 13:3).

The works of justice anoint both the feet and head of Jesus. By his feet we understand the mystery of his humanity; and by his head, his divinity, according to: "The head of Christ is God" (1 Cor 11:3). Thus one who venerates the divinity and humanity of Christ is said to anoint his head and feet.

Or, we can take the head as indicating the very person of Christ, according to: "He has made him the head over all things for the church" (Eph 1:22). Then the feet are Christ's faithful, of whom we read: "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matt 25:40); "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace" (Is 52:7). Thus, one who honors Christ himself, anoints the head of Christ; and one who serves his faithful anoints our Lord's feet.

Again, because the hair is produced from what is superfluous in the body, one dries the Lord's feet with his hair when he takes what he has in surplus and relieves the needs of his neighbor: "Give that which remains as alms" [Lk 11:41]. Thus Augustine says: "If you have a surplus of anything, give it to the poor and you have dried the feet of the Lord." [\[6\]](#)

The fact that the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment signifies that because of the works of justice, the Church enjoys and is filled with a good name: "We are the aroma of Christ" (2 Cor 2:15).

1600 Next (v 40), the Evangelist describes the traitor's indignation at this. He does two things concerning it: first, he shows his indignation; secondly, how it was curbed (v 7). Concerning the first he does three things: first, he describes the traitor; secondly, he mentions what he said; and thirdly, he states that his intention was evil (v 6).

1601 The traitor is portrayed in three ways. First, his dignity is given when he says, **one of his disciples**. This teaches us that no one should presume on himself no matter to what dignity he has been raised: "His angels he charges with wickedness" [Job 4:18]. Secondly, his name, **Judas Iscariot**. The name "Judas" means "professing," to indicate to us that in addition to a way of professing that is virtuous - "Man professes with his lips and so is saved" [Rom 10:10] - there is a way of professing that is blameworthy and mercenary - "He will profess you," [that is, profess your praises] "when you have done good to him" [Ps 49:18]. Thirdly, his crime is mentioned, **he who was to betray him**: "Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me" (Ps 41:10).

1602 Then he gives the traitor's words, from which we see that he had died spiritually from the aroma of the ointment, according to: "For we are the aroma of Christ...to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life" (2 Cor 2:15). Judas was displeased because the ointment was not sold but poured out as an act of homage to Christ. Thus Judas says, **Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii?** But as we read in 2

Corinthians (11:14), the ministers of Satan disguise themselves as angels of righteousness. Thus Judas hid his evil under the cloak of piety, saying, **and given to the poor**: "His heart will work iniquity to practice hypocrisy and speak to the Lord deceitfully" [Is 32:6].

1603 The Evangelist unmasks the deceit when he adds, **This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief**. For he was not interested in helping the poor - "The hearts of the wicked are cruel" [Prv 12:10] - **but because he was a thief**, and accustomed to stealing, he was pained that the use of the ointment had deprived him of an opportunity to steal, and it was this avarice that led to the betrayal, for we read: "Nothing is more wicked than the covetous man" [Sir 10:9]; and "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (10:10). He had the opportunity to steal for **he had the money box**, that is, he was in charge of our Lord's purse, and **he used to take what was put into it**, i.e., whatever was donated by the faithful for Christ's use and for the poor he carried as a duty, but carried off as a thief.

1604 Two things can be noted here. First, that Christ lived on alms as a poor person: "As for me, I am poor and needy" (Ps 40:17). Secondly, it is not opposed to perfection to keep alms in a money box. Thus what we read in Matthew (6:34), "Do not be anxious about tomorrow," does not forbid one from saving for tomorrow, since our Lord did this very thing, and he is the supreme model of perfection.

1605 One might ask why our Lord, since he knew that Judas was a thief, entrusted him with the money box? This can be answered in three ways. First, according to Augustine, Christ did this so that his Church would be patient when it was robbed; for one is not good if he cannot endure those who are evil.^[7] Thus we read: "As a lily among brambles, so is my love among maidens" (Song 2:2). Secondly, our Lord entrusted him with the money box to lessen his danger of final damnation, because he could then satisfy his greed from the money box. But as it is said: "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money" (Eccl 5:10). Thirdly, according to others, he did this in order to teach us that spiritual things should be entrusted to those who are more worthy, and temporal things should be entrusted to the less worthy. Thus the Apostles said: "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables" (Acts 6:2), and they entrusted this work to one of the deacons.

1606 But why does it say here that only Judas said this when the ointment was poured out, while Matthew says that the disciples said this? One reply is that Matthew uses the plural for the singular, as he also did in "Those who sought the child's life are dead" (2:20). Or, one might answer that Judas was the first to

grumble and that this incited the others to say the same, although not from the same motive.

LECTURE 2

7 Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. 8 The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me." 9 When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus also to death, 11 because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

1607 Having narrated the traitor's indignation at the kindness shown by the woman, the Evangelist now shows how our Lord put a stop to it. First, our Lord answers the unjust criticism Judas spoke against the woman; secondly, he rejects the spiritual reason Judas pretended to have (v 8).

1608 He says, **Let her alone**, i.e., do not stop her. For it is well known that many good works are done which if our advice had been sought before they were done, we would not have advised that they be done, because something better could possibly have been done. Yet after they are begun, so long as they are good, they should not be stopped. Thus, as Chrysostom says, before the woman had poured out the ointment, Jesus would perhaps have preferred that it be given to the poor, but now that it was done, he held back those who were trying to stop her, saying, **Let her alone**: "Do not prevent one who is able from doing good. If you are able, you also do good," as we read in Proverbs [3:27].[\[8\]](#)

He adds, **let her keep it for the day of my burial**, foretelling both his approaching death and the kindness this woman was ready to do for him in his tomb if he had not precluded it by rising so soon, for as we read in Mark's Gospel (16:1): "Mary Magdalene," along with other women, "bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him." This is why he said, **let her keep it for the day of my burial**, not the identical ointment she used, but ointment of the same kind, in general or particular, or even a similar service. It is as though he were saying: Do not stop her from doing for me while I am alive what she will be unable to do for me when I am dead. For, as I said, she was prevented by the resurrection of Christ occurring so quickly. This is expressed in a clearer way in Mark (14:8): "She has anointed my body beforehand for burying."

1609 But did she have foreknowledge of Christ's death? Not at all: for she did not

understand what she was doing. Rather, she was moved to do it by a certain inner urge. It often happens that people are moved to do things that they do not understand, as in the case of Caiaphas, the high priest, who said, "You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people" (11:49). Things of this sort are called presages, because they take place before the event.

1610 Then when he says, **the poor you always have with you**, he rejects the spiritual reason which Judas feigned when he said: "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor." Our Lord answered, **the poor you always have with you**. Here it might be remarked that sometimes one should do what is less needful if the opportunity remains for doing what is more needful. Thus, although it was more needful that this ointment be given to the poor rather than having it used to anoint the Lord's feet, nevertheless, because there was still opportunity to do the former, since we always have the poor with us, our Lord allowed what was less needful.

In the statement that **the poor you always have with you**, we are led to understand the fellowship the rich should have toward the poor: "Make yourself companionable to the poor" [Si 4:7].

1611 **But you do not always have me**. Yet we read in Matthew (28:20): "I am with you always, to the close of the age." Augustine gives this reply. When our Lord said, **but you do not always have me**, he was speaking of his bodily presence, that is, as he appeared and in the form in which he would ascend into heaven: "Again, I am leaving the world" (16:28).^[9] But he is always with us as present in his divinity; and he is also present sacramentally in the Church.

Another explanation would be this. When our Lord said this he was thinking of the presence of his divinity. Now some seem to possess Christ spiritually, either in the sacrament or in professing the faith; yet they will not always possess him because they belong to the Church only nominally, and not by merit. These are the servants. But the children will always possess him because "the son continues for ever" (8:35). Thus he said to Judas, **but you do not always have me**, because you have made yourself unworthy of this.

As Chrysostom says, our Lord was rebuking Judas when he said this: for by being annoyed that this respect was shown to Christ, he seemed to consider Christ's presence as a burden.^[10] So Christ said, **you do not always have me**. This was like saying: I am a burden to you; but wait awhile, and I will be leaving.

1612 Next (v 9), the Evangelist shows how Jesus was honored by many of the

Jews; first, by the crowd that went to see him there; secondly, by the crowd which meet him on his way to Jerusalem (v 12). In regard to the first he does two things: first, he shows the eagerness of those who came to see him; secondly, he shows the vehemence of the Pharisees aroused by their envy (v 10).

1613 The first part is divided into two parts: first, he states that a crowd came to him; secondly, he gives the reason why they came. As to the first, he says, **When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came**, to Bethany. This was in keeping with our Lord's invitation: "Come to me, all who labor and are heaven laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28). And so, when we know where Jesus is, we should go to him quickly.

Now there were two reasons why they came. The first was to enjoy the sight and teaching of Christ. Secondly, they came **to see Lazarus**. And they came to see Lazarus for two reasons. First, because of the extraordinary miracle accomplished on Lazarus, that is, his being raised back to the living after four days in the tomb; and the people desired to see this: "Your works are wonderful, and my soul knows them well," that is, it attempts to understand them [Ps 138:14]. Secondly, they came because they hoped they would learn something about the other life from Lazarus, for man has an inborn desire for knowledge of this kind, in spite of what the foolish say: "For they reasoned unsoundly, saying to themselves, 'Short and sorrowful is our life, and there is no remedy when a man comes to his end, and no one has been known to return from Hades'" (Wis 2:1). But here he is! Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead, has resumed from the lower world.

1614 Then the Evangelist describes the vehemence of the Pharisees in their envy, when he says, **So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus also to death**. In this they were opposing God: for God had raised him to life, and they wanted to kill him: "Running stubbornly against him" (Job 15:26). Then the reason for their vehemence is stated, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

1615 But since Christ had cured many people, such as the paralytic and the man born blind, why did they want to kill only Lazarus? Chrysostom gives four reasons. [\[11\]](#) First, because this miracle was more evident, it was performed before many people, and it was absolutely astounding to see a man dead for four days walking and speaking. The second reason was that Lazarus was a well-known person, while the blind man was unimportant, so much so that they even expelled him from the temple. The third reason was because this miracle was accomplished near the time of a great feast, and all the Jewish people who had come for the feast disregarded the solemnities and went to Bethany. The fourth reason was that in the other miracles they could accuse Christ of breaking the Sabbath, and

in this way alienate the people from him; but this time that way was closed. And so because they could find no reason to attack Jesus, they attacked Lazarus as the best way to conceal the miracle: "Their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed blood" (Prv 1:16).

LECTURE 3

12 The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" 14 And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written, 15 "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt!" 16 His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. 17 The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. 18 The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. 19 The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see that you can do nothing; look, the world has gone after him."[\[12\]](#)

1616 Here we see the fervor of the crowd which went to meet Christ. First, they go to meet Christ; secondly, we have the reaction of the Pharisees (v 19). Concerning the first the Evangelist does three things: first, he mentions their going out; secondly, he tells of our Lord's entrance (v 14); and thirdly, he states why the crowd went out to him.

1617 He mentions four things concerning the crowd which went out to the Lord. First, the time they went out, **the next day**, that is, the day following the one he meant when he said, "six days before the Passover"; in other words, the tenth day of the month. This is in keeping with the figure in Exodus (12:3), where we read that the Paschal lamb which was to be immolated on the fourteenth day in the evening should be procured on the tenth day of the month.

1618 Secondly, the ones who went out are described, **a great crowd who had come to the feast**. They signify the multitudes of the people who would be converted to Christ: "Let the assembly of the people be gathered about thee" (Ps 7:7). He says **to the feast**, because believers are converted to Christ so that they may come to the feast day of the heavenly Jerusalem: "Many will come from

east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 8:11).

1619 Thirdly, the Evangelist mentions their motive for going out, which was that they heard that Jesus was coming: he says that they **heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem**. For all the faithful are converted to Christ through what they hear about the faith: "Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Rom 10:17); "and the children of Israel heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel; and the peoples believed," as we read in Exodus [4:31].

1620 Fourthly, he mentions how they conducted themselves. And first of all, what they did: **they took branches of palm trees**. Now the palm, since it retains its freshness, signifies victory. Thus in antiquity it was conferred upon conquerors as a symbol of their victory. Again, we read in Revelation (7:9) of the conquering martyrs that they held "palm branches in their hands." And so the branches of palm trees were given as praise, signifying victory, because our Lord was to conquer death by dying and to triumph over Satan, the prince of death, by the victory of the cross. **And went out to meet him**: "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!" (Amos 4:12).

1621 Secondly, the Evangelist mentions what they said: **they shouted out Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel!** Here they combine both petition and praise. There is petition when they say, **Hosanna**, that is "Save us, I implore you." It is like saying: *hosy*, which means "save," and *anna*, which means "implore." According to Augustine, this is not a word, but rather an exclamation of one praying.[\[13\]](#) And it is quite proper that they should ask the Lord Jesus for salvation, because we read in Isaiah (35:4): "Behold your God...He will come and save you"; "Stir up thy might, and come to save us!" (Ps 80:2).

1622 They praise him for two things: for his coming and for the power of his reign or kingdom. They praise his coming when they say, **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord**. Note that to bless is to speak good things. Now God blesses us in one way, and we bless God in another way. For when God blesses us he makes us good, since for God to speak is to do: "For he commanded [that is, spoke], and they were created" (Ps 148:5). But when we bless God, we profess his goodness: "We bless you from the house of the Lord" (Ps 118:26); "Blessed be every one who blesses you!" (Gen 27:29). Therefore, **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord**, for Christ worked in the name of God, because every thing he did he directed to the glory of God.

Now because both the Father and the Son are the Lord, the phrase, **in the name of the Lord**, can be understood in two ways. In one way, **Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord**, means blessed is he who comes in his own name, as Lord: "The Lord is our ruler" (Is 33:22). Moses did not come in the name of the Lord in this way, because he came as a servant: "Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later" (Heb 3:5). According to Augustine, the better interpretation would be to say that **in the name of the Lord** means in the name of the Father. [\[14\]](#) For Christ's words direct our minds to this: "I have come in my Father's name" (5:45). Further, there are two ways in which Christ is said to have come in the name of the Father. First, he came as the Son, which implies the Father; secondly, he came to manifest the Father: "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gave me" (17:6).

1623 The people praise the power of his reign when they say, **the King of Israel!** Literally, the Jews believed that he had come to reign over them temporally, and ransom them from subjection to the Romans. That is why they hailed him as a king: "He shall reign as king and deal wisely" (Jer 23:5); "Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice" (Is 32:1).

1624 We should note that the above words can be gathered from the Psalms. For when the Psalm says, "The stone which the builders rejected..." (Ps 118:22), it then continues on, "Save us, we beseech thee, O Lord!...Blessed is he who enters in the name of the Lord!" (v 25-26). And there Jerome, according to the meaning of the Hebrew, translated hosanna as "blessed." But what the people added, **the King of Israel**, is not in the psalms. Instead, the Psalm says: "The Lord is God, and he has given us light" (v 27). In saying this, the people, due to their blindness, have lessened his praise: for the Psalm praises our Lord as God, but they praised him as a temporal king.

1625 When the Evangelist says, **and Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it**, he describes our Lord's coming: first, he tells how he came; secondly, he mentions a prophecy (v 15); and thirdly, he describes the state of mind of the disciples in regard to this event (v 16).

1626 It should be noted in regard to the first point, that John the Evangelist wrote his Gospel after all the others. And so, after carefully noting what these had written, he merely summarized what they had already mentioned, but filled in what they had omitted. Therefore, since the other Evangelists had already told how the Lord sent two of his disciples to bring the ass, John contents himself with mentioning briefly that **Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it**.

Here it should be pointed out that Christ's actions are in a way midway between the events of the Old Testament and of the New Testament. Thus the crowds praised him, both the one which went before him, and the one which followed him, because Christ's actions are the rule and exemplar of the things that are done in the New Testament, and they were prefigured by the fathers of the Old Testament.

The young ass is an awkward animal, and signifies the Gentiles. Christ sat upon it to signify that he would redeem the Gentiles: "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Is 49:6); "Happy are you who sow beside all waters, who let the feet of the ox and the ass range free," that is, thus uniting the Jews and the Gentiles in one faith.

Now Matthew wrote his Gospel for the Jews, and so he made mention of a she-ass. This she-ass signifies the synagogue of the Jews, which was like a mother to the Gentiles in spiritual matters, because "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Is 2:3). The other Evangelists, however, wrote their Gospels for the Gentiles, and so they mention the young colt of the she-ass.

1627 When the Evangelist says, **as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion!** he cites the prophecy which was written in Zechariah (9:9). First, he reassures them; secondly, he promises a kingly majesty; and thirdly, he adds the benefit which the king will bring.

He reassures them when he says, **Fear not, daughter of Zion.** Zion was the fortress in Jerusalem where the king lived. The daughter of Zion, therefore, would be the people of Jerusalem and of Judea who were subject to the king of Jerusalem. Thus the Jews are being told, **Fear not**, because the Lord is your defender: "Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass?" (Is 51:12); "The Lord is the defender of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" [Ps 27:1]. Here the Evangelist is driving out their worldly and servile fear.

He promises them a kingly majesty, saying, **behold, your king is coming:** "For to us a son is given" (Is 9:6); "Upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom" (9:7). He says, **your king**, that means, taking flesh from you, for "It is not with angels that he is concerned, but with the descendants of Abraham" (Heb 2:16). Again, **your king**, that is, for your benefit. Thus he adds, **is coming**, to you: "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes" (Lk 19:42). But when they resisted, they hindered their own good.

The king comes to you, I say, not to harm you, but to set you free; thus he adds, **sitting on an ass's colt!** This signifies the mercy of the king, which is most welcome to his subjects: "His throne is upheld by mercy" [Prv 20:28]. This is just the opposite to "A king's wrath is like the growling of a lion" (Prv 19:12). He is saying in effect: He is not coming as a haughty king - Which would make him hateful - but with gentleness: "If they make you master of the feast, do not exalt yourself" (Sir 32:1). Therefore, have no fear that the king will oppress you. Now the Old Law was given in fear, because the Law produced slaves. This phrase also signifies the power of the king, because by coming with humility and in weakness he attracted the entire world: "The weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor 1:25).

1628 Then when he says, **his disciples did not understand this at first**, he describes the state of mind of the disciples regarding this prophecy. And he admits his own ignorance and that of the disciples, for as we read: "The just person is the first to accuse himself" [Prv 18:17]. So he says, **his disciples did not understand this**, what was predicted, **at first**, that is, before the passion. **But when Jesus was glorified**, i.e., when he showed the power of his resurrection, **then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him**. The reason they knew only after he had been glorified was because it was then that they received the power of the Holy Spirit, which made them wiser than all the wise: "The breath of the Almighty makes a man understand" (Job 32:8).

1629 Then he mentions why the crowd went to meet Jesus, which was to bear witness. This was done by **the crowd that had been with him**, at the resurrection of Lazarus, **when he called Lazarus out of the tomb... The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign**. "For Jews demand signs" (1 Cor 1:22). Now this was a clearer and more marvelous sign than the others; thus Christ made it the last in order to impress it more forcefully on their memory.

1630 Then when the Evangelist says, **The Pharisees then said to one another**, he describes the reaction of the Pharisees, who were enraged because their plans had been frustrated. Thus they say, **You see that you can do nothing**. The Pharisees said this out of envy, as if to say: "We are not having any effect, that is, in our evil intentions; we have failed to check him.

But why were they maddened at the blind crowd? Because **the world has gone after him** through whom the world was made. This was a sign that the whole world would follow him: "We shall live in his sight. We shall know and we shall follow the Lord" [Hos 6:3].

Chrysostom, however, thinks that these words were said by the Pharisees who believed, but they were spoken privately for fear of the Jews. [\[15\]](#) And they said this to stop the persecution of Christ. It is as though they were saying: No matter what snares you lay, he will grow in stature and his glory will increase. Why then not stop your plotting? This is practically the same as the advice of Gamaliel in the Acts (5:34).

LECTURE 4

20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks [Gentiles]. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him." [\[16\]](#)

1631 Having described the glory Christ received from the helpfulness of his friends and from the devotion of the crowd, the Evangelist now describes the glory Christ received from the devotion of the Gentiles. First, the devotion of the Gentiles is mentioned; secondly, this devotion is reported (v 22); and thirdly, we see the prediction of Christ's passion (v 23). Concerning the devotion of the Gentiles, two things are set forth: first, their devotion to the sacraments of the Old Law; secondly, their devotion to Christ (v 21).

1632 The devotion of the Gentiles to the sacraments of the Old Testament is shown by the fact that they visited the temple. Thus he says, **Now among those who went up, to Jerusalem, to worship at the feast were some Gentiles.** He is saying in effect: Not just the Jews, but the Gentiles, also, honored Christ. According to a Gloss, the reason why they went up to Jerusalem was because they were proselytes, who had been converted to the Jewish rite by the preaching of those Jews who were scattered throughout the world, and who strove to convert whomever they could: "You traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte" (Mt 23:15). [\[17\]](#) And so, in keeping with the Jewish rite, they went up with the others.

But a better reason is given by Chrysostom, namely, that as we read in Maccabees (3:2), the temple of God in Jerusalem was held in such esteem by all the people and rulers throughout the world that they considered it an honor to glorify the temple with the finest gifts.[\[18\]](#) And so it happened that on the feast days even many Gentiles would go up to Jerusalem. An example of this is mentioned in the Acts (8:27), where it tells of a eunuch, a minister to Queen Candace of Ethiopia, who had come to Jerusalem to worship. Thus Isaiah says: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Is 56:7). The fact that these Gentiles came to the temple out of devotion prefigured the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith.

1633 The devotion of the Gentiles to Christ is shown by their desire to see him; for the Evangelist says, **So these**, that is, the Gentiles, **came to Phillip**. Here we should note that Christ personally preached only to the Jews: "For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs" (Rom 15:8); but he preached to the Gentiles through the apostles. "And I shall send of them that shall be saved to the Gentiles..., and they shall declare my glory to the Gentiles" [Is 66:19]; "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). This was now being indicated beforehand inasmuch as the Gentiles who wanted to see Christ did not come to him first, but to one of his disciples, to Philip. And this was fitting, because Philip was the first to preach to those who were not of the Jewish rite, namely, to the Samaritans, as we see from the Acts (8:5): "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed to them the Christ."

This was also fitting because of his name: for "Philip" means the "mouth of the lantern."[\[19\]](#) Now preachers are the mouth of Christ: "If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall be as your mouth" (Jer 15:19); and Christ too is the lantern: "I have given you as a light to the nations" (Is 42:6). It was also appropriate to him because of his home: for Philip **was from Bethsaida**, which means "hunting," and preachers hunt for those whom they convert to Christ: "I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them" (Jer 16:16). Again, it was appropriate because Bethsaida was **in Galilee**, which means "transmigration," and the Gentiles, by the preaching of the apostles, were transmigrated from the gods of paganism to the state of believers: "Therefore, son of man, prepare for yourself an exile's baggage, and go into exile by day in their sight," as we read in Ezekiel (12:3).

These Gentiles approached Philip and expressed their desires, saying, **we wish to see Jesus**. This signifies that those Gentiles who had not seen Christ in the flesh but who had been converted to the faith by the ministry of the apostles, desired to see him glorified in heaven: "All the earth desired to see the face of

Solomon" [1 Kgs 10:24].

1634 Then when he says, **Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus**, the news of the Gentiles' devotion is carried to Christ. In this action a definite order is being followed, because "the things that are from God are set in order" [Rom 13:1]. Now it belongs to the divine order that lower things be led back to God through those that are higher, and since Andrew outranked Philip among the apostles, because he was converted before him, Philip did not wish to bring these Gentiles to Christ by himself, but through Andrew, perhaps remembering that the Lord had said: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles" (Mt 10:5). And this is what he says, **Phillip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus**. This teaches us that all things should be done with the advice of those in authority. Thus, even Paul went up to Jerusalem and conferred with the apostles about the Gospel which he was preaching among the Gentiles (Gal 2:2). Furthermore, from their names we can gather two things which are necessary for preachers if they are to lead others to Christ. The first is clear, orderly speech; and this is indicated by Philip's name, which means the "mouth of the lantern." The second is virtue, manifested in good actions; and this is indicated by Andrew's name, which has the meaning of "strength." By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their strength by the breath of his mouth" [Ps 33:6].

1635 Then, the passion of Christ is foretold: first, Christ foretells that the time of his passion is near; secondly, he intimates that his passion is necessary (v 24); and thirdly, he mentions the necessity for others to suffer (v 25).

1636 He says, **The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified**. Here it should be noted that our Lord, seeing these Gentiles hastening to see him, and understanding that in them the conversion of the Gentiles was somehow beginning, foretold the imminence of his passion, somewhat like a person who sees a wheat field growing white says that the hour has come to use the sickle for the harvest" (4:35). This is the way the Lord speaks here. Since the Gentiles want to see me, he says, **The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified**.

1637 Now there were three events where he was glorified. First, in his passion: "Christ did not exalt [glorify] himself to be made a high priest," on the altar of the cross, "but was appointed by him who said to him, 'Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee,'" as we read in Hebrews (5:5). In reference to this he says, **The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified**, that is, to suffer, because the Gentiles will not be converted to him before his passion. Indeed, in his passion he was glorified both with visible signs, such as the sun becoming dark, the rendering of the temple curtain and so forth, and with invisible signs,

such as the victory by which in himself he overcame the powers of darkness, as stated in Colossians (2:15). Earlier he had said, "My hour has not yet come" (2:4), because the devotion of the Gentiles had not been as keen as it was now.

Secondly, he was glorified in his resurrection and ascension. For it was necessary for Christ to first rise and ascend into heaven, and thus glorified, to send the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, through whom the Gentiles were to be converted: "For as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (7:39); Christ "ascended to the heights: he captured his spoil" [Ps 69:19].

Thirdly, he was glorified by the conversion of the Gentiles: in Philipians [2:11] we read, "Every tongue will confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."

1638 Then when he says, **I say to you**, he intimates the necessity of his passion: first, he suggests its necessity; secondly the benefit it brings (v 24b).

1639 The necessity for Christ's passion is caused by the conversion of the Gentiles, which cannot take place unless the Son of man is glorified through his passion and resurrection. And this is what he asserts, **Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone**. In regard to the literal sense of this text, it should be noted that we use a grain of wheat either for bread or as a seed. In this text, we should understand that the wheat is taken as a seed, and not as the wheat used for bread, for in the latter case it would never grow and bear fruit. He says, **dies**, not because it loses its strength, but because it is then changed into something else: "What you sow does not come to life unless it dies" (1 Cor 15:36). Now just as the word of God, so far as it is clothed in a sound that can be heard, is a seed planted in a person's soul to produce the fruit of good works - "The seed is the word of God" (Lk 8:11) - so the Word of God, clothed in flesh, is a seed sent into the world to bring forth a great harvest; thus it is also compared to a grain of mustard seed, in Matthew (13:31).

So Christ is saying: I have come as a seed, to bear fruit; and so I truly say to you, **unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone**, that is, unless I die, the fruit of the conversion of the Gentiles will not follow. He compares himself to a grain of wheat because the reason he came was to refresh and nourish our spirits, which is principally done by bread made from wheat: "bread to strengthen man's heart" (Ps 104:15); "The bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (6:51).

1640 But were the Gentiles to be converted only through the death of Christ? Considering God's power, they could have been converted without it; but according to God's decree they were to be converted through the death of Christ as the more fitting way: "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins," as is said in Hebrews (9:22); "if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you" (16:7).

1641 The benefit produced by Christ's passion is given when he says, **but if it dies, it bears much fruit**. He is saying in effect: Unless this seed falls into the earth by the humiliation of the passion - "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death" (Phil 2:8) - there is no benefit, because **it remains alone**. **But if it dies**, that is, is put to death and slain by the Jews, **it bears much fruit**.

The first of these fruits is the remission of sin: "This is all the fruit, that sin is taken away" [Is 27:9]. Truly, this fruit was brought forth by the passion of Christ: "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet 3:18). The second of these fruits is the conversion of the Gentiles to God: "I appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide" (15:16). This fruit, too, was brought forth by the passion of Christ: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (12:32). A third fruit is the fruit of glory: "The fruit of good labors is renowned [i.e., glorious]" (Wis 3:15); "He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life" (4:36). And again, the passion of Christ produced this fruit: "We have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh" (Heb 10:19-20).

1642 Then he mentions the necessity for others to die, those who expose themselves to suffering for the love of Christ. First, he states the necessity for their death; secondly, he encourages us to do this (v 26). Concerning the first he does two things: first, he states the necessity of dying for the sake of Christ; secondly, he mentions the benefit this death brings (v 25).

1643 Now every one, as a matter of fact, loves his own life, but some love it absolutely, without qualification, and others love it partially, in a qualified way. To love someone is to will good to that person; so, to love one's own life is to will good to it. Therefore, one who wills what is good without qualification to his own life, loves it unqualifiedly; while one who wills his life some partial good loves it in a qualified way. Now the unqualified goods of life are those which make a life good, namely, the highest good, which is God. Thus, one who wills the divine and spiritual good to his life, loves it unqualifiedly; while one who wills it earthly goods, such as riches, honors and pleasures, and things of that sort, loves it in a

qualified way. "He who loves sin hates his own life" [Ps 10:5]; "If you allow your soul to take pleasure in base desire, it will make you the laughingstock of your enemies" (Sir 18:31).[\[20\]](#)

1644 This passage, therefore, can be understood in two ways. In one way, as saying, **he who loves his life**, unqualifiedly, that is, in regard to eternal goods, **loses it**, that is, exposes it to death for Christ. But this is not the true sense. Accordingly it means, **he who loves his life**, in a qualified way, that is, in regard to temporal goods, **loses it**, unqualifiedly: "For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?" (Mt 16:26). That this is the true meaning is shown from the statement which follows: **he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life**. Therefore, **he who loves his life**, in this world, that is, as to worldly goods, **loses it** as to eternal goods: "Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep," as we read in Luke (6:25); "Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish" (Lk 16:25).

1645 The benefit produced by this death is asserted when he says, **and he who hates his life in this world**, that is, he who denies his own life's present goods, and endures, for God, things that seem evil in this world, **will keep it for eternal life**: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:10); "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother...yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple," as we read in Luke (14:26).

Note that what was said above about the grain of wheat is in keeping with this teaching. For just as Christ was sent into the world as a seed that was to bear fruit, so whatever temporal goods are given to us in this life by God are not given to us as fruit, but rather that by their means we may obtain the fruit of an eternal reward. Indeed, our very life is a temporal gift from God to us. Therefore, anyone who exposes it for Christ bears much fruit. Such a one, therefore, hates his own life, that is, he exposes his own life, and sows, for the sake of Christ, to gain life everlasting: "He that goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps 126:6). And the same is true of those who risk their wealth and other goods for the sake of Christ, and share them with others, to obtain life everlasting: "He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Cor 9:6).

1646 Now because it seems difficult for one to hate his own life, our Lord encourages us to do this, saying, **If any one serves me, he must follow me**. First, his encouragement is given; secondly, the reason for this encouragement (v

26b).

1647 In regard to the first he does three things. First, he describes his faithful; secondly, he urges them to imitate him; thirdly, he indicates the reward of those who imitate him.

Observe, in regard to the first, the dignity of Christ's faithful, for they are the ministers or servants of Christ: "Are they ministers of Christ? So am I" [2 Cor 11:23]. Thus, those serve Christ who seek the things of Christ; but those who seek their own advantage are not servants of Christ, but servants of themselves: "They all seek after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:21). Priests are servants inasmuch as they administer the sacraments to the faithful: "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1). Again, every one of the faithful who keeps the commandments of Christ is his servant: "Let us act in all circumstances as God's ministers" [2 Cor 6:4].

In regard to the second, observe the glory and grandeur of the faithful of Christ, for he says, **he must follow me**. This is like saying: We follow our masters, whom we serve. Therefore, **If anyone serves me, he must follow me**, so that just as I undergo death so that I might bear much fruit, so also my servant. Now to follow Christ is a great glory: "It is a great glory to follow the Lord" [Sir 23:38]; "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (10:27).

In regard to the third, note the beatitude of the faithful, for **where I am**, not only in the place, but also as regards the sharing of glory, **there shall my servant be also**: "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together" (Mt 24:28); "He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne" (Rev 3:21).

1648 The reason for this encouragement is given when he says, **if any one serves me, the Father will honor him**, for the Father honors anyone who serves Christ. Now above we have read: "that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father" (5:23). Thus, it is the same to honor the Son and to honor the Father. But the Father says, "Those who honor me, I will honor" (1 Sam 2:31). Thus, the Father of Jesus will honor one who ministers to Jesus, not seeking his own, but the things of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not say, "I will honor him," but **the Father will honor him**, because these people did not think at this time that he was equal to the Father.

Or, it might be said that Jesus said this to show how intimately his servants are related to him, inasmuch as they will be honored by the same one who honors

the Son. For the honor the Son has by his nature, they will have by grace. So Augustine says: "An adopted son can receive no greater honor than to be where the only Son is." [21] "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom 8:29).

LECTURE 5

27 "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify thy name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." 29 The crowd standing by heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." 30 Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. 31 Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; 32 and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." 33 He said this to show by what death he was to die. [22]

1649 Above, we saw the glory shown to Christ by various types of people; here the Evangelist considers the glory shown to Christ by God. First, he mentions that Christ asked for glory; secondly, the promise of glory is made (v 28b). Concerning the first he does two things. First, the interior state of Christ is given; secondly, he mentions the request made by Christ.

1650 Note, in regard to the first, that it seems incongruous for Christ to be saying, **Now is my soul troubled**, for he had urged his faithful to hate their own lives in this world; but with his own death near at hand, we hear the Lord himself saying, **Now is my soul troubled**. This leads Augustine to say: "O Lord, You command my soul to follow. But I see your own soul troubled. What support shall I seek, if the rock crumbles?" [23] Thus we must first examine this troubled state of Christ, and secondly, why he willed to undergo it.

1651 As to the first, we should note that, properly speaking, a thing is said to be troubled when it is greatly agitated. Hence when the sea is very agitated it is said to be troubled. And so whenever a thing oversteps the bounds of its repose and tranquility, it is said to be troubled. Now in the human soul there is a sentient area and a rational area. The sensitive area of the soul is troubled when it becomes strongly affected by certain movements. For example, when it is contracted by fear, raised up by hope, dilated by joy, or otherwise affected by one or other of the emotions. Sometimes this perturbation remains within the

bounds of reason, and sometimes it exceeds the bounds of reason, namely, when the reason itself is troubled. And although this latter condition quite often occurs in us, it is not found in Christ, since he is the Wisdom of the Father. Indeed, it is not found in any wise person; thus the Stoic tenet that one who is wise is not troubled, that is, in his reason.

Accordingly, the meaning of **Now is my soul troubled**, is this: My soul is affected by the emotions of fear and sadness in its sentient part; but these emotions do not trouble my reason, and it does not abandon its own order. "He began to be greatly distressed and troubled" (Mk 14:33).

Such emotions, however, exist in us otherwise than in Christ. In us, they arise from necessity, insofar as we are moved and affected from without, as it were. But in Christ, they are not from necessity, but from the command of reason, since there was never any emotion in him except that which he himself aroused. For in Christ the lower powers were subject to his reason so perfectly that they could not act or undergo anything except what reason appointed for them. Thus as was said above [11:33]: "he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled himself"; "You have moved the earth," that is, human nature, "and troubled it" [Ps 59:4]. And so the soul of Christ was troubled in such a way that its perturbation was not opposed to reason, but according to the order of reason.

1652 In regard to the second point, note that Christ willed to be troubled for two reasons. First, to show us a doctrine of the faith, that is, the truth of his human nature. Accordingly, as his passion was drawing near, he did everything in a human way. Secondly, he wanted to be an example for us. For if he had remained unmoved and had felt no emotions in his soul, he would not have been a satisfactory example of how we should face death. And so he willed to be troubled in order that when we are troubled at the prospect of death, we will not refuse to endure it, we will not run away: "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb 4:15).

1653 The relationship of this with what came before is clear. He encouraged his disciples to suffer when he said: "He who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." But some might say to him: "Lord, you can calmly discuss and philosophize about death because you are above human sorrows, and death does not trouble you." It was to counter this that he willed to be troubled. This disturbance in Christ was natural: for just as the soul naturally loves union with its body, so it naturally shrinks separation from it, especially since the reason of Christ allowed his soul and its inferior powers to act in their own proper way.

1654 Again, when he said, **Now is my soul troubled**, he refuted the error of Arius and Apollinaris. For they said that Christ did not have a soul, and in place of his soul they substituted the Word.

1655 Then our Lord makes his petition for glory, saying, **And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour** [understood here not as a question, but as a petition]. Here our Lord takes upon himself the emotions of one who is troubled. And acting as one troubled, he does four things in his petition. First, he poses a question, as one does when deliberating about what is to be done; secondly, he makes a request which arises from a certain inclination; thirdly, he rejects this inclination for a particular reason; and fourthly, he makes another request that arises from a different inclination.

1656 He poses this question as one does when in doubt, because it is natural to deliberate about what to do when one is perplexed. So the Philosopher says in his *Rhetoric* that fear makes a person take counsel.[\[24\]](#) Thus, after mentioning that he is troubled, Christ at once adds, **And what shall I say?** It is the same as saying: "What shall I do in my trouble." Something like this is met in Psalm 55 (v 5): "Fear and trembling came upon me," and then follows, "O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest." For both the perplexed and the emotionally disturbed are weighed down and look for help to relieve themselves.

1657 He makes his petition, arising from a certain inclination, because when one is hesitant about what he should do, he ought to turn to God: "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon thee" (2 Chron 20:12); "I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains from whence help will come to me" [Ps 120:1]. And so, turning to the Father, he says, **Father save me**, that is, from the sufferings which await me at the hour of my passion: "Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck" (Ps 69:1). According to Augustine, what our Lord says here - **Now is my soul troubled** and **Father, save me** - is the same as what he says in Matthew (26:38): "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death."[\[25\]](#)

1658 Note that this petition is not made as though it arose from the inclination of reason; rather, reason is speaking as an advocate of the natural inclination not to die. And so in this petition reason is pointing out the impulse of a natural inclination.

This explanation solves a question which is frequently raised. For we read: "In all things he was heard for his reverence" [Heb 5:7]; and yet in this case, Christ was not heard. The answer to this is that Christ was heard in those matters in which his petition came from reason itself and which he intended to be granted. But the petition he made here did not come from reason, nor was it intended to be

granted, rather, it expressed a natural inclination. Thus Chrysostom reads it as a question, that is, as: **And what shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour?** It is the same as saying: "No! I will not say this." [26]

1659 Yet Christ rejects this petition, which arose from an inclination of the natural appetite, when he says, **No, for this purpose I have come to this hour.** It is the same as saying: It is not right that I be freed from this time of suffering, because I came to suffer; and not as compelled by the necessity of fate or forced by the violence of me, but by willingly offering myself: "He was offered because it was his own will" [Is 53:7]; "No ones take it," my life, "from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (10:18).

1660 Now his reason proposes its own petition when he says, **Father, glorify thy name. Thy name** can be understood in two ways. First, it can mean the Son himself. For a name (*nomen*) - which comes from the word for knowledge or being known (*notitia*) - is like a sign (*notamen*). Thus a name is what manifests a thing. Now the Son manifests the Father: "Father...I have manifested thy name" (17:6). We read of this name: "Behold, the name of the Lord comes from far" (Is 30:27). So the meaning in this: **Father, glorify thy name**, that is, your Son: "And now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made" (17:5). Or, the name of the Lord indicates the knowledge which men have of the Father, then the meaning is, **Father, glorify thy name**, that is, do what is for the glory of your name. Yet it comes to the same thing, because when the Son is glorified the name of the Father is glorified. He says this because the Son was going to be glorified by his passion: "He became obedient," to the Father, "unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him" (Phil 2:8).

He is saying here in effect: By the desire of nature I ask to be saved, but my reason asks that your name be glorified, that is, that the Son suffer, because it was by the passion of Christ that men were to receive their knowledge of God and glorify him. For before the passion God was known only in Judea, and his name was great in Israel; but after the passion, God's name was glorified even among the Gentiles.

1661 Then when the Evangelist says, **Then a voice came from heaven**, the promise of glory is given. First, the voice promising glory is heard; secondly, the crowd expresses its opinion (v 29); lastly, the meaning of the voice is explained (v 30).

1662 With regard to the first, he says, **Then a voice came from heaven.** This is the voice of God the Father. It was the same voice that was heard when Christ

was baptized, "This is my beloved Son" (Mt 3:17), and at his transfiguration (Mt 17:5). Although every voice of this kind was formed by the power of the entire Trinity, this was specifically formed to represent the person of the Father; thus it is referred to as the voice of the Father. In a similar manner the dove was formed by the entire Trinity to signify the person of the Holy Spirit. And again, the body of Christ was formed by the entire Trinity, but specifically assumed by the person of the Word because it had been formed to be united to him.

This voice, then, does two things. First, it reveals the past, when saying, **I have glorified it**, that is, I have begotten you as glorious from all eternity, because the Son is a certain glory and splendor of the Father: "For she [Wisdom] is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God" (Wis 7:26); "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature" (Heb 1:3). Or, **I have glorified it** at your birth, when the angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest" (Lk 2:14) and in the miracles the Father performed through him.

Secondly, the voice foretells what is to come: **and I will glorify it again**, in the passion, in which Christ triumphed over the devil, and in the resurrection and the ascension, and in the conversion of all the world: "The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his Son Jesus" [Acts 3:13].

1663 Next we see the opinion of the crowd, which was wondering about the voice, **The crowd standing by heard it and said**. In this crowd, as in every other, some were dull and slow to understand, and others were more perceptive; yet all of them failed to identify the voice. Those who were slow and carnal only heard it as a sound; so they said **that it had thundered**. Still, they were not entirely mistaken, for the Lord's voice was thunder, both because it had an extraordinary meaning, and because it contained very great things: "How small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job 26:14); "The voice of your thunder" [Ps 76:19].

Those who were keener discerned that the sound was a voice, pronouncing words and having a meaning; so they said someone was speaking. But because they thought that Christ was merely human they erred, attributing these words to an angel. So they said that, **An angel has spoken to him**. They were under the same error as the devil, who thought that Christ needed the help of the angels: thus he said: "He will give his angels charge of you" (Mt 4:6). But he did not need to be guarded and helped by angels; rather, he is the one who glorifies and guards the angels.

1664 The voice is explained when he says, **Jesus answered**. First, he explains the voice; secondly, he mentions the answer given by the people (v 34); and

thirdly, our Lord's answer (v 35). He does two things about the first: first he mentions the reason for the voice; and secondly, he adds its meaning (v 31).

1665 It should be noted in regard to the first that they had said, **An angel has spoken to him**. Now an angel speaks by revealing something that will profit the one to whom he speaks, as is clear in Revelation (ch 1) and in Ezekiel (ch 1). And so to show that he did not need this voice or any revelation from an angel, our Lord says, **This voice has come for your sake, not for mine**, that is, it has not come to instruct me. For this voice mentioned nothing he did not know before, because "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge" (Col 2:2), so that he knew all that the Father knew. But **it has come for your sake**, that is, for your instruction. From this we can understand that many things relating to Christ were, in God's plan, allowed to take place not because Christ needed them, but for our sakes: "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction" (Rom 15:4).

1666 He says, **Now is the judgment of this world**, he states the meaning of this voice. First, he mentions the judgment by which he would be glorified; secondly, the effect of this judgment (v 31b); and thirdly, the way he will be glorified (v 32).

1667 He says, **Now is the judgment of this world**. But if this is true, why do we expect that our Lord will come again to judge? The answer is that now he comes to judge with a judgment of distinction or discernment, by which he discerns his own from those who are not his: "For judgment I came into this world" (9:39). This is what he is speaking of when he says, **Now is the judgment of this world**. But he will come again to judge with the judgment of condemnation, for which he did not come the first time: "For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (3:17).

Or, we might say that there are two kinds of judgment. One is that which condemns the world; and this is not referred to here. The other is the judgment which will be in favor of the world, insofar as the world is set free from servitude to the devil. This is the way the Psalm is understood: "O Lord! Judge those who wrong me; overthrow those who fight against me" [Ps 34:1]. But this judgment and the judgment of distinction are the same, because by the very fact that the judgment is in favor of the world by casting out the devil, the good are distinguished from the wicked.

1668 The effect of this judgment is the casting out of the devil. So he says, **now shall the ruler of this world be cast out**, by the power of the passion of

Christ. Thus the passion of Christ is his glorification; and this explains what he had said, **I will glorify it, insofar as the ruler of this world shall be cast out**, since Christ has the victory over the devil by his passion. "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8).

1669 A difficulty arises here on three points. First, because he says that the devil is the ruler or prince of this world. It was this that led the Manicheans to call him the creator and lord of everything that was visible. The answer is that the devil is called the ruler of this world not by a natural right, but by usurpation, insofar as worldly people, rejecting the true Lord, subject themselves to him: "The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers" (2 Cor 4:4). Thus, he is the ruler of this world insofar as he rules those who are worldly, as St. Augustine says, and these are spread throughout the entire world.[\[27\]](#) For the word "world" is sometimes taken in a pejorative sense to mean those who love the world: "The world knew him not" (1:10). Yet sometimes it is taken in a good sense to indicate those who are good and live in the world in such a way that they are citizens of heaven: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5:19).

1670 The second difficulty concerns the fact that the ruler of this world is said to be cast out. For if he had truly been cast out, he would not longer tempt us now as he did before; yet he continues to tempt us. Therefore, he was not cast out. Augustine answers this by saying that although the devil may tempt those who have ceased to be of the world, he does not tempt them in the same way as he did before. For before he tempted and ruled them from within, but now he does so only from without. For as long as men are in sin, he rules and tempts them from within: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions" (Rom 6:12). And so he was cast out because the effect of sin in man is not [now] from within but from without. [\[28\]](#)

1671 Thirdly, there is a difficulty from the fact that he says, **now shall the ruler of this world be cast out**. For it seems to follow from this that he had not been cast out before the passion of Christ, and consequently, if he is cast out only when men are set free from sin, it seems that Abraham, Isaac and the other men of the Old Testament were not set free from sin. The answer, according to Augustine, is that before the passion of Christ he had been cast out of individual persons, but not from the world, as he was to be later.[\[29\]](#) For what formerly took place in only a few men, but now happens in many Jews and Gentiles who have converted to Christ, is recognized to have been accomplished by the passion of Christ.

Or, it might be said that the devil is cast out by the fact that men are set free from sin; but before the passion of Christ all the just had been set free from sin,

although not entirely, because they were still kept from entering the kingdom. In this respect, therefore, the devil had some right over them which was entirely taken away by the passion of Christ, when the fiery sword was removed, when Christ said to the man: "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (23:43).

1672 The form or manner of this passion would be by being lifted up; thus he says, **and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men [all things] to myself**. In regard to this, Chrysostom has the following example: If a tyrant, accustomed to oppress and rage against his subjects and cast them into chains, were in his madness to treat in the same way some one who was not subject to him and cast him into the same prison, then he would deserve that even his dominion over the others be taken from him. [\[30\]](#) This is what Christ did against the devil. For the devil had some right over men because of the sin of the first parent; and so in some sense he could justly rage against them. But since he dared to try the same things with Christ, over whom he had no right, assailing him in whom he had no part, as the tempter, it was fitting that he be deprived of his dominion by the death of Christ. **And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself**. First, he describes the manner of his death; secondly, the Evangelist explains it, saying, **he said this to show by what death he was to die**, for he would die by being lifted up on the wood of the cross.

1673 Here we should note that there are two reasons why the Lord willed to die the death of the cross. First, because it is a shameful death: "Let us condemn him to a shameful death" (Wis 2:20). So Augustine says: "The Lord willed to die in this way so that not even a shameful death would keep a person from the perfection of righteousness." [\[31\]](#)

Secondly, because such a death involves a lifting up; so our Lord says, **when I am lifted up**. Such a manner of death was in harmony with the fruit, the reason and the symbol of the passion. It was in harmony with its fruit, because it was by the passion that Christ was to be lifted up, exalted: "He became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him" (Phil 2:8). Thus the Psalmist said: "Be exalted, O Lord, in thy strength!" (Ps 2:8).

It harmonized with the reason for the passion, and in two ways: both with respect to men and with respect to the devil. With respect to men, because he died for their salvation. For they had perished, because they were cast down and sunk in earthly things: "they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth" [Ps 16:11]. Thus he willed to die raised up in order to lift our hearts up to heavenly things. For in this way he is our way into heaven. With respect to the devils, it was fitting in the sense that those who exercised their principality and power in

the air were trod under foot by him while he was raised in the air.

Finally, it harmonized with the symbol, because the Lord commanded that a bronze serpent be fashioned in the desert, as recorded in Numbers (21:9), and above: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up" (3:14). And so thus lifted up **I will draw all things to myself**, through love "I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn you, taking pity on you" [Jer 31:3].

Furthermore, the love of God for men appears most clearly in the fact that he condescended to die for them: "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," as we read in Romans (5:8). By doing this he fulfilled the request of the bride: "Draw me after you, and we will run to the aroma of your perfume" [Song 1:3].

1674 Here we may note that the Father draws and the Son also draws: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (6:44). He says here, **I will draw all things**, in order to show that the same action belongs to both of them. And he says, **all things**, and not "all men," because not all men are drawn to the Son. **I will draw all things**, that is, the body and the soul; or all types of men, such as Gentiles and Jews, servants and freemen, male and female; or, all who are predestined to salvation.

Finally, we should note that to draw all things to himself is for Christ to cast out the prince of this world, for Christ has no fellowship with Belial, nor light with darkness (2 Cor 6:15).

LECTURE 6

34 The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? 35 Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. "When Jesus had said this, he departed and hid himself from them.[32]

1675 Having mentioned the promised glorification of the Lord and explaining the voice, the Evangelist now describes the doubt which prevailed among the crowd. First, they introduce the authority of the Law; and secondly, they raise a problem

based on it (v 34).

1676 In regard to the first the Evangelist says, **The crowd answered him**, that is, the Lord, who was speaking of his death, **We have heard from the law**, and law is taken here for the entire Old Testament **that the Christ remains for ever**. This can be gathered from many passages of the Old Testament, especially from Isaiah (9:7): "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end"; and in Daniel (7:14): "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

1677 Basing themselves on this authority, they formulate two doubts: one concerns a fact, and the other the person. As concerns the fact, they say, **How can you say that the Son of man must be lifted up?** But since Christ did not say that "the Son of man must be lifted up," but "and I, when I am lifted up," why do the Jews say that "the Son of man" must be lifted up? The answer to this is that the Jews were now accustomed to our Lord's words; thus they remembered that he called himself the Son of man. And so when he said, "And I, when I am lifted up," they took it to mean, "If the Son of man is lifted up," as Augustine says. [\[33\]](#) Or, one might answer that although Christ did not here mention the Son of man, yet earlier he had said: "The Son of man must be lifted up" (3:14).

1678 Yet it seems that their statement, **The Son of man must be lifted up**, is in no way opposed to the statement that **the Christ remains for ever**. The answer is that since our Lord was accustomed to speak to them in figurative language, they understood much of what was said in that way. And so they also suspected that when our Lord spoke of being lifted up, he was referring to death on the cross: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know," as we read above (8:28). Or, it could be said that they understood it in this sense because they had already thought of doing that very thing. Thus it was not the sharpness of their understanding that gave them this interpretation of these words, but an awareness of their own wickedness.

1679 Note their wickedness, for they do not say: "We have heard from the law that the Christ does not suffer," because in many places of the law reference is made to his passion and resurrection: as "Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter" (Is 53:7); "I have slept and taken my rest: and I have risen up" [Ps 3:7]. Rather, they say, **the Christ remains for ever**. The reason for this is that the former would not have involved any opposition, since no obstacle to Christ's immortality arises from the mere fact of his suffering. In other words, as Chrysostom says, they wished to show that he was not the Christ for the reason that **the Christ remains for ever**. [\[34\]](#)

1680 They raise a question concerning his person when they say, **Who is this Son of man?** They ask this because it says in Daniel (7:13): "And behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days"; and by that Son of man they understood the Christ. It is as though they were saying: "You say the Son of man must be lifted up; yet the Son of man, whom we take to be the Christ, remains forever. So **Who is this Son of man?** If he does not remain for ever, neither is he the Christ." In this they deserve to be reprimanded for their dullness, because even though they had seen and heard so many great things, they still had doubts about his being the Christ: "He who tells a story to a fool tells it to a drowsy man" (Sir 22:9).

1681 Then when he says, **Jesus said to them**, our Lord somewhat settles their doubt. First, he commends the good they had; and secondly, he encourages them to make progress (35b); thirdly, he explains his admonition (v 36).

1682 Jesus said to them, *Adhuc modicum lumen in vobis est*. This can be understood in two ways. In one way, according to Augustine, so that "little" modifies "light."[\[35\]](#) As if to say: "A little light is in you," insofar as it sees that the Christ remains for ever. For this is a truth, and every manifestation of the truth is a light infused by God. Yet this light which is in you is "little," because even though you recognize the eternity of the Christ, you do not believe in his death and resurrection. This shows that you do not have perfect faith. Thus, what was said to Peter applies also to them: "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Mt 14:31).

It is understood in another way by Chrysostom, as meaning that **the light is with you for a little longer** time, that is, I, who am the light.[\[36\]](#) It is the same as saying: I, the light, am among you for a brief time: "A little while, and you will see me no more" (16:16).

1683 And so he exhorts them to make progress in good. First, he gives his exhortation; secondly, he shows the danger threatening them unless they do make progress (v 35b).

1684 He says: I say that you have a little light, but while you have it, **walk**, that is, move forward and make progress, so that you may understand that the Christ, in addition to his eternity, will also die and rise again. This is in keeping with the first explanation given above. Or, **Walk while you have the light**, that is, while I am among you, make progress and be concerned with possessing me in such a way as never to lose me: "Blessed are the people...O Lord, who walk in the light of thy countenance" (Ps 89:15).

And do this **lest the darkness** of unbelief, ignorance and eternal damnation **overtake you** and prevent you from going any further. For a person is overtaken by darkness when he is totally sunk in unbelief; and they would be this way if they believed in the eternity of the Christ in such a way as to deny the humiliation of his death: "A man whose way is hid" (Job 3:23); "We are wrapped up in darkness" (Job 37:19).

1685 The danger threatening them unless they do progress is mentioned when he says, **he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes**. For light, whether exterior or interior, directs man. Exterior light directs him as to external bodily acts, while the interior light directs his will. One, therefore, who does not walk in the light, not perfectly believing in Christ, **but walks in the darkness, does not know where he goes**, that is, to what goal he is being led. As we read in the Psalm (82:5): "They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness." This is what happened to the Jews because they did not know what they were doing, but as people who were walking in the darkness they thought they were on the right road. And so they displeased God in the very things in which they believed they were pleasing him. Similarly, in the very things in which erring heretics believe they merit the light of truth and grace is the source of their being deprived of it: "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death" (Prv 14:12).

1686 Then when he says, **While you have the light, believe in the light**, he explains what he said, namely, what it means to walk. This is explained in two ways, according to the two explanations given above. According to the first explanation: **While you have the light**, that is, while you have some knowledge and light of the truth, **believe in the light**, that is, in the complete truth, **that you may become sons of light**, that is, that you may be reborn in the truth: "We are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not sleep" (1 Thess 5:6).

Or, according to the other explanation: **While you have the light**, that is, me who am the light - "He was the true light which enlightens every man who comes into the world" [1:9] - **believe in the light**, that is, in me. In other words, make progress in the knowledge of me, **that you may become sons of light**, because from the fact that you believe in me you will be the children of God: "But to all who receive him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (1:2).

1687 **When Jesus had said this, he departed and hid himself from them**. Here the Evangelist tells what Jesus did, that he hid himself. When we read above (8:59) that Christ did this very thing, the reason was obvious, for they

were taking stones to cast at him. But here there is no reason for his hiding given, such as that they took up stones or that they blasphemed him. Why then did he hide? The answer is that our Lord, seeing into their hearts, knew their rage and the evil they had planned, i.e., to kill him. And so in his desire to stop them he did not wait for them to act, but hid himself so their anger and envy would abate. In doing this he is an example to us that when the evil purposes of others are clear to us, we should flee before they can accomplish them. In addition, our Lord was showing by his actions what he had said by his words. For he just said, **Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you**. And by hiding himself he indicated what sort of darkness he means: "I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob" (Is 8:17).

LECTURE 7

37 Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him; 38 it was that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" 39 Therefore they could not believe. For Isaiah again said, 40 "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and turn for me to heal them." 41 Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him.

1688 Above, the Evangelist gave many examples of Christ's glory, because of which the Jews sought to kill him out of envy. Now he deals with another of the occasions surrounding his passion, that is, the unbelief of the Jews. First, their unbelief is discussed; in the second place, it is reproved by our Lord (v 44). Concerning the first he does two things: first, he reproves the unbelief of those who believed, but in secret (v 42). As to the first, two things are done: first, he mentions the strange hardness of their unbelief; secondly, to show that it came about not without reason or by chance, he mentions a prophecy (v 38).

1689 The Evangelist, as though at a loss to explain it, says that our Lord had done many miracles: such as changing water into wine, curing a paralytic, giving sight to a blind man, and raising a dead man to life: nevertheless, **though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him**. They usually said: "What sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you?" (6:30). But now! The Evangelist says: **though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him**. "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin" (15:24).

And so they could not say: "We do not see our signs" (Ps 74:9).

1690 Then (v 38), the testimony of the prophet on this point is cited. First, the prophecies are mentioned; secondly, it is shown that they refer to Christ (v 41). He does two things about the first: he cites the prophecy foretelling their unbelief; secondly, he adds the prophecy foretelling the reason for their unbelief (v 39).

1691 He says: I say that they did not believe in him **that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled**. Here we should note that in Sacred Scripture the word "that" sometimes indicates a cause, as in "I came that they may have light" (10:10). But at other times it just indicates a sequence of events, and signifies a future event; and that is how it is used here. These people did not believe, but it was not because Isaiah predicted this. Rather, Isaiah predicted this because they were not going to believe. And so this saying of Isaiah is fulfilled from the fact that they did not believe. "Everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44); "Not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Matt 5:18).

1692 But if it was necessary that the saying of Isaiah be fulfilled, it seems that the Jews should be excused for not believing, for they could not act contrary to the prophecy. I answer that the prophecy took account of their freedom. For God, knowing the future beforehand, foretold their unbelief in the prophecy, but he did not bring it about; for God does not force one to sin just because he already knows one's future sins. And so our Lord, from whom nothing is hidden, predicted that the Jews would commit the sin which they did commit.

1693 Now the Evangelist states what the prophet said, **Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?** Here we should note that belief comes in two ways. Sometimes by instruction from another; and this is the usual way: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Rom 10:17). Sometimes it come by a divine revelation; and this is the special way, spoken of by the Apostle: "For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12).

1694 Isaiah foretold that there would be few believers. First, as to those who would believe in the usual way, by instruction, he says, **Lord, who has believed our report?** This can be understood in two ways. In one way, the meaning is: **who has believed our report?** That is, what you reported to us, what we have heard from you. "We have heard tidings from the Lord" (Obad 1:1); "Let us hear what the Lord will speak" (Ps 85:8). It is like they were saying: "Lord, we have

heard these things from you. But who will believe us when we tell what we have heard from you about your birth and passion?" This entire chapter of Isaiah (ch. 53) is speaking of these things.

Prophets are said to hear in order to suggest the way in which the prophets are instructed. By sight, a person receives an immediate knowledge of the thing seen, but by hearing he does not have an immediate knowledge of what he sees, but he gains his knowledge from certain signs of the thing. And so because the prophets did not immediately see the divine essence, but only certain signs of divine realities, they are said to hear. "If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream," by certain signs (Num 12:6). The Son, however, eternally sees the divine essence itself: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known," as was said above (1:18). **Who has believed our report?** That is, who has believed in the things we have heard and preached? "What I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I announce to you" (Is 21:10).

The second way of understanding **who has believed our report?** is to take it as meaning the things we report to them, what they have heard from us. "They hear what you say but they will not do it" as Ezekiel (33:31) says.

1695 As to the special way belief comes, by revelation, he says, **and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?** The "arm" refers to the Son, through whom the Father does all things, just as we accomplish things through our arm. And if we accomplished things only through an interior word, then this word would be called our arm. And so the Son is called the arm of God not because God the Father has a human shape and a physical arm, but because "all things were made through him," the Son (1:3). "Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his?" (Job 40:9); "He has shown strength with his arm" (Lk 1:51).

1696 Here we should note that Sabellius misunderstood this passage and said that the Father and the Son are the same person; and Arius also did when he said that the Son is inferior to the Father. The reasons for this were that a person and his arm do not form two persons, but only one, and an arm is not equal to the person. The answer to this is that in expressions of this kind the similarities are not really adequate, for what we find in creatures does not perfectly represent what is in God. Thus Dionysius says that symbolic theology is not argumentative. Thus the Son is not called an arm as though he is the same person as the Father or inferior to the Father, but because the Father does all things through him. When he says, **and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?** it is like saying, only to a few, that is, to the apostles: "God has

revealed to us through the Spirit" (1 Cor 2:10).

1697 When the Evangelist says, **therefore they could not believe**, he states the prophecy which foretold the reason for their unbelief. If we examine these words of the Evangelist they seem, if taken at their surface value, difficult to understand. First, because if it is said that **therefore they could not believe**, because Isaiah said this, the Jews seem to be excusable. For is it a sin for a person not to do what he cannot do? And what is more serious, the fault will be cast back on God, since he blinded their eyes. This could be accepted if it were said of the devil, as in 2 Corinthians (4:4): "The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers." But here it is said of our Lord, for Isaiah [6:1] says: "I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne," and follows with "Blind the heart of this people and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted and I heal them" [v 10].

1698 To clarify this let us first explain the statement, **therefore they could not believe**. Here we should note that something is said to be impossible or said to be necessary in two ways: absolutely, and granted a certain presupposition. For example, it is absolutely impossible for a human being to be an ass; but granting a certain presupposition, it is impossible for me to be outside my house, presupposing, that is, that I remain within it sitting down. With this in mind, we may say that a person is excused if he does not do things that are absolutely impossible for him. But he is not excused if he does not do things that are impossible for him granting some presupposition. So, if someone has the evil intention of always stealing, and says that it is impossible for him not to sin as long as he continues with that intention, he is not excused: for this impossibility is not absolute, but based on a certain presupposition, for he can abandon his evil intention. So he says, **therefore they could not believe**, that is, because they had a will clouded over by their wickedness: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil" (Jer 13:23); "How can you do good things when you are evil?" [Mt 12:34]. It is like one saying: "I can in nowise love him, because I hate him."

As to the second point, when we read that God blinds and hardens, we should not think that God puts malice into us or forces us to sin; but we should understand it as meaning that God does not infuse grace. Now he infuses grace because of his mercy, while the cause of his not infusing grace is due to us, insofar as there is something in us which opposes divine grace. As far as he is concerned: "He enlightens every man coming into this world" [1:9]; "He desires all men to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4). But because we leave God, he takes his grace from us: "Because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you" (Hos 4:6), "Your destruction, O Israel, is from yourself; your help is only in me" [Hos 13:9]. It is

like a person who closes the shutters of his house, and someone says to him: "You cannot see because you lack the light of the sun." This would not be due to a failure of the sun, but because he shut out the light of the sun. In the same way we read here that they could not believe, because God blinded them, that is, they were the cause why they were deprived of sight as in "Their wickedness blinded them" (Wis 2:21). [\[37\]](#)

1699 With these distinctions in mind, let us consider the words of this prophecy. It is found in Isaiah (6:10), not in these exact words, but with the same meaning. Three things are mentioned here: first, the hardening and blinding of the Jews; secondly, the effect of each of these; thirdly, their end.

1700 In regard to the first, note that our Lord brought people to the faith in two ways, by his miracles and his teaching. And so he rebukes them on both points: "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin" (15:24); and again in (15:22): "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin." For they had derided both.

Insofar as they did not give due consideration to Christ's miracles, he says, **he has blinded their eyes**, that is, the eyes of their hearts, about which we read: "Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened" (Eph 1:18). For they should have understood that such miracles could only be done by divine power: "You see many things, but do not observe them" (Is 42:20); and again, "Who is blind but my servant? Or deaf, except he to whom I have sent my messengers?" [Is 42:19].

Because they were not moved by the teaching of Christ, he adds, **and hardened their heart**. That is very hard which is not melted by intense heat nor broken by divine blows. Now the words of Christ are "like fire...and like a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces" (Jer 23:29). Fire, indeed, because they inflame through love; and like a hammer because they terrify when they threaten, and break one by the revelation of the truth. And still the hearts of the Jews paid no attention to the words of Christ. Thus it is obvious that they were hardened: "His heart is hard as a stone" (Job 41:24); "He has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills" (Rom 9:18).

1701 The effect of their becoming blind is mentioned when he says, **lest they should see with their eyes**, that is, their spiritual eyes, and perceive the divinity of Christ: "They have eyes, but do not see" (Ps 115:5). In contrast, Luke says: "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see!" (Lk 10:23). The effect of their becoming hard of heart is mentioned when he says, **lest they should**

perceive, understand, **with their heart**: "Because no one understands, they will perish forever" [Job 4:20]; "He would not understand so that he might act well" [Ps 35:4]. Here it should be noted that when he says, "lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart," that is, "that they should not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart," the "that" does not indicate a cause, but merely the sequence of events.

1702 The end of their becoming blind and hard in heart is given when he says, **and turn for me to heal them**. This can be understood in two ways, as Augustine says in his work, *On Gospel Questions*.[\[38\]](#) In one way, so that both parts are negative, and then the meaning would be: "and they do not turn to me and I do not heal them." For the way of salvation from sin is to turn to God: "Restore us to thyself, O Lord, that we may be restored! Renew our days of old!" (Lam 5:21). But to those who prove themselves unworthy to have their sins forgiven, God does not offer the gifts by which they might turn to him and be healed, as is obvious in the case of the non-chosen.

The other interpretation is to regard only the first part as negative and then the meaning would be: they were blinded and hardened so they should not see or understand for a time, and so not seeing or understanding, that is, not believing in Christ, they would put him to death, but afterwards they would repent and turn to God and be healed. For now and then God permits us to fall into sin so that being humbled we may arise firmer in holiness.

Each of these interpretations is verified in the case of some of the Jews: the first one in those who persisted to the end in their unbelief, and the second one in those who turned to Christ after his passion, namely, those with remorse in their hearts at the words of Peter, and who said to the apostles: "Brethren, what shall we do?" as we read in the Acts (2:37).

1703 Then (v 41), the Evangelist shows that these words of Isaiah apply here. He says, **Isaiah said this because he saw his glory**, the glory of God. For when he saw the glory of God he saw at the same time that the Jews would be blinded, as is clear from, "I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne" [Is 6:1], followed by, "Blind the heart of his people and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted, and I heal them" [v 10]. And because it is fitting that one should testify about what he has seen - as we read in 1 John (1:1) - he adds, **and spoke of him**, that is, of Christ, whose glory he saw: "To him all the prophet bear witness" (Acts 10:43); "Which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son" (Rom 1:2).

1704 We read that Isaiah saw and said these things. As to the first, we should avoid the error of the Arians, who say that the Father alone is invisible to every creature, but that the Son was seen in the visions of the Old Testament. But since it is stated that "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (14:9), it is obvious that the Father and the Son are visible in one and the same way. And so Isaiah, seeing the glory of the Son, also saw the glory of the Father, and indeed of the entire Trinity, which is one God, seated upon a high throne before whom the seraphim cry out: Holy, Holy, Holy! This does not mean that Isaiah saw the essence of the Trinity; rather in an imaginary vision, with understanding, he expressed certain signs of this majesty, according to the saying in Numbers (12:6): "If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream."

1705 As to the second thing, that Isaiah **spoke of him**: this excludes the error of the Manicheans, who said that there were no prophecies about Christ in the Old Testament, as Augustine reports to us in his book *Against Faustus*; and it excludes the error of Theodore of Mopsuestia, who said that all the prophecies of the Old Testament bore on some current event, but the apostles and evangelists appropriated them to the life of Christ, like things said about one event can be appropriated to another event. [\[39\]](#) But all this is excluded by the statement, **and spoke of him**, just as Christ said of Moses that "he wrote of me" (5:46).

LECTURE 8

42 Nevertheless many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43 for they loved the praise [glory] of men more than the praise [glory] of God. 44 And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. 45 And he who sees me sees him who sent me. 46 I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. 47 If any one hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. 50 And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden [said to] me."[\[40\]](#)

1706 Above, the Evangelist described the failing of those who did not believe at all; here he explains the failing of those who believed in secret, because they were timid, faint-hearted. First, he mentions their dignity; secondly, their failing (v 42); and thirdly, he suggests the root of this failing (v 43).

1707 The dignity of those who believed in secret was great, for they were the authorities, and on this point he says, **many even of the authorities believed in him**. He is saying in effect: I said that although Jesus had done so many signs, still they did not believe in him; and although this was true for the majority, yet there were some who did believe in him, because **many even of the authorities**, of the people, **believed in him**. One of these was Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, as was said (c 3). Thus the words of the Psalm (47:9) were fulfilled: "The princes of the peoples gather as their people of the God of Abraham"; and the statement of the Pharisees is proved false: "Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him?" (7:48).

1708 The failing of these authorities is timidity, faint-heartedness; thus he says, **but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it**. For as stated above, the Pharisees "agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue" (9:22). So, although they believed with their hearts, they did not profess him with their lips. Their faith, therefore, was insufficient, for as is said in Romans (10:10): "For a man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved." "Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will the Son of man be ashamed" (Lk 9:26).

1709 The root of their failing is vanity, vainglory; so he says, **for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God**. By confessing Christ publicly they would have lost the glory of men, but won the glory of God. But they chose rather to be deprived of the glory of God than the glory of men: "How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" (5:44). "If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ" (Gal 1:10).

1710 Now he shows how Christ rebuked the Jews for their unbelief: first, he shows their duty to believe; secondly, he mentions the fruit of faith (v 46); thirdly, he warns the unbelievers about punishment (v 47). But because vision comes after faith, with regard to the first, he treats of faith; and secondly, of vision (v 45).

1711 As to the first he says, **And Jesus cried out**, both because of the

importance of what he intended to say and because of their free will, to charge them with their sins: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression" (Is 58:1), and said, **He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me**. This seems to contain a contradiction, for he says, **he who believes in me believes not in me**. To understand this we should note first, according to Augustine, that our Lord said this to distinguish his divine and human nature.^[41] For since the proper object of faith is God, we can indeed believe that a creature exists, but we should not believe in a creature (*in creaturam*) but in God alone (*in Deum*) [See Part I, commentary on 6:29]. Now in Christ there is a created nature and the uncreated nature. Therefore, the truth of faith requires that our faith be in Christ as having an uncreated nature. And so he says, **he who believes in me**, that is, in my person, **believes not in me**, as a human being, **but in him who sent me**, that is, he believes in me as sent from the Father: "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me" (7:16).

According to Chrysostom, however, our Lord says this to suggest his origin.^[42] It is a way of speaking similar to a person drawing water from a stream and saying that this water is not from the stream but from the spring: for it does not originate from the stream. So our Lord says, **he who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me**, as though to say: I am not the source of myself, but my divinity is from another, that is, from my Father. **So, he who believes in me, believes not in me**, except insofar as I am from the Father.

1712 Then when he says, **and he who sees me sees him who sent me**, he treats of vision. In regard to this we should note that just as the Father sent the Son to convert the Jews, so Christ also sent his disciples: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (20:21). But no one of the disciples dared to say, nor should he, that one should believe in him [the disciple], although he could say that one should believe him (*crederetur ei*). For this could not take place without detracting from the One who sent him, because if someone believed in the disciple, they would cease to believe in the master. So the Jews could say on the same basis that since you have been sent from the Father, anyone who believes in you ceases to believing in the Father. Therefore, our Lord shows against this that one who does not believe in him, does not believe in the Father. This is his meaning when he says, **he who sees me sees him who sent me**.

The seeing which is referred to here is not a physical vision, but a consideration of the truth by the mind. And the reason why one who sees the Son also sees the Father is that the Father is in the Son by a unity of essence. For one thing is said to be seen in another either because they are the same, or they are entirely conformed. But the Father and the Son are the same in nature and entirely

conformed: because the Son is the image of the Father and unlike in nothing, for "He is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15); "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature" (Heb 1:3). And so, just as one believes in the Father, so also he believes in me: "He who has seen me has seen the Father... Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" (14:9). It is as though he said: The reason why one who sees me sees the Father also, is that the Father is in me and I in the Father. Thus it is clear what faith should be: faith should be in Christ, as God, just as it is in the Father.

1713 Next he shows the fruit of faith. First, he shows his own worth and power when he says, **I have come as light into the world**. It has already been explained how Christ is a light: "He was the true light, which enlightens every man coming into this world" [1:9], and "I am the light of the world" (8:12). He also shows by this that he has the divine nature. For to be light is proper to God; others may give off light, that is participate in light, but God is light by essence: "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn 1:5). But because he "dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen" (1 Tim 6:16), we were unable to approach him. And so it was necessary that he come to us. This is what he says, **I have come as light into the world**, that is, I am the unapproachable light which rescues from error and disperses intellectual darkness: "I came from the Father and have come into the world" (16:28); "He came to his own" [1:11]. And although the apostles are called light - "You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:14) - they are not light in the same way as Christ. For they are a light whose light has been given to them, even though in some way they also give light, that is, in their ministry. Furthermore, none of the apostles could truly say, **I have come as light into the world**, because when they came into the world they were still darkness and not light, for in Job [37:19] it says: "We are wrapped in darkness."

1714 Secondly, he continues, **that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness**. To become enlightened, therefore, is an effect of faith: "He who follows me will not walk in darkness" (8:12). **May not remain in darkness**: that is, the darkness of ignorance, of unbelief and eternal damnation. This shows that all are born in the darkness of sin: "For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord," as we read in Ephesians (5:8). And in the darkness of ignorance: "A man whose way is hidden and God has surrounded him with darkness" [Job 3:23]. And in the end, unless they turn to Christ, they will be brought to the darkness of eternal damnation. And so, he who does not believe in me remains in darkness: "Whoever is unbelieving in the Son will not see life; rather, the anger of God rests on him" [3:36].

1715 Then he discloses the punishment of unbelievers, which they will incur through their condemnation at the judgment. First, he states that the judgment

will be delayed; secondly, that there will be a judgment in the future (v 48); and thirdly, he shows the cause of the judgment (v 48b).

1716 As to the first he says, **If any one hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him**. Note that the ones to be made happy, beatified, are those who hear the word of God and keep it, believing it within in their hearts, and doing it without in their actions. But they who hear it but take no care to keep it, become more guilty: "For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Rom 2:13); "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only" (Jas 1:22). And so, **If any one hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him**.

But this seems to conflict with what was said above (5:22): "The Father...has given all judgment to the Son." Therefore, we should understand it as, **I do not judge him** at this time. It could be considered a weakness in him if he overlooked those who despised him. And so he says that such persons will be judged, although not now; for we read that "God will bring every deed into judgment" (Eccl 12:14), and "Flee from the face of iniquity, for the sword is the avenger of iniquity: and know that there is a judgment" [Job 19:29].

1717 He continues with the reason for the delay, saying for **I did not come to judge the world but to save the world**. Now the Son of God comes two times: one time he comes as Savior, and the next as judge. But since all were in sin, if he had come the first time as judge, he would have saved no one, because all were the children of wrath. And so it was fitting that he come first to save believers, and later to judge both believers and sinners. This is what he is saying: I do not judge now, **for I did not come at this come to judge the world but to save the world**. "God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him" [3:17].

1718 Then when he says, **he who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge**, he foretells the judgment to come. It is like saying: Although those who do not keep my word are not judged now, they will not go unpunished, whoever they are, because, **he who rejects me and does not receive my sayings** by believing them and acting according to them, **has a judge**. The reason for this is that if one does not receive the word of Christ, he scorns the word of God, whose Word is Christ, just like the one who does not obey the command of his master. "Flee from the face of iniquity; and know that there is a judgment" [Job 19:29]; "For God will bring every deed into judgment" (Eccl 12:14); "Woe to you who scorn. Will not you yourselves also be scorned?" [Is 33:1]; "They who despise me will be despised" [1 Sam 2:30].

1719 Then when he says, **the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day**, he assigns the cause of the judgment. And first, he mentions the cause of the judgment; secondly, the adequacy of this cause (v 49).

1720 He says: I say that such a person has one that judges him. But who will that judge be? He says, **the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day**. According to Augustine, this is the same as saying: I will judge him on the last day. [43] For Christ revealed himself in his sayings, he announced himself. He, therefore, is the word that he spoke, for he spoke about himself: "Even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true, for I know whence I have come and whither I am going" (8:14). It is like saying: What I have said to them and they have despised will judge them: "He is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness" (Acts 10:42).

1721 Then he shows the sufficiency of this cause, saying, **for I have not spoken on my own authority [of myself, *ex meipso*]**. So first he shows this from the origin of his sayings; secondly, from their dignity or value (v 50). Concerning the first he does two things: first, he excludes a false notion: secondly, he states the truth.

1722 The false notion, of course, is that the Son works, or says, or is, merely of himself, and not from another: for this would be to say that the Son is not from the Father, which is what he does say: I say that the word which I have spoken will judge them, **for I have not spoken of myself**: "The Son cannot do anything of himself" [5:19]; "I do not speak of myself" [14:10]. **Indeed, I have not spoken of myself**, is the same as "I was not born of myself but from the Father." He is saying in effect, I will judge him on the last day (appearing in the form of a servant): "He gave him the power to pass judgment, because he is the Son of man" [5:27]. Yet I will not judge from human authority, that is, because I am the Son of man, but from divine authority, because I am the Son of God. Therefore, I will not judge of myself, but from the Father from whom I have the authority to judge.

1723 He establishes the truth when he says, **the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak**. Unless this is appropriately understood, it can be the source of two errors. The first is that since the one commanding is greater than the one commanded, the Father is greater than the Son. Secondly, since what is given to someone was not possessed by him before it was given, and so was not known by him, it seems that if the Father gave a commandment to the Son it follows that the Son at some time did not have it, and so did not know it. As a result, something has

been added to the Son, and so the Son is not truly God.

In answer to this we should note that all the divine commands are in the mind of the Father, since these commands are nothing other than the plans or patterns of things to be done. And so just as the patterns of all creatures produced by God are in the mind of the Father, and are called ideas, so the patterns of all things to be done by us are in his mind. And just as the patterns of all things pass from the Father to the Son, who is the Wisdom of the Father, so also the patterns of all things to be done. Therefore, the Son says, **the Father who sent me has himself given me**, as God, **commandment**, that is, by an eternal generation he has communicated to me **what to say** within **and what to speak** without, just as what we say (if we speak the truth) makes known what is in our minds.

[\[44\]](#)

1724 Chrysostom explains all this differently, and more clearly. [\[45\]](#) First of all (v 47): **If any one hear my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him**. Now one is said to be condemned in two ways: either by a judge or by the reason for the condemnation. For a murderer is condemned to be hanged both by the judge who passes sentence and by the murder he committed, which is the reason for his condemnation. He says, **I do not judge him**, that is, I am not the reason for his condemnation, but he himself is: "Your destruction, O Israel is from yourself; your help is only in me" [Hos 13:9]. And the reason is: **for I did not come to judge the world**, that is, I was not sent to condemn but to save.

But will not such a person be judged? He certainly will, because **he who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge**. He shows what that judge is when he says, **the word that I have spoken**, and you have heard, will be his accuser and **will be his judge on the last day**. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin" (15:22). He shows that the word that he spoke will judge them by saying, **for I have not spoken of myself**. This is not said causally, but in a material sense, so that the meaning is: You say that your word will judge. But what is that word? It is the word that I have spoken, **for I have not spoken of myself**; that is, it is the word from the Father that I have spoken, and what he gave me to say and speak. Otherwise, if I had spoken something in opposition to the Father, or something I had not received from the Father, and they had believed me, they would have an excuse. But because I have spoken as I have, it is certain that they have rejected not only me, but also my Father.

1725 According to this explanation, the statement, **the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak**, shows the sufficiency of the basis of the judgment because of the dignity or value

of the word. First, its dignity is given; secondly, the fact that the word was spoken. Its dignity is stated when he says, **I know that his commandment is eternal life**. "This is the true God and eternal life" (1 Jn 5:20). For the Son himself is the commandment of the Father, or, he is eternal life. "If you would enter life, keep the commandments" (Mt 19:17).

Therefore, because the Father has given me commandment, and this commandment is eternal life, and since I have come to lead men to eternal life, I accomplish the commandment of the Father in all that I do. This is what he is saying, **What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has said to me**. According to Chrysostom, whose explanation is clear, the meaning is: **what I say, therefore**, when preaching in public, **I say as the Father has said to me**, that is, insofar as I have received knowledge from him - understanding this was received by Christ as man.

1726 But if, with Augustine, we understand this to apply to Christ as God, how can the Father say something to him, since Christ is his Word? The answer is that the Father did not say anything to him as though he spoke by words to his only Word. Rather, the Father spoke to the Son by generating him, and giving him life in himself: "He [the Lord] said to me, 'You are my son'" (Ps 2:7).[\[46\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) St. Thomas refers to Jn 12:6 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 55, a. 7, obj. 3; q. 188, a. 7.

[\[2\]](#) *Tract. in Io.*, 50, ch. 6, col. 1760; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:1-11.

[\[3\]](#) Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 62, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 342; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 11:1-5; Jerome, *Evang. Ioan.*; PL 29, col. 670.

[\[4\]](#) Origen.

[\[5\]](#) Augustine, *De consensus evangelistarum*, 2, ch. 79, 78; PL 34; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:1-11.

Gregory, *Epistola V ad Theoctistam*; PL 77; col. 449C.

[\[6\]](#) *Tract. in Io.*, 50, ch. 6, col. 1760; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:1-11.

[7] *Tract. in Io.*, 50, ch. 10, col. 1762; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:1-11.

[8] Chrysostom.

[9] *Tract. in Io.*, 50, ch. 13, col. 1763; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:1-11.

[10] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 65, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 363; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:1-11.

[11] *In Ioannem hom.*, 66, ch. 1; PG 59, col 365, 366; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:1-11.

[12] St. Thomas refers to Jn 12:13 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 1, a. 9, s. c.

[13] *Tract. in Io.*, 51, ch. 2, col. 1764; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:12-19.

[14] *Tract. in Io.*, 51, ch. 3, col. 1763.

[15] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 66, ch. 2; PG 59, col 367; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12-19.

[16] St. Thomas refers to Jn 12:24 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 74, a. 3, s. c.; Jn 12:24, 25: *ST* III, q. 46, a. 2, obj. 1.

[17] Gloss (not Alcuin or Bede Alcuin)

[18] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 66, ch. 2; PG 59, col 367.

[19] The most commonly accepted derivation of Philip is from the Greek *phil--hippos* meaning "lover of horses."

[20] Summa-man can love himself partially or absolutely by willing temporal or eternal goods. To himself.

[21] *Tract. in Io.*, 51, ch. 11, col. 1767.

[22] St. Thomas refers to Jn 12:31 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 44, a. 1; q. 49, a. 2, s. c.; Jn 12:31: *ST* III, q. 46, a. 4; q. 49, a. 2, s. c.

[23] *Tract. in Io.*, 52, ch. 2, col. 1769; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:27-33.

[24] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*.

[25] *Tract. in Io.*, 52, ch. 3, col. 1770; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 7:9-13..

[26] *In Ioannem hom.*, 67, ch. 1; PG 59, col 371; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:27-33.

[27] *Tract. in Io.*, 52, ch. 6, col. 1771; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:27-33.

[28] *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:27-33.

[29] *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:27-33.

[30] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 67, ch. 3; PG 59, col. 373; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:27-33.

[31] See *Tract. in Io.*, 52, ch. 13, col. 1774.

[32] St. Thomas refers to Jn 12:36 in the *Summa Theologiae*: I-II, q. 108, a. 1, s. c.

[33] *Tract. in Io.*, 52, ch. 12, col. 1773; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:34-36.

[34] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 68, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 374; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:34-36.

[35] *Tract. in Io.*, 52, ch. 13, col. 1774.

[36] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 68, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 374; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:34-36.

[37] Summa-the way in which God is said to blind the eyes and hearts of those who do not believe.

[38] Augustine, *Quaest. Evang.*

[39] Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, lib. 4, ch. 1; PL 42, col. 217.

[40] St. Thomas refers to Jn 12:43 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 132, a. 3; Jn 12:48: *ST* III, q. 59, a. 5, s. c.

[41] *Tract. in Io.*, 54, ch. 2, col. 1780-1; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:44-50.

[42] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 69, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 377; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:44-50.

[43] *Tract. in Io.*, 54, ch. 6, col. 1782-3; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:44-50.

[44] Summa-patterns of all things existing in the mind of the Father and communicated to the Son.

[45] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 68, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 379; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:44-50.

[46] *Tract. in Io.*, 54, ch. 8, col. 1784; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 12:44-50.

13

LECTURE I

1 Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand, and that he had come from God and was going to God...[1]

1727 Above, the Evangelist set forth some of the events leading to Christ's passion and death; in this part he shows how Christ prepared his disciples before his passion. First, we see how he formed them by his example; secondly, how he comforted them with his words (c 14); thirdly, how he strengthened them by the help of his prayers (c 17). Concerning the first he does two things: first, he presents the example Christ gave for his disciples to imitate; and secondly we see the weakness of the disciples, who were not yet ready to follow him (v 21). Concerning the first he does three things: first, he sets forth the example; secondly, he shows that the example was useful (v 6); thirdly, we see Jesus asking them to imitate it (v 12). Concerning the first he does two things: first, he describes the love of Christ, who is giving the example; secondly, the action in which he gave the example (v 2). Concerning the first he mentions three things: first, the feast about to be celebrated; secondly, the approaching death of Christ; thirdly, Christ's burning love.

1728 The feast at hand was the Passover; so he says, **Now before the feast of the Passover**. Here we should note that some say the [Latin] word *pascha* comes from the Greek word for "passion," and that this feast is called the *Pascha* because it is then that we celebrate the passion of our Lord. As a matter of fact, the word *pascha* in Greek does mean "to suffer." Yet the primary origin of this word is from the Hebrew word, *pesah*, which means a "passage," as in Exodus [12:11]: "It is the *pesah*," passage, or a passing over, "of the Lord." This is the meaning the Evangelist gives it here because of two passings. The first was the passing of the angel striking down the first-born of the Egyptians and sparing the

first-born of the Hebrews (Ex 12:12); and the other was the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea. So it was reasonable to call this feast the *Pascha*, [translated into English as Passover].

We can say that our Passover takes its meaning from both languages, Greek and Hebrew. For the passage of Christ from this world to the Father took place through his passion. "He passed about doing good and healing all" [Acts 10:38]. Again, all of us who follow Christ have our own passage: either by reform and martyrdom, according to the saying, "We have passed through fire and water and you have brought us to a place of refreshment" [Ps 66:12]; or by the desire of our mind aspiring to heavenly things: "Pass over to me all you who desire me and be filled with my fruits" [Sir 24:19].

1729 As we read in Exodus (23:14), the Jews had three great feasts, when they gathered together in a place chosen by the Lord: The Pesah, when the lamb was sacrificed, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, that is, the *Skenopegia*. But the greatest feast was that of the Passover.

A problem arises as to why he says here, **before the feast of the Passover**, for the feast of the Passover is when the lamb was sacrificed, that is, on the 14th day of the month. So since he says, **before the feast of the Passover**, it seems that this was taking place on the 13th day, the day before the 14th. And indeed, the Greeks accept this, and say that our Lord suffered on the 14th, when the Jews were supposed to celebrate the Passover, and that our Lord, knowing that his passion was near, anticipated the celebration of the Passover and celebrated his own Passover on the day before the Passover feast of the Jews. And because it is commanded in Exodus (12:18) that from the evening of the 14th day to the 21st day the Hebrews should not have any leavened bread, they further say that the Lord celebrated not with unleavened bread, but with leavened bread, because Hebrews did have leavened bread on the 13th day, that is, before the Passover.

But the other three Evangelists do not agree with this, for they say the time was the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the lamb was to be sacrificed (Mt 26:17; Mk 14:12; Lk 22:7). It follows from this that our Lord's supper took place on the very day that the Jews sacrificed the lamb.

1730 The Greeks respond to this that the other Evangelists did not report this truly; and so John, who wrote the last of the Gospels, corrected them. But it is heresy to say that there is anything false not only in the Gospels but anywhere in the canonical scriptures. Consequently, we have to say that all the Evangelists state the same thing and do not disagree.

To elucidate this it should be noted that, as is stated in Leviticus (23:5), the feasts of the Jews began on the evening of the preceding day. The reason for this was that they reckoned their days according to the moon, which first appears in the evening; so, they counted their days from one sunset to the next. Thus for them, the Passover began on the evening of the preceding day and ended on the evening of the day of the Passover. We celebrate feasts in the same way; so something that takes place with us on the vigil of Christmas is said to have happened on Christmas. And so the other Evangelists, using this way of speaking, said that the supper took place on the first day of Unleavened Bread, meaning it took place on the evening before the first full day of the feast of Unleavened Bread. But here, John the Evangelist regards the Passover as that entire daytime which was celebrated, but not as the evening before, which was also celebrated. Thus he says, **before the feast of the Passover**. Consequently, it is clear that our Lord's supper took place on the 14th day in the evening [the beginning of the 14th day, the day beginning in the evening].

1731 The death of Christ, which was approaching, was his passage from this world by his passion. And as to this he says, **Jesus knew that his hour had come**: for this feast was a symbol of the passion of Christ, "All these things happened to them as symbols" [1 Cor 10:11]. So he at once mentions the reality, that is, the passion of Christ. And as a way of showing that the word *pascha* came from *pesah*, meaning a passage, he mentions his passage, **to depart**, pass, **out of this world to the Father**.

1732 Here the Evangelist mentions three things about the passion of Christ: first, that it was foreseen; secondly, that it was fitting; thirdly, it was a source of benefits and exaltation.

It was foreseen and not fortuitous; so he says, **Jesus knew**. He is saying in effect; Jesus suffered knowingly and willingly, not unexpectedly and unwillingly. "Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him" (18:4). The opposite is said of us: "There is great affliction for man because he is ignorant of things past, and things to come he cannot know in any way" [Eccl 8:7].

1733 The passion of Christ was fitting, first as to its time; and as to this he says, **that his hour had come**, which was the time of the Passover, when his passage would be by the cross: "There is a time and opportunity for every business" [Eccl 8:6]. This is the hour of which he said, "My hour has not yet come" (2:4). Yet this hour was not a matter of fate, as though governed by the course and arrangement of the stars; it was determined by the disposition and providence of God. I say, therefore, it was determined for the Jewish Passover because it was fitting to this Jewish feast that the reality follow the symbol, that

is, that when the lamb, which was a symbol of Christ, was sacrificed, Christ, who was truly the Lamb of God, should be immolated. "You know that you were ransomed...not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Pet 1:18-19).

It was also fitting to the situation, for Christ was now glorified: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified" (13:31). He had already revealed the Father to the world: "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world" (17:6). What remained, therefore, was to accomplish his passion and the work of human redemption, about which we read: "It is finished," followed by, "and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit" (19:30).

1734 The passion of Christ was a source of benefits and glory, not of defeat, because it was in order that he could **depart out of this world to the Father**, by making his human nature a partaker in the glory of the Father: "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (20:17). This does not mean that he would pass from one place to another, since God the Father is not contained by any place: "Do I not fill heaven and earth? (Jer 23:24). Rather, just as Christ is said to have come from the Father, not by leaving him, but by assuming an inferior nature like our own, so he is said to have returned to the Father insofar as, even in his human nature, he became a sharer in the Father's glory. "The life he lives he lives to God" (Rom 6:10); "Every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" [Phil 2:11].

1735 Then when he says, **having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end**, he commends the intense love of Christ; and this on four points.

First, because his love was first, according to "Not that we have loved God, but that he has first loved us" [1 Jn 4:10]. And as to this he says, **having loved his own**, trying to suggest that this was in advance of our love. I say he loved us before he created us: "For thou lovest all things that exist, and have loathing for none of the things which thou hast made" (Wis 11:24). He loved us before he called us: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have drawn you, taking pity on you" [Jer 31:3]. And he loved us before he redeemed us: "Greater love has not man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (15:13).

1736 Secondly, his love is commended as fitting, because he loved **his own**. Here we should note that God loves persons in various ways, depending on the various ways they are Christ's. Now, one can be his in three ways. First, by

creation; and God loves these by conserving their goods of nature: "He came to his own home, and his own people," by creation, "received him not" (1:11). Others are his by donation, that is, those given to him by God the Father through faith: "Thine they were, and thou gave them to me, and they have kept thy word" (17:6); and he loves these by preserving their goods of grace. Finally, some are his by a special devotion: "Behold, we are your bone and flesh" (1 Chron 11:1); he loves these by consoling them in a special way. [\[2\]](#)

1737 Thirdly, Christ's love is commended because it was needed, since he loved **his own who were in the world**. Those who were already in the glory of the Father are his, because even our fathers of long time past were his insofar as they hoped to be set free by him: "All his holy ones are in his hand" [Deut 33:3]. But these do not need such love as this as much as those who were in the world; so he says, **who were in the world**, that is, in body, but not in mind.

1738 Fourthly, his love is commended because it was perfect, so he says, **he loved them to the end**. Now there are two kind of ends: the end in the intention, and the end in execution. The end in intention is that to which our intention is directed; and this end ought to be eternal life, according to, "The return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life" (Rom 6:22). Again this end should be Christ: "For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified" (Rom 10:4). But these two are really one end, because eternal life is nothing other than enjoying Christ in his divinity: "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (17:3). From this point of view he says, **he loved them to the end**, in order to lead them to himself, the end; or, to lead them to eternal life, which is the same thing. "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have drawn you, taking pity on you" [Jer 31:3].

The end in execution is the terminus or outcome of a thing; so in this sense, death can be called an end. Thus he could say, **he loved them to the end**, that is, up to death. Used in this way, it can have three meanings. The first, mentioned by Augustine, is a very human way, and means that Christ loved his own until he died, but then no longer. [\[3\]](#) This meaning is false: for Christ, who was not ended by death, by no means ends his love at death. Another meaning would take the word "to" as indicating a cause; and then it would mean, **he loved them to the end**, that is, his love for them led him to death: "He loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). A third meaning would be this: although Christ had already shown them many signs of his love, yet **to the end**, that is, at the time of his death, he showed them signs of a greater love: "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you" (16:4). He would be saying in effect: it was not necessary then to show you how much I

loved you, but now that I am leaving it is, so that my love and the memory of me might be impressed more deeply into your hearts.

1739 Then when he says, **during supper**, he describes the act by which Christ gave his example. First, he mentions the time of the action; secondly, the dignity of the one acting (v 3); thirdly, his humility (v 4). He describes the time in two ways: in one way, as the time of Christ's love; in another way, by emphasizing the sin of Judas.

1740 In regard to the first, he says, literally, "when supper was done." Here we should note that both things that are permanent and things that are successive are said to be done or made. A permanent thing is said to be done or made when it has come to the perfection of its proper species and form; thus a house is said to be done or made when it has proper form. But in something which is successive, it is said to be made or done when it is over or is finished; thus the world is said to have been made when it was completed. But even things like this can be said to be made or done when they receive their appropriate species. So when he says here, literally, "when supper was done," he does not mean it was finished and over with: for after Christ washed the feet of the disciples, he returned to his place and gave the morsel to Judas. "When supper was done" rather means that it was prepared and now brought to his own species: for the group had already begun to eat, and then Christ got up. Thus Christ washed the feet of the disciples **during supper**.

We read about such a supper in Luke [14:16], "A man once gave a great supper." A breakfast and supper are different. What is given at the beginning of the day is called a breakfast, while what is given at its end is called supper. Likewise, that spiritual nourishment suitable for those beginning is called breakfast, while that nourishment appropriate for the advanced is more like a supper.

1741 Then when the Evangelist says, **when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him**, he depicts the time by emphasizing the sin of the traitor. He mentions his sin for two reasons. First, the better to bring out the evil of Judas, who in spite of so many tokens of love and humble service, considered committing such a great sin: the Psalm (41:9) says: "Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me." And secondly, the better to show the wonderful love of Christ who, although knowing this, treated him with love and humility by washing his feet: "With those who hated peace I was peaceable" [Ps 120:7].

1742 But can the devil put anything into our hearts? It seems he can, for a Psalm speaks of things "sent by evil angels" [Ps 77:49]. To explain this, we should note

that what is in a person's thought and will is said to be in his heart. So the statement, **when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas**, should be understood to refer to his will.

Understanding it the above way, there are two ways something can be put into our heart. First, directly; and in this way only one who has the power to move our will from within can put something into our heart. Only God can do this; consequently, he alone can directly move our will: "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand," in the power, "of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will" (Prv 21:10). But because the will is also moved by an external object, something apprehended as a good, it follows that anyone who brings to mind, or suggests that something is good is said to put something into our heart indirectly, by making us apprehend something as good, which in turn moves our will. This happens in two ways. By an external suggestion, and then one person can put something into another's heart; or by an interior suggestion, which is the way the devil puts something into our heart. For our imagination, since it is a physical reality, is subject to the power of the devil when God allows it. So, whether we be awake or asleep, he forms in it certain images which, when apprehended, move our will to desire something. And so the devil puts something into our heart, not directly by moving our heart, but indirectly, by suggestion.[\[4\]](#)

1743 Then (v 3) he considers the dignity of the one acting, for "The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself" (Sir 3:18). So the Evangelist, about to speak of Christ's humility, treats first of his very great dignity because of his knowledge, saying, **Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands**. For spiritual gifts are such that they are not unrecognized when given: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God" (1 Cor 2:12). Thus, Christ knew what had been given to him by God; and the Evangelist mentions this so Christ's humility would be more admirable. For sometimes it happens that a person is of great dignity, yet because of his simplicity he does not realize it. If such a person were to do something humble, it would not be regarded as worthy of great praise: "If you do not know yourself, O fairest among women..." [Song 1:8]. But if someone does know his own dignity, and still his affections are inclined to what is humble, his humility should be praised. And this is why the Evangelist says, **Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands**; and he still did not neglect to do what was humble.

Secondly, we see his dignity as to his power, because **the Father had given all things into his hands**, that is, into his power. God gave, in time, to Christ as man, what was in the power of the Son from eternity: "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me" (Mt 28:18). He says, **the Father had given all things into his hands**, for two reasons. First, to show that Christ did not suffer

against his will. For if all things were in **his hands**, that is, in his power, it is clear that his enemies could do nothing to him against his will. Secondly, because when a person of little importance is honored, he easily becomes proud; nor does he do anything humble, lest it seem to lessen his dignity. But when one of great dignity is honored, he does not neglect the humble things. And so Christ's dignity is mentioned here.

Thirdly, we see his dignity because of his nobility, when he says, **that he had come from God and was going to God**: "living with God" as Wisdom (8:3) says. Fourthly, his dignity because of his holiness, because he **was going to God**, for our holiness lies in our going to God. He mentions this because since Christ is going to God, it is special to him to lead others to God. This is done especially by humility and love; and so he offers them an example of humility and love.

LECTURE 2

4 [He] rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. 5 Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. 6 He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand." 8 Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have not part in me." 9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 10 Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not all of you." 11 For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "You are not all clean." [5]

1744 After showing the dignity of Christ, the Evangelist now commends his humility, which Christ showed by washing the feet of the disciples. First, the Evangelist mentions Christ's preparation for this humble task; secondly, the service itself (v 5).

1745 In regard to the first, we should note that in performing this humble task, Christ shows himself a servant: "The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28). Now three things are necessary for a good servant. First, he should be careful to notice anything

that might be lacking in his service; and this would be hampered if he were sitting or lying down. Thus servants stand. So he says, Christ **rose from supper**: "For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves" (Lk 22:27). Secondly, a servant should not be encumbered, so he can do everything necessary to his service. And since too much clothing is such a hindrance, our Lord **laid aside his garments**. Thirdly, a good servant is prepared, having at hand everything which he needs. In Luke (10:40) we read that Martha "was distracted with much serving." So our Lord **girded himself with a towel**, so he would be ready not just to wash their feet, but to dry them as well. And since he who had come from God and was going to God is now washing the feet of others, he is treading under foot the universal tendency to pride.

1746 As to its mystical meaning, this action can be referred to two things: the incarnation of Christ and his passion. If it is referred to his incarnation, it tells us three things about Christ. First, he was willing to help the human race, indicated by the fact that he **rose from supper**. For God seems to be sitting down as long as he allows us to be troubled; but when he rescues us from it, he seems to rise, as the Psalm (43:26) says: "Rise up, come to our help." Secondly, it indicates that he emptied himself: not that he abandoned his great dignity, but he hid it by taking on our smallness: "Truly, thou art a God who hidest thyself" (Is 45:15). This is shown by the fact that he **laid aside his garments**: "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil 2:7). Thirdly, the fact that he **girded himself with a towel** indicates that he took on our mortality: "taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:7).

If this event is referred to the passion of Christ, then he literally set aside his garments when the soldiers stripped him: "for my clothing they cast lots" (19:23). And he was girded with a towel in the tomb. And also in his passion he laid aside the garments of our mortality and put on a towel, that is, the splendor of immortality: "Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him" (Rom 6:9).

1747 Then when the Evangelist says, **Then he poured water into a basin...**, he describes Christ's service, and shows his admirable humility in three ways. First, as to what kind of service it was, for it was very lowly, since the Lord of majesty stooped down to wash the feet of his servants. Secondly, as to the number of things he did, for he put water into the basin, washed their feet, and then dried them. Thirdly, as to the way it was done: for Christ did not do it through others or with their help, but by himself. "The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself" (Sir 3:18).

1748 As for the mystical meaning, three things can be gathered from these events. First, the pouring out of Christ's blood on the earth is indicated by his

pouring water into the basin. For the blood of Jesus can be called water because it has the power to cleanse: "He washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev 1:4). And so blood and water came out of his side at the same time to show us that his blood washes away sins. Or, water can indicate the passion of Christ, for in Scripture water signifies tribulations: "Save me O God! For the waters," that is, tribulations, "have come up to my soul" [Ps 69:1]. Therefore, **he poured water into a basin**, that is, he impressed the memory of his passion on the minds of the faithful by their faith and devotion: "Remember my affliction and my bitterness, the wormwood and the gall!" (Lam 3:19).

1749 Secondly, when he says, **and began to wash**, it indicates our human imperfection. For after Christ, the apostles were more perfect than others, and yet even they needed to be washed, since they were unclean to some degree. We can understand by this that no matter how perfect a person may be, he acquires some uncleanness, and still needs to become more perfect: "Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin'?" (Prv 20:9). However, only the feet of such persons are unclean. But others are not only unclean in their feet, they are stained all over. For those who lie down in earthly uncleanness are defiled all over; thus, those who cling entirely to the love of earthly things, both in their affections and their senses, are entirely unclean. But those who stand, that is, tend to heavenly things in mind and desire, become unclean only on their feet. For just as a person who is standing must at least touch the earth with his feet, so we, as long as we live this mortal life which needs earthly things to sustain the body, acquire some uncleanness, at least because of our sensuality. Thus our Lord told the disciples to shake the dust from their feet (Lk 9:5). The Evangelist says that Christ **began to wash**, because the cleansing of our earthly affections begins here and is completed in the future. Then the words of Isaiah (35:8) will be fulfilled: "It shall be called the Holy Way."

Note that, according to Origen, our Lord began to wash the feet of his disciples right before his passion, for if he had washed them a long time before, they would have become dirty again.[\[6\]](#) So he began to wash them a short time before he would wash the apostles with the water of the Holy Spirit, after his passion: "Before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Act 1:5). In short, when our Lord put water into the basin, this indicated the pouring out of his blood; and when he began to wash the feet of his apostles, this indicated the cleansing of our sins.

1750 Thirdly, we have indicated the fact that Christ took upon himself our punishments; for he not only cleansed us from our stains, but took upon himself the punishments they deserved. For our own punishments and penance would not be enough unless they were founded on the merits and power of Christ's

passion. This is shown by the fact that he wiped the feet of his disciples with his towel, that is, his body (1 Pet 2:21).

1751 Then when the Evangelist says, **he came to Simon Peter**, he shows the example was beneficial by means of an encounter between the Teacher and the disciple. In this encounter our Lord shows that this example is both a mystery and necessary (v 8); and secondly, that it is appropriate (v 9). As to the first, the Evangelist does two things. First, he mentions the circumstances for Christ's speaking; secondly, what Christ said (v 7).

1752 The occasion for Christ's words was the refusal of Peter to allow this example of humility; he says, **he came to Simon Peter, and Peter said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet?** There are three explanations for this.

According to Origen, our Lord began to wash their feet by beginning with the last. [7] The reason for this was that just as a doctor who must care for a number of sick begins with those who need it more, so too Christ, when he washed the grimy feet of his disciples, began with the dirtiest, and then came to Peter, who needed it less than the others: "beginning with the last, up to the first" (Mt 20:8). The Evangelist seems to indicate this: for Christ **began to wash the disciples' feet**, and then he follows this with, **he came to Simon Peter**. It seems from this that Jesus washed the feet of the others first.

1753 If you ask why Peter was the first to object, Origen replies that this was due to the intense love Peter had for Christ. [8] The other disciples had a certain respectful awe and fear of Christ, and so complied without question to everything he did. But Peter, more aflame with love - "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?...Yes Lord; you know that I love you" (21:15) - and taking confidence from this love, refuses to comply and asks to know why: "A true friend will act as your equal and assume authority in your household" [Sir 6:11]. This is why in Scripture Peter often asks for explanations and does not hesitate to say what he thinks is best.

1754 The second explanation is by Chrysostom. [9] He says that Christ was ready to start with the first of the apostles, but Judas, the betrayer, in his foolishness and pride, pushed ahead of Peter. None of the others would have dared to go ahead of Peter. Thus the Evangelist is speaking of Judas when he says, **he began to wash the disciples' feet**, that is, the feet of Judas, who, as proud and foolish, would make no objection or refuse to allow what our Lord did. But when he came to Peter, who revered and loved his Teacher, Peter refused with awe and asked for an explanation. And any of the others would have done the same.

1755 The third explanation is by Augustine.[\[10\]](#) He says the words of the Evangelist do not show that our Lord first washed the feet of the other disciples and then came to Peter. Rather, according to his custom, the Evangelist first mentions the incident and after that gives the order of events within in, just as he did in Chapter 6. So he first mentions the entire incident, that is, Christ washed the feet of his disciples; and then, if we should ask how this was done, he says that he came first to Simon Peter. And so he was the first to refuse, saying, **Lord, do you wash my feet?**

These words have great depth. He says, **Lord, do you**, who are the Son of the living God, **wash my feet**, who am Simon, the son of Jonah? **Lord, do you**, the Lamb without spot, the mirror without stain, and the brightness of eternal light, **do you wash my feet**, who am a sinner? "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lk 5:8). **Lord, do you**, who are the Creator, **wash my feet**, I who am a creature and of little faith? Peter said these things struck by awe at the realization of the dignity of Christ, as in "I have considered your works, and have feared" [Hab 1:3].

1756 Then (v 7), we see the words of Christ, which show that this action is a mystery. Christ said to Peter: **What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand**. This action is both an example and a mystery. It is an example of humility to be practiced: "For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (v 15) And it is a mystery because it signifies an interior cleansing: "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet" (v 10).

So what Christ said can be understood in two ways. In one way, **What I am doing you do not know now**, that is, you do not now understand that what I am doing is an example; **but afterward you will understand**, when he explained it to them saying: "Do you know what I have done to you?" (v 12). In another way, **What I am doing you do not know now**; that is to say, this is a mystery and something hidden, and it signifies an interior cleansing which only I can accomplish, and which you do not understand now, **but afterward you will understand**, when you receive the Holy Spirit: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (16:12).

1757 Next, he shows that this action is necessary. First, the Evangelist mentions what Peter said which provoked Christ's answer; secondly, we see what Christ said.

1758 Peter says, **You shall never wash my feet**. He is saying in effect: By no

means will I submit to this from my Teacher, my Lord and my God. And although Peter said this out of zeal, it was an imprudent and disordered zeal: "They have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened" (Rom 10:2). His zeal was disordered for three reasons. He refused something that was beneficial and necessary; for as we read: "We do not know how to pray as we ought" (Rom 8:26). And so it is imprudent to refuse what God gives us, even if it seems disadvantageous. Paul too asked to be freed from his thorn (2 Cor 12:8), yet it was for his benefit. Again, it seemed to indicate a certain disrespect for Christ by wanting to go against his plans. Finally, it seemed to disparage his companions in that the others, according to Origen, yielded to Christ without an argument, while Peter refused, saying, **You shall never wash my feet.** [\[11\]](#)

1759 Our Lord reproved him, saying, **If I do not wash you, you have not part in me.** This statement can refer to two things: to the action that Christ was performing, or to what the action signified.

If we refer it to what the action signified, the meaning is clear. For no one can share in the eternal inheritance and be a joint heir with Christ unless he is spiritually clean, for we read: "But nothing unclean shall enter it" (Rev 21:27). And in the Psalm (15:1) it says: "O Lord, who shall sojourn in thy tent?" And the answer is given: "He who walks blamelessly." Therefore, it is like he was saying: **If I do not wash you, you will not be clean; and if you are not clean, you have no part in me.**

But if we refer this statement to the action itself, then it can be asked if this washing was necessary for salvation. We can say to this that just as some things are forbidden because they are evil, and some things are evil because they are forbidden, so some things are commanded because they are necessary, and some things are necessary because they are commanded. And so this washing, about which our Lord said, **If I do not wash you, you have no part in me,** if considered in itself, was not necessary for salvation. But on the supposition that it was commanded by Christ, then it was necessary: "To obey is better than sacrifice," and so "stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Sam 15:22-23).

1760 Then the Evangelist shows the action was appropriate. First, the words of Peter are given; and then Christ's answer.

1761 Peter's words indicate his intense love for Christ. Before, when our Lord said to him, **What I am doing you do not know now,** he had intimated that it would be useful; yet Peter paid no attention to this, and could not be persuaded to have his feet washed. But when our Lord warned him it would mean they would no longer be together, saying, **you have no part in me,** Peter offered

more than just his feet, saying, **Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!** For Peter was frightened by this answer, and affected by love and fear, he offered all of himself for washing. Clement tells us in his *Itinerary* that Peter was so touched by the physical presence of Christ, whom he had loved so intensely, that after the ascension, when he recalled the sweetness of Christ's presence, and his holy manner, he wept so much that his cheeks appeared to be furrowed. [\[12\]](#)

1762 We may note that there are three things in a person: the head at the top, the feet at the bottom, and the hands in the middle. The same is true for the inner person, that is, for the soul. There is the head, which is the higher reason, by which the soul adheres to God. "The head of a woman is her husband" (1 Cor 4:4), that is, the higher reason. The hands are the lower reason, which is concerned with the works of the active life. Finally, the feet are the sensuality. Now our Lord knew that his disciples were clean as to their head, because they had been united to God by faith and charity; and their hands were clean because their works were holy. But as to their feet, they still retained some affection for earthly things in their sensuality. And so Peter, anxious because of our Lord's warning, agrees not only to have his feet washed, but also his hands and head, saying, **Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head.** It was like saying: I do not know if my hands and feet need washing - "I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted" (1 Cor 4:4) - and so I am ready to wash **not my feet only**, that is, my lower affections - "I had bathed my feet, how could I soil them?" (Song 5:3) - **but also my hands**, that is, my works - "I will wash my hands among the innocent" [26:6] - **and my head**, that is, my higher reason - "Wash your face" (Mt 6:17).

1763 Then (v 10), the Evangelist gives our Lord's answer. First, our Lord states a general principle; secondly, he applies it to this situation; and thirdly, the Evangelist explains these words of Christ.

1764 He says at first, **he who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over**, except for his feet, which touch the earth. We understand from this that the apostles had already been baptized. For he says, **he who has bathed**, and then adds, **and you are clean**, that is, because they had been baptized.

1765 Some say they had been baptized only with the baptism of John. But this does not seem to be true, because then they would not have bathed, because the baptism of John did not cleanse within from guilt. And so it should be said, according to Augustine, that they had been baptized with the baptism of Christ. [\[13\]](#) If you object that Christ did not baptize but only his disciples, as was stated

above (4:2), I say that he did not baptize the crowds, but only his disciples and those he knew well.

But since baptism cleanses even the stains from the feet, it seems that one who has bathed, that is, is baptized, does not need to wash his feet. I answer that if they had left this world immediately after their baptism, they would have had no need for this washing, for since they would be entirely clean, they would go to God at once. But those who live in this world after their baptism cannot reach such perfection that disordered movement of the sensuality in regard to earthly affections never arise. And so it is necessary that they wash their feet either by martyrdom, which is a baptism of blood, or by repentance, which is a baptism of fire, so that they can return to God.

1766 Then when he says, **you are clean, but not all of you**, our Lord applies this general principle to the situation. But if they were clean, why did our Lord wash them again? Augustine says their hands and heads were clean, but that their feet needed washing.[\[14\]](#) Chrysostom says that they were not absolutely clean, because they had not yet been cleansed from original sin: for since Christ had not yet suffered, the price of our redemption had not yet been paid - but they were clean in a limited sense, that is, from the errors of the Jews.[\[15\]](#) Origen says that they were clean, but that a further cleansing was needed, for reason should always aspire to better gifts, always strive for the heights of virtue, and glow with the brightness of righteousness: "He who is holy, let him be sanctified further" [Rev 22:11]. **But not all of you**, because one of them was dirty both in hands and head.[\[16\]](#)

1767 This is why the Evangelist says, **for he knew who was to betray him**. He is saying that Christ said, **but not all of you**, because he knew the uncleanness of Judas the betrayer. In general, there are two things which cleans a person: alms and compassion for the poor - "Give alms and then all things are clean for you" [Lk 11:41] - and love for God - "her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much" (Lk 7:47); "love covers all offenses" (Prv 10:12). But Judas lacks these two things. He lacked compassion because he was a thief and, holding the money, he stole the alms of the poor. He also lacked love for Christ, because the devil had already put it into this heart to betray Christ to the chief priests to be crucified.

LECTURE 3

12 When he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and resumed his place [again], he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and

Lord; and you are right, for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. 16 Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. 18 I am not speaking of you all; I know whom I have chosen; it is that the scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' 19 I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he. 20 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives anyone whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives he who sent me."[\[17\]](#)

1768 After our Lord showed that his humble service was necessary, he then urges that it be imitated. First, the Evangelist describes the circumstances of this exhortation; secondly, he mentions the exhortation itself (v 12b). Concerning the first he does two things: first, he mentions the sequence in this exhortation; secondly, he describes the one giving the exhortation (v 12a).

1769 The sequence found in this exhortation is that Christ later taught in words what he had first done by his actions. In regard to this he says, **When he had washed their feet**: "Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:1): "He who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:19).

1770 He describes the one giving the exhortation by his clothing and posture. As to his clothing, different clothing is suitable to different people depending on the different activities appropriate to each: "A man's attire...shows what he is" (Sir 19:30). One sort of attire is suitable for a servant, and another for a teacher. Now because a servant must be ready to serve, he does not have any superfluous clothing; and so Christ, when he wished to serve, "rose from supper, laid aside his garments." And a teacher, who should be serious and of great authority, ought also to be suitably dressed. Thus our Lord, when beginning to teach, had **taken his garments**.

As to his posture: when Christ began to serve he rose; he says that Christ "rose from supper." But now, about to teach, he reclines; he says, **he resumed his place again, he said to them**. The reason for this is that teaching should be done in an atmosphere of serenity, and it is by sitting and being quiet that the soul becomes wise and discerning.

1771 Three events here are able to indicate mysteries. When Christ sends the Holy Spirit to his disciples he will be giving them complete teaching: "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (14:26). But three things are to take place before the Spirit is sent. First, their sins are to be washed away by his passion: "He washed us from our sins in his own blood" [Rev 1:5]. In reference to this he says, **when he had washed their feet**, that is, completely cleansed them by his blood. Secondly, there is the resurrection of Christ. Christ had a mortal body before his passion, but he was not mortal because he was, as a person, the Son or God; his mortality was due to the human nature he assumed. But after he rose from the dead by the power of his divinity, he took on bodily immortality. And in reference to this he says, he had **taken his garments**, that is, he arose immortal. He says **his garments** because he did this by his own power: "The life he lives he lives to God," that is, by the power of God (Rom 6:10). We read of these garments: "He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life" (Rev 3:5). Also, before the Spirit is sent, Christ is to be seated [next to the Father] after his ascension: "If I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you" (16:7). And referring to this he says, **and resumed his place again**, that is, remaining and sitting at the right hand of the Father: "The Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into the heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mk 16:19). He says, **again**, not because as the Son of God he had ever ceased to sit with the Father, for he is in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, but because as man he was raised to the greater goods of the Father: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9).

And so, before sending into them the Holy Spirit, who would perfectly teach them, Christ would wash them with the blood he shed; take up his garments by rising; and resume his place by ascending in glory.

1772 Next (v 12b), he gives his exhortation. First, he asks a question; secondly, he accepts their acknowledgement; thirdly, he draws a conclusion from this; fourthly, he confirms this conclusion.

1773 Christ questions them when he says, **Do you know what I have done to you?** This means: You have seen what I have done, but you do not know why I did it. And he asks them in this way in order to show the greatness of his action and to prompt them to reflect on it. For we should meditate on the works of God because they are profound: "How great are thy works, O Lord! Thy thoughts are very deep" (Ps 92:5). We can barely know the works of God: "Then I saw all the works of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the

sun" (Eccl 8:17). Yet it is still a delight to think about them: "For thou O Lord, hast made me glad by thy work; at the work of thy hands I sing for joy" (Ps 92:4). Further, these works are helpful, because they lead us to a knowledge of their author: "For from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator" (Wis 13:5); "These very works which I am doing, bear me witness" (5:36).

According to Origen, this statement can be rendered as, **Know what I have done to you.**[\[18\]](#) In this way, it has an imperative sense, as if Christ were saying: You ought to understand what I have done to you. In this interpretation our Lord said this to rouse their understanding.

1774 Our Lord accepts their acknowledgment, **You call me Teacher and Lord.** He mentions what they acknowledge; and then he approves of it.

1775 As to the first, we should note that in 1 Corinthians (1:24), the Apostle says two things about Christ: he is the power of God and the wisdom of God. As the power of God, he rules all things, for as Ambrose says, the word "Lord" is a name of power.[\[19\]](#) As the wisdom of God he teaches everyone. Thus the disciples called him **Lord** - "Lord, to whom shall we go?" (6:68) - **and Teacher** - "Rabbi, eat" (4:31). And with good reason. For he is the Lord, who alone creates and restores: "Know that the Lord is God!" (Ps 100:3). And he is the only Teacher who teaches from within: "You have one master, the Christ" (Mt 23:10).

1776 When he says, **and you are right**, he approves their acknowledgement. Here we should note that something which is spoken can be commendable for two reasons. First, because what is said is in harmony with the thing about which it is said; and this happens if what is said is true, for if it is false, it does not harmonize with the thing. So it is well said: "Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth" (Eph 4:25). For lies must be avoided to such an extent that even if it seems that they lead to the glory of God, they should not be spoken. In reference to this point he says, **and you are right**; because what you say is true, for it applies to me, **for so I am**, Teacher and Lord. I am the Teacher because of the wisdom I teach by my words; I am the Lord because of the power I show in my miracles.

Secondly, what is spoken can be commendable because it is in harmony with the person speaking. There are some who call Christ Teacher and Lord, but it is not in harmony with themselves, for they do not defer to the teaching and commands of God; and such people do not speak rightly. So to those who say, "Lord, Lord, open to us," the answer is given, "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you" (Mt 25:11), because they are not speaking from their hearts, but only with their lips.

But the apostles spoke rightly, because it was in agreement with themselves. And so Christ replied, **and you are right**, that is, you are speaking the truth, **for so I am**, that is, for you I am the Teacher and the Lord, for you listen to me as Teacher - "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (6:6) - and you follow me as Lord - "Lo, we have left everything and followed you" (Mt 19:27).

1777 This seems to conflict with the statement in Proverbs (27:2): "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth." It seems, therefore, that it was not right for our Lord to praise himself. Augustine answers this in two ways.[\[20\]](#) First, it is wrong for a person to commend himself because of the danger of becoming proud: because if one is inclined to pride, it is dangerous for him to be pleased with himself. When there is no danger of pride, self-praise is not wrong. This danger was not to be feared in Christ, for if one is above everything, then no matter how much he praises himself, he does not commend himself too much.

Augustine also says that sometimes it is good that a person commends himself, as when this is beneficial to others.[\[21\]](#) The Apostle commended himself this way to the Corinthians (2 Cor 11). Now for us to know God is very beneficial and necessary in every way, for our entire perfection lies in this. Thus it was a benefit for us that he reveal his greatness to us, for how could we know it if it were not shown to us by the one who knows. Thus it was necessary that Christ commend himself to us, for as Augustine says, if he did not praise himself in order to avoid seeming arrogant, he would be depriving us of wisdom: "Wisdom will praise herself" (Sir 24:1).

1778 He draws the conclusion when he says, **If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet**. He is arguing here from what is less [expected] to what is more [expected]. For it seems less [expected] that one who is greater humble himself than one who is not as great. And with this in mind he concludes, **If I then**, who am greater, because I am **your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet**, then **you** who are not as great, because you are disciples and servants, **ought**, far more than I, **to wash one another's feet**: "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant...even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve" (Mt 20:26).

1779 It seems that the statement, **you ought to wash one another's feet**, is a precept. And one who neglects a precept sins in a serious way. Therefore, [it is a serious sin not to wash the feet of others]. I reply, according to Augustine, that every one should wash the feet of others, either in a physical or spiritual way.[\[22\]](#) And it is much better, and true beyond argument, that one should do this in

a physical way, so that a Christian will not consider it beneath him to do what Christ did. For when a person stoops down to the feet of his neighbor, humility is awakened in his heart, or if already there it is made stronger.

If one cannot do this in a physical way, it should at least be done in one's heart. When feet are washed, their stains are washed away. So we wash the feet of our neighbors in a spiritual way when, as far as we can, we wash away their moral stains. This is done in three ways. The first way is by forgiving their offenses, as in "And if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (Col 3:13). Another way is by praying because of their sins, according to "Pray for one another, that you may be healed" (Jas 5:16). These two kinds of washing can be done by all the faithful. The third way belongs to prelates, who ought to wash by forgiving sins by the power of the keys: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven" (20:22).

We can also say that by this action our Lord pointed out all the works of mercy. For one who gives bread to the hungry washes his feet, as does one who practices hospitality, or gives food to one in need; and so on for the other works. "Contribute to the needs of the saints" (Rom 12:13).

1780 He supports his conclusion in four ways: first, by his intention; secondly, by his authority (v 16); thirdly, by the reward due this action (v 17); and fourthly, by the dignity of those whose feet he washed (v 20).

1781 He said the reason I did this was to give you an example; so **you also ought to wash one another's feet**, because that was what I intended by this action. For when we are dealing with the conduct of people, example has more influence than words. A person chooses and does what seems good to him, and so what one chooses is a better indication of what is good than what one teaches should be chosen. This is why when someone says one thing and does another, what he does has more influence on others than what he has taught. Thus it is especially necessary to give example by one's actions.

Now the example of a mere human being would not be adequate for the entire human race to imitate, both because human reason cannot take everything into account, and it does err in what it does take into account. And so there was given to us the example of the Son of God, which cannot be in error and is adequate for all situations. Thus Augustine says: "Pride is not healed if it is not healed by the divine humility" [11.Opt;font-family:"Times New Roman">\[23\]](#); and the same is true of avarice and the other vices.

Note that the Son of God is a fitting and sufficient example for us. For he is the art of the Father, and just as he was the model or pattern for every thing created, so he was the model for our justification: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps" (1 Pet 2:21); "My foot has held fast to his steps, I have kept his way and have not turned aside," as we read in Job (23:11).

1782 Then when he says, **Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master**, he strengthens his conclusion by his authority. First, he mentions the status of his disciples; secondly, the work they do.

Then the status of the disciples is that they are servants: "so you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants'" (Lk 17:10). The work they have to do is to be apostles - and an apostle is one who is sent: "He...chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles" (Lk 6:13). So he says: I say that "you also ought to wash one another's feet" as I have washed yours, because **a servant is not greater than his master**, and this refers to their status, **nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him**. Although the Son of God was sent to us, as we see in Hebrews (3:1), and he is equal to the one who sent him, that is, the Father, yet it is true of all others that he who is sent is not greater than the one who sent him.

1783 This seems to contradict what our Lord said to his disciples below (15:15): "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing." I answer that there are two ways of being a servant. One way is based on reverence and respect, "filial fear," and this produces a good servant: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Mt 25:23). This is the kind of servant our Lord is talking about here in John (13:16). The other way of being a servant is based on the fear of punishment, "servile fear." This kind of servant is mentioned in "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me" (Mt 18:33). This is the kind of servant our Lord refers to when he says: "No longer do I call you servants" (15:15).

1784 When he says, **If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them**, he strengthens his conclusion by a reward. First, he mentions the reward; secondly, he excludes someone from it (v 18).

1785 **If you know these things**, which many do know, **blessed are you if you do them**, which is true of few. He says, "know" and "do" because we read: "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk 11:28); and "A

good understanding have all those who practice it" (Ps 111:10). On the other hand, "Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin" (Jas 4:17).

1786 He excludes someone when he says, **I am not speaking of you all**. First, he says there is an exception; secondly, he gives the reason for the exception (v 18). Thirdly, he tells why he said there was an exception (v 19). He does two things about the first: he mentions there is an exception; he answers an unspoken question.

1787 He says there is an exception when he says, **I am not speaking of you all**. He is saying in effect: You will be blessed, but not all of you, because **I am not speaking of you all** when I say you will be blessed: "All the runners compete, but only one receives the prize" (1 Cor 9:24). For there is one of you, that is, Judas, who will not be blessed, and he will not do these things.

According to Origen, our Lord did not say **blessed are you**, without qualification; but he added a condition, **if you do them**.[\[24\]](#) And this is true for all of them, even Judas; for if Judas had done these things, he would have been blessed. So for Origen, Jesus is excluding Judas from his servants, "a servant is not greater than his master" (v 16). It was like saying: I say you are servants and apostles, **but I am not speaking of you all**: for Judas, since he was a servant of sin, was not a servant of the Divine Word, nor was he an apostle once the devil had entered into his heart.

1788 Someone could say: Since Christ does not say that all are blessed or his apostles, then some member of his group might perish unexpectedly. Our Lord answers this saying, **I know whom I have chosen**. This was like saying: Those who have been chosen will not perish; but not all have been chosen. So, the one who will perish will be the one who has not been chosen, that is, Judas: "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (15:16).

1789 This seems to conflict with his earlier statement: "Did I not choose you, the twelve?" (6:71). Therefore, since Judas was one of the twelve, it seems that he was chosen. I answer that one can be chosen in two ways. One is for a present righteousness; and Judas was chosen for this. The other is for final glory; and Judas was not chosen for this.

1790 The reason there was an exception was so **that the scripture may be fulfilled** - not that scripture forced the event, but it did mention an event that would happen: "Everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44); "Not an iota, nor a dot,

will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Mt 5:18). This scripture says: **He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me**. This is another translation of what we have in the Psalm [41:9] as: "The man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has greatly deceived me." The intimacy Judas had with Christ is shown when we read, **he who ate my bread**: for Judas, along with the other disciples, ate bread with Christ, even consecrated bread. Further, his malicious efforts against Christ are shown when it says, **has lifted his heel against me**; that is, he will try to crush me. And we do crush our enemies under our heel: "She shall crush your head, and you will lie in wait for her heel" [Gen 3:15]. And so one is said to raise his heel against another when he tries to crush him. But Judas will not be able to do this, because I will be exalted by the very thing with which he wants to crush me: "And I, when am lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" [12:32].

1791 We have an example in this for ourselves: let us not be set back if we happen to suffer evil from those close to us or from the malicious, since we can remember the conduct of Judas who, in spite of having received unlimited goods, returned the contrary to his benefactor. Our Lord chose Judas, whom he knew would become an evil person, so that we could realize that there would be no human society which does not have some evil members: "As a lily among brambles, so is my love among maidens" (Song 2:2). And in one of his letters Augustine says: "I don't care to assume that my household is better than the group of the apostles." [25] We can also understand from this that if a prelate receives someone into the Church, and this person becomes bad, the prelate should not be blamed. Look at Judas! Even though he was chosen by Christ he turned out to be a traitor. The same thing happened to Philip when he received Simon the magician: "Shall they repay good with evil, by making a snare to take my life?" [Jer 18:20]; "A man's foes will be those of his own household" (Mt 10:36).

1792 Then when he says, **I tell you this now**, he gives the reason why he mentioned there was an exception. As if to say: I have been silent about his malice for a long time, but because the time is near when it will appear publicly, therefore, **I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he** who predicts the future and reveals the secrets of the heart: things which are characteristic of God. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it? 'I the Lord search the mind and try the heart'" (Jer 17:9); "Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods" (Is 41:23). Or, "I am who am" [Ex 3:14].

1793 Next (v 20), he confirms his conclusion from the dignity of those whose feet he washed. For their dignity was so great that services performed for them

seemed in a way to rebound to God, although according to a certain progression: because things done for the faithful through Christ rebound to God the Father.

First, he shows how those things done for the disciples of Christ flow back or rebound to Christ. Regarding this he says, **Truly, truly, I say to you**. He is saying in effect: Truly, you ought to wash their feet, because **he who receives any one whom I send receives me**, that is, I regard as done to me the service given to those whom I send: "He who receives you receives me" (Mt 10:41). Secondly, he shows how a service given to Christ rebounds to the Father, saying, **he who receives me receives him who sent me**: "That all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father" (5:23). However, according to Origen, this verse can be understood in two ways.[\[26\]](#) In one way by compressing the two parts into one, and then the sense is: he who receives those sent by me also receives the Father. The second way keeps the parts distinct, and then the meaning is: he who receives, that is, in a physical way, those sent by me, receives me; and those who receive me, that is, coming into their souls in a spiritual way - as in "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:17) - receives him who sent me, the Father. Not only will I dwell in him, but the Father will also: "We will come to him and make our home with him" (14:23).

1794 Arius used this text in the following way to help support his own error: the Lord says that he who receives him receives the Father; and so the relationship between the Father who sends and the Son is the same as that of the Son who sends and the disciples. But Christ who sends is greater than the disciples who are sent; thus, the Father is greater than the Son.

We should answer this, according to Augustine, by saying that there were two natures in Christ, a human and a divine nature.[\[27\]](#) In the first part he is speaking with reference to his human nature, saying, **he who receives any one whom I send receives me**, as human, for I share with them in one [human] nature. In the second part he speaks in reference to his divinity: **he who receives me**, who am God, **receives him who sent me**, for I have the same [divine] nature as him.

Or, we could understand it to mean: he who receives one whom I send, receives me, for my authority is in him; and he who receives me receives the Father, whose authority is in me. In this way, these words show that Christ is the bridge between God and humankind, as in "There is one mediator between God and the men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5).

LECTURE 4

21 When Jesus had thus spoken, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." 22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. 23 One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was lying close to the breast [lap] of Jesus; 24 so Simon Peter beckoned to him and said, "Tell us who it is of whom he speaks." 25 So lying thus, close to the breast of Jesus, he said to him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 Jesus answered, "It is he whom I shall give this morsel [bread] when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel [bread], he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27 Then after the morsel, Satan entered into him. [28]

1795 Above, the Evangelist presented the example Christ gave to his disciples to imitate. Here he shows the failure of the disciples who were not yet ready to follow him; a failure which Christ predicted. First, we see the failure of the disciple who betrayed him; secondly, of the disciple who denied him (v 36). Two things are done with the first: one of the disciples is said to be a betrayer; secondly, we see him leave the supper. Two things are done concerning the first: the betrayal is predicted; then we see it beginning to be executed (v 27a). Two things are done about the first: the crime of the traitor is foretold; secondly, the traitor is identified (v 22).

1796 Two things are done about the first: the emotions of the one foretelling the betrayal are mentioned; secondly, the event predicted is mentioned.

The one foretelling the betrayal is Christ, and he is troubled. As to this the Evangelist says, **When Jesus had thus spoken**, inviting them once again to works of love, he visualized the disciple who was to betray him and **he was troubled in spirit**. Here we should note that to be troubled is to be disturbed. This is shown by an event mentioned before: "From time to time an angel of the Lord used to come down into the pool and the water was disturbed...the sick man said, 'Sir, I have no one to plunge me into the pool once the water is troubled'" (5:4). Here it is the same thing for water to be disturbed or troubled. We also say the sea is troubled when it is disturbed. And so to say that a soul is troubled is to say that it is disturbed. Now there are some acts of the soul which do not involve a disturbance in the body; these are the actions of its intellectual powers. But the acts of the sensory appetite do involve a disturbance in the body; these are the actions of its intellectual powers. But the acts of the sensory appetite do involve some bodily disturbance; and so the affections of the sensory appetite are called passions. Now among all the affections or passions of the sensory appetite, sadness involves the most disturbance. While pleasure, since it

implies a rest in a good which is possessed, has more the character of rest than of disturbance. Even fear, since it is concerned with an evil to come in the future, has less disturbance than sadness, which involves an evil which is present. This is why one who is afflicted with sadness is especially said to be troubled. So Christ was troubled, that is, he was sad.

1797 We can recall here that there have been philosophers, the Stoics, who said that those who are wise are not troubled this way or by such passions. For although they admit that one who is wise may have fear, or joy or desire, such a one is never sad. It is clear that this is false because Jesus, who is the highest wisdom, was troubled.

Note that one can be troubled in two ways. Sometimes it comes from the flesh, which means that one is troubled because of some apprehension by the senses, but independently of the judgment of reason. Yet sometimes this can remain within the limits of reason and not cloud one's reason; in this case, Jerome would call it a *propassion*.[\[29\]](#) This can happen in one who is wise. At other times, this can go beyond the limits of reason and trouble reason. This is not found in the wise.

The second way of being troubled is to have it come from one's reason, that is, when one is troubled in the sensory appetite because of a judgment of reason and from deliberation. This was the way Christ was troubled. And so the Evangelist is careful to say that **he was troubled in spirit**, that is, the sensory appetite of Christ was troubled because of a judgment of his reason. Thus he said above (11:33) that Jesus "troubled himself." For in Christ all things arose from the deliberation of reason, even in his sensory appetite; and so there were in him no sudden disturbances of his sensuality.

1798 Jesus willed to be troubled at this time for two reasons. First, in order to instruct us in the faith. For suffering and death, which human nature naturally shuns, were drawing near to him; and when he realized this, he became sad because they were harmful and evil for him. And so he willed, by a judgment of reason, to be troubled even in his soul, to show us that he had a real human nature. This excludes the error of Apollinaris who said that Christ did not have a soul, but the Word took its place.

Secondly, he did this to aid our own progress. According to Augustine, he saw that the traitor was about to leave and return with the Jews who wanted to capture him.[\[30\]](#) By this action, Judas was severed from the society of the saints and drew down a sentence of death upon himself. And because Jesus loved him, this made him sad. This gives an example to superiors that if now and then they

have to pass a harsh judgment on their subjects, they should do it with a sad heart, according to "Let a good man strike or rebuke me in kindness" (Ps 141:5). For when Jesus decided to reveal the treachery of Judas to the others, **he was troubled in spirit and testified**, to show he was not ignorant of his betrayal, and said, **Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.**

1799 He is careful to say, **one of you**, i.e., one of those chosen for this holy society, so that we might understand that there would never be a society so holy that it would be without sinners and those who are evil: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them" (Job 1:6).

He said one of them, not two or several, so it would not seem that he was reproving the whole group rather than the traitor in the group. For we should not think a group bad because one member is bad; although if several are bad, the group could be considered bad. He said, **one of you**, that is, one of your number, not one of you in merit or one in spirit: "They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us" (1 Jn 2:19). **One of you will betray me.** Me, the Teacher, the Lord, the Savior.

1800 Next (v 22), the traitor is privately identified. First, the occasions for this are mentioned; secondly, the traitor is identified (v 26); thirdly, we see the effect of his identification (v 27). There were two occasions for his identification: one was the uncertainty of the disciples, and the other was a question asked by one of the disciples. First, John mentions their uncertainty; and then the disciple's question.

1801 With regard to the first, note that the good disciples had very great love for Christ and their faith was very strong. Because of their love each one assumed that he would not be the one to deny Christ; yet because their faith was so strong they were most certain that what Christ said could not be false. And so, although none of them was conscious of any evil, they nevertheless thought the prediction of Christ was truer and more believable than their own opinion. Accordingly, considering that they were human and that their affections could change so much that they could will the opposite of what they willed before, they were more uncertain of themselves than of the truth spoken by Christ. So, **the disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke**: "Therefore let any one who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor 10:12); "If I wash myself with snow, and cleanse my hands with lye, yet thou wilt plunge me into a pit" (Job 9:30).

1802 Next (v 23), the disciple's question is stated. First we see the intimacy he

had with Christ; secondly, what led him to ask (v 24); thirdly, his question (v 25).

1803 The disciple's intimacy with Christ is shown by the fact that he was lying close to him. He says, **one of the disciples was lying close to the lap of Jesus**. This was John the Evangelist who wrote his Gospel. He wrote of himself in the third person to avoid boasting. In this he followed the custom of others who wrote Sacred Scripture. Moses wrote of himself this way, as though he were someone else: "and the Lord said to Moses" (Lev 11:1). And so did Matthew: "He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax office" as we see from Matthew (Mt 9:9). And further on Paul did the same: "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor 12:2).

1804 John here mentions three things about himself. First, the love he had for Christ as he rested on him. John said that he **was lying**, that is resting: "Then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, and lift up your face to God" (Job 22:26); "He leads me beside the waters of rest" (Ps 23:2). Secondly, he intimates his knowledge of mysteries, which were made known to him by Christ, and especially for the writing of this Gospel. He says he was lying **close to the lap of Jesus**, for the lap signifies things that are hidden: "The only Son, who is in the lap of the Father, he has made him known" [1:18]. Thirdly, he mentions the special love Christ had for him, saying, **whom Jesus loved**, not exclusively, but in a way above others. Exactly how Christ loved him more than others will be stated more clearly at the end of this book.

For the present, it is enough to say that John was more loved by Christ for three reasons. First, because of the cleanliness of his purity: for he was a virgin when chosen by the Lord, and always remained so: "He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend" (Prv 22:11). Secondly, because of the depth of his wisdom, for he saw further into the secrets of God than others; and so he is compared to an eagle, "A wise servant has the king's favor" [Prv 14:35]. Thirdly, because of the great intensity of his love for Christ: "I love those who love me" (Prv 8:17).

1805 Then when he says, **so Simon Peter beckoned to him**, John mentions what led him to question Christ. But since to beckon is to suggest something without speaking any words, why does he say that Peter both **beckoned...and said**? I answer that the [Latin] word beckon can also mean just to think something within ourselves, as "The fool says in his heart..." (Ps 53:1). And, even more so, we can say that someone said something when he indicates by some external sign or gesture what he has conceived in his heart. This is the meaning of his saying that Peter **beckoned...and said**, that is, thinking of something within himself, he indicated it by some kind of gesture. Or, one could say that he first gave some gesture, and then said in words: **Who is it of whom he**

speaks? that is, who will betray him.

1806 Since everywhere in the Gospels Peter is always presented as bold and as the first to speak out because of his fervent love, why is he now keeping silent? Chrysostom gives three reasons for this.[\[31\]](#) One is that Peter had just been reprimanded by our Lord for not allowing him to wash his feet, and had heard, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." As a result, he preferred not to bother our Lord just now. Another reason is that Peter did not want our Lord to reveal this openly so that others could hear it. And so because Peter was a few feet away from Christ and would not be the only one to hear his answer, he urged John, who was next to Jesus, to ask him.

The third reason is mystical. John signifies the contemplative life, and Peter the active life. Now Peter is instructed by Christ by means of John because the active life learns about divine things by means of the contemplative life: "Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving" (Lk 10:39).

1807 Then when he says, **So lying thus, close to the breast of Jesus, he said to him, Lord, who is it?** he mentions the question. Note that when Peter was beckoning to John to get him to question our Lord, John was leaning near the lap of Jesus. But now when John asks he is near the breast of Jesus, for the breast is closer to the mouth than the lap is. And so John moved from the lap of Christ to his breast so he could hear his answer more quietly and privately.

As for the mystical interpretation, we can see from this that the more a person wants to grasp the secrets of divine wisdom, the more he should try to get closer to Christ, according to: "Come to him and be enlightened" [Ps 34:5]. For the secrets of divine wisdom are especially revealed to those who are joined to God by love: "He shows his friend that it is his possession" [Job 36:33]; "His friend comes and searches into him" [Prv 18:17].

1808 Then when he says, **Jesus answered**, he identifies the betrayer: first by words, then by an action. He identifies by words when he says, **It is he to whom I shall give this bread when I have dipped it**. This can signify two things, depending on how bread is understood. If it is understood to indicate something evil, it signifies the hypocrisy of Judas. For just as dipped bread is stained and has changed in appearance so also a pretender, for he thinks one thing in his heart while he simulates something else with his words. And Judas was like this, for on the outside he pretended to love the Teacher, but in his heart he planned to betray him: The wicked "speak peace with their neighbors, while mischief is in their hearts" (Ps 28:3).

If bread is taken to signify something good, then this action stresses the malice of Judas. When bread is dipped it tastes better. So Christ gave Judas dipped bread to show that although Judas had received many good things from Christ, in spite of these he betrayed him: "But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to hold sweet converse together" (Ps 55:13).

1809 He identifies the betrayer by an action when he says, **so when he had dipped the bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot**. Some say that this bread was the consecrated body of Christ. But, according to Augustine, this is not so.[\[32\]](#) For it is clear from the other Evangelists that our Lord gave his body to the disciples while he was having supper. Thus it is evident that Judas received the body of Christ at the same time as the other disciples, that is, during the supper. During the course of this meal Jesus rose and washed the feet of the disciples and returned to his place. And it was only after this that he gave the bread to Judas. Clearly, this was not the body of Christ.

1810 He continues with the effect of this identification, saying, **then after the morsel, Satan entered into him**. Here we might ask how Satan enters into a person. I answer that there are two ways of understanding Satan's entering into a person. He could enter into a person's body, as in the case of those who are physically molested by a devil. In this way the devil can essentially enter into a person. Or, we might take it to mean that the devil enters into a person's mind, so that the devil would essentially penetrate the mind. However, no one but God can enter into a person in this way. Now the rational soul does not have quantitative dimensions so that something could be in it except what gives it existence, which is there by its own power. Now where the power of God is, there also is his essence: for in God essence and power are the same. So it is clear that God is in the soul essentially. Yet the devil can enter into the human mind in the sense that a person who has been seduced by him follows him in doing evil; this is an effect of the devil's malice, which someone has loved.[\[33\]](#)

1811 It was said above: "And during supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him...". But now he says, **Satan entered into him**. So there seems to be a difference between "put into" and "enter into." I say that this was not said to indicate a difference, but to note a growth in evil. The devil is said to put something evil into a person's heart when the person yields to him and assents to the evil, but with some fear as to whether he ought to do this or not. But he enters into a person's heart when one totally gives himself to following his suggestions and offers no resistance at all. Thus Satan first put the plan to deceive Christ into Judas, and then he entered into to possess him more completely and to lead him to accomplish the evil.

1812 One might ask why Luke (22:3) says that Satan entered into Judas even before he received the morsel. This seems to conflict with what John says here, that **after the morsel, Satan entered into him**. I answer that in the first cast Satan entered into him to plan the betrayal, but now he entered into him to accomplish and complete it.

1813 Was it wrong to give Judas this morsel, for after that Satan would enter into him? I say, no. Judas himself was evil, and used a good thing in an evil way. In a similar way, when someone unworthily receives the Eucharist, which is good and even the best of things, he receives it in an evil way and it turns out to be evil for him, because he "eats and drinks judgment upon himself" (1 Cor 11:29).

LECTURE 5

27b Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." 28 Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast"; or, that he should give something to the poor. 30 So, after receiving the morsel, he immediately went out; and it was night.[\[34\]](#)

1814 We now see the betrayal itself, after it was predicted. First, we see that Judas was allowed to do what was predicted; and secondly, how it was done (v 30). John does three things with the first: first, he gives the words of our Lord, allowing Judas to act; secondly, he mentions that the meaning of these words was not clear; and thirdly, he states how the Apostles understood them.

1815 Our Lord's words were: **What you are going to do, do quickly**. This is not a command or a counsel, since sin cannot be commanded or counseled, because "The command of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Ps 19:8). It is, rather, a permission. As we have seen, the devil had put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus, and he had already made arrangements with the chief priests. Yet he could not carry this out unless Christ himself gave permission, because "No one takes it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (10:18); "He was offered because it was his own will" [Is 53:7].

These words also reprimand the evil act of betrayal, and imply that while Christ was conferring benefits on him, Judas was planning his death: "But now I rebuke you, and lay the charge before you" (Ps 50:21). As Augustine says, they are also the words of one who eagerly desires to carry out the work of our redemption.

[\[35\]](#) Still, Christ was not commanding the crime, but predicting it. He was not so

much seeking the ruin of the one who betrayed him as he was hurrying to become the salvation of believers: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished!" (Lk 12:50).

1816 What our Lord said was not clear to the disciples. John says, **Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him.** We can understand from this that the words of Christ are so profound and so above human understanding that we can understand no more of them than what he reveals: "It is the glory of God to conceal the word" [Prv 25:2].

1817 A question arises here. Since our Lord had indicated to John who the traitor was, saying, **it is he to whom I shall give this bread when I have dipped it**, and then he gave it to Judas, the disciples seem to have been exceedingly dull not to have understood what he had just said. I answer that our Lord said this privately to John in order not to reveal the betrayer. The reason for this being that Peter loved Christ so fiercely that had he been certain that Judas was about to betray him, he would have quickly killed him.

1818 Since John himself was one of those at the dinner, why did he say, **no one at the table knew why he said this to him?** I answer that it is usual for one who is good and without evil to believe that others also are without evil. Now John was extremely good and would never consider becoming a betrayer. Thus he never suspected that another disciple would commit such a great crime.

1819 Now the Evangelist tells us what the disciples, ignorant of the real reason Jesus was speaking, thought he meant: some of the disciples **thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him...** Here we should note that the Lord God of Heaven, who feeds all living things, had a purse, not to own the things of earth, but to save the offerings of believers and so provide for his own necessities and the needs of others. This purse was in the care of Judas. As Augustine says, this teaches us that the Church can have and reserve money for its immediate needs. [\[36\]](#) It also teaches us that the Church's money should be used for only two things. First, for what pertains to divine worship; for we read, **Buy what we need for the feast**, that is, what we can use to worship God on the festival day: "Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house" (Mal 3:10). Secondly, its money can be used to help the poor, so he adds, or **that he should give something to the poor.**

1820 One might argue against this that Matthew (6:34) says, "do not be anxious about tomorrow." Augustine answered this and said that our Lord did not command the saints not to keep the money or other goods of one day for the

next.[\[37\]](#) Rather, he said, "Do not be anxious about tomorrow." This means that we should not be preaching or doing other religious services in order to provide a future for ourselves; nor should we omit acting in a virtuous way because of fear of the future. Thus it is clear that when our Lord said "Do not be anxious about tomorrow," he was forbidding two things. First, we are not to do good to secure our future; secondly, we are not to omit doing good because we fear a future poverty.

Chrysostom explains this clearly when he says: "Do not be anxious about tomorrow, that is, do not anticipate today the cares of the next day; the troubles of today are enough."[\[38\]](#)

1821 Some might also wonder why our Lord had a purse, since he told his disciples, "Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals" (Lk 10:4). According to Chrysostom, our Lord possessed a purse to provide for those in need and to teach us that no matter how poor and crucified to the world we may be, we should be concerned for the poor, according to "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor" (Ps 112:9).[\[39\]](#) Or, we could say that when he told them to take nothing on their way, he was referring to individual preachers and Apostles, who should carry nothing when they went to preach. But it did not refer to the entire group which would need something for themselves and for the poor.

1822 Next (v 30), John shows that what was predicted came about. First, he mentions the action which was done; secondly, the time when it was done.

1823 What was done was done quickly, because **after receiving the morsel, he immediately went out**. Note that, as Origen says, the Evangelist does not say that Judas ate the morsel, but that he received it.[\[40\]](#) This can be understood in two ways. First, it could be that Judas was so troubled about obeying the Teacher that when he received the morsel, he did not eat it, but perhaps left it on the table and without delay went out to complete his betrayal. The reason for this could be that the devil did not allow Judas to eat the bread. For the devil, who had already entered into the heart of Judas, feared that if Judas ate the bread, the devil would have to leave, since he could not be in the same place as Jesus: "What accord has Christ with Belial?" (2 Cor 6:15); "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons" (1 Cor 10:21).

Taken the other way, we could think that Judas ate the bread he received. Then the meaning is, **after receiving the morsel**, not only in his hand, but even eating it, **he immediately went out**. He thus made use of a good thing in a bad way. This is exactly what someone does who unworthily eats the bread of the Lord, or drinks from his chalice: he eats and drinks to his own damage and

adds to his sin. So the bread Jesus gave to Judas became a source of harm: for after the bread entered into him so did Satan.

1824 The time is described as one of darkness: **and it was night**. He mentions this for two reasons. First, to emphasize the malice of Judas. It had grown in his heart to such a degree that even the inconvenience of the hour did not cause him to wait till the morning: "The murderer rises in the dark...and in the night he is as a thief" (Job 24:14).

In the second place, he wants to show his state of mind. **It was night**, because the mind of Judas the traitor was dark, without divine light. "If any one walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if any one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him" (11:9-10).

LECTURE 6

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified and in him God is glorified; 32 if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and [will] glorify him at once.

1825 After Judas left to bring about our Lord's death, Jesus mentions that he himself will be leaving for glory. First, to console them, he mentions the glory to which he is going; secondly, he foretells his leaving (v 33).

1826 The glory to which he is going is the glorification and exaltation of Christ insofar as he is the Son of man. **When he had gone out**, that is Judas, **Jesus said**, to his disciples, **Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified**. The [Latin] word used was actually "clarified" and not "glorified." But both words mean the same thing. To be clarified, (to be made bright or splendid, to be displayed and made known) is the same as to be glorified, for glory is a kind of splendor. According to Ambrose, someone has glory when he is known with clarity and praised.[\[41\]](#) And so exegetes translate the Greek word "clarify" as "glorify," and vice versa.

We can understand this statement in four ways, by referring it to the four kinds of glory which Christ had: the glory of the cross; the glory of his judicial power; the glory of his resurrection; and the glory of being known by the faith of the people. Scripture attributes this fourfold glory to Christ.

1827 First, then, Christ was glorified by being lifted up on the cross. Even Paul said that his own glory was in the cross: "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal 6:14). This is the glory Chrysostom has in mind in his explanation of the text. [\[42\]](#) In this explanation our Lord mentions four things about the glory of the cross: the glory itself; the fruit of this glory; the author of the glory; and the time of the glory.

As to the first [the very glory of the cross] he says, **Now is the Son of man glorified**. Note that when something is beginning, it seems in a way to already exist. Now when Judas went out to bring back the soldiers, this seems to be the beginning of Christ's passion, the passion by which he was to be glorified. This is why he says, **now is the Son of man glorified**, that is, the passion by which he will be glorified is now beginning. Indeed, Christ was glorified by the passion of the cross because by it he conquered the enemies of death and the devil: "that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death" (Heb 2:14). Again, he acquired glory because by his cross he joined heaven and earth: "to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20). Further, he was glorified by his cross because by it he acquired all kingship. One version of Psalm 95 (v 9) says: "Say to the nations that the Lord has reigned from his cross." Again, Christ was glorified by the cross because he accomplished many miracles on it: the curtain of the temple was split, an earthquake occurred, rocks were split and the sun was darkened, and many saints arose, as Matthew (27:51) states. So with his passion drawing near, these are the reasons why our Lord said, **now is the Son of man glorified**. It is like saying: now my passion is beginning, the passion which is my glory.

The fruit of this glory is that God is glorified by it. So he says, **and in him God is glorified**, that is, in the glorified Son of man. For the glory of the passion leads to the glory of God. If God was glorified by the death of Peter - "This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God" (21:19) - he was much more glorified by the death of Christ.

The author of this glory is not an angel or a human being, but God himself. He says, **if God is glorified in him**, that is, if his glory is so great that God is glorified by it, he does not need to be glorified by another. But **God will also glorify him in himself**, that is, through himself: "Father, glorify me" [\[43\]](#) (17:5).

The time for this glory is fast approaching, because God **will glorify him at once**, that is, he will give him the glory of the cross. "For the cross, although it is foolish to the Gentiles and to those who are lost, yet to us who believe, it is the very great wisdom of God and the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18).

1828 The second glory of Christ is the glory of his judicial power: "And then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (Mk 13:26). This is the glory about which Augustine speaks, as the gloss says.^[44] In reference to this, he does four things here: first, he mentions the glory of the judicial power of Christ; secondly, he shows the merit from which he acquired it; thirdly, he expounds on this; fourthly, he shows the source of Christ's glory. As to the first, he says, **Now is the Son of man glorified**. We should note that in Sacred Scripture, one thing is not explicitly said to signify another, and the word for the signifying thing is also used for the thing signified. For example, we do not read that "The rock signified Christ"; rather, it says, "And the Rock was Christ" (1 Cor 10:4). In the departure of Judas away from the apostles we have a kind of image of the future judgment, when the wicked will be separated from the good, and Christ will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left (Mt 25:33). Since this departure of Judas signified the future judgment, right after this our Lord began to speak of the glory of his judicial power, saying, **Now is the Son of man glorified**; that is, this departure or separation represents the glory which the Son of man will have in the judgment, where none of the good will perish and none of the evil will be with them. He does not say: "Now is the glorification of the Son of man signified," but rather, **Now is the Son of man glorified**, in keeping with the above-mentioned custom of Scripture.

Now the merit of this glorification is that God would be glorified in him. For God is glorified by those who seek to do his will, and not their own. Christ was like this: "For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (6:38). And this is why **in him God is glorified**. He amplifies on this when he says, **if God is glorified in him**, that is, if, by doing the will of God, he glorifies God, then rightly **God will also glorify him in himself**, so that the human nature assumed by the eternal Word will be given an eternal glory. Thus, **in himself**, that is, in his own glory: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9). Therefore the glorification by which God is glorified in Christ is the merit in virtue of which Christ as man is glorified **in himself**, that is, in the glory of God. This will occur when his human nature, its weakness having been laid down by the death of the cross, receives the glory of immortality at the resurrection. So the resurrection itself was the source from which this glory began. Accordingly he says, **and will glorify him at once**, at the resurrection, which will quickly come: "I will arise in the morning early" [Ps 108:2]: and also, "You will not let your Holy One see corruption" [Ps 16:10].

1829 The third glory of Christ is the glory of his resurrection, about which we read, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in

newness of life" (Rom 6:4). It is in terms of this glory that Hilary explains this passage, and Augustine also in part.[\[45\]](#)

From this aspect, Christ first foretells this glory of his, saying, **Now is the Son of man glorified**. Here he is speaking of the future as if it has already happened, because what we think will quickly happen we regard as good as done. Now the glory of the resurrection was very near, and so he says, **Now is the Son of man glorified**, as if his body, by its union with the divine nature, had in a way acquired the glory of the divinity.

Secondly, he mentions the cause of this glory quite subtly. As he said, in the resurrection the humanity of Christ was glorified because of its union with the divine nature; and there was one person, that of the Word. For we read: "You will not leave my soul in Sheol; you will not let your holy one," who is the holiest of all, "see corruption" [Ps 16:10]. Such glory is also due to this human being, Christ, in so far as he is God. We too will have the glory of the resurrection to the extent that we share in the divinity: "He who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Rom 8:11). So he says that **the Son of man**, that is, Christ considered in his human nature, **is glorified**, by his resurrection. And who will glorify him? He says, **God will also glorify him in himself**, so that this human being, Christ, who reigns in the glory which is from the glory of God, may himself pass into the glory of God, that is, might entirely abide in God, as though deified by the way his human nature is possessed. It is like saying: A lamp is bright because a fire is burning brightly within it. That which sends the rays of brightness into the human nature of Christ is God; and thus the human nature of Christ is glorified by the glory of his divinity, and the human nature of Christ is brought into the glory of his divinity, not by having its nature changed, but by a sharing of glory in so far as this human being, Christ, is adored as God: "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil 2:9). So he says, **if God is glorified in him**, that is, if it is true that the glory of his divinity overflows to the glory of his humanity, subsequently **God will also glorify him in himself**, give him a share of his own glory by assuming him into that glory: "Every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of the Father" [Phil 2:11].

Thus, Christ has a twofold glory. One is in his human nature, but is derived from his divinity. The other is the glory of his divinity, into which his human nature is in a way taken up. But each glory is different. The first-mentioned glory had a beginning in time. For this reason he speaks of it as past, saying, **and in him God is**, or has been, **glorified**, on the day of the resurrection. The other glory is eternal, because from eternity the Word of God is God. And the human nature of Christ, assumed into this glory, will be glorified forever. And so he speaks of this

as in the future: **and will glorify him at once**, that is, he will always establish him in that glory forever.

1830 The fourth glory of Christ is the glory of being known by the faith of the people. Origen has this kind of glory in mind in his exposition. [46] According to him, glory means one thing in ordinary speech, and another thing in Scripture. In ordinary speech, glory is the praise given by a number of people, or the clear knowledge of someone accompanied by praise, as Ambrose says. [47] While in Scripture, glory indicates that a divine sign or mark is upon one. We read in Exodus [40:34] that "The glory of the Lord appeared over the tabernacle," that is, a divine sign rested over it. The same happened to the face of Moses, when it was glorified. Just as glory, in the physical sense, indicates that a divine sign rests upon one, so, in the spiritual sense, that intellect is said to be glorified when it is so deified and so transcends all material things that it is raised to a knowledge of God. It is by this that we are made sharers of glory: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:18). Therefore, if anyone who knows God is glorified and made a sharer of glory, it is clear that Christ, who knows God most perfectly, since he is the brightness of the entire divine glory (Heb 1:30), and able to receive the splendor of the entire divine glory, if, I say, this is so, then Christ is most perfectly glorified. And all who know God owe this to Christ.

But men did not yet realize that Christ was so glorified by this most perfect knowledge and participation in the divinity. And so, although he was glorified in himself, he was not yet glorified in the knowledge of men. He began to have his glory at his passion and resurrection, when men began to recognize his power and divinity. Our Lord, speaking here of this glory, says, **Now is the Son of man glorified**, that is, now, in his human nature, he is receiving glory in the knowledge of men because of his approaching passion. **And in him God**, the Father, **is glorified**. For the Son not only reveals himself, but the Father as well: "[Father] I have manifested thy name" (17:6). Consequently, not only is the Son glorified, but the Father also: "No one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Mt 11:27). He says, **in him**, because one who sees the Son also sees the Father (14:9).

It is characteristic of one who is greater to return what is greater. And thus he adds, **if God is glorified in him**, that is, if the glory of God the Father somehow increases because of the glory of the Son of man, because the Father becomes better known, **God will also glorify him in himself**, that is, make it known that Christ Jesus is in his glory. This will not be delayed for he **will glorify him at once**.

LECTURE 7

33 "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

1831 Above, our Lord spoke of the glory he would acquire by his leaving. Here, he is telling them that he will leave them. First, he foretells his leaving; secondly, he shows that his disciples were not yet fit to follow him (v 33b); thirdly, he shows how they can become fit, **A new commandment I give to you.**

1832 He briefly foretells his coming departure, saying, **Little children, yet a little while I am with you.** He uses the words of a parent to his children the more to inflame their love; for it is when friends are about to leave each other that they especially glow with love: "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" (13:1). He says, **little children**, to show their imperfection, for they were not yet perfectly children, because they did not yet perfectly love. They were not yet perfect in charity: "My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be informed in you" (Gal 4:19). Still, they had grown somewhat in perfection, because from slaves they became little children, as he calls them here, and brethren, "Go to my brethren and say to them" (20:17).

1833 We should note that the expression, **yet a little while**, can be explained in three ways, according to the three ways Christ is present to his disciples. Christ was present to his disciples in body. But his body can be considered in two ways. First, we can view it as having the characteristics that belong to human nature, for Christ had a mortal body, just as others. So, **a little while**, is understood as the time between these words and his death. So the sense is: **yet a little while I am with you**, that is, a little time remains until I am taken and die, and then I will rise and be immortal, even in body: "Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him" (Rom 6:9). So Luke (24:44) says: "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you."

Secondly, he was with them in body, but a body that was already glorified. Then, **a little while**, indicates the time that intervened until his ascension: "A little

while, and you will see me no more; again a little while, and you will see me, because I go to the Father" [16:16]; "Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land" (Hag 2:6).

Thirdly, it can be explained as applying to the spiritual presence of Christ, his presence in his divinity and in the sacraments. Then, **a little while**, is taken to mean the time which would intervene until the end of the world. This is a little while in comparison with eternity: "Children it is the last hour" (1 Jn 2:18). Then the meaning is: **yet a little while I am with you**, that is, although I will leave you in body, I am still spiritually with you for **a little while** which remains before the end of the world: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20).

Yet this explanation is not appropriate to the presence of Christ in his divinity, for he will be with them not only to the end of the world, but for all eternity. For this reason Origen explains it another way. [\[48\]](#) He says that Christ is always with the perfect, who do not sin in a serious way. But he is not always present to the imperfect, because when they sin he withdraws from them. Now in a little while the disciples would leave Christ, fall away and abandon him: "You will all fall away because of me this night" (Mt 26:31). And so Christ spiritually withdrew from them. In reference to this he says, **yet a little while I am with you**, that is, in a little while you will leave and abandon me, and then I will not be with you.

1834 Next, he mentions their inability to follow him. First, he notes their effort, **you will seek me**, whom you have spiritually abandoned by your flight and denials. **You will seek me**, I say, by your repentance, as Peter did, who wept bitterly: "Seek the Lord while he may be found" (Is 55:6); "In their distress they seek me" (Hos 5:15). Or, **you will seek me**, that is, you will want me to be present in body: "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and you will not see it" (Lk 17:22).

Secondly, he shows their weakness, saying, **as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, Where I am going you cannot come**. Yet this was said differently to the two. Some of the Jews would never be converted. It was to these that it was said absolutely that they could not go where Christ was going. But now that Judas has gone, none of the remaining disciples would be separated from Christ. And to them he did not say absolutely, **you cannot come**, but added, **now I say to you**. It is like saying: **I said to the Jews**, that is, to the obstinate among them, that they could never come. But **I say to you**, that for **now**, you cannot follow me, because you are not perfect enough in charity to want to die for me. For I will leave you by dying.

Again, I am going to the glory of my Father, to which no one can come unless he

is perfect in charity. Also, I will be glorified now, for as we read, "Now is the Son of man glorified." But it is not yet the time for your bodies to be glorified; so, **where I am going you cannot come.**

1835 Then, he teaches them how they can become fit to follow him: **a new commandment I give to you.** First, he mentions the special character of this commandment; secondly, he shows why they should live up to it (v 35). As to the first he does three things: first, he mentions a feature of this commandment, secondly, its meaning; and thirdly, its standard.

1836 The feature of this commandment he emphasizes is its newness. Thus he says, **a new commandment.** But did not the Old Testament or Law have a commandment about the love of one's neighbor? It did, because when Christ was asked by a lawyer which was the greatest commandment, he replied: "You shall love the Lord your God," and continued, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:37). This is found in Leviticus: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18).

Nevertheless, there are three special reasons why this commandment is said to be new. First, because of the newness, the renewal, it produces: "You have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col 3:9). This newness is from charity, the charity to which Christ urges us. Secondly, this commandment is said to be new because of the cause which produces this renewal; and this is a new spirit. There are two spirits: the old and the new. The old spirit is the spirit of slavery; the new is the spirit of love. The first produces slaves; the second, children by adoption: "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship" (Rom 8:15); "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you" (Ez 36:26). The spirit sets us on fire with love because "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5). Thirdly, it is a new commandment because of the effect it established, that is, a New Covenant. The difference between the New and the Old Covenant is that between love and fear: as we read in Jeremiah (31:31): "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel." Under the Old Covenant, this commandment was observed through fear; under the New Covenant it is observed through love. So this commandment was in the Old Law, not as characteristic of it, but as a preparation for the New Law.

1837 The import of the commandment is mutual love; thus he says: **that you love one another.** It is of the very nature of friendship that is not imperceptible; otherwise, it would not be friendship, but merely good-will. For a true and firm friendship the friends need a mutual love for each other; for this duplication makes it true and firm. Our Lord, wanting there to be perfect friendship among

his faithful and disciples, gave them this command of mutual love: "Whoever fears the Lord directs his friendship aright" (Sir 6:17).

1838 The standard for this mutual love is given when he says, **as I have loved you**. Now Christ loved us three ways: gratuitously, effectively and rightly.

He loved us gratuitously because he began to love us and did not wait for us to begin to love him: "Not that we loved God, but because he first loved us" [1 Jn 4:10]. In the same way we should first love our neighbors and not wait to be loved by them or for them to do us a favor.

Christ loved us effectively, which is obvious from what he did; for love is proven to exist from what one does. The greatest thing a person can do for a friend is to give himself for that friend. This is what Christ did: "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us" (Eph 5:2). So we read: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (15:13). We also should be led by this example and love one another effectively and fruitfully: "Let us not love in word or in speech but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn 3:18).

Christ also loved us rightly. Since all friendship is based on some kind of sharing (for similarity is a cause of love), that friendship is right which is based on a similarity or a sharing in some good. Now Christ loved us as similar to himself by the grace of adoption, loving us in the light of this similarity in order to draw us to God. "I have loved you with an everlasting love; and so taking pity on you, I have drawn you" [Jer 31:3]. We also, in the one we love, should love what pertains to God and not so much the pleasure or benefits the loved one gives to us. In this kind of love for our neighbor, even the love of God is included.

1839 Then when he says, **By this all men will know that you are my disciples**, he gives the reason for following this command. Here we should note that one who is in the army of a king should wear this emblem. The emblem of Christ is the emblem of charity. So anyone who wants to be in the army of Christ should be stamped with the emblem of charity. This is what he is saying here: **By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another**. I mean a holy love: "I am the mother of beautiful love and of fear and of knowledge and of holy hope" [Sir 24:24].

Although the apostles received many gifts from Christ, such as life, intelligence and good health, as well as spiritual goods, such as the ability to perform miracles - "I will give you a mouth and wisdom" (Lk 21:15) - none of these are the emblem of a disciple of Christ, since they can be possessed both by the good and the bad. Rather, the special sign of a disciple of Christ is charity and mutual

love; "He has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit" (2 Cor 1:22).

LECTURE 8

36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterward." 37 Peter said to him, "Lord, why cannot I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." 38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow, till you have denied me three times."

1840 Above, John mentioned the defection of one of the disciples, Judas the traitor; here he tells of the failure of another, Peter, who denied Christ. First we see the occasion of Christ's prediction; secondly, the prediction of Peter's denial. He does two things about the first: he mentions Peter's desire; secondly, his confidence, **Why cannot I follow you now?** He does two things about the second: first: he shows Peter expressing his desire; secondly, he shows that its fulfillment will be delayed, **you cannot follow me now.**

1841 Peter's desire is shown by the quick way he questioned Christ: **Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going?** Peter had heard our Lord say that he would be with them just for a little while, and he became anxious about Christ's leaving them. So he asks, **Where are you going?** Chrysostom says about this: "Peter's love was indeed great, and more furious than a fire that nothing could stop." [49] This is why even after Christ had said, "Where I am going you cannot follow," Peter still wanted to follow him. So he asked where he was going, just like we read in the Song of Songs: "Whither has your beloved gone, O fairest among women? Whither has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you?" (6:1).

1842 Yet he cannot now have what he desires, since for the present he is prevented from following Christ. **Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterward.** This is like saying: You are still imperfect, and thus not able to follow me now; but later, when you are perfect, you will follow me. This is similar to what we will read further on: "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young," that is, imperfect, "you girded yourself...but when you are old," and have climbed the mountain of perfection, "you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you" (21:18).

1843 When John says, **Peter said to him**, he indicates Peter's confidence. Peter had understood what our Lord had just said as expressing some doubt about the

perfection of Peter's love. Love is perfect when one exposes oneself to death for a friend: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (15:13). And so because Peter was ready to die for Christ, he declared that he was perfect in love when he said, **I will lay down my life for you**, that is, I am ready to die for you. He really meant this, and was not pretending. Still, we do not know the strength of our own love until it meets some obstacle to be overcome: "I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted" (1 Cor 4:4).

1844 Next, John shows Jesus predicting the denial of Peter. First, Jesus checks Peter's presumption; secondly, he predicts his denial.

1845 As to the first we should note that after Christ said **you cannot follow me now**, Peter was confident of his own strength and said that he could follow Christ and die for him. Our Lord checked him by saying, **Will you lay down your life for me?** It is like saying: Think what you are saying. I know you better than you know yourself; you do not know how strong your own love is. So do not assume that you can do everything. "So do not become proud, but stand in awe" (Rom 11:20). A similar thought is found in Matthew (26:41): "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Our Lord allowed Peter to be tempted and to fall so that when he became head of the Church he would have an unpretentious opinion of himself and have compassion for his subjects when they sinned: "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb 4:15). In Peter, some temptations grew into sins. But Christ was tempted as we are, not because he committed sin, but because the temptations were penal in character.

1846 Christ predicts Peter's denial when he says, **Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow, till you have denied me three times**. This causes a problem as it seems to be false: for in [some versions of] Mark (14:68) we read that the cock crowed immediately after his first denial. Augustine answers this in two ways.[\[50\]](#) In the first way he says that our Lord was expressing Peter's state of mind rather than his actions: for such fear had overcome Peter's soul that he was ready, by the time the cock crowed, to deny our Lord not only once but three times. So the meaning is: you will be ready to deny me three times before the cock crows. He explains it another way by saying the prediction refers to the very beginning of Peter's denial. Something is said to happen before something else even if it only begins to happen. Now our Lord predicted three denials; they began before the first cock-crow, although the entire series was not completed before it. Here the meaning is: your triple denial will begin before the cock crows.

1847 There is also a question about where these words were spoken. Matthew and Mark say that our Lord said this to Peter after they had left the upper room; but Luke and John say he said this in the upper room. It is after the farewell discourses that John has Jesus saying, "Rise, let us go hence" (below 14:31). In answer to this we should say that it is true that our Lord said this in the upper room. Matthew and Mark did not follow the order of history, but of memory.

One could also say, with Augustine, that our Lord said this three times.^[51] A close inspection of our Lord's words which led to his predicting the denial of Peter shows that three different things were said. In Matthew we read that our Lord said: "You will all fall away because of me this night" (Mt 26:31); and Mark says the same (Mk 14:27). Peter answered: "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away" (Mt 26:33). Then Jesus said: "This very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times" (Mt 26:34). In Luke, however, we read that Jesus said: "Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (Lk 22:31). Peter then said, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death" (Lk 22:33). Our Lord answered this: "I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you three times deny that you know me" (Lk 22:34). But here, in John, when Peter asked our Lord where he was going, our Lord replied: "the cock will not crow, till you have denied me three times." We can conclude from this that our Lord predicted Peter's denial several times.

^[1] St. Thomas refers to Jn 13:1 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 46, a. 9, s. c. and ad 1; q. 74, a. 4, obj. 1.

^[2] Summa-

^[3] *Tract. in Io.*, 55, ch. 2, col 1785; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:1-5.

^[4] Summa-will can be moved by God, by internal suggestion and external suggestion

^[5] St. Thomas refers to Jn 13:4 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 74, a. 4, obj. 1; Jn 13:5: *ST* III, q. 46, a. 9, ad 1; Jn 13:10: *ST* III, q. 72, a. 6, ad 2; q. 83, a. 5, ad 1.

^[6] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 2; PG 14, col. 405; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:1-5.

[7] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 4; PG 14, col. 411; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:6-11.

[8] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 5; PG 14, col. 412; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:6-11.

[9] *In Ioannem hom.*, 70, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 383; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:6-11.

[10] *Tract. in Io.*, 56, ch. 1, col. 1788; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:6-11.

[11] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 5; PG 14, col. 412; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:6-11.

[12] Clement, *Itinerary*.

[13] *Epistola 64*, ch. 5, no. 10; PL 33, col. 178; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:6-11.

[14] *Tract. in Io.*, 56, ch. 3, col. 1788; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:6-11.

[15] *In Ioannem hom.*, 70, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 384; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:6-11.

[16] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 6; PG 14, col. 416; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:6-11.

[17] St. Thomas refers to Jn 13:13 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 132, a. 1, ad 1; Jn 13:15: *ST* III, q. 37 a. 1, obj. 2; Jn 13:17: *ST* I-II, q. 4, a. 6, s. c.; q. 5, a. 7, s. c.; q. 7, a. 2, ad 3; Jn 13:18: *ST* III, q. 36, a. 3, s. c.

[18] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 57 PG 14, col. 430; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:12-20.

[19] Ambrose, *Expos sec. Lucam*, X, ch .3 ; PL 15, col. 1804-5.

[20] *Tract. in Io.*, 58, ch. 3, col. 1793; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:12-20.

[21] *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:12-20.

[22] *Tract. in Io.*, 58, ch. 4, col. 1794; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:12-20.

[23] Augustine, *De Agone Christiano*, ch. XI, 12; PL 40, col. 297.

[24] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 8; PG 14, col. 424; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:12-20.

[25] Augustine, *Epistola 78*, ch. 8; PL 33, col. 272.

[26] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 10; PG 14, col. 431 cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:12-20.

[27] *Tract. in Io.*, 59. ch. 2, col. 1796; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:12-20.

[28] St. Thomas refers to Jn 13:26, 27 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 81, a. 2, obj. 3.

[29] Comm. in Matt., I; PL 26, col. 38C.

[30] *Tract. in Io.*, 60, ch. 1, col. 1797; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:21-30.

[31] *In Ioannem hom.*, 72, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 389, 390; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:21-30.

[32] *Tract. in Io.*, 62, ch. 3, col. 1802; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:21-30.

[33] Summa-God is in the soul essentially, but the devil cannot be.

[34] St. Thomas refers to Jn 13:29 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 188, a. 7.

[35] *Tract. in Io.*, 62, ch. 4, col. 1802-3; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:21-30.

[36] Ibid., 5, col. 1803; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:21-30.

[37] Ibid.; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:21-30

[38] *In Ioannem hom.*, 72, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 392.

[39] *In Ioannem hom.*, 72, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 391, 392; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:21-30.

[40] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 16; PG 14, col. 443; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:21-30.

[41] Ambrose, *Hexaemeron*, III, ch. 7, no. 30; PL col. 168B, see also Sermo III De Caritate, 11; PL 18, col. 142A.

[42] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 72, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 392; cf. *Catena Aurea*,

13:31-32.

[43] Summa-1827-1830, the glory of Christ.

[44] Gloss.

[45] Augustine, *Tract. in Io.*, 63, ch. 3, col. 1805; Hilary, *De Trin.*, 11, ch. 42; PL 10; Cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:31-32.

[46] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 17, 18; PG 14, col. 445-451; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:31-32.

[47] Ambrose, *Hexaemeron*, III, ch. 7, no. 30; PL col. 168B.

[48] Origen, *In Ioan.*, XXXII, ch. 19; PG 14, col. 453 ; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:33-35.

[49] *In Ioannem hom.*, 63, ch. 3; PG 59, col. 31; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:36-38.

[50] *Tract. in Io.*, 66, ch. 2, col. 1880-1; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 7:9-13.

[51] *De consensus evangelistarum*, 3, ch. 11; PL 34; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 13:36-38.

14

LECTURE I

1 "Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? [If it were not so I would have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you.] 3 And when [if] I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."[\[1\]](#)

1848 Above (ch 13), our Lord taught his disciples by example, here he consoles them by his words. First, they are encouraged in many ways by what he says; secondly, what he has said is explained (ch 16). Concerning the first, we should note that there were two things which could trouble the disciples. One was near, that Christ would soon be leaving them; the second was in the future, and was the hardships they would undergo. First, Christ consoles them over his leaving; secondly, over their future hardships (ch 15). He does two things concerning the first: first, he consoles them from their own point of view, as those who will be left; secondly, from his own point of view, as the one leaving (v 27). He does three things about the first: first, he says that he is going to the Father; secondly, he promises them the gift of the Holy Spirit (v 15); thirdly, he promises that he will also be with them (v 18). He does two things about the first: first, he mentions that he is going to the Father; secondly, he brings in the way he would go (v 4). He does three things about the first: first, he expels their anxieties; secondly, he refers to his power (v 1b); thirdly, he adds a promise (v 2a).

1849 In regard to the first, note that the disciples could have been disturbed by what our Lord said about the betrayal of Judas, Peter's denial, and his own going away. Indeed, each of these did trouble them and make them sad: "Thou hast made the land to quake," that is, the hearts of the disciples, "thou hast rent it open" (Ps 60:2). Therefore our Lord, wishing to soothe their sorrow, said: **Let not your hearts be troubled.**

1850 In Acts (1:1) we read: "Jesus began to do and teach." Yet above (13:21) it says that Jesus "was troubled in spirit." How can he tell his disciples not to be

troubled when he himself was troubled? I answer that he did not teach the opposite of what he did. It was stated above that he was troubled *in* spirit, not that his spirit was troubled. Here he is not forbidding them to be troubled in spirit, but he is forbidding that their hearts, that is, their spirits, be troubled. For there is a troubled state which arises from reason; this is to be praised and is not forbidden: "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation" (2 Cor 7:10). Yet there is a different grief or troubled state of the reason itself; this is not laudable because it draws the reason from its proper course; this is forbidden: "The just person will not be troubled for the Lord puts his hand under him" [Ps 37:24]. For one who always possesses God cannot be disturbed.

1851 Accordingly, our Lord refers to the power of his divinity, saying, **you believe in God, believe also in me**. Here he presupposes one thing and commands another. He presupposes their faith in God, saying, **you believe in God**: he had already taught them about this: "For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists" (Heb 11:6). What he commands is that they believe in him, saying, **believe also in me**. For if you believe in God, and since I am God, then you should believe in me. And this follows whether the word God stands for the divine essence, since the Son is God, or whether it stands for the person of the Father. For no one can believe in the Father unless he believes in the Son: "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father" (5:23).

The fact that he says, **believe also in me**, indicates that he is truly God; for although we are allowed to believe a human being (*homini*) or a creature, we ought to believe *in* God alone (*in Deum*). Therefore, we must believe in Christ as we believe in God. "We are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 Jn 5:20); "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (6:29). [See the Commentary on 6:28, no. 901.]

1852 Then when he says, **in my Father's house are many rooms**, he adds the promise that it is through Christ that they will approach and be brought to the Father. Now a promise to others that they will gain entrance to some place involves two things: first, the place must be prepared; next, they have to be brought there. Our Lord makes these two promises here: one concerns the preparation of the place, and the other is about their being brought there. Yet the first is not necessary, for the place has already been prepared; but the second is necessary. Thus he does two things: he says the first promise is not necessary; and then he makes his second promise (v 3). In regard to the first he does two things: first, he indicates that it is not necessary to prepare the place; secondly he shows that he could prepare it if it were necessary (v 2b).

1853 He says, **in my Father's house are many rooms**. The house of any one is where he dwells, and so the house of God is where God dwells. Now God

dwells in his saints: "Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us" (Jer 14:9). In some of them he dwells by faith: "I will live in them and move among them" (2 Cor 6:16); while in others he dwells by perfect happiness: "that God may be everything to every one" (1 Cor 15:28). Accordingly, God has two houses. One is the Church militant, that is, the society of those who believe: "that you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim 3:15). God dwells in this house by faith. "The dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them" (Rev 21:3). The other is the Church triumphant, that is, the society of the saints in the glory of the Father: "We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, thy holy temple" (Ps 65:4).

Yet the house of the Father is not only where he dwells, but he himself is the house, for he exists in himself. It is into this house that he gathers us. We see from 2 Corinthians (5:1) that God himself is the house: "We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This house is the house of glory, which is God himself: "A glorious throne set on high from the beginning is the place of our sanctification" [Jer 17:12]. We remain in this place, in God, with our will and affections by the joys of love: "He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jn 4:16). And we remain here with our minds by our knowledge of the truth: "Sanctify them in the truth" (17:17).

In this house, then, that is, in glory, which is God, are many rooms, that is, various participations in happiness. This is because one who knows more will have a greater place. Therefore, the different rooms are the various participations in the knowledge and enjoyment of God.

1854 The question arises here whether one person can be happier than another. It seems not. For happiness is the end; and what is perfect, complete, does not have degrees; therefore, there cannot be different degrees of happiness.

I answer that a thing can be perfect in two ways: absolutely and in a qualified sense. The absolute perfection of happiness is found only in God, for only he knows and loves himself to the extent that he is knowable and lovable (since he knows and loves infinitely his own infinite truth and goodness). From this point of view, the supreme good itself, which is the object and cause of happiness, can not be greater or less. This is because there is only one supreme good, which is God.

But in a qualified sense, that is, considering certain conditions of time, of nature and of grace, one person can be happier than another depending on the possession of this good and the capacity of each. The greater the capacity a person has for this good, the more he shares in it, I mean he participates in it

more the better disposed and prepared he is to enjoy it. Now one is disposed for this good in two ways. Happiness consists in two things. The first is the vision of God; and one is disposed for this by purity. And so the more one has a heart which is raised above earthly matters, the more he will see God, and the more perfectly. Secondly, happiness consists in the delight of enjoying [God], and one is disposed for this by love. Thus, one who has a more burning love for God will find more delight in the enjoyment of God. We read about the first in Matthew (5:8): "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see." [2]

1855 Another question arises from what Matthew (20:10) says, that every laborer received one denarius. This denarius is nothing but a room in the house of the Father. Therefore, there are not many rooms. I answer that the reward of eternal life is both one and many. It is many based on the various capacities of those who share in it, and from this point of view there are different rooms in the Father's house.

Yet this reward is one, and this for three reasons. First, because there is one object; for it is the same object which all the blessed see and enjoy. Thus, there is one denarius. But it is seen and loved in various degrees: "Then you will delight yourself in the Almighty" (Job 22:26); "In that day the Lord of hosts will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people" (Is 28:5). It is like a spring of water, available to all to take as much as they wish. Then, one who has a larger cup will receive more, and one who has a smaller cup will receive less. Therefore, there is one fountain, considering it in itself, but every one does not receive the same portion. This is the opinion of Gregory, in his *Morals* XXII. [3] Secondly, this reward is one, according to Augustine, because it is an eternal portion: each one will have an eternal happiness, for the just will go into eternal life; but there are differences in capacity. [4] Thirdly, this reward is one because of charity, which unites everything, and makes the joy of each the joy of the rest, and conversely: "Rejoice with those who rejoice" (Rom 12:15).

1856 The Pelagians erred by misunderstanding this passage. They said that children who die without baptism will be saved in the house of God, but not in the kingdom of God, for we read "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (3:5). Augustine answers this by saying that our Lord said that these rooms are in God's house. [5] Now in a kingdom there are nothing but houses: for a kingdom is made up of cities, and cities of neighborhoods, and neighborhoods of houses. Thus, if rooms are in a house, it is evident that they are in the kingdom.

1857 Then when he says, **if it were not so I would have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you**, he shows he has the ability to prepare a

place for them if necessary. For one could say: it is true that in his Father's house many rooms have been prepared, but if not, he could not prepare them. Our Lord excludes this by saying, **if it were not so**, that is, if the rooms were not prepared, **I would have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you.**

Here we should consider what is meant by the phrase, **to prepare a place for you**. A place is prepared in two ways. In one way, when something is done to the place itself, as when it is cleaned or enlarged: "Enlarge the place of your tent" (Is 54:2). In another way, when someone is given the means to enter it; and so the Psalmist prays: "Be thou to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me" (Ps 71:3), which is like saying: May I always have the means to enter here. With this in mind, the text can be understood in two ways. If this place had some defect or was something created, it would be subject to my power to perfect it, for every creature is subject to the power of the Word: "All things were made through him" (1:3). So, if it had some defect, **I would have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you**. But this place, in itself, is prepared; for this place is God himself, as was said, in whom is the abundance of all perfections. But perhaps you do not have the means to enter it; and so, **if it were not so**, that is, if it were not so that you had the means to enter here and were not predestined to this place, **I would have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you**, for it is in my power to predestine you to this place. For he, with the Father and the Holy Spirit has predestined them to eternal life: "He chose us in him" (Eph 1:4).

1858 Our Lord said above: "Where I am going you cannot follow me now" (13:36). And then here, to keep them from believing that they would be absolutely separated from him he adds, **and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself**. This is the second promise, that they will be brought into the kingdom.

This seems to conflict with his earlier statement, for he had said: **if it were not so**, [if places were not already prepared] **I would have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you**. This implies that he is not going to prepare a place for them. Yet here we read: **if I go and prepare a place for you**, which suggests that he is going to prepare a place for them.

One reply would be that these two sentences can be understood as connected together. Then the meaning would be this: "if it were not so," that is, if places were not prepared [that is, by predestination] and I had to go to prepare them, "I would have told you that I am going to prepare [such] a place for you." And then again, "if it were not so," [in the sense of the execution of predestination, see below] "I go and prepare a place for you."

According to Augustine, however, these are distinct sentences and are not read together. [6] Our Lord prepared places both by eternal predestination, and by carrying out this predestination. He also prepared these places by his departure. Thus, what our Lord said first, that rooms were prepared, is understood as referring to the first preparation from all eternity. Then when he says, **if I go and prepare a place for you**, this is understood as referring to the carrying out of the eternal predestination.

1859 Our Lord prepared a place for us by his departure in five ways. First he made room for faith: for since faith concerns things not seen, when the disciples saw Christ in person, they did not need faith for this. Thus he left them, so that the one they had possessed by his bodily presence and saw with their bodily eyes, they could still possess in his spiritual presence and see with the eyes of their mind. This is to possess him by faith. Secondly, his leaving prepared a place by showing them the way to go to that place: "He who opens the breach will go before them" (Mic 2:13). Thirdly, by his prayers for them: "He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him" (Heb 7:25); "He rides through the heavens to your help" (Deut 33:26). Fourthly, by attracting them to what is above: "Draw me after you" (Song 1:4); "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above" (Col 3:1). Fifthly, by sending them the Holy Spirit: "As yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (7:39).

1860 The glorification of Christ was completed by his ascension. And so as soon as he ascended, he sent the Holy Spirit to his disciples. He told them ahead of time that he would physically leave them, saying, **if I go and prepare a place for you**. And then he promised them a spiritual return, saying, **I will come again**. I will come at the end of the world: "Then Jesus ... will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:2). **And will take you**, glorified in soul and body, **to myself**: "We shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess 4:17).

1861 Will Christ wait until the end of the world before he takes the spirits of the apostles? It is the opinion of the Greeks that the saints will not go to paradise until the day of judgment. But if this were true, the desire of the Apostle (Phil 1:23) to be with Christ would be futile. Therefore, one should say that immediately after the house where we dwell here is overthrown, our souls are with Christ. And so the statement, **I will come again and will take you to myself**, can be understood as that spiritual coming with which Christ always visits the Church of the faithful and vivifies each of the faithful at death. Then the meaning is: **I will come again**, to the Church, spiritually and continuously, **and**

will take you to myself, that is, I will strengthen you in faith and love for me: "My beloved has gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices," that is, to the community of the saints, "to feed in the garden," that is, to delight in their virtues, "and to gather lilies," to draw pure souls to himself when he gives life to the saints at death [Song 6:1].[\[7\]](#)

1862 Then he mentions the fruit of this, saying, **that where I am you may be also**, that is, so that the members may be with their head; so the disciples may be with their Teacher: "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together" (Mt 24:28); "Where I am, there shall my servant be also" (12:26).

LECTURE 2

4 "Where I am going you know, and the way you know." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. 7 If you had known me, you would [without doubt] have known my Father also; henceforth you [shall] know him and have seen him." [\[8\]](#)

1863 Above our Lord consoled his disciples because he was leaving, promising them that they could come to the Father. Now he mentions the way by which they are to approach the Father. But one does not know a way unless he also knows his destination; and so he also considers the destination. First, he mentions the way and its destination as known to them; secondly, he explains this (v 5).

1864 In regard to the first, note that our Lord had said: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again." The disciples could have asked him where he was going, just like Peter did before: "Lord, where are you going?" (13:36). Our Lord knew this and so said to them, **Where I am going you know, and the way you know**. For I am going to the Father, whom you know, since I have manifested him to you: "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gave me" (17:9). And I myself am the way through which I go, and you know me: "We have beheld his glory" (1:14). He spoke truly, therefore, when he said, **where I am going you know, and the way you know**: because they knew the Father through Christ, and they knew Christ by living with him.

1865 Next (v 5), our Lord explains what he has just said: first, we see the occasion for this explanation; secondly, the explanation itself (v 6).

1866 The occasion for this explanation was the hesitation expressed in the question of Thomas. **Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?** Here Thomas denies the two things that our Lord affirmed. For our Lord said that they knew both the way and its destination; but Thomas denied that he knew the way and its destination. Yet both statements are true: for it is true that they knew, yet they did not know that they knew. For they knew many things about the Father and the Son which they had learned from Christ; yet they did not know that it was the Father to whom Christ was going, and that the Son was the way by which he was going. For it is difficult to go to the Father. It is not surprising that they did not know this because although they clearly knew that Christ was a human being, they only imperfectly recognized his divinity: "That path no bird of prey knows" (Job 28:7).

Thomas says, **how can we know the way?** Knowledge of the way depends on knowledge of the destination. And so because we do not know the destination • "He dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see" (1 Tim 6:16) • we can not discover the way: "How inscrutable his ways!" (Rom 11:33).

1867 Then when he says, **Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life**, the question is answered. Our Lord was to answer about two things: first, about the way and its destination; secondly, about their knowledge of both (v 7). He does two things about the first: first, he states what the way is; secondly, he gives its destination (v 6b).

1868 The way, as has been said, is Christ himself; so he says, **I am the way**. This is indeed true, for it is through him that we have access to the Father, as stated in Romans (5:2). This answer could also settle the uncertainty of the faltering disciple.

Because this way is not separated from its destination but united to it, he adds, **and the truth, and the life**. So Christ is at once both the way and the destination. He is the way by reason of his human nature, and the destination because of his divinity. Therefore, as human, he says, **I am the way**; as God, he adds, **and the truth, and the life**. These last two appropriately indicate the destination of the way. For the destination of this way is the end of human desire. Now human beings especially desire two things: first, a knowledge of the truth, and this is characteristic of them; secondly, that they continue to exist, and this is common to all things. In fact, Christ is the way to arrive at the knowledge of the truth, while still being the truth itself: "Teach me thy way O Lord, that I may walk in thy truth" (Ps 85:11). Christ is also the way to arrive at life, while still being life itself: "Thou couldst show me the path of life" (Ps 16:11). And so he

indicated the destination or end of this way as truth and life. These two were already applied to Christ: first, he is life: "In him was life" (1:4); then, he is truth, because "the life is the light of men" (1:45), and light is truth.

1869 Note that both truth and life belong properly and essentially (*per se*) to Christ. Truth belongs essentially to him because he is the Word. Now truth is the conformity of a thing to the intellect, and this results when the intellect conceives the thing as it is. Therefore, the truth of our intellect belongs to our word, which is its conception. Yet although our word is true, it is not truth itself, since it is not true of itself but because it is conformed to the thing conceived. And so the truth of the divine intellect belongs to the Word of God. But because the Word of God is true of itself (since it is not measured by things, but things are true in the measure that they are similar to the Word) the Word of God is truth itself. And because no one can know the truth unless he adheres to the truth, it is necessary that anyone who desires to know the truth adhere to this Word.

Life also belongs properly to Christ: for everything which has some activity from itself is said to be living, while non-living things do not have motion from themselves. Among the activities of life the chief are the intellectual activities. Thus, the intellect itself is said to be living, and its activities are a certain kind of life. Now in God the activity of understanding and the intellect itself are the same. Thus it is clear that the Son, who is the Word of the intellect of the Father, is his own life. [\[9\]](#)

This is the reason why Christ referred to himself as the way, united to its destination: because he is the destination, containing in himself whatever can be desired, that is, existing truth and life.

1870 If then, you ask which way to go, accept Christ, for he is the way: "This is the way, walk in it" (Is 30:21). And Augustine says: "Walk like this human being and you will come to God. It is better to limp along on the way than to walk briskly off the way." [\[10\]](#) For one who limps on the way, even though he makes just a little progress, is approaching his destination; but if one walks off the way, the faster he goes the further he gets from his destination.

If you ask where to go, cling to Christ, for he is the truth which we desire to reach: "My mouth will utter truth" (Prv 8:7). If you ask where to remain, remain in Christ because he is the life: "He who finds me finds life and shall have salvation from the Lord" [Prv 8:35]. Therefore, cling to Christ if you wish to be secure, for you cannot get off the road because he is the way. And so those who hold on to him are not walking off the road but on the right road: "I have taught you the way of wisdom" (Prv 4:11). But some are just the opposite: "They did

not find the way of truth to dwell in" [Ps 107:4].

Again, those who hold on to Christ cannot be deceived, because he is the truth and teaches all truth: "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (18:37). Further, they cannot be troubled, because he is the life and the giver of life: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (10:10).

Augustine says that when our Lord said **I am the way, and the truth, and the life**, he was saying in effect: How do you want to go? **I am the way**. Where do you want to go? **I am the truth**. Where do you want to remain? **I am the life**. [\[11\]](#) As Hilary says: he who is the way does not lead us off the right path; he who is the truth does not deceive us with falsehoods; and he who is the life does not abandon us to death. [\[12\]](#)

1871 Here is another interpretation. In human beings, holiness involves three things: action, contemplation, and one's intention. These are brought to perfection by Christ. Christ is the way for those in the active life; he is the truth for those who stand firm in the contemplative life. And he directs the intention of both those in the active and contemplative life to life, eternal life. For he teaches us to go and preach for the sake of the age to come. So, the Lord is our way by which we go to him, and through him to the Father.

1872 But when he, who is the way, goes to the Father, is he the way for himself? As Augustine says, he is the way, and the one who goes by the way, and the destination of the way. [\[13\]](#) Thus he goes to himself through himself. He, as having human nature, is the way. Thus, he came through his flesh, yet remained where he was; and he went through his flesh, without leaving where he had come from.

Also, through the flesh he returned to himself, the truth and the life. For God had come, through his flesh, to us, the truth to liars, the life to mortals: "God is truthful, and every human is a liar" [Rom 3:4]. And when he left us, and took his flesh up to that place where there are no liars, this very Word who was made flesh returned, through his flesh, to the truth, which is himself. For example: when I speak to others, my mind goes out to them, yet it does not leave me; and when I am silent, in a certain sense I return to myself, yet still remain with those to whom I spoke [if they remember what I said]. And so Christ, who is our way, be-came the way even for himself, this is, for his flesh, to go to the truth and the life.

1873 Then when he says, **no one comes to the Father, but by me**, he

answers what was asked about the destination of the way. The way, which is Christ, leads to the Father. Yet, because the Father and the Son are one, this way leads also to himself. And so Christ says that he is the terminus of the way.

1874 Note that the Apostle says: "For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him?" (1 Cor 2:11), that is, provided one does not choose to reveal his own thoughts. A person reveals what is hidden within by his words, and it is only by the words of a person that we can know what is hidden within. Now "no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11), therefore, no one can acquire a knowledge of the Father except by his Word, which is his Son: "No one knows the Father except the Son" (Mt 11:27). And just like one of us who wants to be known by others by revealing to them the words in his heart, clothes these words with letters or sounds, so God, wanting to be known by us, takes his Word, conceived from eternity, and clothes it with flesh in time. And so no one can arrive at a knowledge of the Father except through the Son. Thus he says: "I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved" (10:9).

1875 Note, with Chrysostom, that our Lord had said: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (6:44).[\[14\]](#) But here he says: no one comes to the Father, but by me. This indicates that the Son is equal to the Father.

It is now clear what the way is, it is Christ; what the destination is, it is the Father.

1876 Then when he says, **If you had known me, you would without doubt have known my Father also**, he shows that the disciples knew both where he was going and the way. First, he shows this; secondly he resolves a coming difficulty. He does two things about the first: first, he shows that knowledge of the Son is also knowledge of the Father; secondly, he states the disciples' knowledge of the Father (v 7b).

1877 He had said: I have said that I am the way, and that you know the way, that is, me. Therefore, you also know where I am going, because you cannot know me without knowing the Father. This is what he says: **If you had known me, you would without doubt have known my Father also**.

1878 Yet he had said to the Jews before: "If you knew me, you would perhaps know my Father also" [8:19]. Why does he say here, "without doubt," while before he said "perhaps"? It seems that before he had some doubts about what he says here.

We should answer that in the first instance he was speaking to the Jews, whom he was reprimanding. And so he added "perhaps" not because he had any doubts, but as a rebuke to them. But here he is speaking to his disciples, whom he is teaching. Thus, he simply states the truth to them: **If you had known me, you would without doubt have known my Father also.** This is like saying: If you knew my grace and dignity, you would without doubt also know that of the Father. For there is no better way to know something than through its word or image, and the Son is the Word of the Father: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" (1:1); "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (1:14). The Son is also the image of the Father: "He is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15); "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature" (Heb 1:3). Therefore, the Father is known in the Son as in his Word and proper image.

1879 Note that to the extent that something approaches to a likeness of the Word of the Father, to that extent the Father is known in it, and to that extent it is in the image of the Father. Now since every created word is some likeness of that Word, and some likeness, though imperfect, of the divinity is found in every thing, either as an image or a trace, it follows that what God is cannot be known perfectly through any creature or by any thought or concept of a created intellect. It is the Word alone, the only•begotten Word, which is a perfect word and the perfect image of the Father, that knows and comprehends the Father.

Therefore, according to Hilary, this statement can be put in another context.[\[15\]](#) Our Lord said: "no one comes to the Father, but by me." If you ask Arius how one goes to the Father through the Son, he answers that it is by recalling what the Son taught, because the Son taught us about the Father: "Father ... I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me" (17:6). But our Lord rejected this by saying: **If you had known me, you would without doubt have known my Father also.** This is like saying: Arius, or anyone else can indeed speak about the Father, but no human being is such that by knowing him the Father is known. This is true of the Son alone, who has the same nature as the Father.

1880 Next, our Lord shows the knowledge the disciples had of the Father. Our Lord had already told the disciples that they knew the Father when he said, "Where I am going you know." Yet Thomas denied this: "we do not know where you are going." Thus our Lord shows here that in a certain way they did know the Father, so that his statement was true; and in another sense they did not know the Father, so that what Thomas said was true. To do this, he mentions a twofold knowledge of the Father: one which will be in the future, and the other which

was in the past.

He says, **henceforth you shall know him**. And he says, **henceforth**, because knowledge of the Father is of two kinds. One is perfect, and is by an immediate vision of him, and this will be in our homeland: "When he appears we shall be like him" (1 Jn 3:2). The other is imperfect, and is by reflections and is obscure; and we have this by faith: "For now we see in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor 3:2). Thus, this phrase can be understood of each kind of knowledge. **Henceforth you shall know him**, with perfect knowledge in your homeland: "I shall tell you plainly of the Father" (16:25). This is like saying: It is true that you do not know him with perfect knowledge, but from **henceforth you shall know him**, after the mystery of my passion has been accomplished. Or, in the other way, **henceforth**, after my resurrection and ascension and after I have sent the Holy Spirit, **you shall know him**, with the perfect knowledge of faith, for when the Spirit, the Paraclete, comes, "he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (14:26). So you are speaking the truth when you say that you do not know him with perfect knowledge.

And I am speaking the truth, because you have seen him: "Afterward he was seen on earth and conversed with men" [Bar 3:37]. They saw Christ in the flesh he had taken on, in which the Word existed, and in the Word they saw the Father. Thus they saw the Father in him: "He who sent me is with me" (8:29).

1881 Note that the Father was not in the flesh in such a way that it was joined to him to constitute one person, but he was in the incarnate Word because they had one and the same nature, and the Father was seen in the incarnate Christ: "We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (1:14).

LECTURE 3

8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? [Philip], he who has seen me has seen the Father [also]; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority [of myself]; but the Father who dwells in me does his [the] works. 11 Believe me [Do you not believe] that I am in the Father and the Father in me [?]. Or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves. 12 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater

works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask [the Father] in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; 14 if you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."[\[16\]](#)

1882 Here our Lord clears up a confusion in one of the disciples: first, we see what the confusion was; secondly, it is resolved (v 9).

1883 In regard to the first, recall that above our Lord mentioned two things. He promised something for the future, namely, a perfect knowledge of God, when he said: "henceforth you shall know him"; and he mentioned something about the past, namely, that they had seen him (v 7). When Philip heard this he believed that he had seen the Father. But now he asks to know him, saying, **Lord, show us the Father** (not asking for a vision but for knowledge) **and we shall be satisfied**. This is not surprising since that vision of the Father [a knowledge] is the end of all our desires and actions, and nothing else is necessary: "You will fill me with joy by your face," that is, by the vision of your face [Ps 16:11]; "He satisfies your desire with good things" [Ps 103:5].

1884 Now the confusion is cleared up. First, we see it resolved; secondly, this is explained further (v 10). As to the first, our Lord chides Philip for his slowness; secondly, he states the truth, **Philip, he who has seen me has seen the Father also**; thirdly, Christ objects to the very request, **how can you say, Show us the Father**.

1885 He says, **Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip?** He is saying in effect: you should know me, considering how long I have been living with you and talking with you. And if you had known me, you would without doubt have known the Father also. Therefore, since you do not know the Father, you indicate that you do not know me. And you can be chided for your slowness: "Are you also still without understanding?" (Mt 15:16); "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again" (Heb 5:12)

1886 This gives rise to a question, for before, our Lord told the disciples that they knew him, when he said, "and the way you know" (v 4), while here he seems to say the opposite, "If you had known me, you would without doubt have known my Father also" (v 7).

Augustine answers this by saying that among the disciples there were some who knew Christ as the Word of God.[\[17\]](#) One of these was Peter, when he said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16). There were others who did

not truly know him, and Philip was one of these. It is to the first group that our Lord says, "Where I am going you know, and the way you know" (v 4); it is to the second group that he says, "If you had known me, you would without doubt have known the Father also."

Here is another explanation. Christ could be known in a twofold way. He could be known in his human nature, and every one knew him this way. With this in mind he says, "Where I am going you know, and the way you know." He could also be known as being of a divine nature, but they did not yet perfectly know him in this way. In reference to this, he says, "If you had known me, you would without doubt have known my Father also." This is clear from the fact that he adds, **Philip, he who has seen me has seen the Father also**. He is saying in effect: If you knew me, you would know the Father; and then you would not be saying, **show us the Father**, because you would have already seen him by seeing me: "If you knew me, you would perhaps know my Father also" [8:19].

1887 Sabellius made this statement the basis of his error. He asked what could be the meaning of **he who has seen me has seen the Father also**, except that the Father and the Son are the same?

Hilary answers this by saying if this were so, our Lord would have said, "he who has seen me has seen the Father," without adding the "also."[\[18\]](#) But because he adds the "also," saying, **has seen the Father also**, he shows there is a distinction. Augustine says that we use the same way of speaking when we talk about two people who are alike.[\[19\]](#) We say that if you saw one you saw the other. Now the most perfect likeness of the Father is in the Son. Therefore he says, **he who has seen me has seen the Father also**. In fact, there is a greater likeness in the Son than there is among mere human beings, because in them there can never be a likeness based on the very same numerical form or quality, but only a likeness in species. In the Son, however, there is the same numerical nature as in the Father. Thus, when seeing the Son, the Father is better seen than when seeing some mere human another mere human is seen, no matter how much alike they are.[\[20\]](#)

1888 Note that this statement excludes the error of Arius on two points. First, it rejects his denial of consubstantiality. For it is impossible to see the uncreated substance by seeing some created substance, just as by knowing a substance of one genus, one cannot know a substance of another genus. It is evident, therefore, that the Son is not a created substance, but is consubstantial with the Father. Otherwise, one who sees the Son would not see the Father.

The other error excluded is their interpretation of 1 Timothy (1:17), "To the King

of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God," as meaning that only the Father is invisible, but the Son was often seen in his nature. But if this were so, it would follow that the Father was also frequently seen, because one who sees the Son sees the Father also. So since the Father is invisible as to his nature, it is impossible that the Father was seen in his nature.

1889 Someone might question why our Lord chided Philip for asking to see the Father after he had seen the Son, since when one sees a picture he should not be rebuked for wanting to see the thing pictured.

Chrysostom answers this by saying that after hearing about knowing and seeing the Father, Philip wanted to see the Father with his bodily eyes, just as he thought he had seen the Son. [\[21\]](#) This is what our Lord reproved, pointing out to him that he did not even see the Son in his nature with his bodily eyes.

Augustine says that our Lord did not disapprove of the request, but of the attitude behind it. [\[22\]](#) Philip said, **Show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied**. This was like saying: We know you, but that is not enough. Thus he believed that there was complete sufficiency in knowing the Father, but not in knowing the Son. He seemed to think that the Son was inferior to the Father. This is what our Lord reproved, showing that there is the same sufficiency in knowing the Son as there is in knowing the Father, saying, **he who has seen me has seen the Father also**.

1890 Then when he says, **How can you say, Show us the Father?** he shows his disapproval of the request, and of the basis of the request. He is displeased with the request because the Father is seen in the Son. Philip could have said what we read in Job: "I, who have spoken so unthoughtfully, what can I reply? I will put my hand over my mouth" [39:34]. He disapproves of the root of the request when he says, **Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?** This is like saying: You want to possess the Father, believing that you will have sufficiency in him. But if you believe that, **Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?** For if you believed the latter, you would expect to find in me all the sufficiency which is in the Father.

1891 He says, **I am in the Father and the Father in me**, because they are one in essence. This was spoken of before: "I and the Father are one" (10:30).

We should note that in the divinity essence is not related to person as it is in human beings. Among human beings, the essence of Socrates is not Socrates, because Socrates is a composite. But in the divinity, essence is the same with the person in reality, and so the essence of the Father is the Father, and the essence

of one Son is the Son. Therefore, wherever the essence of the Father is, there the Father is; and wherever the essence of the Son is, there the Son is. Now the essence of the Father is in the Son, and the essence of the Son is in the Father. Therefore, the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son. This is how Hilary explains it. [\[23\]](#)

1892 Now our Lord clarifies his answer: first by the works he does himself; secondly, by the works he will do by the disciples (v 12). So he first mentions the works he does himself; secondly, he infers a tenet of the faith (v 11).

1893 The belief that Christ was God could be known from two things: from his teaching and from his miracles. Our Lord mentions these. "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin" (15:24). Referring to his teaching he says, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin" (15:22). We also read: "No man ever spoke like this man!" (7:46). The blind man, referring to his works, said: Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind" (9:32). Our Lord shows his divinity by these two things. Referring to his teaching, he says, **The words that I say to you**, by the instrument of my human nature, **I do not speak of myself, but from him who is in me**, that is, the Father: "I declare to the world what I have heard from him," the Father (8:26). The Father, therefore, who speaks in me, is in me. Now whatever a human being says must come from the first Word. And this first Word, the Word of God, is from the Father. Therefore, all the words we speak must be from God. So when anyone speaks words he has from the Father, the Father is in him. Referring to his works, he says, **the Father who dwells in me does the works**, because no one could do the works that I do: "The Son can do nothing of himself" [5:19].

1894 Chrysostom wonders how Christ can start by referring to his words, and then bring in his works, for Christ says, **the words that I say to you ... but the Father does the works**. There are two answers to this. Chrysostom says that Christ was referring to his teaching the first time, and then referring to his miracles. [\[24\]](#) For Augustine, our Lord is referring to his words as his works: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (6:29). [\[25\]](#) So when the Lord says, **the Father does the works**, we should understand that these works are words.

1895 Two heresies were based on the above texts. When our Lord said, **I am in the Father**, Sabellius understood this to mean that the Father and the Son are the same. And from the statement, **I do not speak of myself**, Arius inferred that the Son is inferior to the Father. Yet these very texts refute these heresies.

For if the Father and Son were the same, as Sabellius speculated, the Son would not have said, **The words that I say to you I do not speak of myself**. And if the Son were inferior to the Father, as Arius blasphemed, he would not have said, **the Father who dwells in me does the works**.

1896 Since our belief in the Trinity is shown by the above two statements, our Lord concludes to this belief, saying, **Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?** It was explained above how this is to be understood. In Greek, the text reads: **Believe**, that is, believe me, **that I am in the Father and the Father in me**. Or, it is surprising that you do not believe **that I am in the Father and the Father in me**. Note that before our Lord was speaking only to Philip (v 8•10a), but from the point where he says, **the words that I say to you** [v 10b], he is speaking to all the apostles together. But if what I say to you is not enough to show my consubstantiality, then at least believe me for the sake of the works themselves: "The works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness" (5:36); "Even though you do not believe me, believe the works" (10:38).

1897 After clarifying what he had said by appealing to the works he did by himself, our Lord now clarifies these things by the works he would do through the disciples. First, he mentions the works of the disciples; secondly, he mentions how they would do them, **Whatever you ask the Father in my name, I will do it**. As to the first, he first mentions the works of the disciples; secondly, he states the reason for what he said, **because I go to the Father**.

1898 He says, **Truly, truly, I say to you**, and so forth. He is saying in effect: The works that I do are so great that they are a sufficient sign of my divinity; but if these are not enough for you, then look at the works I will do through others. For the strongest sign of great power is when a person does extraordinary things not only by himself but also through others. So he says, **he who believes in me will also do the works that I do**. These words not only show the power of the divinity in Christ, but also the power of faith, and the union of Christ with those who believe. For just as the Son acts because the Father dwells in him by a unity of nature, so also those who believe act because Christ dwells in them by faith: "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:17). Now the works which Christ accomplished and the disciples do by the power of Christ are the miracles: "And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents" (Mk 16:17).

1899 What is remarkable is that he adds, **and greater works than these will he do**. We could say that in a certain sense our Lord does more things and greater things through his apostles than by himself. Among the miracles of Christ

the greatest was when a sick person was healed by touching the fringe of his garment (Mt 9:20). But the sick were healed by the shadow of Peter, as we read in Acts (5:15). And it is greater to heal by one's shadow than by the fringe of one's garment. In another way, we could say that Christ did more by the words of his disciples than by his own. As Augustine says, our Lord is speaking here of works accomplished by words, when the fruit of these words was faith. [26] We see in Matthew that a young man was not persuaded by Christ to sell his possessions and follow him, for when Christ said to the youth, "Go, sell what you possess and give to the poor," we read that "he went away sorrowful" (Mt 19:21). Yet we read that at the preaching of Peter and the other apostles, people sold their possessions and all that they owned and brought the money and laid it at the feet of the apostles (Acts 4:34).

1900 Someone might find fault with this because our Lord did not say that the apostles would do greater things, but **he who believes in me**. Should we say, then, that those who do not do greater things than Christ are not to be counted among those who believe in Christ? Of course not! That would be too harsh.

We should say, rather, that Christ works in two ways. In one way, he works without us, as in creating the heavens and the earth, raising the dead to life, and things like that. In the other way, he works in us but not without us: the result of this is faith, by which the impious are brought to life. Our Lord is speaking here of what is found in all believers: this is the result which Christ produces in us, but not without us. The reason for this is that whoever believes is producing the same result since what is produced in me by God is also produced in me by myself, that is, by my free choice. Thus the Apostle says: "it was not I," that is, I alone, "but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Cor 15:10). Christ is speaking of this result or work when he says that believers **will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do**, for it is a greater thing to justify the impious than to create the heavens and the earth. For the justification of the impious, considered in itself, continues forever: "Righteousness is immortal" (Wis 1:15). But the heavens and the earth will pass away, as Luke (21:33) says. Further, effects which are physical are directed to what is spiritual. Now the heavens and the earth are physical effects, but the justification of the impious is a spiritual effect.

1901 This gives rise to a question. The creation of the holy angels is included in the creation of the heavens and the earth. Is it then a greater work to cooperate with Christ in one's own justification than to create an angel? Augustine does not settle this, but he does say: "Let him who can judge whether it is greater to create the just angels than to justify impious men. Certainly, if each shows an equal power, the second shows greater mercy." [27] But if we carefully consider

what works our Lord is talking about here, we are not setting the creation of the angels above the justification of the impious. When our Lord said, **and greater works than these will he do**, we need not understand this to mean all the works of Christ, but perhaps only those which he was then doing. But then he was working by the word of faith, and it is not as great to preach words of righteousness [or of faith] which he did without us, as to justify sinners, which he does in us in such a way that we also do it.

1902 Now he gives the reason why he said they will do greater things, which is **because I go to the Father**. This can be understood in three ways. First, according to Chrysostom: I will work as long as I am in the world, but when I leave, you will take my place.[\[28\]](#) And so, the things that I am doing you will do, and even greater things, **because I go to the Father**, and after that I will do nothing by myself, that is, by preaching. The second interpretation is this: The Jews think that if I am killed faith in me will be eradicated. This is not true. Indeed, it will be approved even more, and you will do greater things **because I go to the Father**, that is, I will not perish, but continue in my own dignity in heaven: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified" (13:31). A third interpretation: You will do greater things **because I go to the Father**. He is saying in effect: Since I will be glorified more, it is appropriate that I do greater things, and also give you the power to do greater things. Thus, before Jesus was glorified, the Spirit was not given to the disciples in that fullness with which it was given after: "As yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (7:39).

1903 Now he mentions how these things will be done: first, the way, **whatever you ask**; secondly, why they will be done, **that the Father may be glorified**.

1904 As to the first, since our Lord said, "and greater works than these will he do," in order that the greatness of the worker might be known from the greatness of the works, some might suppose that one who believes in the Son of God would be greater than the Son. Our Lord excludes this by the way the works are done. For the Son does these works by his own authority, while one who believes in him does it by asking. So he says, **Whatever you ask the Father in my name, I will do it**.

This eliminates the equality between believers and Christ in three ways. First, because as was said, believers do these works by asking: so he says, **Whatever you ask**. "Every one who asks receives" (Mt 7:8). Secondly, because believers work by reason of the Son; so he says, **in my name**, that is, by reason of my name: "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). For this name is above every name: "Not to us, O

Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory" (Ps 115:1). Thirdly, because the Son himself does all these works in them and through them: thus he says, **I will do it**. Note that the Father is asked and the Son does the work, the reason being that the works of the Father and the Son are inseparable: "Whatever he [the Father] does, that the Son does likewise" (5:19). For the Father does all things through the Son: "All things were made through him" (1:3).

1905 How could he say, **Whatever you ask I will do it**, since we see that his faithful ask and do not receive? According to Augustine, we should consider here that he first says, **in my name**, and then adds, **I will do it**.^[29] The name of Christ is the name of salvation: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). Therefore, one who asks for something pertaining to salvation asks in the name of Christ. It does happen that someone asks for something which does not pertain to salvation. This happens for two reasons. First, because one has a corrupt affection: as when one asks for something to which he is attracted, but which if he did have, would be an obstacle to his salvation. One who asks this way is not heard because he asks wrongly: "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly" (Jas 4:3). For when someone, because of his corrupt affection, would badly use what he wants to receive, he does not receive it because of our Lord's compassion. The reason being that our Lord does not just look at one's desire, but rather the helpfulness of what is desired. For the good Lord often denies what we ask in order to give us what we should prefer.

The second reason we may ask for something which does not pertain to our salvation is our ignorance. We sometimes ask for what we think is helpful, but really is not. But God takes care of us, and does not do what we ask. Thus Paul, who labored more than all others, asked our Lord three times to take away a thorn in his flesh, but he did not receive what he asked because it was not useful for him (2 Cor 12:8). "We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26). "You do not know what you are asking" (Mt 20:22). Thus it is clear that when we truly ask in his name, in the name of Jesus Christ, he will do it.

He says, **I will do it**, using the future tense, not the present tense, because he sometimes postpones doing what we ask so that our desire for it will increase and so that he can grant it at the right time: "Rain will fall on you when it should fall" [Lev 26:4]; "In a day of salvation I have helped you" (Is 49:8). Again, it sometimes happens that we pray for people and are perhaps not heard, and this is because they put obstacles in the way. "Do not pray for this people ... for I do not hear you" (Jer 7:16); "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people" (Jer 15:1).

1906 Then when he says, **that the Father may be glorified in the Son**, he gives the reason. Augustine punctuates this passage in the following way. "Whatever you ask the Father in my name, I will do it." Then a new sentence begins: "That the Father may be glorified in the Son, if you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." This is like saying: I will do what you ask in my name so **that the Father may be glorified in the Son**, and everything that the Son does is directed to the glory of the Father: "I do not seek my own glory" (8:50). We also should direct all our works to the glory of God: "Do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31).

LECTURE 4

15 "If you love me, [keep my commandments] you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another [Paraclete] Counselor, to be with you for ever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you [will] know him, for he [will dwell] dwells with you, and will be in you."[\[30\]](#)

1907 Above, our Lord consoled his disciples over his leaving by promising that they would be able to approach the Father. But because it might seem that this was in the distant future, and in the meantime they would still be in sorrow without their Teacher, he here soothes their sorrow by promising them the Holy Spirit. First, we see the preparation needed to receive the Holy Spirit; secondly, the Holy Spirit is promised, **he will give you another Paraclete**. Thirdly, this promise is clarified, **to be with you forever**. Preparation for receiving the Holy Spirit was necessary both for the disciples and for Christ.

1908 The disciples needed a twofold preparation: love in their hearts and obedience in their work. Our Lord assumes they have one of these, for he says, **If you love me**. And it is clear that you do because you are sad over my leaving: "You also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning" (15:27). The other he commands for the future, **keep my commandments**. This is like saying: You don't express your love for me by tears but by obedience to my commands, for this is a clear sign of love: "If a man love me, he will keep my word" (14:23). Thus, two things prepare one to receive the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is love, he is given only to those who love: "I love those who love me" (Prv 8:17). Likewise, he is given to the obedient: "To this we are witnesses" (Acts 3:15); "I have put my Spirit upon him" (Is 42:1).

1909 Yet is it true that it is the obedience of the disciples and their love for Christ

that prepare them for the Holy Spirit? It seems not, because the love by which we love God is from the Holy Spirit: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). Further, our obedience is from the Holy Spirit: "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom 8:14); "I have run in the way of your commandments when you enlarged my heart" [Ps 119:32]. One might answer that it is by loving the Son that we deserve to receive the Holy Spirit, and having him, we love the Father. But this is false because our love for the Father and the Son is the same love.

Accordingly, we should say that it is characteristic of the gifts of God that if one makes good use of a gift granted to him, he deserves to receive a greater gift and grace. And one who badly uses a gift, has it taken from him. For we read in Matthew (25:24) that the talent which the lazy servant received from his master was taken from him because he did not use it well, and it was given to the one who had received five talents. It is like this with the gift of the Holy Spirit. No one can love God unless he has the Holy Spirit: because we do not act before we receive God's grace, rather, the grace comes first: "He loved us first" [1 Jn 4:10]. We should say, therefore, that the apostles first received the Holy Spirit so that they could love God and obey his commands. But it was necessary that they make good use, by their love and obedience, of this first gift of the Holy Spirit in order to receive the Spirit more fully. And so the meaning is, **If you love me**, by means of the Holy Spirit, whom you have, and obey my commandments, you will receive the Holy Spirit with greater fullness.

1910 Another preparation was needed for Christ, and as to this he says, **And I will pray the Father**, and so forth. Note that our Lord Jesus Christ, as a human being, is the mediator between God and humankind, as we see from 1 Timothy (2:5). And so as a human being he approaches God and asks heavenly gifts for us, and coming to us he lifts us up and leads us to God. And so, because he had already come to us, and by giving us the commandments of God had led believers to God, he still had to return to the Father and ask for spiritual gifts: "Approaching God by himself he is able to save forever" [Heb 7:25]. He does this by asking the Father; and he says this, **I will pray the Father**: "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men" (Eph 4:8).

Note that it is the same person who asks that the Paraclete be given and who gives the Paraclete. He asks as a human being, he gives as God. And he says **I will pray** in order to banish their sorrow over his leaving them, because his very leaving is the reason they can now receive the Holy Spirit.

1911 Now we see the promise of the Holy Spirit. The word Paraclete is Greek,

and means "Consoler." He says, **he will give you another Paraclete**, that is, the Father, although not without the Son, will give the Holy Spirit, who is the Consoler, since he is the spirit of love. It is love that causes spiritual consolation and joy: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy" (Gal 5:22). The Holy Spirit is our advocate: "We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26).

The fact that he says, **another**, indicates a distinction of persons in God, in opposition to Sabellius.

1912 An objection. The word "Paraclete" suggests an action of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, by saying **another Paraclete**, a difference in nature seems to be indicated, because different actions indicate different natures. Thus the Holy Spirit does not have the same nature as the Son.

I reply that the Holy Spirit is a consoler and advocate, and so is the Son. John says that the Son is an advocate: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteousness" (1 Jn 2:1). In Isaiah we are told he is a consoler: "The Spirit of the Lord has sent me to comfort those who mourn" [Is 61:1]. Yet the Son and the Holy Spirit are not consolers and advocates in the same way, if we consider the appropriation of persons [how and why we attribute certain attributes to the different Persons of the Trinity]. Christ is called an advocate because as a human being he intercedes for us to the Father; the Holy Spirit is an advocate because he makes us ask. Again, the Holy Spirit is called a consoler because he is formally love. But the Son is a consoler because he is the Word. The Son is a consoler in two ways: because of his teaching and because the Son gives the Holy Spirit and incites love in our hearts. Thus the word, **another**, does not indicate a different nature in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Rather, it indicates the different way each is an advocate and a consoler. [\[31\]](#)

1913 Now the promise of the Holy Spirit is given: first, we see how it is given; secondly, what the gift itself is; thirdly, those who receive it (v 17).

1914 The Spirit is truly given because it is given forever. Thus he says, **to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth**. When something is given to a person only for a time, this is not a true giving; but there is a true giving when something is given to be kept forever. And so the Holy Spirit is truly given because he is to remain with them forever. He is with us for ever: in this life he enlightens and teaches us, bringing things to our mind; and in the next life he brings us to see the very reality: "And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (1 Sam 16:13). Although Judas had received him, the Spirit did not remain with him forever, because he did not receive him to

remain with him forever, but only for a temporary righteousness.

According to Chrysostom, one could say that our Lord said these things to dispel a certain physical interpretation they might have. [32] They could have imagined that this Paraclete, which was to be given to them, would also leave them after a while by some kind of suffering, like Christ. He rejects this when he says, **to be with you for ever**. This is like saying: The Spirit will not suffer death as I do, nor will he leave you.

1915 We saw above that it was said to John the Baptist: "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" (1:33). It seems from this that it is peculiar to Christ that the Holy Spirit remain with him forever. Yet this is not true if he also remains with the disciples forever.

According to Chrysostom, the solution is that the Holy Spirit is said to remain in us by his gifts. Certain gifts of the Holy Spirit are necessary for salvation; these are found in all the saints and always remain in us, as charity, which never leaves (1 Cor 13:8), since it will continue into the future. Other gifts are not necessary for salvation, but are given to the faithful so they can manifest the Spirit: "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7). With this in mind, the Holy Spirit is with the disciples and the saints forever by the first type of gift. But it is peculiar to Christ that the Spirit is always with him by the second type of gift, for Christ always has a plenitude of power to work miracles and to prophesy, and so on. This is not true of others, because, as Gregory says, the spirits of the prophets are not under the control of the prophets.

1916 The Spirit is a most excellent gift because he is the Spirit of truth. He is called the Spirit to show the subtlety or fineness of his nature, for the word "spirit" is used to indicate something which is undiscoverable and invisible. And so what is invisible is usually referred to as a spirit. The Holy Spirit also is undiscoverable and invisible: "The Spirit blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes" [3:8]. He is also called the Spirit to indicate his power, because he moves us to act and work well. For the word "spirit" indicates a certain impulse, and that is why the word *spiritus* can also mean the wind: "For all who are impelled by the Spirit of God are sons of God" [Rom 8:14]; "Let thy good spirit lead me on a level path" (Ps 143:10).

He adds, **of truth**, because this Spirit proceeds from the Truth and speaks the truth, for the Holy Spirit is nothing else than Love. (When a person is impelled to

love earthly things and the world, he is impelled by the spirit of the world: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God" (1 Cor 2:12); and when one is impelled to works of the flesh, he is not impelled by the Holy Spirit, as Ezekiel (13:3) says: "Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit.")

But the Holy Spirit leads to the knowledge of the truth, because he proceeds from the Truth, who says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6). In us, love of the truth arises when we have conceived and considered truth. So also in God, Love proceeds from conceived Truth, which is the Son. And just as Love proceeds from the Truth, so Love leads to knowledge of the truth: "He [The Holy Spirit] will glorify me because he will receive from me and declare it to you" [16:14]. And therefore Ambrose says that any truth, no matter who speaks it, is from the Holy Spirit.[\[33\]](#) "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3); "When the Paraclete comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth ..." [15:26]. It is a characteristic of the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth because it is love which impels one to reveal his secrets: "I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (15:15); "He showed it," the truth, "to his friend" [Job 36:33].

1917 The ones who receive the Holy Spirit are those who believe; he says, **whom the world cannot receive**. First, he shows to whom the Spirit is not given; secondly, to whom he is given, **you will know him**. First, he shows that he is not given to the world; secondly, he mentions why (v 17).

1918 As to the first he says, **whom the world cannot receive**. Our Lord is here calling those who love the world, the "world." As long as they love the world they cannot receive the Holy Spirit, for he is the love of God. And no one can love, as his destination, both God and the world: "If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him" (1 Jn 2:15). As Gregory says: "The Holy Spirit inflames everything he fills with a desire for invisible things. And because worldly hearts love only visible things, the world does not receive him, because it does not rise to the love of what is invisible. For worldly minds, the more they widen themselves with their desires, the more they narrow the core of their hearts to the Spirit"[\[34\]](#) (*Morals V*). "The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful" [Wis 1:5].

1919 In regard to the second, why he is not given to the world, he says, **because it neither sees him nor knows him**. For spiritual gifts are not received unless they are desired: "She," divine Wisdom, "hastens to make herself known to those who desire her." And they are not desired unless they are somehow known. Now there are two reasons why they are not known. First,

because one does not want to know them; and secondly, because one is not capable of such knowledge. These two reasons apply to the worldly. In the first place, they do not desire this, and as to this he says, **the world neither sees him**, that is, does not want to know him: "They have fixed their eyes on the ground" [Ps 16:11]. Further, they are not capable of knowing him, and as to this he says, **nor knows him**. As Augustine says: "Worldly love does not have invisible eyes which alone can see the invisible Holy Spirit."[\[35\]](#) "The sensual person does not perceive those things pertaining to the Spirit of God" [1 Cor 2:14]. Just as a tainted tongue does not taste sweet flavors, so a soul tainted by the corruption of the world does not taste the sweetness of heavenly things.

Here is the interpretation of Chrysostom.[\[36\]](#) I say that **he will give you another Paraclete, the Spirit of truth**, but he will not assume flesh, because **the world neither sees him nor knows him**, that is, it will not receive him, but only you will.

1920 Now he mentions, first of all, to whom the Spirit is given; secondly, he gives the reason. The Holy Spirit is given to believers: he says, **you**, who are moved by the Holy Spirit, **will know him**: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God" (1 Cor 2:12). This is because you scorn the world: "We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen" (2 Cor 4:18).

The reason for this is, **for he will dwell with you**. Note, first, the familiarity of the Holy Spirit with the apostles, **for he will dwell with you**, that is, for your benefit: "Let your good spirit lead me on a level path!" (Ps 143:10); "O, how good is your spirit, O Lord, in all things" [Wis 12:1]. Secondly, note how intimate his indwelling is, **for he will be in you**, that is, in the depths of your heart: "I will put a new Spirit within them" (Ez 11:19).

LECTURE 5

18 "I will not leave you [orphans] desolate; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, [and] you will live also. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."[\[37\]](#)

1921 Above, our Lord promised that the Holy Spirit would be our Consoler. But because the apostles had not risen very high in their knowledge of the Holy Spirit, and their attention was absorbed by the presence of Christ, this consolation seemed small to them. Thus, in this part, our Lord promises, first, that he will return; secondly, his own gifts (v 25). Concerning the first, he promises then that he will return; and then he gives the reason (v 21); thirdly, he answers a question for one of the disciples (v 22). Concerning the first, he first shows that he will return; secondly, the way he will return (v 19); and thirdly, he foretells the fruit of his return (v 20). Concerning the first, he shows why he needs to return; secondly, he promises to return, **I will come to you** (v 18).

1922 The reason our Lord has to return is so that the disciples would not remain orphans; he says, **I will not leave you orphans**. The word "orphans" comes from the Greek, and indicates little children who do not have a father: "We have become orphans, fatherless; our mothers are like widows" (Lam 5:3).

Consider that we can have three fathers. One father gives us existence: "We have had earthly fathers," literally, fathers of our flesh (Heb 12:9). Another father would be one whose evil example we follow: "You are of your father the devil" (8:44). A third father would be one who gratuitously adopts us: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons" [Rom 8:15]. Now God does not adopt as his children those who imitate their father, the devil, for "What fellowship has light with darkness?" (2 Cor 6:14). And he does not adopt those who are too attached, in a worldly way, to their parents: "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:37). But God does adopt as his children those who have become orphans by being stripped of their affection for sin and by abandoning a worldly love for their parents. "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me up" (Ps 27:10); but much more one who has left them: "Forget your people and your father's house; and the king will desire your beauty" (Ps 45:10).

Note that Christ presents himself to his disciples as a father. Now although the word "father," if taken to indicate a person, is special to the Father, yet if it is taken to indicate an essence, it is appropriate for the entire Trinity. So our Lord said above (13:33): "Little children, yet a little while I am with you."

1923 Christ promises to come when he says, **I will come to you**. But he had already come to them by taking on flesh: "Christ Jesus came into the world" (1 Tim 1:5). Still, he will come in three more ways. Two of these ways are bodily or physical. One is after the resurrection and before his ascension, when he leaves them by death and comes to them after the resurrection and stands among his disciples, as is stated below (c 20). The other bodily coming will be at the end of the world: "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the

same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11); "And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Lk 21:27). His third coming is spiritual and invisible, that is, when he comes to his faithful by grace, either in life or in death: "If he comes to me I will not see him" [Job 9:11].

He says, therefore, **I will come to you**, after the resurrection (and this is the first way of coming mentioned above) and "I will see you again" (16:22). Again, I will come to you at the end of the world: "The Lord will come to judge" [Is 3:14]. And again I will come at your death to take you to myself: "I will come again and will take you to myself" (above v 3). And again, **I will come to you**, visiting you in a spiritual way: "We will come to him and make our home with him" (14:23).

1924 Here he explains how he will return and shows that his return to the apostles will be in a special way. Since they might think that he would return to them as still subject to death, he excludes this, saying: **Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more**. If we explain this as referring to his return after the resurrection, the meaning is this: **Yet a little while**, that is, I will be with you only for a short time in this mortal flesh, and then I will be crucified; but after that, **the world will see me no more**. This is because after the resurrection he did not show himself to all, but only to witnesses pre-ordained by God, that is, to his disciples (Acts 1:3). Thus he says, **but you will see me**, that is, in my glorified and immortal body.

He gives the reason for this when he says, **because I live and you will live**. This clears up a difficulty. The disciples could have wondered how they would see him, since he would be dead, and they with him. So he says that this will not be the case, **because I live**, that is, I will live after the resurrection: "I died, and behold I am alive for evermore" (Rev 1:18), **and you will live**, because you will not be killed with me: "If you seek me, let these men go" (18:8). Here is another interpretation: I live, by my resurrection, **and you will live**, that is, you will rejoice over this, since "The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (20:20). Here, to live means to rejoice, and it is used in this sense in Genesis [45:26]: "When Jacob heard that Joseph was ruling in Egypt his spirit began to live again," with joy.

1925 Augustine finds fault with this interpretation because our Lord said, **Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more**.^[38] This means that the worldly will never see him again. Yet they will see him at the judgment, according to: "Every eye will see him" (Rev 1:7). For this reason Augustine explains this **little while** as including the second coming, when Christ comes to judge. This time is described as little in comparison to eternity: "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past" (Ps 90:4). The Apostle, in Hebrews

(12:26), also refers to this time as a little while when he is explaining the statement in Haggai: "In a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land" (2:7). **And the world will see me no more**, because after the judgment those who love the world and the wicked will not see him, since they are going into eternal fire. As we read in another version of Isaiah [26:10]: "Remove the wicked so they do not see the glory of God." **But you**, who have followed me and stayed with me in my trials, **will see me**, in an everlasting eternity: "Your eyes will see the king in his beauty" (Is 33:17); "We shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:17). You will see me **because I live and you will live also**. This is like saying: Just as I have a glorified life in my soul and in my body, so will you "Christ will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body" (Phil 3:21). He says this because our glorified life is produced by the glorified life of Christ: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22). Christ speaks of himself in the present tense, **I live**, because his resurrection would be immediately after his death, and there would be no delay; according to: "I will rise at dawn" [Ps 108:2], because "You will not let your holy one undergo corruption" [Ps 16:10]. When referring to the disciples he uses the future, **you will live**, because the resurrection of their bodies was to be postponed till the end of the world: "Your dead shall live, their bodies shall rise" (Is 26:19).

1926 Now we see the fruit of his return, which is the knowledge of those things which the apostles did not know. For, as we saw, Peter did not know where Christ was going, and so he asked: "Lord, where are you going?" (13:36); and Thomas did not know this, nor the way he would go: "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" (14:5). Philip did not know the Father, and so he asked: "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied" (14:8). All these arose from ignorance of one thing: they did not know how the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father. Thus Christ said to Philip: "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" (14:10). And so our Lord promises them that they will know this, saying, **In that day you will know that I am in my Father**, and so forth. This will dispel all confusion from the hearts of the disciples.

1927 This sentence can be explained as referring to his coming at the time of the resurrection, and his coming at the judgment. We have two kinds of knowledge of the mysteries of the divinity. One is imperfect, and we have this by faith; the other is perfect, and comes by vision. These two kinds of knowledge are mentioned in, "For now we see in a mirror dimly," by the first kind of knowledge, "but then face to face." referring to the second kind of knowledge (1 Cor 13:12).

He says, **In that day**, after my resurrection, **you will know that I am in my Father**: and they will know this by the knowledge of faith, because then having

seen that he has arisen and is among them, they will have a most certain faith about him, especially those who would receive the Holy Spirit, who would teach them all things. Or, on the other hand, **In that day**, of the final resurrection at the judgment, **you will know**, that is, clearly and by vision: "Then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood" (1 Cor 13:12).

1928 But what will they know? The two things he mentioned above. First, "the Father who dwells in me does the works" [14:10]. Referring to this he says, **that I am in my Father**, that is, by a consubstantiality of nature. The other thing they will know is what he said about doing works through the disciples, when he said, "he who believes in me will also do the works that I do" (14:12). And referring to this he says, **and you in me, and I in you**.

1929 Here our Lord seems to say that the relation between himself and the Father is like the relation of the disciples to himself. For this reason the Arians maintained that just as the disciples are inferior to Christ and not consubstantial with him, so the Son is inferior to the Father and distinct from him in substance. One should answer this by saying that when Christ says, **I am in my Father**, he means by a consubstantiality of nature: "I and the Father are one" (10:30); "And the Word was with God" (1:1).

1930 The statement, **and you in me**, means that the disciples are in Christ. For what is protected or shielded by something is said to be in that thing, like something contained in its container. In this way the affairs of a kingdom are said to be in the hands of the king. And with this meaning it is said that "in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). **And I in you**, remaining within you, and acting and indwelling within you by grace: "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:17); "You desire proof that Christ is speaking in me" (2 Cor 113:3).

Hilary gives another exposition. **And you in me**, that is, you will be in me through your nature, which I have taken on: for in taking on our nature he took us all on: "He did not take hold of the angels, but he did take hold of the seed of Abraham" [Heb 2:16]. **And I in you**, that is, I will be in you when you receive my sacrament, for when one receives the body of Christ, Christ is in him: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (6:56). [\[39\]](#)

Another interpretation: **and you in me, and I in you**, that is, by our mutual love, for we read: "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jn 4:16). And you did not know these things, but you will know them in that day.

1931 Now the reason for his return is given, and our Lord mentions two reasons why he is seen by the faithful and not by the world. The first is their true love for God; the second is God's love for them (v 21b).

1932 As to the first he says, **he who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me**. Note that true love is love which appears and proves itself by actions: for love is revealed by its actions. Since to love someone is to will that person something good and to desire what this person wants, one does not seem to truly love a person if he does not accomplish the will of the beloved or do what he knows this person wants. And so one who does not do the will of God does not seem to truly love him. Thus he says, **he who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me**, that is, with a true love for me.

1933 Some have these commandments of God in their heart, by remembering them and continually meditating on them: "I have laid up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you" (Ps 119:11). But this is not enough unless they are kept in one's actions: "A good understanding have all those who practice it" (Ps 111:10). Others have these commandments on their lips, by preaching and exhorting: "How sweet are your words to my taste" (Ps 119:103). They also should follow them in their actions, because "He who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:19). Thus in Matthew (c 23), God reprimands those who speak but do not act. Others have them by hearing them, gladly and earnestly listening to them: "He who is of God hears the words of God" (8:47). Yet this is not enough unless they keep them in their actions, "for it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified" (Rom 2:13); "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life" (6:27). Therefore, those who have the commandments [in the above ways] do keep them to a certain extent; but they still have to persist in keeping them. For this reason Augustine says: "The person who keeps the commandments in his memory and keeps them in his life, who has them in his speech and keeps them in his conduct, who has them by hearing them and keeps them by doing them, who has them by doing and persisting in doing them, this is one who loves me." [\[40\]](#)

1934 As for the second reason why he will be seen by the faithful, he says, **he who loves me will be loved by my Father**. At first glance this does not seem to make sense. Does God love us because we love him? Assuredly not; for we read: "not that we loved God, but because he has first loved us" [1 Jn 4:10].

Therefore, we should understand this statement in the light of what was said before, "He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me."

This does not mean that one keeps the commandments and as a result of this loves. But rather, one loves, and as a result of this, keeps the commandments. In the same way, we should say here that one is loved by the Father, and as a result he loves Christ, and not that one is loved because he loves. Therefore, we love the Son because the Father loves us. For it is a characteristic of true love that it draws the one loved to love the one who loves him: "I have loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore I have drawn you having compassion on you" [Jer 31:3].

1935 Because the Father's love is not without the Son's love, since it is the same love in each, "Whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise" [5:19], he adds, **and I will love him**. Why does he say, **I will love**, using the future, since the Father and the Son love all things from eternity? We should answer that love, considered as being in the divine will, is eternal; but considered as manifested in the accomplishment of some work and effect, is temporal. So the meaning is: **and I will love him**, that is, I will show the effect of my love, because **I will manifest myself to him**: for I love in order to manifest myself.

1936 Note that one's love for another is sometimes qualified and sometimes absolute. It is qualified when one wills the other some particular good; but it is absolute when one wills the other all good. Now God loves every created thing in a qualified sense, because he wills some good to every creature, even to the demons, for example, that they live and understand and exist. There are particular goods. But God loves absolutely those to whom he wills all good, that is, that they have God himself. And to have God is to have truth, for God is Truth. But truth is had or possessed when it is known. So God, who is Truth, truly and absolutely loves those to whom he manifests himself. This is what he says, **and I will manifest myself to him**, that is, in the future, by glory, which is the ultimate effect of future beatitude: "He showed it to his friend" [Job 36:33]; "She hastens to make herself known to those who desire her" (Wis 6:13).

1937 Someone might ask: The Father will manifest himself, will he not? Yes, both the Father and the Son. For the Son manifests himself and the Father at the same time, because the Son is the Word of the Father: "No one knows the Father except the Son" (Mt 11:27). If in the meantime the Son manifests himself to anyone in some way, this is a sign of God's love. And this can be a reason why the world will not see him, because he will not manifest himself to it because it does not love him.

LECTURE 6

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you

will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered him, "If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. 25 These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. 26 But the [Paraclete] Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." [\[41\]](#)

1938 Above, our Lord promised the disciples that he would come to them; here he clears up a perplexity for one of the disciples. First, we see the bewildered disciple; secondly, Christ's answer (v 23).

1939 With respect to the first, when those who are humble and saintly hear great things about themselves, they are usually astonished and bewildered. Now the disciples had just heard our Lord say, "Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me," and so on. So it seemed that he was preferring the apostles to the entire world. Thus Judas, the brother of James, whose letter is part of Holy Scripture, was bewildered and astonished, and said, **Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?** It is like saying: Why will you do this? Are we superior to the whole world? David said something like this: "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?" (2 Sam 7:18). And the righteous also say: "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you?" (Mt 25:37).

1940 Then, Christ's answer is given: first, Christ states the reason why he will manifest himself to the disciples and not to the world; secondly, he explains something he had said (v 24b). He shows, first, why he will manifest himself to his disciples; secondly, why he will not manifest himself to the world, at **he who does not love me**. As to the first, we see the fitness of the disciples to have Christ manifest himself to them; secondly, we see the manner and order of this manifestation, at **and my Father will love him** (v 23). In regard to the first, he mentions two things which make a person fit to receive God's manifestation. The first, is charity, the second is obedience.

1941 As to charity, he says, **If a man loves me**. Three things are necessary for a person who wants to see God. First, one must draw near to God: "Those who approach his feet will receive his teaching" [Deut 33:3]. Secondly, one must lift up his eyes in order to see God: "Lift up your eyes on high and see who created these things" [Is 40:26]. And thirdly, one must take time to look, for spiritual

things cannot be seen if one is absorbed by earthly things: "Take time and see that the Lord is sweet" [Ps 34:8]. Now it is charity which accomplishes these three things. Charity joins our soul to God: "He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jn 4:16). It also makes us look at God: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21). As the saying goes: "Where your love is, there your eyes are." Charity also frees us from worldly matters: "If any one loves the world, perfect love for God is not in him" [1 Jn 2:15]. Thus, to turn it about, one who perfectly loves God, does not love the world.

1942 Obedience follows from charity; and so he says, **he will keep my word**. Gregory says: "The proof of love is one's actions. Love for God is never lazy: if it is present it accomplishes great things; if it refuses to work, it is not love." [\[42\]](#) For the will, especially when it is concerned with an end, moves the other powers to their actions: for a person does not rest until he does those things which will bring him to his intended end, especially if it is intensely desired. And so, when a person's will is intent on God, who is its end, it moves all powers to do those things which obtain him. Now it is charity which makes one intent on God, and thus it is charity which causes us to keep the commandments: "The love of Christ controls us" (2 Cor 5:14); "Its flashes are flashes of fire" (Song 8:6). And through obedience a person is rendered fit to see God: "Through your precepts," that is, as kept by me, "I get understanding" (Ps 119:104). Again, "I understood more than the aged" (Ps 119:100).

1943 Then when he says, **and my Father will love him**, we see the manner and order of this manifestation. Three things are needed so a divine manifestation can be made to us. The first is divine love; and he refers to this when he says, **and my Father will love him**. We explained above why the future tense is used, **will love**, which is that he is referring to the effect of love, although from the point of view of his willing to do good, God loves us from eternity: "Yet I have loved Jacob but I have hated Esau" (Mal 1:2). Jesus does not say here, "I will love him," because he had already made that clear to them before: "I love those who love me" (Prv 8:17). It remained for him to say that the Father would love them: "He loved the people: all the saints are in his hand" [Deut 4:37].

1944 The second thing needed is that the divine come to us; referring to this, he says, **and we will come to him**. An objection to this is that for a thing to come, it has to change its place. But God does not change. Therefore, I answer that God is said to come to us not because he moves to us, but because we move to him. Something comes into a place in which it previously was not: but this does not apply to God since he is everywhere: "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" (Jer 23:24). Rather, God is said to come to someone because he is there in a new

way, in a way he had not been there before, that is, by the effect of his grace. It is by this effect of grace that he makes us approach him.

1945 According to Augustine, God comes to us in three ways and we go to him in the same three ways. [\[43\]](#) First, he comes to us by filling us with his effects; and we go to him by receiving them: "Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my produce" (Sir 24:19). Secondly, God comes to us by enlightening us; and we go to him by thinking of him: "Come to him and be enlightened" [Ps 33:6]. Thirdly, he comes to us by helping us; and we go to him by obeying, because we cannot obey unless helped by Christ: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord" (Is 2:3).

1946 Why does he not mention the Holy Spirit? Augustine says that we do not read here that the Spirit will be excluded when the Father and Son come, because we read above that the Spirit was "to be with you for ever" (v 16). Since in the Trinity there is a distinction of Persons and a unity of essence, sometimes the three persons are mentioned to indicate the distinction of the persons. And sometimes only two of the three persons are mentioned to indicate the unity of essence. Or again, one could say that since the Holy Spirit is nothing other than the love of the Father and the Son, when the Father and Son are mentioned, the Spirit is implied.

1947 The third thing required for the manifestation of God is the continuation of each of the above, that is, of the love of God and of his coming to us. In regard to these he says, **and make our home with him**. Two things are indicated here. First, when he says, **home**, he indicates the stability with which we cling to God. God comes to some by faith, but does not remain because "they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away" (Lk 8:13). He comes to others through their sorrow for sin; yet he does not stay with them because they return to their sins: "Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool that repeats his folly" (Prv 26:11). But he remains forever in his predestined: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20). Secondly, these words indicate the intimacy of Christ with us: **with him**, that is, with the one who loves and obeys him, since he takes pleasure in us, and has us take pleasure in him, "delighting in the sons of men" (Prv 8:31).

1948 Chrysostom gives this a different meaning. [\[44\]](#) He says that when Judas heard **I will not leave you orphans ... but you will see me**, he thought that after his death Christ would come to them like the dead appear to us in a dream. So he asks, **how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?** This was like saying: How unfortunate for us! You will die and can only help us as the dead do. To exclude this Christ says, I and the Father **will come**

to him (v 23), that is, as the Father manifests himself, so I do also, **and make our home with him**, which is not done in dreams.

1949 Now he gives the reason why he will not manifest himself to the world: this reason is the lack of those things on account of which he says that he will manifest himself. For when the cause is absent, the effect is absent. Now the causes for a divine manifestation to be made to the worldly are not found in them. And so God will not manifest himself to the world and the worldly.

It is clear that they do not have the cause, because the world does not love him. Referring to this he says, **he who does not love me**. Further, they do not obey him; and so he says, **does not keep my words**. As Gregory says: "To love God it is necessary to use our words, our minds and our lives." [45] The reason is obvious why God will manifest himself to his own, and not to the world. It is because his own really have love, and it is love which distinguishes the saints from the world: "He hides the light from the proud. He shows his friend that he owns it" [Job 36:32]; "The deep says 'It is not in me' and the sea," that is, one who is disordered, "says, 'It is not with me.'" (Job 28:14).

1950 Then when he says, **and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's**, he clears up what he had just said, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my *Father* will love him, and *we* will come to him." For someone could say that there was no reason for this statement (v 23), and it would be more reasonable to have said: "I will love him, and I will come to him." To exclude this idea he says, **and the word which you hear is not mine**, that is, it is not mine as coming from myself, but it is mine as coming from another, from the Father, who sent me. It is like saying: One who does not hear this word does not love only me, he also does not love the Father. And therefore, one who loves both Christ and the Father deserves a manifestation of each. So he says: **and the word which you hear**, spoken by me, as a human being, is indeed mine insofar as I speak it, and yet it **is not mine**, insofar as it is mine from another: "My teaching is not mine" (7:16); "The words that I say to you I do not speak of my self" [14:10].

1951 Augustine remarks that when our Lord refers to his own words he uses the plural, "my words" (v 24), but when he speaks of the utterance of the Father, he uses the singular form, "the word which you hear is not mine," because he wants us to understand that the word of the Father is he himself, the unique Word of the Father. [46] Thus he says he is from the Father, and not from himself, because he is neither his own image nor his own Son, but the Son and image of the Father. Yet all the words in our heart are from this unique Word of the Father.

1952 Here our Lord promises gifts to his disciples. He had promised them both the Holy Spirit and himself; and so now he first mentions what they will receive when the Holy Spirit comes; and secondly, what they will receive from him, **peace**. From the coming of the Holy Spirit they will receive great things, namely an understanding of all the words of Christ. In regard to this he first mentions what he taught them, and secondly he promises they will understand them (v 26).

1953 He says, in regard to the first, **these things**, what I have said, **I have spoken to you**, by the instrument of my human nature, **while I am still with you**, as bodily present. It is indeed a very great favor that the Son himself should speak to us and teach us: "In these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb 1:1); "What is all flesh that it should hear its Lord?" [Deut 5:26].

1954 He promises them that they will understand his teachings through the Holy Spirit, who will give himself to them; he says, **the Paraclete ... will teach you all things**. He does three things concerning the Holy Spirit: he describes him, mentions his mission and his effect.

1955 He describes the Holy Spirit in several ways: as the Paraclete, as Spirit, and as Holy. He is the Paraclete because he consoles us. He consoles us in our sorrows which arise from the troubles of this world: "fighting without and fear within" (2 Cor 7:5); "who comforts us in all our affliction" (2 Cor 1:4). He does this because he is love, and causes us to love God and give him great honor. For this reason we endure insults with joy: "Then they left the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name" (Acts 5:41); "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven" (Mt 5:12). He also consoles us in our sadness over past sins; Matthew refers to this in "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted" (5:4). He does this because he gives us the hope of forgiveness: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven" (20:22).

He is the Spirit because he moves hearts to obey God: "He will come like a rushing stream, which the Spirit of the Lord drives" [Is 59:19]; "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom 8:14). He is Holy because he consecrates us to God, and all consecrated things are called holy: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you" (1 Cor 6:19); "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God" (Ps 46:4).

1956 Then when he says, **whom the Father will send in my name**, he refers to the mission of the Spirit. We should not think the Spirit comes by a local motion, but rather by being in them in a new way in which he was not before:

"When you send forth your Spirit, they are created," that is, with a spiritual existence (Ps 104:30). Notice that the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son. To show this Christ sometimes says that the Father sends him, as he does here; and he sometimes says that he himself sends him, "I will send him to you" (16:7). Yet Christ never says that the Spirit is sent by the Father without mentioning himself. So he says here, **whom the Father will send in my name**. Nor does Christ say that the Spirit is sent by himself, the Son, without mentioning the Father: "the Paraclete, whom I shall send to you from the Father" (15:26).

1957 Why does he say, **in my name**? Will the Holy Spirit be called the Son? One could answer that this was said for the reason that the Holy Spirit was given to the faithful when they invoked the name of Christ. But it is better to say that just as the Son comes in the name of the Father • "I have come in my Father's name" • so the Holy Spirit comes in the name of the Son. Now the Son comes in the name of the Father not because he is the Father, but because he is the Son of the Father. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit comes in the name of the Son not because he was to be called the Son, but because he is the Spirit of the Son: "Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom 8:9); "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts" (Gal 4:6), because he is the Spirit of his Son, and not because he was to be called the Son: "he predestined [them] to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29). The basis for this is the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father and of the Holy Spirit with the Son.

Further, just as the Son, coming in the name of the Father, subjects his faithful to the Father • "and has made them a kingdom and priests to our God" (Rev 5:10) • so the Holy Spirit conforms us to the Son because he adopts us as children of God: You have received the spirit of adoption, by which we cry out 'Abba! Father' [Rom 8:15].[\[47\]](#)

1958 Next he mentions the effect of the Holy Spirit, saying, **he will teach you all things**. Just as the effect of the mission of the Son was to lead us to the Father, so the effect of the mission of the Holy Spirit is to lead the faithful to the Son. Now the Son, once he is begotten Wisdom, is Truth itself: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6). And so the effect of this kind of mission [of the Spirit] is to make us sharers in the divine wisdom and knowers of the truth. The Son, since he is the Word, gives teaching to us; but the Holy Spirit enables us to grasp it.

He says, **he will teach you all things**, because no matter what a person may teach by his exterior actions, he will have no effect unless the Holy Spirit gives an

understanding from within. For unless the Spirit is present to the heart of the listener, the words of the teacher will be useless: "The breath of the Almighty makes him understand" (Job 32:8). This is true even to the extent that the Son himself, speaking by means of his human nature, is not successful unless he works from within by the Holy Spirit.

1959 We read before that "Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me" (6:45). Here he is expanding on this, because one does not learn without the Holy Spirit teaching. He is saying in effect: one who receives the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son knows the Father and the Son and comes to them. The Spirit makes us know all things by inspiring us from within, by directing us and lifting us up to spiritual things. Just as one whose sense of taste is tainted does not have a true knowledge of flavors, so one who is tainted by love of the world cannot taste divine things: "The sensual man does not perceive those things of the Spirit of God" [1 Cor 2:14].

1960 Since to remind a person of something is the task of an inferior, like an agent in divine affairs, shall we say that the Holy Spirit, who brings things to our mind, is inferior to us? According to Gregory, we should say that the Holy Spirit is said to bring things to our remembrance not as though he brought us knowledge from below, but because in a hidden way he aids our ability to know.[\[48\]](#) Or, one could say the Spirit teaches because he makes us share in the wisdom of the Son; and he brings things to our remembrance because, being love, he incites us. Or, the Spirit **will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you**, that is, he will recall them to your memory: "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord" (Ps 22:27).

We should notice that of all the things Christ said to his disciples, some were not understood, and others were not remembered. Thus our Lord says, **he will teach you all things**, which you cannot now understand, and **bring to your remembrance all** that you cannot remember. How could John the Evangelist after forty years have remembered all the sayings of Christ he wrote in his Gospel unless the Holy Spirit had brought them to his mind?

LECTURE 7

27a "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you."

1961 Above, our Lord promised his disciples what they would gain from the presence of the Holy Spirit. Here he promises them a gift they will obtain from his own coming and presence.

Note that if we consider the characteristic feature of the persons of the Son and the Holy Spirit, our Lord seems to interchange their gifts. Since the Son is the Word, it seems that the gifts of wisdom and knowledge are appropriate to him. But peace is appropriate, appropriated, to the Holy Spirit, since he is love, which the cause of peace. Nevertheless, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son, and what the Holy Spirit gives he has from the Son, our Lord here attributes this gift of knowledge to the Holy Spirit, saying, **he will teach you all things**. Yet, this gift is still appropriate to the Son. And because the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son, actions which are appropriate to the Holy Spirit are attributed to the Son. This is the reason why Christ attributes peace to himself, saying, **Peace I leave with you**. First, he promises his gift of peace, which he is leaving; secondly, he distinguishes this peace from the peace of the world.

1962 He says, **Peace I leave with you**. Peace is nothing else than the tranquillity arising from order, for things are said to have peace when their order remains undisturbed. In a human being there is a threefold order: that of a person to himself; of a person to God; and of a person to his neighbor. Thus, the human person can enjoy a threefold peace. One peace is interior, when he is at peace with himself, and his faculties are not unsettled: Great peace have those who love your law" (Ps 119:165). Another peace is peace with God, when one is entirely conformed to his direction: "Since we are justified by faith, let us have peace with God" (Rom 5:1). The third peace is with our neighbor: "Strive for peace with all men" (Heb 12:14).

There are three things which have to be put in order within us: the intellect, the will and sense appetency. The will should be directed by the mind or reason, and sense appetency should be directed by the intellect and will. Accordingly, Augustine, in his *The Words of our Lord*, describes the peace of the saints by saying: "Peace is a calmness of mind, a tranquillity of soul, a simplicity of heart, a bond of love and a fellowship of charity."[\[49\]](#) Calmness of mind refers to our reason, which should be free, not tied down, nor absorbed by disordered affections; tranquillity of soul refers to our sense appetency, which should not be harassed by our emotional states; simplicity of heart refers to our will, which should be entirely set toward God, its object; the bond of love refers to our neighbor; and the fellowship of charity to God. The saints have this peace now, and will have it in the future. But here it is imperfect because we cannot have an undisturbed peace either with ourselves, or with God, or with our neighbor. We will enjoy it perfectly in the future, when we reign without an enemy and there can never be conflicts.

Our Lord here promises us each kind of peace. The first kind when he says,

Peace I leave with you, that is, in this world, so that you can conquer the enemy and love each other. This is a kind of covenant established by Christ which we should keep: "A covenant of peace was established with him" (Si 45:24). As Augustine says, one can not gain the inheritance of the Lord who is unwilling to observe his covenant, nor can he have a union with Christ if he lives in strife with a Christian.[\[50\]](#) He promises the second kind of peace when he says, **my peace I give to you**, that is, in the future: "I will bring her," the heavenly Jerusalem, "a river of peace" [Is 66:12].

1963 Since whether in this world or in our native land, all the peace possessed by the saints comes to them through Christ - "in me you shall have peace" [16:33] • why does our Lord, when speaking of the peace of the saints in this life not say, "my peace I give to you," instead of reserving this for the peace of our native land? We should say that each peace, of the present and of the future, is a peace of Christ. But our present peace is the peace of Christ because he is only its author. The future peace is the peace of Christ both because he is its author and because it is a peace such as he possesses it. He always had this second kind of peace, because he was always without [interior] conflict. Our present peace, as was said, is not without conflict, and although Christ is its author, he does not possess it this way. This explanation makes use of the distinction between the peace of this time and the peace of eternity. According to Augustine, both statements can refer to the peace of this time. Then Christ is saying, **Peace I leave with you**, by my example, but **my peace I give to you**, by my power and strength.

1964 Then when he says, **not as the world gives do I give to you**, he distinguishes this peace from the peace of the world. The peace of the saints is different from the peace of the world in three ways. First, the purpose of each is different. Temporal peace is directed to the quiet and calm enjoyment of temporal things, with the result that it sometimes helps a person to sin: "They live in strife due to ignorance, and they call such great evils peace" (Wis 14:22). But the peace of the saints is directed to eternal goods. The meaning, therefore is: **not as the world gives do I give to you**, that is, not for the same end. The world gives peace so exterior goods can be possessed undisturbed; but I give peace so that you can obtain eternal things.

They also differ as the pretended or deceitful from the true, because the peace of the world is a pretended peace since it is only on the outside: "The wicked ... who speak peace with their neighbors, while mischief is in their hearts" (Ps 27:3). But the peace of Christ is true, because it is both on the outside and the inside. So the meaning is, **not as the world gives do I give to you**, that is, I do not give a pretended peace, as the world does, but true peace. Thirdly, they differ in perfection, because the peace of the world is imperfect since it is not concerned

with the interior tranquillity of a person but only with externals. "There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked" (Is 57:21). But the peace of Christ brings tranquillity both within and without. "Great peace have those who love your law" (Ps 119:165). So the meaning is: **not as the world gives**, that is, not such an imperfect peace.

LECTURE 8

27b "Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father, [who is greater than I]: for the Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe. 30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; 31 but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go hence."[\[51\]](#)

1965 Above, our Lord consoled his disciples by mentioning what directly affected them: he promised them that they could approach the Father, that the Holy Spirit would come, and that he himself would return. Here he consoles them by mentioning what directly concerns himself. These give them two reasons for being consoled: one is from the fruit which will follow Christ's leaving; the other is from the reason for his death (v 30).

1966 Now the fruit which would follow from Christ's leaving would be such things as his exaltation, which would console them. For it is usual among friends that when one departs to go to his exaltation, the others feel less desolate. And so our Lord mentions this reason for their consolation. First, he casts a certain uneasiness from their hearts; secondly, he recalls something which somewhat consoled them, yet partly troubled them; thirdly, he gives a reason which will completely console them; fourthly, he answers an unspoken question.

1967 He casts out uneasiness from their hearts when he says, **Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid**. Here, trouble means sadness, and being afraid refers to fear. Sadness and fear are similar in that both are concerned with an evil. Yet they are different because sadness is over an evil which is present, while fear is over an evil which is to come. Our Lord said, **Let not your hearts be troubled**, about evil which is present: "For the righteous will never be moved" (Ps 112:6). **Neither let them be afraid**, of what is future: "Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies?" (Is 51:12), which refers to

human fear, for he does not reject divine fear.

1968 Then when he says, **You heard me say to you, I go away**, they were troubled because he was leaving them. But they were somewhat consoled because he added, **and I will come to you**. This did not completely console them because they were afraid that perhaps in the meantime, when the shepherd was gone, the wolf would attack the flock, according to "Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered" (Zech 13:7). Thus he said to them, **Let not your hearts be troubled** because **I go away, neither let them be afraid** because **I will come to you**.

He goes by his own power, by dying; and he comes by arising: "The Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death ... and he will rise on the third day" [Mt 20:18]. Again, he went by his ascension: "The beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength" [Is 63:1]; and he will come to judge: "They will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Lk 21:27).

1969 He completely consoles them when he says, **If you loved me, you would have rejoiced**. It is like saying: If you love me, you should not be sad, but rather rejoice that I am leaving, because I am leaving to be exalted, **because I go to the Father, who is greater than I**.

1970 This passage led Arius to the disparaging statement that the Father is greater than the Son. Yet our Lord's own words repel this error. One should understand **the Father is greater than I**, based on the meaning of **I go to the Father**. Now the Son does not go to the Father insofar as he is the Son of God, for as the Son of God he was with the Father from eternity: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God" (1:1). Rather, he is said to go to the Father because of his human nature. Thus when he says, **the Father is greater than I**, he does not mean I, as Son of God, but as Son of man, for in this way he is not only inferior to the Father and the Holy Spirit, but even to the angels: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels" [Heb 2:9]. Again, in some things he was subject to human beings, as his parents (Lk 2:51). Consequently, he is inferior to the Father because of his human nature, but equal because of his divine nature: "He did not think it robbery to be equal to God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" [Phil 2:6].

1971 One could also say, as Hilary does, that even according to the divine nature the Father is greater than the Son, yet the Son is not inferior to the Father, but equal.[\[52\]](#) For the Father is not greater than the Son in power, eternity and greatness, but by the dignity of a grantor or source. For the Father receives

nothing from another, but the Son, if I can put it this way, receives his nature from the Father by an eternal generation. So, the Father is greater because he gives; but the Son is not inferior, but equal, because he receives all that the Father has: "God has bestowed on him the name which is above every name" (Phil 2:9). For the one to whom a single act of existence (*esse*) is given, is not inferior to the giver.

1972 Chrysostom explains this by saying that our Lord is saying this by taking into account the opinions of the apostles, who did not yet know of the resurrection or think that he was equal to the Father. [53] And so he said to them: even if you do not believe me on the ground that I cannot help myself, or expect that I will see you again after my cross, yet believe me **because I go to the Father, who is greater than I.**

1973 He now answers an unspoken question when he says, **And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe.** For they could have asked why he was telling them these things, and so he anticipates them by saying this.

Augustine brought up a problem: since faith is concerned with things which are not seen, a person should not believe after the event, but before it. One should say to this that the apostles saw one thing and believed another. They saw the death and resurrection of Christ, and having seen, they believed that he was the Christ, the Son of God. But after these events they did not believe with a new faith, but with an increased faith. Or, indeed, they believed with a failing faith when he had died, and a renewed faith when he arose, as Augustine says. [54]

1974 Then when he says, **I will no longer talk much with you**, he mentions another source of their consolation, based on the reason for his death. Sometimes the reason for a person's death is a cause for sorrow, as when one is killed because he is guilty; other reasons are consoling, as when someone dies for that good we call virtue: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief ... yet if one suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed" (1 Pet 4:15). With respect to this, our Lord first shows that a sin was not the reason for his death; secondly, that it was caused by the virtues of obedience and love, **so that the world may know that I love the Father.**

1975 He says, **I will no longer talk much with you**, because the time is short: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you" (13:33). Or, because you are not yet ready for it: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (16:12). Or, **I will no longer talk much with you**, because I will briefly explain to you that I will not die because of my own guilt. And he does this when

he says, **for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me.** This ruler is the devil, and he is called a ruler of this world not because he is its creator, or because of his natural power, as the Manicheans blasphemed, but because of guilt, that is, because of the lovers of this world. For this reason he is called the ruler of the world and of sin: "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against ... the world rulers this present darkness" (Eph 6:12). Therefore, he is not the ruler of creatures, but of sinners and of darkness: "He is king over all the children of pride" (Job 41:34).

So this ruler comes to afflict: he entered into the heart of Judas to incite his betrayal, and into the hearts of the Jews to incite them to kill. But **he has no power over me**, for he has no power over us except because of sin: "Every one who commits sin is a slave to sin" (8:34). Now in Christ there was no sin: not in his soul, "He committed no sin" (1 Pet 2:22), nor in his flesh, because he was conceived of the Virgin without original sin through the Holy Spirit: "the child to be born of you will be called holy, the Son of God" (Lk 1:35). Because the devil even attacked Christ, over whom he had no right, he deserved to lose what he justly held: "What have I do to with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" [Mk 5:7]. So it is clear that the cause of Christ's death was not his own guilt; and there was no reason for him to die if he had no sin.

1976 Then he mentions the true reason for his death, which is that good which is virtue. He says, **so that the world may know that I love the Father.** Augustine relates this sentence to what follows, **Rise, let us go hence.** [\[55\]](#)

Two things led Christ to undergo death: love for God and love for neighbor; "Walk in love" (Eph 5:2). He shows this love by the sign that he accomplishes what God commands: "If you love me keep my commandments" [14:15]. Referring to this he says, **that the world may know that I love the Father**, with an active love, because I go to die. Thus he adds, **I do as the Father has commanded me.** This is obedience, which is produced by love; and it is the second thing by which the Father moved him to undergo death. The Father did not give this commandment to the Son of God, who since he is the Word, is also the command of the Father. He gave this commandment to the Son of man, insofar as he infused into his soul that it was necessary for the salvation of humankind that the Christ die in his human nature. And so, that the world may know these things, **Rise**, from the place where they had eaten, **let us go hence**, to the place where I am to be betrayed, so that you can see that I am not dying by necessity, but from love and obedience: "He goes out to meet the weapons" (Job 39:21).

1977 Chrysostom understands this differently, since he does not relate **Rise, let**

us go hence, to what came before it in the same way.^[56] The meaning now is: I am not dying because the ruler of this world has power over me; I am doing this because I love the Father. But as for you, **Rise, let us go hence**. He said this because he saw they were afraid, both because of the time, as it was deep into the night, and due to the place, for they were obviously at some house and constantly watching the entrance as if expecting to be set upon by their enemies. Consequently they were not paying attention to what he was saying. So Christ led them to another hidden place, so that feeling more secure they could listen with more attention to what he would say to them and understand it better: "I will bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her" (Hos 2:14).

^[1] St. Thomas refers to Jn 14:1 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 1, a. 9, obj. 5; q. 16, a. 1, obj. 2; q. 174, a. 6; Jn 14: 2: *ST* I-II, q. 5, a. 2, s. c.; III, q. 57, a. 6; q. 75, a. 1; Jn 14:3: *ST* III, q. 57, a. 1, ad 3; q. 57, a. 6.

^[2] Summa-different degrees of happiness in heaven.

^[3] *Moralia*, 22, ch. 24; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:1-4.

^[4] *Tract. in Io.*, 67, ch.2, col. 1812; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:1-4.

^[5] *Ibid.*, 3, col. 1813; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:1-4.

^[6] *Tract. in Io.*, 68, ch. 1, col. 1814; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:1-4.

^[7] Summa-the saints will be with Christ immediately after death.

^[8] St. Thomas refers to Jn 14:5 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 45, a. 1; Jn 14:6: *ST* I, q. 2, a. 1, obj. 3; I, q. 3, a. 3, s. c.; I, q. 16, a. 5, s. c.; I, q. 39, a. 8, obj 5; II-II, q. 34, a. 1, obj. 2; III, q. 78, a. 5, s. c.

^[9] Summa-Christ is essentially truth and life and thus the object of man's desire.

^[10] *Sermones de Verbis Domini* 142, ch. 1; PL 38, col. 778; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:5-7.

^[11] *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:15-7.

[12] *De Trin.*, 7, ch. 33; PL 10, col. 228A; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:5-7.

[13] *Tract. in Io.*, 69, ch. 2, col. 1816; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:5-7.

[14] *In Ioannem hom.*, 73, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 398; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:5-7.

[15] *De Trin.*, 7, ch. 33; PL 10, col. 228A; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:5-7.

[16] St. Thomas quotes Jn 14: 9 in the *Summa Theologiae*: I, q. 19, a. 4, arg. 1; q. 88, a. 3, arg 2; Jn 14: 11: *ST* I, q. 42, a. 5, s. c; II-II, q. 1, a. 8, obj. 3; Jn 14:10: *ST* III, q. 43, a. 2, s. c.; Jn 14:12: *ST* I- q. 105, a. 8, s. c.; I-II, q. 111, a. 2, obj. 2; q. 113, a. 9, s. c.; III, q. 43, a. 4, obj. 2; q. 64, a. 4, obj. 2; q. 69, a. 6, obj. 2.

[17] *Tract. in Io.*, 70, ch. 1, col. 1818; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:8-11.

[18] *De Trin.*, 7, ch. 34; PL 10, col. 228D; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:8-11.

[19] *Tract. in Io.*, 70, ch. 2, col. 1819 ; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:8-11.

[20] *Summa--*

[21] *In Ioannem hom.*, 74, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 401; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:8-11.

[22] *Tract. in Io.*, 70, ch. 3, col. 1820; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:8-11.

[23] *De Trin.*, 7; PL 10; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:8-11.

[24] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 74, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 401; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:8-11.

[25] *Tract. in Io.*, 71, ch. 1, 2, col. 1820-1; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:8-11.

[26] *Tract. in Io.*, 71, ch. 2, col. 1821; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:12-14.

[27] *Tract. in Io.*, 71, ch. 3, col. 1821-2; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:12-14.

[28] *In Ioannem hom.*, 74, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 402; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:12-14.

[29] *Tract. in Io.*, 72, ch. 2, col. 1823; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:12-14.

[30] St. Thomas quotes Jn 14:16 in the *Summa Theologiae*: I, q. 27, a. 3, s. c.; II-II, q. 83, a. 10, obj. 1; Jn 14:17: *ST* I-II, q. 68, a. 3, s. c.; q. 106, a. 1, ad 1.

[31] summa-appropriation of persons in the trinity

[32] *In Ioannem hom.*, 75, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 405; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:15-17.

[33] Ambrose.

[34] *Moralia*, V, ch. 28, no. 50; PL 75, col. 706A; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:15-17.

[35] *Tract. in Io.*, 74, ch. 4; col 1828; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:15-17.

[36] Chrysostom, *In Ioannem hom.*, 75, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 405; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:15-17.

[37] St. Thomas quotes Jn 14: 18 in *Summa Theologiae*: I, q. 88, a. 3, s. c.; Jn 14:21: *ST* I-II, q. 114, a. 4, s. c.; II-II, q. 24, a. 12, s. c.; III, q. 58, a. 3, obj. 4.

[38] *Tract. in Io.*, 75, ch. 2, col. 1829; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:18-21.

[39] *De Trin.*, 8; PL 10; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:18-21.

[40] *Tract. in Io.*, 75, ch. 5, col. 1830; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:18-21.

[41] St. Thomas quotes Jn 14:23 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 184, a. 3, obj. 3; Jn 14:28: *ST* I, q. 42, a. 4, obj. 1; Jn 14:23: *ST* I, q. 43, a. 4 obj. 2 and a. 5.

[42] *Homiliae in Evangelista XXX*, ch.1; PL 76, col. 1220C; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:22-27.

[43] *Tract. in Io.*, 76, ch. 2, col. 1831; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:22-27.

[44] *In Ioannem hom.*, 75, ch. 3; PG 59, col. 406; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:22-27.

[45] *Homiliae in Evangelista XXX*, ch. 2; PL 76, col. 1221B; cf. *Catena Aurea*,

14:22-27.

[46] *Tract. in Io.*, 76, ch. 5, col. 1832; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:22-27.

[47] Summa-this whole section of the chapter on the nature of the Holy Spirit and his relationship to the Father and the Son.

[48] *Homiliae in Evangelista XXX*, ch. 3; PL 76, col 1222B; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:22-27.

[49] *Sermones de Verbis Domini* 97; PL 39, col. 1931; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:22-27.

[50] Ibid.; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:22-27.

[51] St. Thomas quotes Jn 14:28 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 3, a. 8, obj. 1; q. 20, a. 1. s. c.; q. 57, a. 2, obj. 3; q. 58, a. 3 obj. 3; Jn 14:31: *ST* I, q. 42, a. 6, obj. 2; III, q. 47, a. 2, ad 1.

[52] *De Trin.*, 9, ch. 54; PL 10, col. 324B; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:27-31.

[53] *In Ioannem hom.*, 75, ch. 4; PG 59, col. 407; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:27-31.

[54] *Tract. in Io.*, 79, ch. 1, col. 1838; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:27-31.

[55] *Tract. in Io.*, 79, ch. 2, col. 1838; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:27-31.

[56] *In Ioannem hom.*, 76, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 409-411; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 14:27-31.

15

LECTURE I

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are [and he is] gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so [become] prove to be my disciples.[1]

1978 In this talk our Lord especially wants to comfort his disciples about two things: one was near, in the present, and this was his passion; the other was what they feared in the future, and this was the troubles which would come upon them. He had said to them about these two things: **Let not your hearts be troubled**, referring to the first, and neither let them be afraid (14:27), referring to the second.

So now, after comforting them over his leaving (14:1), he strengthens them for the troubles which will come upon them. First, he presents a certain picture; secondly, he moves from this to his intention (15:3). The picture he presents is of a vine and a vinedresser. First, he mentions the vine; secondly, the vinedresser; and thirdly, he approves of the vinedresser's concern for the branches of the vine.

1979 He himself is the vine. So he says, making a comparison, **I am the vine**; for just like a vine, although it seems to be of small account, nevertheless

surpasses all trees in the sweetness of its fruit, so Christ, although he seemed to be despised by the world because he was poor, and seemed of small account and was publicly disgraced, nevertheless produced the sweetest fruit: "His fruit was sweet to my taste" (Song 2:3). And so Christ is a vine producing a wine which interiorly intoxicates us: a wine of sorrow for sin: "You have given us to drink the wine of sorrow" [Ps 60:3]; and a wine which strengthens us, that is, which restores us: "My blood is drink indeed" (6:55). In the same way he compared himself, above, to wheat, for his flesh is truly food.

This is the vine mentioned in Genesis (40:9•10): "There was a vine before me, and on the vine there were three branches," that is Christ, in whom there are three substances: his body, soul and divinity. This is also the vine about which Jacob says: "My son, tie your she•ass," that is, the Church, "to the vine" [Gen 49:11].

1980 This vine is true. Sometimes what is true is distinguished from its likeness, as a man is distinguished from his picture. And sometimes what is true is distinguished from what is deformed or spoiled, as true wine is distinguished from vinegar, which is spoiled wine. When Christ says here, **I am the true vine**, he is using true in the second sense to distinguish himself from the deformed or spoiled vine, which is the Jewish people. We read about them: "How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine" (Jer 2:21). This was because this vine brought forth wild grapes instead of grapes: "When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?" (Is 5:4).

1981 There are two natures in Christ, the divine and the human. Because of his human nature he is like us and is less than the Father. Because of his divine nature he is like God and above us. Thus he is the true vine insofar as he is the head of the Church, the man Christ Jesus. He implies this when he mentions the vinedresser, who is the Father. He says, **and my Father is the vinedresser**. If Christ is the vine because of his divine nature, the Father would also be the vine like the Son. But because Christ is the vine by reason of his human nature, the Father is related to him as vinedresser to vine. Indeed, even Christ himself, as God, is a vinedresser.

1982 [The vinedresser cultivates the vine.] Now to cultivate something is to devote one's interest to it. And we can cultivate something in two ways: either to make what is cultivated better, as we cultivate a field or something of that sort, or to make ourselves better by the cultivating, and in this way we cultivate wisdom. God cultivates us to make us better by his work, since he roots out the evil seeds in our hearts. As Augustine says, he opens our hearts with the plow of his words, plants the seeds of the commandments, and harvests the fruit of

devotion.[\[2\]](#)

But we cultivate God, not by plowing but by adoring, in order that we may be made better by him: "If any one is a worshiper," that is, a cultivator, "of God and does his will, God listens to him" (9:31). And so the Father is the vinedresser of this vine for the good of others. For he plants: "I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed" (Jer 2:21), and makes it grow: I planted, Apollos can make one grow from within and produce fruit, no matter how much others cooperate on the exterior. And God guards and preserves, for we read that he built a watchtower in the vineyard, and put a hedge around it (Mt 21:33; Is 5:2).

1983 The vinedresser is concerned about two things: the vine and its branches. Now the vine considered here was perfect, and did not need care by the vinedresser. And so the entire care of the vinedresser will be directed to the branches. He says, **every branch of mine** and so forth. The branches of a vine, however, have the nature of the vine; and so those united to Christ are branches of this vine: "The vine brought forth branches" [Ez 17:6]. He mentions two things about the branches: first, the attitude of the vinedresser to the bad branches; his interest in the good branches.

1984 The vinedresser's interest in the bad branches is to cut them off the vine. Thus he says, **every branch**, that is, every believer, **of mine that bears no fruit**, that is, bears no fruit on the vine, which is me, without whom nothing can bear fruit, **he takes away** from the vine. It is clear from this that not only are some cut off from Christ for doing evil, but also because they neglect to do good: "We entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor 6:1). Thus the Apostle said about himself: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain" (1 Cor 15:10). We read in Matthew (25:28) that the money was taken away from the servant who did not bear fruit with it, but hid it instead; and our Lord ordered the unfruitful fig tree to be cut down (Lk 13:7).

1985 His interest in the good branches is to help them so they can bear more fruit. So he says, **and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit**. Considering the literal sense, we see that a natural vine with branches that have many shoots bears less fruit, because the sap is spread out through all the shoots. Thus the vinedresser prunes away the extra shoots so that the vine can bear more fruit. It is the same with us. For if we are well-disposed and united to God, yet scatter our love over many things, our virtue becomes weak and we become less able to do good. This is why God, in order that we may bear fruit, will frequently remove such obstacles and prune us by sending troubles and temptations, which make us stronger. Accordingly, he says, he **prunes**, even though one may be clean, for in this life no one is so

clean that he does not need to be cleansed more and more: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 Jn 1:8). And he does this so **that it may bear more fruit**, that is, grow in virtue, so that the more pruned or cleansed the more fruitful one is: "Let the just still be justified, and the holy still be sanctified" [Rev 22:11]; "The Gospel is bearing fruit and growing" (Col 1:6); "They go from strength to strength" (Ps 84:7).

1986 Now he passes from this picture to his main intention. Two things were noticed in the above picture when comparing the branches to the vine: the union of the branches to the vine, and the pruning of the branches. First, he considers the union of the branches with the vine; secondly, their pruning (v 18). As to the first, he advises the disciples to cling to the vine; secondly, he gives the reason for this (v 4b); thirdly, he describes this union (v 9). He does two things concerning the first: he reminds them of a benefit already received; secondly, he tells them to abide in him (4a).

1987 The benefit they had already received was that of being cleansed. He says, **you are already made clean**. It is like saying: I have said certain things about branches; and you are branches ready to be pruned so as to bear fruit. And you are clean by the **word which I have spoken to you**.

The word of Christ, in the first place, cleanses us from error by teaching us: "He must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine" (Tit 1:9). This is because there is no falsity in the words of God: "All my words are right" [Prv 8:8]. He says, **you are already made clean** from the errors of the Jews. Secondly, the word of Christ cleanses our hearts from earthly affections by inflaming them toward heavenly things. For the word of God by its power moves our hearts, weighed down by earthly things, and sets them on fire: "Is not my word fire?" (Jer 23:29). Thirdly when God is invoked in baptism, his word cleanses us from sin. For we are cleansed in baptism because the word cleanses with the water. As Augustine says: "Take away the word and what is the water but only water? The word accompanies the element and a sacrament is formed."[\[3\]](#) Thus it is the word which makes the water touch the body and wash the heart. The word, I say, not because it is spoken, but because it is believed. For this word of faith is so strong in the Church that it even cleanses infants, although they themselves cannot believe, when it is proclaimed from the faith of those who believe, offer, bless and touch the infants, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). Fourthly, the word of Christ cleanses by the power of faith: God "cleansed their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9).[\[4\]](#)

Thus he says to them, you already instructed, moved, baptized, strengthened in

faith, **are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you.**

"You are clean, but not all" (13:10). Since he had said above that the work of a vinedresser was to prune, he clearly shows that he is a vinedresser when he says that his word cleanses. And indeed, Christ, as God, is a vinedresser and prunes the branches.

1988 Here he urges them to persevere. He is saying in effect: Because you are now cleansed and have received such a great benefit, you should remain this way. He says, **Abide in me**, by charity: "He who abides in love abides in God" (1 Jn 4:16); and by means of the sacraments: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me" (6:56). He says, **Abide in me**, by receiving grace, **and I in you**, by helping you.

1989 Next (v 4b), he gives four reasons for being united to Christ. First, it sanctifies those who are united to him; secondly, those not united are punished (v 6); thirdly, those who are united to him have their desires satisfied (v 7); fourthly, it glorifies God (v 8). In regard to the first, he shows that being united to Christ is necessary in order to bear fruit; secondly that this is efficacious (v 5).

1990 He does two things about the first: first, he presents an illustration; and secondly shows that it is apt. As to the first he says, I say that you should abide in me so that you can bear fruit, because just **as the branch** literally, a material branch, **cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine**, from whose roots sap ascends to give life to the branches, so **neither can you** bear fruit **unless you abide in me**. Thus, being united to Christ is the reason why someone bears fruit. And so of those who are not united to Christ we read: "What return [fruit] did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed?" (Rom 6:21); "The company of the godless is barren" (Job 15:34).

His example is apt because **I am the vine, you are the branches**. It is like saying: The relation between you and me is like that of branches to the vine. We read of these branches: "It sent out its branches to the sea" [Ps 80:11].

1991 Here he shows that being united to Christ is efficacious: first, he shows that it is efficacious; secondly, the reason for this efficacy (v 5b).

1992 First he says: I say that it is not only necessary for a person to abide in me in order to bear fruit, it is also efficacious, **because he who abides in me**, by believing, obeying and persevering, **and I in him**, by giving enlightenment, help and perseverance, he it is and not another, **that bears much fruit**.

Such persons bear a threefold fruit in this life. The first is that they avoid sin.

Secondly, they are eager to accomplish works of holiness: "the return you get is sanctification" (Rom 6:22). Thirdly, they are eager for the progress of others: "The earth will be filled with the fruit of your works" [Ps 104:13]. They also produce a fourth fruit, but in eternal life: "He gathers fruit for eternal life" (4:36). Eternal life is the last and perfect fruit of our labors: "The fruit of good works is glorious" [Wis 3:15].

1993 The reason for this efficacy is because **apart from me you can do nothing**. With these words he instructs the hearts of the humble and silences the mouths of the proud, especially of the Pelagians, who say that they can do by themselves, without the help of God, the good works of the virtues and of the law. And although they were trying to maintain our free will, they really undermined it. Look at what our Lord says here! He says that without him we cannot do anything great, nor anything small, indeed, we cannot do anything at all. This is not surprising because neither does God do anything without him: "Without him was not anything made that was made" (1:3). For our works are either from the power of nature or from divine grace. If they are from the power of nature, then, since every action of nature is from the Word of God, no nature can act to do anything without him. If our works are from the power of grace, then, since he is the author of grace • "grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (1:17) • it is obvious that no meritorious work can be done without him: "Not that we are capable of thinking anything of ourselves as originating from ourselves; our capability is from God" [2 Cor 3:5]. Therefore, if we cannot even think without it coming from God, much less can we do anything else.[\[5\]](#)

1994 Here he mentions the second reason for remaining united to Christ, which is the threat of punishment, for unless we abide in him, we will not escape punishment. He mentions five things which describe this punishment. Some of these belong to the punishment of loss, that is to say, the exclusion from glory; so he says, **he is cast forth**. Sometimes on a natural vine we see a branch which remains by some sort of an external connection without sharing any of the sap. In this way also some remain connected to Christ only by faith, yet they do not share the sap of the vine because they do not have charity. Thus, such persons will be cast out, that is, separated from fellowship with the good.[\[6\]](#)

The second punishment of loss is a withering; he says, **and withers**, for if such a person once took anything at all from the root, he will lose it when deprived of its help and life. Even bad Christians seem to have some kind of a freshness, but when they are separated from the saints and from Christ their dried up condition will be apparent: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd" (Ps 22:16).

The third punishment is association with those who are evil; he says, **and he is**

gathered, by the reaping angels, to be with the wicked. This is a very great punishment. For if it is a great punishment to be with the wicked for only a little while, how much greater it is to be with the most evil men and devils forever: "They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit" (Is 24:22); "Gather the weeds first and bind them into bundles to be burned" (Mt 13:30).

The fourth punishment is that of sense; he says, **thrown into the fire**, which is eternal: "What will be done with the wood of the vine?... Look, it is given to the fire for fuel" [Ez 15:2]. If the wood of the vine does not remain united to it, it is more worthless than other woods; but if it abides on the vine it is more beautiful than the others. Thus Augustine says: "A branch is fit for two things: either the vine or the fire. If it is not on the vine, it will be in the fire." [7] "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire" (Mt 25:41). The fifth punishment is the unending experience of fire, he says, **and burned**, without end: "And they will go away into eternal punishment" (Mt 25:46).

1995 Now we have the third reason for abiding in Christ: our prayers become effective. He is saying, in effect, **If you abide in me**, you will obtain this fruit, that is, **ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you**.

Note that when before he urged them to remain united to him, he mentioned two things; and he repeats them here. First, he said before, **Abide in me**, and he repeats it here by saying, **If you abide in me**. Secondly, he said before, **and I in you**, in place of which he now says, **and my words abide in you**. Because Christ is the Word of the Father, all words of wisdom are from him: "The source of wisdom is God's Word in the highest heaven" (Sir 1:5). Thus it is clear that Christ is in us when the words of his wisdom are in us: "You do not have his word abiding in you" (5:38).

Thus he says, **and my words abide in you**, in four ways: by your loving them, believing them, meditating on them and accomplishing them: "My son, be attentive to my words," by believing them; "incline your ear to my sayings," by obeying or accomplishing them; "let them not escape from your sight," because you meditate on them; but "keep them within your heart," by loving them (Prv 4:20). "Your words were found and I ate them" (Jer 15:16).

Therefore, the words of Christ are in us when we do as he commands and love what he promises. And from this it follows that they teach us what we ought to pray for: "We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26). For this reason Christ taught us to pray with his own words (Mt 6:9; Lk 11:2). And so the words of God, when believed and meditated upon, teach us to ask for the things

necessary for our salvation; and these words of God when loved and accomplished help us to merit it. So he adds, **ask**, with sound judgment and perseverance, **whatever you will, and it shall be done for you**: "If you ask anything of the Father in my name he will give it to you" [16:23].

1996 Now the fourth reason for abiding in Christ is mentioned, and it is the glory of the Father. All our works should be directed to the glory of God: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory" (Ps 115:1); "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" [1 Cor 10:31]. And so our Lord shows that we are in Christ, because this is why we bear fruit, and because we bear fruit the Father is glorified. He says, **By this my Father is glorified**, that is, it reflects glory on my Father, **that you bear much fruit**.

Here he mentions, in reverse order, three things which follow one from the other. One refers to abiding in Christ, **you become my disciples**, and this is the same as "Abide in me" (v 4). The second follows from this, **you bear much fruit**. And from this my Father is glorified. He is saying in effect: It gives glory to the Father that you bear much fruit, and you bear much fruit because you are my disciples. You do this, first of all, by living well: "That they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5:16); and by teaching well, which also glorifies God: "Glorify the Lord by teaching" [Is 24:15]; "Every one who calls upon my name I have created him for my praise and glory" (Is 43:7). And so the apostles are the soil which bears much fruit because they have become the disciples of Christ by abiding in him and by the fire of their charity.

For these are the signs of a disciple of Christ: first that one abides in him, is united to him: "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples" (8:31). And by doing this they become fit for bearing the fruit of teaching. The second sign is charity: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (13:35). And because of this they are able to bear the fruit of good works, because nothing has any value without charity: "If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries ... but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor 13:2).

LECTURE 2

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 This is my commandment, that you love one another as I

have loved you. 13 Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[\[8\]](#)

1997 Above, our Lord urged his disciples to remain united with him; here he shows what this involves. He makes three points: first, to abide in him is to abide in his love; secondly, to abide in his love is to keep his commandments (v 10); thirdly, that his commandment is to love (v 12). He does two things about the first: first, he recalls the benefit granted to the disciples; secondly, he urges them to persevere, **abide in my love** (v 9).

1998 He says that the fact that we abide in Christ is due to his grace; and this grace is the effect of his love: "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jer 31:3). It is clear from this that all our good works are ours due to the benefit of divine love. For they would not be ours unless faith acted through love, and we would not love unless we were first loved. And so he reminds them of this benefit by saying, **As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.**

1999 The word "as" sometimes indicates an equality of nature, and at other times a similarity in acting. The Arians, who erred about this passage, wanted the "as" to indicate an equality, and because of this they concluded that the Son was inferior to the Father. But this is false. We must say, then, according to Augustine, that the word "as" indicates a likeness in grace and love; for the love with which the Son loves his disciples is a certain likeness of that love with which the Father loves the Son.[\[9\]](#)

Now since to love someone is to will good to that person, the Father loves the Son, with respect to the Son's divine nature, because the Father wills him his own infinite good, which he has, by communicating to the Son the very same numerical nature the Father himself has: "For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing" (5:20). The Father also loves the Son with respect to his human nature: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos 11:1). And he loves him so that he would be at once both God and man.

But the Son did not love the disciples in either of these ways. For he did not love them to the point of their being gods by nature, nor to the point that they would be united to God so as to form one person with him. But he did love them up to a similar point: he loved them to the extent that they would be gods by their participation in grace • "I say, 'You are gods'" (Ps 82:6); "He has granted to us precious and very great promises, that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4) • and he loved them to the extent that they would be united to God in affection: "He who is united to the Lord becomes one

spirit with him" (1 Cor 6:17); "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29). Thus the Father communicated to the Son a greater good, with respect to each nature of the Son, than the Son did to his disciples; yet there is a similarity, as was said.

2000 **Abide in my love.** This is like saying: Because you have received such a great benefit from my love, **abide** in it so that you love me. Or it could mean, **abide in my love** because I love you, that is, abide in my grace so you will not be excluded from the good things I have prepared for you. This meaning is the more apt, so that the thought is: Persevere in this state so that you will be loved by me through the effect of grace: "Every one should remain in the state in which he was called" (1 Cor 7:20). "He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jn 4:16).

2001 Now he shows what it means to abide in his love. First, he shows that it means to keep his commandment; secondly, he illustrates it with an example, **as I have kept my Father's commandments**; thirdly, he eliminates an assumption (v 11).

2002 He says, **Abide in my love**, and you will do this **if you keep my commandments**, for this is the way you will abide in my love. Keeping the commandments is an effect of divine love, not only of the love by which we love, but also of the love by which God loves us. For from the fact that God loves us, he influences us and helps us to fulfill his commandments, which we cannot do without grace: "In this is love, not that we love God but that he loved us first" [1 Jn 4:10].

2003 He adds an example when he says, **as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love**. For just as the love which the Father has for him is the model or standard of Christ's love for us, so Christ wants his obedience to be the model of our obedience. By saying this Christ shows that he abided in the Father's love because in all things he kept the Father's commandments. For he submitted to death: "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8); and refrained from all sin: "He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips" (1 Pet 2:22). These things are to be understood of Christ in his human nature: "He has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him" (8:29). And so he says, **I abide in his love**, because there is nothing in me, as a human being, opposed to his love.

2004 Now so they do not think he is urging them to keep his commandments for his own benefit and not for their benefit, he says, **These things I have spoken to you**, that you keep my commandments, for your own good, so **that my joy**

may be in you. Now love is the cause of joy, for everyone takes joy in what he loves. But God loves himself and creatures, especially rational creatures, to whom he grants an infinite good. So Christ rejoices in two things from all eternity: first, in his own good and that of the Father: "I was delighted every day, playing before him" [Prv 8:30]; secondly, he delights in the good of the rational creature: "delighting in the sons of men" (Prv 8:31), that is, in the fact that I am shared in by the children of men. He rejoices in these things from eternity: "As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you" (Is 62:5).

Consequently, our Lord wants us to become sharers of his joy by our observing his commandments. He says, **that my joy**, the joy I take in my divinity and that of my Father, **may be in you**. This is nothing else than eternal life, which as Augustine says, is joy in the truth.[\[10\]](#) **That my joy may be in you** means, in effect, that you may have eternal life: "Then you will delight yourself in the Almighty" (Job 22:26). **And that your joy**, which I take in my own humanity, **may be full**. The goods in which we rejoice are either imperfect or imperfectly possessed; and so in this life our joy cannot be full. But it will be full when perfect goods are perfectly possessed: "Enter into the joy of your master" (Mt 25:21).

2005 Now our Lord states what his precepts are: first, he states his commandment; secondly, he presents an example (v 12b); thirdly, he recalls a benefit (v 14).

2006 The commandment he gives is the commandment of charity, which he wants us to keep: **This is my commandment, that you love one another**. Since there are many other commandments of the Lord in the sacred writings, why does he say that his commandment is only the practice of charity?

The answer, according to Gregory, is that charity is the root and end of all the virtues.[\[11\]](#) It is the root, because it is from charity, firmly rooted in the human heart, that we are led to accomplish all the other commandments: "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law" (Rom 13:8). Therefore, all the commandments are, in a way, directed to this: that we do good to our neighbor, and not harm him; and this is done best through charity. Charity is the end because all the commandments are directed to it and by it alone are given strength: "The aim of our charge is love" (1 Tim 1:5). So he says, **This is my commandment, that you love one another**, since everything comes from charity as its source, and all things are directed to charity as their end. As Gregory puts it: just as many branches of a tree spring from one root, so the many virtues are produced from one root; and the branch of a good work has no life if it is not united to the root of charity.[\[12\]](#)

2007 Since we read in Matthew (22:40) that the law and the prophets depend not only on love for God, but also on love for neighbor, why does Christ mention here only love for neighbor? The answer is that one is included in the other: for a person who loves God must love his neighbor and things which belong to God; and the person who loves his neighbor for the sake of God must love God. Now although the objects of these acts are different, yet the outcomes are the same. There are two reasons why he mentions love of neighbor rather than the love of God. By doing this he wants to teach and lead them to help their neighbor, and to help them to become strong enough to endure sufferings from those who will persecute them. To do both of these, charity for our neighbor is necessary.

2008 Here he shows by an example how we should love our neighbor, which is, as Christ loved us. Now Christ loved us in the correct order and efficaciously. His love was orderly because he loved nothing in us but God and in relation to God: "I am the mother of beautiful love" (Si 24:18), and efficacious because he loved us so much that he delivered himself for us: "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:2). So we should love our neighbor, in a holy way, for his good, and efficaciously, by showing our love by our actions: "Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn 3:18).

2009 **Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.** Here he shows the efficacy of love, which is that one undergo death for his friends; this is a sign of the greatest love. Yet one could object that it is considered to be a sign of a greater love when someone lays down his life for his enemies, as Christ did: "But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). We should answer that Christ did not lay down his life for his enemies so that they would remain his enemies, but to make them his friends. Or, one could say, that he lay down his life for his friends, not in the sense that they were friends who loved him, but rather were those whom he loved. It is clear that the sign of the greatest love is to lay down one's life for one's friends. This is so because there are four lovable things to be put in order: God, our soul, our neighbor, and our body. We should love God more than ourselves and our neighbor, so that for the sake of God we ought to give ourselves, body and soul, and our neighbor. We should lay down our body, but not give it, for the sake of our soul. For our neighbor, we should expose our body and our physical life for his salvation. Consequently, since our physical life is the best thing we have after our soul, it is the greatest thing to expose it for the sake of our neighbor, and a sign of greater love: "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (1 Jn 4:9).

LECTURE 3

14 "You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 This I command you, to love [so that you will love] one another."[\[13\]](#)

2010 Above, our Lord urged us to love our neighbor, based on his example. Here, Christ shows his disciples the benefit conferred upon them which obliges them to imitate him, which is, that he has embraced them in his love. First, he mentions a sign of friendship; secondly, the cause of this friendship (v 16). He gives two signs of friendship: one is found in the disciples; the other in himself (v 15).

2011 The sign in the disciples that they are friends of Christ is that they keep his commandments; he says, **You are my friends if you do what I command you.** He is saying in effect: Up to now I have urged you to love one another, but now I am speaking and teaching you about your friendship with me.

The statement, **you are my friends** can be understood in two ways, based on the two ways someone is called a friend. A person is called a friend either because he loves or because he is loved. And what follows, **if you do what I command you** is true for both meanings of friend. Those who love God keep his commandments, and because a friend is, as Gregory says, in a way the guardian of the other's soul, it is appropriate that one who guards or keeps the will of God in his commandments is called the friend of God.[\[14\]](#) Again, those whom God loves keep his commandments, because by conferring his grace on them he helps them to keep them: for by loving us, God makes us love him: "I love those who love me" (Prv 8:17). It is not they who first loved God, but God makes them lovers by loving them.

2012 Note that keeping the commandments is not the cause of divine friendship but the sign, the sign that both God loves us and that we love God: "Love of her [Wisdom] is the keeping of her laws" (Wis 6:19); "He who says he loves him and does not keep his commandments is a liar" [1 Jn 2:4].

2013 The sign of Christ's friendship for them is mentioned when he says, **No longer do I call you servants**. First, he excludes what seems opposed to friendship; secondly, he mentions the sign of true friendship (v 15b).

2014 Servitude is opposed to friendship; and he rejects this by saying, **No longer do I call you servants**. It is like saying: although you were formerly servants under the law, now you are free under grace: "You have received the spirit of adoption" [Rom 8:15].

Secondly, he adds the reason for this when he says, **for the servant does not know what his master is doing**: for a servant is like a stranger to his master, "The slave does not continue in the house for ever" (8:35). Now secrets should not be told to strangers, "Do not tell a secret to a stranger" [Prv 25:9]. And so secrets should not be given to those who are now servants. This verse shows the servant does not act for the sake of himself, because charity does not seek its own, but the interests of Jesus and the salvation of one's neighbor. Those who act entirely by reason of another are bad servants. Thus it is clear that the disciples were servants, but it was a good servitude springing from love.

As for the second difficulty, we should say that the servant who is moved only by another and not by himself, is related to the one who moves him as a tool to the worker. Now a tool shares with the worker in the work, but not in the reason for the work. So such servants share only in the work. But when a servant acts by his own will, it is necessary for him to know the reason for the work and have secrets revealed to him so he can know what he is doing. "If you have a servant, regard him as your own soul" [Sir 33:31]. Now the apostles, as was said, were moved by themselves to accomplish good works, that is, they were moved by their own will, inclined by love. And so our Lord revealed his secrets to them. But bad servants do not know what their master is doing. What things don't they know? Strictly speaking, they do not know what God does in us. For God acts in us in all the good we do: "O Lord ... you have wrought for us all our works (Is 26:12). So the bad servant, darkened by the pride in his own heart, **does not know what his master is doing** when this servant attributes to himself what he does.

2016 Now he sets down the true sign of friendship on his own part, which is that **all that I have heard from my Father I have made know to you**. For the true sign of friendship is that a friend reveals the secrets of his heart to his friend. Since friends have one mind and heart, it does not seem that what one friend reveals to another is placed outside his own heart: "Argue your case with your neighbor" (Prv 25:9). Now God reveals his secrets to us by letting us share in his wisdom: "In every generation she [Wisdom] passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets" (Wis 7:27).

2017 There is a question here as to what and in what way the Son hears from the Father. The answer has already been indicated in many ways. Since to hear is to receive knowledge from another, for the Son to hear from the Father is nothing other than for the Son to receive knowledge from the Father. Now the knowledge of the Son is his own essence. Thus, for the Son to hear from the Father is for the Son to receive his essence from the Father.

2018 Another question concerns the statement, **all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you**. If he did make all things known to them it would follow that the disciples knew as much as the Son. The answer, according to Chrysostom, is that **all that I have heard** means all that I have heard which you ought to hear, but not absolutely all things, **I have made known to you**: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (16:12).[\[15\]](#)

Or, one could say, according to Augustine, that what he would say to them was so certain that he used the past tense instead of the future.[\[16\]](#) So the meaning becomes, **all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you**, that is, I will make known with that fullness of which the Apostle says: "Then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood" (1 Cor 13:12). And below we read, "The hour is coming when I shall tell you plainly of the Father" (16:25), that is, when I lead you to the vision of the Father. For all things the Son knows the Father knows. So when he reveals the Father to us, the Son will reveal all that the Son himself knows and which we know.

Again, one could say with Gregory, and this is better, that the same thing can be known perfectly or imperfectly. For example, in the sciences it is obvious that a person who knows all the principles of a science is said to know that science, although imperfectly. And so a person who teaches some principles of a science can say that he teaches that science, because everything that belongs to that science is virtually contained in its principles. But one will know that same science more perfectly when he knows the individual conclusions which are virtually in the principles. In the same way we can have a twofold knowledge of divine matters. One is imperfect, and is gained by faith, which is a foretaste of that future happiness and knowledge which we will have in heaven: "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for" [Heb 11:2]. He says of this knowledge, **all ... I have made known to you**, that is, in faith, by a kind of foretaste, like conclusions are virtually contained in their principles. So Gregory says: "All the things he has made known to his servants are the joys of interior love and the feasts of our heavenly fatherland, which he excites in our minds every day by the breath of his love. For as long as we love the sublime heavenly things we have heard, we already know what we love, because the love itself is knowledge."[\[17\]](#)

2019 Now he mentions the cause of this friendship. It is the usual practice for each one of us to say that he or she is the cause of friendship: "Every friend will say, 'I started the friendship'" [Sir 37:1]. And so many people attribute to themselves the cause of God's friendship when they attribute to themselves, and not to God, the source of their good actions. Our Lord rejects this by saying, **you did not choose me**. He is saying in effect: Whoever has been called to this sublime friendship should not attribute the cause of this friendship to himself, but to me, who chose him or her as a friend. First, he mentions the gratuitous choice of God; secondly, he sets forth for what they have been chosen, **that you should go and bear fruit**.

2020 He says, you did not choose me to be your friend, **but I chose you** to make you my friends: "Not that we loved God, but that he loved us first" [1 Jn 4:10].

Now God's love is twofold. One is eternal, by which we are predestined: "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4). The other is temporal, by which we are called by him, and this is simply the carrying out of eternal predestination. And this is because those he chose by predestining them he also chose by calling them: "Those whom he predestined he also called" (Rom 8:30); "He chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles" (Lk 6:13).[\[18\]](#)

2021 Some say that God's temporal choice is caused by the merits of those who are chosen. This conflicts with what it says here. For if God chose you because you were good, you were still not able to be good unless you chose the good, and this good is especially God. Therefore, it was you who first chose the good which is God, before you were chosen. But our Lord says the contrary: **you did not choose me, but I chose you**. Thus we should not say that our own goodness entirely precedes God's choice. I say "entirely" because we might have some particular good which could be the cause of another good being given to us; and this good could be the cause of being given still another good, since there is a certain order in God's gifts. But in general, nothing can be the cause of and precede the divine choice, because all our goods are from God.

2022 It would be an even greater error to say that our eternal election was preceded by our own choice. Yet there are some who said that our preceding merits are the cause of that election. This was Origen's error. He said that human souls were created equal at the same time and that while some stood firm, others sinned, more and less seriously. Thus, some merited to receive grace, and others did not.[\[19\]](#) Our Lord's saying is opposed to this, **you did not choose me**.

2023 Others say that it is true that our actually existing merits are not the cause

of our predestination, but those merits preexisting in the foreknowledge of God are. Thus they say that because God knew that certain persons would be good and make good use of grace, he decided to give them grace. But if this were so, it would follow that the reason he chose us was because he foreknew we would choose him. And so our choice would be prior to the divine choice; which is contrary to our Lord's statement.

2024 Perhaps someone might say: What choice could there be since we were nothing and there was no rank among us? But one who says this is misled by thinking that the divine choice is like human choice. They are not the same. Our choice is caused by some already existing good; while God's choice is the cause of an influx of good, greater in one than in another. Since choice is an act of the will, then according as the will of God and the human will are differently related to the good, so the character of their choice will be different. Now God's will is related to a created good as its cause: "How would anything have endured if thou hadst not willed it?" (Wis 11:25). And so goodness is dispensed to created things from the will of God. Accordingly, God prefers one person to another insofar as he confers more good on that one than on another. But the human will is moved to something by a preexisting good which has become known. Therefore, in our choices it is necessary that one good exist before another. The reason why God confers more good on one than on another is so that there might be a splendor of order in things. This is clear in material things where prime matter of itself is uniformly disposed to all forms. Also, before things themselves exist, they are not disposed to this or that existence; rather, they receive different forms and existences from God so that an order can be established among them. It is like this among rational creatures, where some are chosen for glory and some are rejected for punishment: "The Lord knows who are his ... In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and earthenware, and some for noble use, some for ignoble" (2 Tim 2:19). And so we see a diversified order: the mercy of God shines forth in those whom, without any previous merits, he prepares for grace; in others we see the justice of God when, because of their own guilt, he allots them punishment, yet less than is deserved. So, I have chosen you by predestining you from all eternity, and by calling you to the faith during your lifetime.

2025 Then he points out for what he has chosen them when he says, **I appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.** First, he states for what he chose them; secondly, he gives a reason for the above (v 17). In regard to the first he does two things: first, he shows that he chose them to do something; secondly, that he **chose them to receive something, whatever you ask the Father.**

2026 He says, **I appointed you,** that is, I gave you a definite rank in my

Church: "And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets" (1 Cor 12:28). Again, **I appointed you**, that is, firmly set you: "And God made the two great lights ... and God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth" (Gen 1:16).

2027 **I appointed you**, I say, to three things. First to go; and so he says, **that you should go**, traveling over the whole world to convert the whole world to the faith: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15). Or, **that you should go**, that is, progress from virtue to virtue: "They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion" (Ps 84:7); "His shoots shall spread out" (Hos 14:6).

Secondly, he appointed them to bear fruit; so he says, **and bear fruit**. This fruit is the fruit of conversion to the faith, as in Paul's first journey, "In order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles" (Rom 1:13); or an interior and spiritual fruit, as in his second journey, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Gal 5:22); "My blossoms became glorious and abundant fruit" (Sir 24:17).

Thirdly, they were appointed to bear fruit that would not be destroyed by death or sin; so he says, **and that your fruit should abide**, that is, that the society of the faithful would be led into eternal life and their spiritual fruit flourish: "He gathers fruit for eternal life" (4:36).

2028 **So that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you**. Here he shows that he chose them to receive something, namely, all that they ask for. He is saying: I have appointed you to be worthy to receive from the Father in my name: "If our hearts do not condemn us we have confidence before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask" (1 Jn 3:22).

2029 **These things I command you so that you will love one another**. Here he is giving the reason for what he has said. Someone might ask: Why did Christ tell them all these things? So our Lord answers, **These things I command you so that you will love one another**. He is saying in effect: Everything I said to you was to lead you to love your neighbor: "The aim of our charge is love" (1 Tim 1:5). One could also say, with Chrysostom, that the apostles could have said: Lord, why are you reminding us so much about your love? Are you reprimanding us? But our Lord says: Not at all. I am doing this to encourage you to love your neighbor: "And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also" (1 Jn 4:21).

LECTURE 4

18 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. 21 But all this they will do to you on my account, because they do not know him who sent me."

2030 After presenting the picture of the vine and the branches and explaining the part about the branches being united to the vine, he now explains it in regard to the pruning or cleansing they will receive from their trials. So our Lord now consoles them against the tribulations they were going to endure. First, he mentions a few considerations which will console them; secondly, he explains these (v 20); thirdly, he rejects the excuses of those who will persecute them (v 22). He mentions two reasons why they should be consoled: the first uses himself as an example; the second is based on the reason for their being hated, **because you are not of the world.**

2031 Our Lord consoles them by using himself as an example of one who has suffered the persecution of oppressors, saying, **If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.** Note that just as the source of all benefits is love, so the source of all persecutions is hatred. And so our Lord foretells that they will be hated: "You will be hated by all nations" (Mt 24:9); "Blessed are you when men hate you" (Lk 6:22).

He says, **If the world hates you**, that is, it will come to pass that the world will hate you, and show its hatred by persecuting you, **know that it has hated me before it hated you:** "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me" (7:7). This thought is a great consolation for the just so that they can courageously endure persecutions: "Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted" (Heb 12:3); "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Pet 2:21). According to Augustine, the members should not consider themselves greater than the Head, nor refuse to be part of his body by being unwilling to endure with their Head the hatred of the world. [\[20\]](#)

2032 The world can have two meanings. First a good meaning, for those who lead a good life in the world: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5:19). Secondly, it can have an evil sense, meaning those who

love the world: "The whole world is in the power of the evil one" (1 Jn 5:19). And so the whole world hates the whole world, because those who love the world, and they are spread throughout the whole world, hate the whole world, that is, the Church of the good, which has been established throughout the whole world.

2033 Now he mentions a second point for their consolation, and this is based on the reason for their being hated. When a person endures another's hatred because of his own sins, there is reason for regret and sorrow; but when he is hated because of his virtue he should rejoice. First, our Lord gives the reason why some are loved by the world; secondly, why the apostles are hated by the world (v 19).

2034 The reason why some are loved by the world is that they are like the world; **If you were of the world, the world would love its own.** Like loves like: "Every creature loves its like" (Sir 13:15). And thus the world, that is, those who love the world, love those who love the world. Accordingly, our Lord says, **If you were of the world**, that is, followers of the world, **the world would love its own**, because you would be its own and like to it: "The world cannot hate you, but it hates me" (7:7). "They are of the world, therefore what they say is of the world, and the world listens to them" (1 Jn 4:5).

2035 One might object that our Lord meant by the world the authorities of the world, who would persecute the apostles. Yet these very same authorities persecute other worldly people, like murderers and thieves. Therefore, the world does not love its own any more than it loves the apostles.

I reply that it is possible to find something purely good, but not something purely evil, since the subject of evil is something good. Consequently, the evil of guilt is located in some good of nature. Therefore, no person can be a sinner and evil without having some good. So it is because of the evil of these authorities, the evil of their unbelief, that they belong to the world and hate the apostles and those who are not of the world. But because of the good they possess they are not of the world and hate those who are of the world, as thieves and robbers, and such. Still, there were some who were living well in the world yet loved the apostles and approved of their actions.

2036 But now there seems to be a greater difficulty. For every sin pertains to the world, and so a person is of the world by reason of any sin. Yet we observe that people who commit the same sin hate each other, for, example, the proud: "Among the proud there is always strife" [Prv 13:10]. And one greedy person hates another who is also greedy. As the Philosopher says, potters quarrel with one another.[\[21\]](#) Thus, the world is hating the world, and what our Lord says

here does not seem to be true, that is, **the world would love its own.**

I reply that there are two kinds of love: the love of friendship and the love of concupiscence. These are quite different. With the love of concupiscence we draw external things or persons to ourselves, and we love these others insofar as they are useful to us or give us pleasure. But in the love of friendship we have the opposite, for we draw ourselves to what is external to us, because those we love in this way we treat the same as ourselves, sharing ourselves with them in some way. Thus, likeness is a cause of love, when we are speaking of the love of friendship, for we do not love a person in this way unless we are one with that person: and likeness is a certain way of being one. But with the love of concupiscence, whether it is for what is useful or gives pleasure, likeness is a cause of division and hatred. For since with this love I love some person or thing insofar as it is useful to me or gives me pleasure, I hate as opposed to me whatever hinders this usefulness or pleasure. So it is that the proud feud among themselves, for one takes for himself the glory that another loves and in which he takes pleasure. As for the potters, they quarrel because one takes for himself some profit which another wants for himself.

Notice that the love of concupiscence is not a love for the thing desired but a love for the person desiring: for in this kind of love, one loves another because the other is useful, as was said. Therefore, in this kind of love, one is rather loving himself than the other. For example, a person who loves wine because it gives him pleasure loves himself rather than the wine. But the love of friendship is concerned rather with the thing loved than with the one loving, because here one loves another for the sake of the one loved, and not for the sake of the one loving. And so because in the love of friendship likeness is a cause of love, and unlikeness a cause of hatred, the world hates what is not its own and is unlike it; but it loves, with the love of friendship, what is its own. It is the reverse with the love of concupiscence. Thus he says, **If you were of the world, the world would love its own**, with the love of friendship.

2037 Now he gives the reason why the world hates the apostles, which is because they are unlike the world. He says, **but because you are not of the world**, because your spirit has been lifted above it • although you are of the world by your origin: "You are from below, I am from above" (8:23) • lifted above it not by yourselves but by my grace, because **I chose you out of the world**, therefore, because you are not of the world, **the world hates you**, that is, those who love the world and who are unlike you, hate you: "An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, but he whose way is straight is an abomination to the wicked" (Prv 29:27); and in the same chapter "Bloodthirsty men hate one who is blameless" (v 10).

2038 Three reasons can be given why the world hates those who are holy. First, there is a difference of condition: the world is in a state of death, but those who are holy are in a state of life: "Do not wonder, brethren, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 Jn 3:13). And so we read: "The very sight of him is a burden to us" (Wis 2:15). The second reason is that the world does not like to be corrected: for those who are holy are, by their words and actions, a rebuke to the conduct of the world. Consequently the world hates them: "They hate him who reproves in the gate" (Amos 5:10); "But it," the world, "hates me because I testify of it that its works are evil" (7:7). The third reason is because of evil envy, for those who are evil envy the good when they see them grow and increase in goodness and holiness, just like the Egyptians hated and persecuted the children of Israel when they saw them increasing (Ex 1:9). And we also see that Joseph's brothers hated him when they saw that he was loved more than they (Gen 37:4).

2039 Now he amplifies on the reasons just given for their consolation: first, the one using himself as an example; secondly, the one relating to the reason why they are hated (v 21). He does two things with the first: first, he reminds them that he and they are different in condition; secondly, he shows they are alike in what will be done to them, **If they persecuted me, they will persecute you.**

2040 Their different conditions were that Christ was the Lord and the apostles were servants: "A servant is not greater than his master" (13:16). He reminds them of this difference when he says, **Remember the word that I said to you, A servant is not greater than his master.** Therefore, it is not unfitting for you to undergo the same sufferings as your Lord; rather, you should regard this as a great glory. Thus Christ said to the disciples who were asking to sit on his right and left, "Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" (Mt 20:22). "It is a great honor to follow God" (Sir 23:28); "It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher" (Mt 10:25).

2041 On the contrary. He said above, "No longer do I call you servants" (15:15), while he says here, **A servant is not greater than his master.** I answer that there are two kinds of servitude. One comes from a slave-like fear, that is, from a fear of punishment; and the Apostles were not servants in this way. The other comes from a "chaste fear," [the respect of a spouse], and such servitude was in the apostles: "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes" (Lk 12:37).

2042 If then you are my servants and I am your Lord, you should be content to have happen to you what happens to me. Now some have despised me, while others have accepted me: "He came to his own home, and his own people

received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (1:11). You will be treated the same way: if some despise you, yet others will honor you.

For this reason he says, **If they persecuted me, they will persecute you.** Here we see how the saints are like Christ: for the disciples were persecuted for the same reason that Christ was, because Christ was being persecuted in the disciples. In fact in Acts (9:4) Christ said that he was being persecuted in the persecution of his disciples: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

And so because their reason for acting is the same in the two cases, the consequence follows: **If they persecuted me, they will persecute you:** "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household" (Mt 10:25). Matthew (23:34) says of this persecution: "Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town." Similarly, they will be honored for the same reason that Christ was: if they kept my word, they will keep yours also, because your words are my words: "You desire proof that Christ is speaking in me" (2 Cor 13:3); "For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Mt 10:20). And so Christ says, "He who hears you hears me" (Lk 10:16). The apostles were in truth accepted and honored by some of the people, as is clear from "When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God" (1 Thess 2: 13).

2043 Now he amplifies on the second consideration that would console them, which is based on the reason for their being hated. The apostles were chosen and raised above the world insofar as they had been made sharers of divinity and joined to God. This is why the world hated them. From this it follows that the world rather hated God in them than hated them. The reason for this hatred was that the world lacked the true knowledge of God which comes from the true faith and devoted love. If they did have this knowledge and recognized that the apostles were friends of God, they would not have persecuted them. Thus he says, **all this they will do to you,** that is, hate and persecute you, **on my account.** And so this should be your glory: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or a mischief-maker; yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God" (1 Pet 4:14). On my account, not because they love me, but because they hate me; just as, on the contrary, you will suffer on my account because you love me.

They will do these things to you **because they do not know him who sent me:** "If you knew me, you would perhaps know my Father also" [8:19]. For they

did not know that God would be pleased by their accepting Christ. Note that he is speaking here of a perfect knowledge, which consists in a faith which perfects the intellect and joins the affections to God. We read of this kind of knowledge: "Let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me" (Jer 9:24); "To know you is complete righteousness" (Wis 15:3).

LECTURE 5

22 "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 He who hates me hates my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 It is to fulfill the word that is written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.' 26 But when the Counselor [Paraclete] comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me. 27 And you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning."[\[22\]](#)

2044 Before, when our Lord said that the Jews would persecute his disciples, he give as the reason that the Jews did not know the one who sent him. Now, since ignorance usually excuses one, he here shows that they are inexcusable. He does this in two ways: first, because of the things he personally did and taught them; secondly, because of what will occur when he is no longer present (v 26). In regard to the first he does two things: first, he shows that they were without excuse because of the truth he taught; secondly, because of the witness of the works he performed (v 24). He does three things about the first: first, he shows what could have excused them; secondly, that they did not have this excuse (v 22); thirdly, he shows the real source of their persecution (v 23).

2045 He had said: "But all this they will do to you on my account." Yet they might have had an excuse. **If I had not come and spoken to them**, that is, if I had not shown myself personally and taught them personally, **they would not have sin.**

2046 How does this reconcile with Romans (3:23) which states that "All have sinned"? We should say that our Lord is not speaking here of just any sin, but of the sin of disbelief, that is, they do not believe in Christ. This is called here simply "sin" because it is a prime example of sin, because as long as this sin lasts, no other sin can be remitted; for no sin is remitted except by faith in Jesus Christ

through whom we are justified, as we read in Romans (5:1). Consequently, **they would not have sin** means that they would not be charged with not believing in him. This is primarily because "faith comes from what is heard" (Rom 10:17). So, if Christ had not come and had not spoken to them, they could not have believed. And no one is charged with a sin for not doing what he can't do at all.

2047 Yet some could say that they were bound to believe and could have believed even if Christ had not come, since he had been foretold to them by the prophets: "which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son" (Rom 1:2). I answer that of themselves the Jews could not believe and understand the words of the prophets unless they were shown by divine help: "The words are shut up and sealed until the appointed time" [Dan 12:9]. Thus the eunuch said: "How can I understand, unless some one guides me?" (Acts 8:31). Therefore, if Christ had not come, they would not have this sin, the sin of disbelief, although they would have had other actual sins for which they would have been punished. And a similar reasoning holds for all those whom the preaching of God's word could not reach. For this reason they cannot be charged with the sin of disbelief for their condemnation; but they will be condemned, because deprived of God's favors because of their other actual sins and original sin.

2048 Note that Christ's coming and teaching resulted in good for many, that is, for those who accepted him and kept his word. And for many it turned out bad, that is, for those who decided neither to listen to him nor believe him. "He will become ... a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Is 8:14); "This child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel" (Lk 2:34).

2049 He has just stated what could have excused them from unbelief. But they don't have this excuse because Christ showed himself to them in person and taught them. Thus he says, **but now**, since I have come and spoken to them, **they have no excuse**, that of ignorance, **for their sin**. "So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God" (Rom 1:20). But they did know Christ, as is clear from Matthew (21:38): "This is the heir; come, let us kill him." However, they knew that he was the Christ promised in the law, but they did not know that he was God, because "If they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:8). And so their ignorance is no excuse, because they did not do this from ignorance but from another root, that is, from hatred and a certain malice.

2050 This is why he adds, **He who hates me hates my Father also**. This is like saying: Their sin is not ignorance of me, but hatred for me, and this involves hatred for the Father. Since the Son and the Father are one in essence, truth and

goodness, and since all knowledge of anyone is through the truth which is in him, whoever loves the Son loves the Father also; and whoever knows the one knows the other also; and whoever hates the Son hates the Father also.

2051 Two problems arise here. First, whether anyone can hate God? We should say that no one can hate God as God. Since God is the pure essence of goodness, and since this is lovable in itself, it is impossible that God be hated in himself. This is the reason why it is impossible for an evil person to see God. For it is impossible for God to be seen without being loved; and one who loves God is good. So these two things are incompatible, namely, to see God and be evil.

Yet one can hate God from a particular point of view. For example, one who loves lustful pleasures hates God as forbidding the enjoyment of lust, and one who wants to be free from all punishment hates the justice of God when it punishes.

[\[23\]](#)

2052 The second problem arises because no one can hate what he does not know. But the Jews did not know the Father: "They do not know him who sent me" (15:21). Therefore, what he says here does not seem to be true, that they **hate my Father also**. We can say, according to Augustine, that a person can love or hate something that was never seen nor truly known. [\[24\]](#) This can happen in two ways. In one way, I can hate or love a person according as I know him; or, according to what I am told about him. For example, if I hear that someone is a thief I hate him, not because I know or hate this very person, but because in general I hate all thieves. So, if he were a thief and I did not know it, I would hate him without knowing that I hated him. Now the Jews hated Christ and the truth that he preached. Since the very truth that Christ preached and the works he performed were in the will of God the Father, then just as they hated Christ, so also they hated the Father, even though they did not know that these things were in the will of the Father.

2053 Now he shows they are without excuse because of the witness of his signs. They could say that they were not convinced by the words he spoke in opposition to them. So he corroborates his words with marvelous actions, saying, **If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin**. First, he shows that they could be somewhat excused; secondly, he reveals the root of their sin (v 24b); thirdly, he cites an authority (v 25).

2054 There are two questions about the first point. One is about the truth of the antecedent statement, **If I had not done among them the works which no one else did**. Did Christ perform certain good works among them that no one else had done? It seems not. If we say that Christ raised the dead, Elijah and

Elisha also did this. If Christ walked on the water, Moses parted the waters. Again, Joshua did something greater [than Christ] for he made the sun stand still. So it seems that Christ should not use this as an argument, and thus the conclusion is not true.

I answer that we can say, according to Augustine, that our Lord is not speaking of the miracles he worked among them, that is, merely in their sight, but of those he worked "among" them, that is, on their very persons.[\[25\]](#) In curing the sick, although others did it, no one did it so much as Christ, because no other was made God and no one was born of a virgin but Christ. So in healing the sick he performed among them works which no one else performed; and this in three ways. First, because his works were so great: for he raised a person who had been dead for four days; he gave sight to a man who was born blind, which had never been heard of before, as we read above (9:32). Secondly, because of the great number of his works, for he healed all who were sick (Mt 14:35), and no one else did this. Thirdly, because of the way he did these works: others did these things by praying for help, which showed that they were not doing this by their own power; but Christ did it by command, for he did it by his own power: "What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (Mk 1:27).

Therefore, although others have raised the dead and have accomplished other miracles which Christ did, they did not do it in the same manner as Christ, nor by their own power, as Christ did. Further, making the sun stand still is less than what the dying Christ did, when he made the moon move backwards and changed the whole course of the heavens, as Dionysius says.[\[26\]](#)

2055 The second question is about the truth of the conditional statement, that if Christ had not done among them works which no one else did, the Jews would not have the sin of disbelief. My reply is that if we speak of any of the miracles indiscriminately, the Jews would have been excusable if they had not been done among them by Christ. For no one can come to Christ by faith unless he is drawn: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (6:44). So the spouse says in the Song (1:4): "Draw me after you." Therefore, if there were no one who had drawn them to the faith, they would have an excuse for their disbelief. Note that Christ drew by words and by signs, both visible and invisible, that is, by inciting and stirring hearts from within: "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord" (Prv 21:1). And so an inner impulse to act well is the work of God, and those who resist it sin. If not, Stephen would have no reason to say: "You always resist the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:51). And Isaiah (50:5) says: "The Lord has opened my ear," that is, the ear of my heart, "and I was not rebellious." When our Lord said, **If I had not done**

among them the works which no one else did, we have to understand this as referring not only to visible works but also to the interior impulses and attractions to his teaching. If these had not been done among them, they would not have sin. It is now clear how they could have been excused, that is, if he had not accomplished miraculous works among them.

2056 Now he shows the root of their sin of disbelief, namely, their hatred, because of which they did not believe the works they saw. He says, **but now they have seen**, the works he did among them, **and hated both me and my Father**: "Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord" (Prv 1:29). As Gregory says, there are some in the Church who not only do not do good works, but they even persecute those who do, so that what they fail to do they detest in others. [\[27\]](#) Thus their sin is not one of weakness or ignorance, but is committed of set purpose.

2057 Yet some could say: If it is true that the Jews hated you and your Father, why did you perform miracles among them? He answers and says **It is to fulfill the word that is written in their law**. Here we could ask why he says that this was written in their law when it was written in the Psalms? We can say to this that the "law" is understood in three ways in scripture. Sometimes it is taken for the entire Old Testament; and this is the way it is understood here, because the entire teaching of the Old Testament is directed to the observance of the law: "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom" (Lk 23:42). Sometimes it is taken as distinguished from the histories and the prophets: "that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms" (in which the histories are sometimes included) "must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44). And sometimes the law is taken as distinct only from the prophets, and then the histories are included in the prophets. He says, **It is to fulfill what is written in their law**, that is, in the Psalms (35:19) **'They hated me without a cause,'** and not to gain some benefit or avoid some trouble (for this is why people hate). Indeed, Christ gave them opportunities to love him when he healed and taught them: "He went about doing good" (Acts 10:38); "Is evil a recompense for good? They have dug a pit for my life" (Jer 18:20); "What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me" (Jer 2:5).

2058 Now he shows that they are inexcusable because of what will come to pass after him: because they would have other testimonies, namely, those of the Holy Spirit and of the apostles. First, he states what was to come from the Holy Spirit; secondly, from the apostles (v 27). He indicates four things about the Spirit: his freedom, tenderness, procession and activity.

2059 He indicates his freedom, or power, when he says, **But when the**

Paraclete comes. Strictly speaking that person is said to come who comes willingly and on his own authority; and this is true of the Holy Spirit, because "the Spirit blows where it wills" [3:8]; "I called upon God, and the Spirit of wisdom came to me" (Wis 7:7). Therefore, in saying, **whom I shall send**, he does not suggest force but origin.

2060 He touches on his tenderness when he says, **the Paraclete**, that is the Consoler. Since the Paraclete is the Love of God he makes us scorn earthly things and cling to God; and thus he takes away our pain and sadness and gives us joy in divine things: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" (Gal 5:22); and in Acts (9:31) we read that the Church was walking "in the comfort of the Holy Spirit."

2061 Thirdly, he touches on the twofold procession of the Holy Spirit. First, he mentions the temporal procession when he says, **whom I shall send to you from the Father**. Note that the Holy Spirit is said to be sent not because the Spirit is changing place, since the Spirit fills the entire universe, as we read in Wisdom (1:7), but because, by grace, the Holy Spirit begins to dwell in a new way in those he makes a temple of God: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor 3:16). There is no disagreement in saying that the Holy Spirit is sent and that he comes. In saying that the Spirit comes the grandeur of his divinity is indicated: the "Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills" (1 Cor 12:11). And he is said to be sent to indicate his procession from another, for the fact that he sanctifies the rational creature by indwelling he has from that other, from whom he has it that he is, just as it is from another that the Son has whatever he does.

The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son together; and this is indicated in "He showed me the river of the water of life," that is, the Holy Spirit, "flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb," that is, of Christ (Rev 22:1). Therefore, when speaking of the sending of the Holy Spirit he mentions the Father and the Son, who send the Spirit by the same and equal power. Thus sometimes he mentions the Father as sending the Spirit, but not without the Son, as above (14:26): "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name"; at other times he says that he himself sends the Holy Spirit, but not without the Father: as here, **whom I shall send to you from the Father**, because whatever the Son does he has from the Father: "The Son cannot do anything of himself" [5:19].[\[28\]](#)

2062 He mentions the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit when he shows in a similar way that the Spirit is related both to the Father and the Son. He shows the Spirit as related to the Son when he says, **the Spirit of truth**, for the Son is the Truth: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6). He shows the Spirit as related to the Father when he says, **who proceeds from the Father**. So to

say that the Holy Spirit is **the Spirit of truth**, is the same as saying the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son: "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts" (Gal 4:6). And because the word "spirit" (*spiritus*) suggests a kind of impulse and every motion produces an effect in harmony with its source (as heating makes something hot), it follows that the Holy Spirit makes those to whom he is sent like the one whose Spirit he is. And since he is the Spirit of Truth "He will teach you all truth" [16:13]; "The inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding" [Job 32:8]. In the same way, because he is the Spirit of the Son, he produces sons: "You have received the spirit of sonship" (Rom 8:15). He says the **Spirit of truth** as contrasted with the spirit of lying: "The Lord has mingled within her the spirit of error" [Is 19:14]; "I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets" (1 Kgs 22:22).

2063 Because he says **who proceeds from the Father** and does not add "and from the Son," the Greeks say that the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Son but only from the Father. But this absolutely cannot be. For the Holy Spirit could not be distinguished from the Son unless he either proceeds from the Son, or on the other hand, the Son proceeds from him (and no one claims this). For one cannot say that among the divine persons, who are entirely immaterial and simple, there is a material distinction based on a division of quantity, which matter underlies. Thus it is necessary that the distinction of the divine persons be by way of a formal distinction, which has to involve some kind of opposition. For if forms are not opposed they are compatible with one another in the same subject and do not diversify a supposit; for example, to be white and large. So among the divine persons, since "not subject to birth" and "fatherhood" are not opposed, they belong to one person. If, then, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons proceeding from the Father, they have to be distinguished by some properties that are opposed. These properties cannot be opposed like affirmation and negation or privation and possessing are opposed, because then the Son and the Holy Spirit would be related to one another like being and non-being and as the complete to the deprived, and this is repugnant to their equality. Nor can these properties be opposed like contraries are opposed, one of which is more perfect than the other. What remains is that the Holy Spirit is distinguished from the Son only by a relative opposition.

This kind of opposition rests solely on the fact that one of them is referred to the other. For the different relations of two things to some third thing are not directly opposed except accidentally, that is by some incidental consequence. So in order for the Holy Spirit to be distinguished from the Son, they must have relations that are opposed, by which they will be opposed to each other. No such relations can be found except relations of origin, insofar as one person is from the other. Thus it is impossible, granting the Trinity of persons, that the Holy Spirit not be from the Son.

2064 Some say that the Holy Spirit and the Son are distinguished by the different ways they proceed, insofar as the Son is from the Father by being born and the Holy Spirit by proceeding. But the same problem still returns which arose from the previous opinion, as to how these two processions differ. One cannot say that they are distinguished because of the diverse things received by their respective generations, like the generation of a human being and a horse differ because of the diverse natures that are communicated. For the very same nature is received by the Son by being born from the Father and by the Holy Spirit by proceeding. So we are left with the conclusion that they are distinguished only by the order of origin, that is to say, insofar as the birth of the Son is a principle of the procession of the Holy Spirit. And so, if the Holy Spirit were not from the Son, the Spirit would not be distinguished from the Son and procession would not be distinguished from birth.

Thus even the Greeks admit some order between the Son and the Holy Spirit. For they say that the Holy Spirit is of the Son, and that the Son acts through the Holy Spirit, but not conversely. And some even admit that the Holy Spirit is from the Son, but they will not concede that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son. Yet in this they are obviously imprudent. For we use the word "procession" in all cases in which one thing is from another in any way. And so this word, because it is so general, has been adapted to indicate the existence of the Holy Spirit as from the Son. We don't have any examples of this in creatures which would lead us to give it a specific name; while we do have examples which give us the special term of "generation" which is applied to the Son. The reason for this is that in creatures we do not find a person proceeding from will, as love, while we do find a person proceeding from nature, as son. Thus, however the Holy Spirit is ordered to the Son, it can be concluded that the Spirit proceeds from the Son.

2065 Nevertheless some of the Greeks assert that one should not say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son because for them the preposition "from" indicates a principle which is not from a principle, and this is so only of the Father. This is not compelling because the Son with the Father is one principle of the Holy Spirit, as also of creatures. And although the Son has it from the Father that the Son is a principle of creatures, still creatures are said to be from the Son; and for the same reason it can be said that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son.

Nor does it make any difference that we read here, **who proceeds from the Father**, instead of "from the Father and the Son," because in a similar way it is said, **whom I shall send**, and yet the Father is also understood to send, since there is added, **from the Father**. In a similar way because it says, **the Spirit of truth**, that is, the Spirit of the Son, we understand that the Spirit proceeds from

the Son. For, as has been said, when the procession of the Holy Spirit is mentioned, the Son is always joined to the Father, and the Father to the Son; and so these different ways of expression indicate a distinction of persons.

2066 Fourthly, he mentions the activity of the Holy Spirit when he says, **he will bear witness to me**; and this in three ways. First, the Spirit will teach the disciples and give them the confidence to bear witness: "For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Mt 10:20). Secondly, the Spirit will communicate his teaching to those who believe in Christ: "God also bore witness by signs and miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit" wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Heb 2:4). Thirdly, the Spirit will soften the hearts of their hearers: "When you send forth your Spirit, they are created" (Ps 104:30).

2067 Finally, he mentions what lies ahead for the disciples when he says, **and you also are witnesses**, inspired by the Holy Spirit: "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of this earth" (Acts 1:8). We read of this twofold testimony in Acts (5:32): "We are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

He adds why this testimony is appropriate when he says, **because you have been with me from the beginning**, that is, the beginning of my preaching and working of miracles, and so you can testify to what you have seen and heard: "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you" (1 Jn 1:3). We can see from this that Christ did not perform miracles in his youth, as some apocryphal gospels relate but only from the time he called his disciples.

[\[1\]](#) "Times New Roman";color:blue'>St. Thomas refers to Jn 15:1 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 74, a. 5, s. c.; Jn 15:3: *ST* III, q. 74, a. 5, s. c.; Jn 15:5: *ST* I-II, q. 6, a. 1, obj. 3; q. 109, a. 6, ad 2; II-II, q. 156, a. 2, ad 1.

[\[2\]](#) *Sermones de Verbis Domini* 61; PL 38, col. 1859;"Times New Roman";color:black'> "Times New Roman";color:green'>cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:1-3.

[\[3\]](#) *Tract. in Io.*, 80, ch. 3, col. 1839; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:1-3.

[\[4\]](#) *Summa*-Word of Christ cleanses both in faith and baptism.

[5] Summa-it is impossible to do any work except by Christ.

[6] Summa-that it is possible to be united to the Church in faith, but not by charity.

[7] *Tract. in Io.*, 81 ch. 3, col. 1841-2; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:4-7.

[8] St. Thomas refers to Jn 15:11 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 28, a. 3 s. c.; Jn 15:12: *ST* I-II, q. 68, a. 1; II-II, q. 22, a. 1. s. c.; Jn 15:13: *ST* II-II, q. 26, a. 5, obj. 3; q. 124, a. 2, obj. 2; q. 124, a. 3, q. 184, a. 5, obj. 3; q. 184, a. 2, ad 3; III, q. 66, a. 12.

[9] *Tract. in Io.*, 82, ch. 4, col. 1844; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:8-11.

[10] *Tract. in Io.*, 83, ch. 1, col. 1844-5; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:8-11.

[11] *Homiliae in Evangelista*, XXVII; 1; PL 76, col. 1205B; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:12-16.

[12] *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:12-16.

[13] St. Thomas refers to Jn 15:14 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 23, a. 1, s. c.; Jn 15:15: *ST* II-II, q. 172, a. 4, obj. 2; Jn 15:17: *ST* I, q. 73, a. 2, arg. 1.

[14] *Moralia XVII*, ch. 15, no. 28; PL 76, col. 415B"Times New Roman";color: green'; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:12-16.

[15] *In Ioannem hom.*, 77, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 415; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:12-16.

[16] *Tract. in Io.*, 86, ch. 1, col. 1850; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:12-16.

[17] *Homiliae in Evangelista XXVII*; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:12-16.

[18] Summa-God predestines and calls men not based on their merit.

[19] Origen.

[20] *Tract. in Io.*, 87, ch. 2, col. 1853; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:17-21.

[21] Aristotle.

[22] St. Thomas refers to Jn 15:22 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 5, a. 2, obj. 3; q. 10, a. 1; q. 10, a. 3, s. c.; III, q. 47, a. 5; q. 80, a. 5, s. c.; q. 86, a. 3, ad 2; Jn 15:24: *ST* II-II, q. 34, a. 1 s. c.; III, q. 43, a. 4, ad 1; q. 47, a. 5, obj. 2; Jn 15:25: *ST* II-II, q. 16, a. 1, obj. 5; Jn 15:26: *ST* I, q. 27, a. 3, s. c.; q. 36, a. 2, obj 1.

[23] Summa-man can hate God under a certain aspect.

[24] *Tract. in Io.*, 90, ch. 1, col. 1858-9; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:22-25.

[25] Ibid., cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:22-25.

[26] Dionysius.

[27] *Moralia*, XXV, ch. 11, no. 28; PL 76, col. 339B; "Times New Roman";color: green'>cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:22-25.

[28] Summa-procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. 2061-2065.

16

LECTURE I

1 "I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away. 2 They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. 3 And they will do this because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4 But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you."[\[1\]](#)

2068 Above, our Lord had used certain considerations to console his disciples over his leaving and against the persecutions and tribulations that would come upon them. Here he amplifies these considerations more clearly. First, he explains the considerations he gave before; and secondly, we see the effect of this explanation on the disciples (v 29).

If we pay close attention to what was said in the previous two chapters, we can see that our Lord aimed at consoling his disciples against two things: his own leaving them, and the tribulations that would come upon them. But he here explains these two things in reverse order. He had consoled them first over his leaving because this would take place very soon and he had not yet foretold all the tribulations that would come upon them. But now, since they seemed to be more troubled by their own tribulations than by Christ's leaving, our Lord here consoles them first of all against their forthcoming trials, and then against his leaving (v 5). He does three things concerning the first: first, he gives his intention; secondly, he mentions the tribulations they will suffer from being persecuted (v 2); thirdly, he tells why they will be persecuted (v 3).

2069 He says: I have said that the Jews hate me and you, because they do not know who sent me. I have said that they are inexcusable and that you and the Holy Spirit will bear witness against them. Now **I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away**, that is, so you don't fall away when the tribulations I have foretold come upon you. And it is fitting that our Lord restrains them from falling after promising the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is love •

"God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom 5:5) • and the Holy Spirit prevents stumbling: "Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble" (Ps 119:165). Now it is characteristic of friends that they disregard any loss for the sake of one another, as stated in Proverbs [12:26]. So, for one who is a friend of God, to suffer punishment and loss is no reason to fall away. Yet because the disciples had not yet received the Holy Spirit before the death of Christ, they did fall away during his passion: "You will all fall away because of me this night" (Mt 26:31). But after the Holy Spirit came there was no falling away.

2070 The disciples might say: Don't we have reason to fall away? Many troubles will come upon us: first, that of rejection; secondly, we will be killed.

2071 They will be rejected from the society of the Jews; so he says, **They will put you out of the synagogues**: "The Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue" (9:22). This was so successful that for this reason some of the [Jewish] authorities who did believe in Christ were afraid to profess him publicly, as we read above (12:42). Christ foretold this rejection: "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man" (Lk 6:22).

2072 Was it an evil for the apostles to be cast out of the Jewish synagogues, since they were going to leave them in any case? The answer, according to Augustine, is that it was a trial for them, because this was our Lord's way of telling them that the Jews would not accept Christ.[\[2\]](#) For if they had received Christ, the synagogue of the Jews and the Church of Christ would have been the same; and those who would be converted to the Church of Christ would have been converted to the synagogue of the Jews.

2073 The other trial is that of being killed: **indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God**. We can take these words as spoken to console the disciples, so that the **indeed** signifies a contrary train of thought and the sense would be: **indeed**, you ought to be consoled by what they will do to you, for **the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God**. How is it a consolation for them that whoever kills them thinks he is serving God? The answer, according to Augustine, is that in saying, **they will put you out of the synagogues**, we are to understand that those converted to Christ would be immediately killed by the Jews.[\[3\]](#) And so to console his disciples our Lord tells them that they would win so many to Christ, who would be expelled from the Jewish synagogues, that they could not all be killed, and so the Jews would try to kill the apostles so they

would not convert all the people to the name of Christ by their preaching.

Or, we could say that here Christ is simply telling them beforehand that they will be killed.

2074 He says, **whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God**, and not to the gods, to show that he is speaking only of persecution from the Jews: "I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify" (Mt 23:34). The martyrs of Christ were killed by the gentiles, and they did not consider that they were serving God but only their own gods. It was the Jews who, when they killed those who were preaching Christ, thought this was a service to God. For they had zeal for God, but without knowledge, since they believed that anyone who converted to Christ was deserting God. We read of this killing: "For your sake we are slain all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Ps 44:22).

2075 He gives the reason why this will be so (v 3), first stating the reason, and then saying why he foretold this persecution (v 4).

2076 He says, they will persecute you, but **they will do this**, not out of zeal for the truth, but **because they have not known the Father**, as Father, **nor me**, his Son: "If you did know me, perhaps you would have known my Father also" [8:19]; "I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him; but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim 1:13).

2077 One could ask: If the Jews are going to persecute you because of their ignorance of the faith, why did Christ foretell this to you? So Christ first gives the reason why he foretold this; and secondly, why he did not tell them before (v 4).

2078 He says, **But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them**. The hour is said to come for people when they are able to accomplish what they desire and do what they want: "Let not the flower of time," that is, the hour ripe for indulging in pleasures, "pass us by" [Wis 2:7]. So the hour of the Jews will come when they are able to begin to persecute you. This is the hour of darkness: "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Lk 22:53).

That you may remember that I told you of them. This would help in two ways. In the midst of their persecutions, when they recalled that Christ had predicted them, they would realize his divinity and become more confident of his help. Again, when people foresee that tribulations are soon to come, they are less afflicted by them, for forewarned is forearmed. Cicero gives the reason for this in

his *Tusculan Questions*.^[4] The better temporal goods and evils are known, he says, the less they are regarded. Thus, riches are more highly regarded by those who don't have them than by the same people after they acquire them. In the same way, troubles are more feared and considered more oppressive before they are experienced than when they have come and are present. Now when evil is meditated upon before it actually comes, this makes it present in a certain sense, and because of this presence it is less regarded. So Cicero says that one who is wise, by premeditation on evils before they strike, can acquire strength against the sadness they will bring. Accordingly, Christ foretold the apostles about their tribulations for two reasons: to increase their confidence in his help, and to lessen their sadness.

2079 Here he gives the reason why he did not foretell these things to them before, namely, **because I was with you**. We can relate this to the two points just mentioned. First, to the increasing of their hope. While I was with you, you had confidence in my help. But now that you will see me die, you might doubt my power. Consequently, I must foretell certain things that are to come so that you may realize my divinity and power. Or, we can refer this to the second point, and then the meaning becomes this: **I was with you**, protecting you, and letting you cast all your troubles on me • "Father ... while I was with them, I kept them in your name" (17:12). But since I am about to leave you, the entire weight of your troubles will fall upon yourselves. And so it is necessary that you be forewarned.

2080 Yet it seems that our Lord did predict similar things before, for the other Evangelists tell us that before this the Lord foretold to his disciples that they would be handed over to the authorities and rulers and that they would be scourged in the Jewish synagogues. This is not at odds with what our Lord says here, **I did not say these things to you from the beginning**, because they said that our Lord said this to them on the Mount of Olives, when his passion was near, that is, three days before the last supper. So the phrase, **from the beginning**, does not refer to the time of the passion, but to the time [of his public ministry, before the time of his passion] when he was first with his disciples, as Augustine says.^[5]

2081 But this conflicts with Matthew. For he says that our Lord foretold that tribulations would come to the disciples not only when his passion was fast approaching, but even when he first chose them: "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Mt 10:16). One must say then that **from the beginning** refers to the Holy Spirit, for he did not tell them of the coming of the Holy Spirit from the beginning, as Augustine says.^[6]

Or, it could be said, with Chrysostom, that Christ is referring to their tribulations.

[7] In this case, he did not tell them **from the beginning** two things which he now newly foretells. One is that they would suffer persecutions from the Jews, which he had not said previously, but had only mentioned the gentiles, as is clear from Matthew (10). The second regards something he had previously foretold them, which was that they would be scourged. But he now adds an element which was especially troublesome, which was that the Jews would regard their death as a service to God.

LECTURE 2

5 "But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor [Paraclete] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." [8]

2082 Above, our Lord dealt with what would console his disciples in their coming troubles. Here he deals with what will console them against his leaving. Our Lord consoles them against his leaving with three considerations: first, they will have access to the Father, as promised when he said, "Let not your hearts be troubled ... In my Father's house there are many rooms" (14:1); secondly, because he was going to send the Paraclete, and so he said, "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete" [14:16]; thirdly, they will see him again, as he said, "I will not leave your orphans; I will come to you" [14:18]. He explains these three things here, but not in the above order. First, we see the promise of the Spirit; secondly, the fact that they will see him again (v 16); thirdly, we see their access to the Father. He does two things with the first: first, he mentions that they need some consolation; secondly, he gives it (v 7). He does two things with the first: first, he foretells his leaving them; secondly, he mentions the effect of this prediction (v 6).

2083 He is leaving them, going to the Father. He says, I was with you till now, **but now I am going to him who sent me**, that is, to the Father. This is a mark of perfection, for a thing reaches its perfection when it returns to its source: "I am ascending to him who sent me" (Tob 12:20); "The rivers return to the place from which they came" [Sir 1:7]. He went, in his human nature, to the one with whom he was from all eternity, in his divine nature. This was explained more fully before.

2084 He adds, **yet none of you asks me, Where are you going?** Why does he say this? For Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?" (13:36); and Thomas

said, "Lord, we do not know where you are going" (14:5). Both Chrysostom and Augustine give an answer to this, but not the same one.

Chrysostom says that when the disciples heard that they would be killed and cast out of the synagogues, they became so sad and stunned that they practically forgot about Christ's leaving them and losing the thread of his thought did not ask him about this.^[9] So Christ says, **but because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts.** Thus when our Lord says, **But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, Where are you going?** he is really reproofing them, according to Chrysostom. They did not question him about this: "Ask your Father, and he will show you" (Deut 32:7); "Search out and seek, and she will become known to you" (Sir 6:28).

Augustine, on the other hand, thinks that the statement, **But now I am going to him who sent me**, does not refer to this very time when he is speaking, but refers to the time when he was to ascend into heaven.^[10] It was like saying: You asked me before where I was going; but I will be going now in such a way that you will not have to ask me, **Where are you going?** because "as they were looking on, he was lifted up" (Acts 1:9).

2085 Now he mentions the sorrow of the disciples. For Chrysostom this sorrow is the effect of Christ's prediction [of the future troubles of the disciples] • For Augustine, their sorrow is the effect of Christ's leaving, for they were glad to be in his presence, and attracted in a certain carnal way to him in his human nature, like one friend is pleased at the presence of another. So they were sad that he was leaving: "Weeping may tarry for the night," that is, the time of the passion, "but joy comes" to the apostles "with the morning" of the resurrection (Ps 30:5). It is human for sorrow to touch our hearts, but it is bad when it completely takes over our heart because it then destroys our reason. So he says, somewhat like a rebuke, **sorrow has filled your hearts;** "Do not give yourself over to sorrow" (Sir 30:21); "Let not your hearts be troubled" (14:27).

2086 Now he mentions one of the things which will console them, the promise of the Holy Spirit. First, he promises the Holy Spirit; secondly, he foretells the effect of the Spirit (v 8).

2087 He does two things about the first. First, he points out the necessity of his going; secondly, he shows that his going is beneficial.

He says, **sorrow has filled your hearts**, because I am leaving; but you should rather be glad, because **it is to your advantage that I go away**, that is, it is very necessary for you, **for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come**

to you. Furthermore, my going is very fruitful and beneficial for you, because **if I go, I will send him to you.**

2088 But, could not Christ have sent the Holy Spirit while he was still living in the flesh? He could have, because even at his baptism the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove and never left him. Indeed, from the instant of his conception he received the Spirit without measure. But Christ did not choose to give the Spirit to his disciples while he was still living among them for four reasons. First, they were not prepared, for carnal love is contrary to the Holy Spirit, since the Spirit is spiritual love. Now the disciples were affected by a certain carnal love for the human nature of Christ, without yet being elevated to a spiritual love of his divinity. And so they were not yet ready for the Holy Spirit: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view," with carnal affection; "even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view," before his passion, "we regard him thus no longer" (2 Cor 5: 16).

Secondly, Christ did not give them the Spirit then because of the characteristic of divine help, which is to be especially present in times of need: "A stronghold in times of trouble" (Is 9:9); "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me up" (Ps 27:10). Now as long as Christ was with them, he was all the help they needed. But when he left they were exposed to many tribulations, and so another consoler and helper was very quickly given to them: "He will give you another Paraclete" [14:16]; "Whom will he teach knowledge? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast" (Is 28:9).

Thirdly, the Spirit was not given then out of consideration for the dignity of Christ. As Augustine says in his book *On the Trinity*, Christ as human does not have the power to give the Holy Spirit, but he does as God.[\[11\]](#) When he was with his disciples, he seemed to be human, just like them. And so that it would not seem that it was a mere human being who was giving the Holy Spirit, Christ did not give the Spirit before his ascension: "the Spirit has not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (7:39) "Send her forth from the holy heavens" (Wis 9:10).

Fourthly, the Spirit was not given at that time to preserve unity in the Church. We saw that "John did no sign" (10:41), and this was so in order not to divert the people from Christ, and to make the superiority of Christ over John more evident. But the disciples were to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that they could do even greater works than Christ had done: "And greater works than these will he do" (14:12). If the Holy Spirit had been given to them before the passion, the people might have become confused as to who really was the Christ, and they would be divided: "You have ascended to the heights, and have given gifts to

men" [Ps 68:18].

2089 Chrysostom thinks that we can use this as an argument against the Macedonians. [\[12\]](#) They say that the Holy Spirit is a creature and the minister of the Father and the Son. But if this were true, the coming of the Holy Spirit would not have been a sufficient consolation to the Apostles for Christ's leaving them. It would be like the departure of a king, where the substitution for him of one of his ministers would not be a sufficient consolation. Thus, because the Holy Spirit is equal to the Son, our Lord consoles them by promising that the Spirit will come.

2090 Yet if the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal, why is it to their advantage that the Son leave so that the Holy Spirit can come? The Son left as far as concerns his bodily presence, but he came invisibly together with the Holy Spirit. If the Son had dwelt here invisibly and said, "It is to your advantage that I go because the Holy Spirit will come," people would think the Holy Spirit was greater than the Son.

LECTURE 3

8 "And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is [already] judged. 12 I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth [will teach you all truth]; for he will not speak on his own authority [from himself], but whatever he hears [will hear] he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." [\[13\]](#)

2091 Above, our Lord consoled his apostles by promising them the Holy Spirit. Here he shows the benefit the Holy Spirit will bring to them when he comes. He mentions three benefits: one for the world; a second for the disciples; and a third for Christ. As for the world, the Holy Spirit will convince the world; as for the apostles, the Spirit will teach them (v 12); as for Christ, the Spirit will glorify him (v 14). First, he mentions the benefit of the Spirit's coming for the world; secondly, he explains it (v 9).

2092 He says: It is to your advantage that I go, because I will send the Holy Spirit to you, **and when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.** This has received two interpretations; one by Augustine, and the other by Chrysostom.

2093 Augustine explains it this way. [\[14\]](#) **And when he comes**, the Holy Spirit, that is, **he will convince**, that is, rebuke or reprove, **the world.** "Reprove a wise man, and he will love you" (Ps 9:8).

But did not Christ also rebuke the world? He did, as in "You are of your father the devil" (8:44), and in Matthew (c 23) he said many things against the Pharisees and Scribes. Why then does he say, **he will convince**, as though he himself did not reprove?

Perhaps someone will say that Christ rebuked only the Jews, but that the Holy Spirit, in and through the disciples, will rebuke the entire world. But this is in opposition to the fact that Christ also speaks in and through the apostles, just as the Holy Spirit does: "You desire proof that Christ is speaking in me" (2 Cor 13:3).

One must therefore say that, **he will convince**, rebuke, **the world**, as the one who will invisibly enter into their hearts and pour his charity into them so that their fear is conquered and they have the strength to rebuke. For as was already said, as long as the disciples were carnally attracted to Christ, the Holy Spirit was not in them as he would be later. Consequently they were not as courageous then as they were after the Spirit came. "Their power," the power of the apostles, "came from the Spirit of his mouth" [Ps 33:6]; "Then the Spirit of God took possession of Zechariah" (2 Chron 24:20). Again, **he will convince the world** because he will fill hearts which were before worldly and lead them to rebuke themselves: "I will reprove my ways in his sight" [Job 13:15]. The Holy Spirit does this: "Put a new and right spirit within me" (Ps 51:10).

2094 For what will the Spirit rebuke the world? For three things. He will reprove the worldly for the sin they have committed: "Declare to my people their transgression" (Is 58:1). And this was done by the apostles: "Their voice goes out through all the earth" (Ps 19:4). He will reprove the world for the righteousness it has neglected. And the apostles did this: "None is righteousness, no not one" (Rom 3:10). And the Spirit will reprove the world because of the judgment it has held in contempt: "When wickedness comes, contempt comes also" (Prv 18:3); "She [Jerusalem] has despised my judgments" [Ez 5:6].

2095 Now he explains all this. First, what he says about their sin, because they

do not believe in me. The Spirit rebukes them only for the sin of disbelief because by faith all other sins are remitted. In a similar way our Lord charges the damned only with a lack of mercy, because all sins are washed away by mercy: "By mercy and faith sins are cleansed away" [Prv 15:27]. The same applies here, because as long as they remain in disbelief, their other sins remain, but when there is no longer disbelief the other sins are remitted. He says, "because they do not believe in me," using the form *in me*, and not the forms *mihi* or *me*, because even the devils believe that Christ exists and they tremble (Jas 2:19). In me, that is, with a faith enlivened by hope and love. [On faith "in me" see no. 901 above]

2096 Secondly, he explains what he said about righteousness when he says **because I go to the Father**. This can be understood in two ways: either as referring to the righteousness of Christ or that of the apostles. As referring to the righteousness of the apostles the explanation is this: the world will be rebuked because of our righteousness, because the world has not imitated it. The righteousness, I say, which is not from the law but from faith: "The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ" (Rom 3:22).

Faith is concerned with what is invisible (Heb 11:1). Now the disciples saw one thing, the humanity of Christ, and did not see another, his divinity. But Christ promises this to them as a reward: "I will ... manifest myself to him" (14:21). Thus, the disciples had faith only regarding the divinity of Christ; but when Christ's human nature was taken from them, they had faith regarding both. And so, according to Augustine in his *Commentary on John*, when Christ says, **because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more**, it is like saying: You believe in me, that is, as regards my divinity, and because I go to the Father, you will believe in me also as regards my humanity.^[15] This is the righteousness of faith which the world does not imitate.

He says, **and you will see me no more**, not because they would never see him, but because they would not see him in that mortal flesh. They did see him at the resurrection, but then he was immortal; and they will see him at the judgment, coming in glory.

This phrase is expounded as referring to the righteousness of Christ in the book, *On the Words of the Lord*.^[16] The Jews were unwilling to recognize the righteousness of Christ: "We know that this man is a sinner" (9:24). But he will manifest his righteousness to them, saying **because I go to the Father**: for the very fact that I go to the Father is a sign of my righteousness. Christ descended because of his mercy, but his ascension was due to his righteousness: "Therefore God has highly exalted him" (Phil 2:9).

2097 Thirdly, the Holy Spirit reproves the world by the judgment. This is because **the ruler of this world is already judged**. It is the devil who is the ruler of this world, that is, of worldly people. He is the ruler, not by creation, but by his suggestions and their imitation of him: "Those on his side imitate him" [Wis 2:25]; "He is king over all the sons of pride" (Job 41:34). Therefore, this ruler **is already judged**, that is, cast outside: "Now is the judgment of this world," that is, in favor of the world, "now shall the ruler of this world be cast out" (12:31). He says this to anticipate the excuse that some will make for their sins, saying that the devil tempted them. He is saying in effect: They cannot be excused because the devil has been cast out by the grace and faith of Christ and by the Holy Spirit, cast out from the hearts of the faithful so that he no longer tempts from within as before, but from without. And so those who resolve to cling to Christ can resist. This is why the devil, who has conquered the strongest males, can be conquered by frail women. Thus the world is reproved by this judgment because being unwilling to resist, it is overcome by the devil, who although expelled is brought back by their consent to sin: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies" (Rom 6:12).

Another explanation is in the book, *The Words of the Lord*. It says here that the phrase, **is already judged**, refers to the judgment of condemnation.[\[17\]](#) That is, the ruler of this world is already condemned, and consequently all who adhere to him: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt 25:41). The world is reproved by this judgment because although the world knows that its ruler has been condemned, it has not escaped from this judgment but is judged with its ruler, because it imitates his pride and evil ways.

2098 Chrysostom gives another explanation of this passage, as follows. **When he comes**, the Holy Spirit, **he will convince**, that is, convict, the world of sin.[\[18\]](#) It is like saying: The Holy Spirit will be a witness against the world: "God also bore witness by signs and wonders" (Heb 2:4). He will show that they have sinned grievously **because they did not believe in me**, when they see that the Holy Spirit will be given in my name to those who believe: "And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32). The Holy Spirit will be a witness to my **righteousness**, which the world did not think I possessed. And he will be this witness **because I go to the Father**, and will send you the Spirit, who will show that I am righteous and have led a faultless life: "Whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth" (15:26); and in the Psalm [68:18] we see that after Christ ascends he gives gifts to men. He will be a witness **of judgment, because the ruler of this world is already judged**, that is, it is by the Holy Spirit that he is judged, that is, cast out of the hearts of those who believe: "I will remove from the land ... the unclean spirit" (Zech 13:2); "Now we have received not the spirit of

the world, but the Spirit which is from God" (1 Cor 2:12). He will convict the world by his judgment because the world wickedly judged that Christ had a devil and cast out devils by Beelzebul. The Holy Spirit, which I will send, will condemn the devil and cast him out.

2099 Now he mentions the benefit his disciples will receive from the coming of the Holy Spirit; this benefit is their instruction. First, he states their need for instruction; secondly, he promises this instruction (v 13); thirdly, he eliminates a difficulty (v 13b).

2100 He says: the coming of the Holy Spirit will benefit the world because he will rebuke it. But the Spirit will also benefit you by instructing you. You need this instruction because **I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.** It is like saying: I have instructed you, but you are not completely instructed: "Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways; and how small a whisper do we hear of him. But the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job 26:14). It would be foolish to ask what those many things were which they could not bear, as Augustine remarks. [\[19\]](#) For if they could not bear them, much less can we.

2101 The statement, **you cannot bear them now**, has been used by certain heretics as a cover for their errors. They tell their adherents the basest things in private, things they would not dare to say openly, as though these were the things the disciples were not then able to bear, and as though the Holy Spirit taught them these things which a man would blush to teach and preach openly. We should not think that some secret teaching is kept from believers who are uneducated, and taught to those who are more learned. Indeed, matters of faith are presented to all the faithful: "What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light" (Mt 10:27). Still, they have to be presented in one way to the uneducated and in another way to the learned. For instance, certain fine points about the mystery of the Incarnation and the other mysteries would not be presented to the uneducated because they would not understand them and they would actually be an obstacle. So our Lord presented all matters of faith to his disciples, but not in the way he later revealed them, and especially not in the way they will be presented in eternal life. Accordingly, what they could not bear then was the full knowledge of divine things, such as knowledge of the equality of the Son with the Father and other things of that sort which they did not then know. Paul says, "He heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter" (2 Cor 12:4), these things were the very truths of faith, not something else, but known in a more profound way. Again, the disciples did not then have a spiritual understanding of all the scriptures, but did only when "He opened their minds to understand the scriptures" (Lk 24:45). Also, the disciples did not then have a full understanding of the sufferings and dangers they were to undergo • they could

not bear such knowledge then as their spirits were weak: "Put your shoulder under her and carry her" (Sir 6:25). For these reasons the disciples were in need of further instruction.

2102 Then he promises that they will be instructed by the coming of the Holy Spirit, who will teach them all truth. For since the Holy Spirit is from the Truth, it is appropriate that the Spirit teach the truth, and make those he teaches like the one who sent him. He says, **all the truth**, that is, the truth of the faith. He will teach them to have a better understanding of this truth in this life, and a fullness of understanding in eternal life, where we will know as we are known (see 1 Cor 13:12); "His anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie" (1 Jn 2:27). Or, **all the truth**, that is, of the figures of the law, which understanding the apostles received from the Holy Spirit. We read in Daniel (1:17) that the Lord gave to his children wisdom and understanding.

2103 Now he excludes a difficulty which could have arisen. If the Holy Spirit will teach them, it seems that he is greater than Christ. This is not true, because the Spirit will teach them by the power of the Father and the Son, **for he will not speak from himself**, but from me, because he will be from me. Just as the Son does not act from himself but from the Father, so the Holy Spirit, because he is from another, that is, from the Father and the Son, **will not speak from himself, but whatever he will hear** by receiving knowledge as well as his essence from eternity, **he will speak**, not in a bodily way but by enlightening your minds from within: "I will bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her" (Hos 2:14); "Let me hear what God the Lord will speak" (Ps 85:8).[\[20\]](#)

2104 Since the Holy Spirit hears from eternity, why does he say he will hear? We should say to this that eternity includes all time. Consequently, the Holy Spirit, who hears from all eternity, is said to hear in the present, in the past, and in the future. Yet at times he is said to hear in the future because the knowledge in question concerns things that are still in the future. **He will speak**, therefore, whatever he will hear, for he will not only teach about things that are eternal, but future things. Thus he adds, **he will declare to you the things that are to come**, which is a characteristic of God: "She has foreknowledge of signs and wonders" (Wis 8:8); "Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods" (Is 41:23). This is characteristic of the Holy Spirit: "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Joel 2:28). So they would have no doubts about how they would know of the coming tribulations, which Christ predicted for them, he adds, **and he will declare to you the things that are to come**, that is, upon you.

LECTURE 4

14 "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine [for he will receive from me] and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine [that he will receive from me] and declare it to you."[\[21\]](#)

2105 Above, we saw two fruits of the coming of the Holy Spirit, which were the rebuking of the world and the instruction of the disciples. Now the third fruit is mentioned, the glorification of Christ. First, he mentions this fruit, the glorification; secondly, the reason for it (v 14b); thirdly, he expands on this (v 15).

2106 He says: "He will teach all truth," because **he will glorify me**, in whom is all truth: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6); "In whom," that is, in Christ, "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3).

He will glorify me, that is, give a clear knowledge of me. He will do this, first of all, by enlightening the disciples: for they were still carnal and attached to Christ in a carnal way, that is, in the weakness of his flesh, not realizing the grandeur of his divinity. Later, they were able to grasp this through the Holy Spirit: "God has revealed to us through the Spirit" (1 Cor 2:10). Secondly, the Spirit will give them the confidence to preach clearly, openly. Before this the disciples were so timid that they did not dare to profess Christ publicly, but when they were filled with the Holy Spirit fear was cast out, and they proclaimed Christ to the people, being somehow impelled by that same Spirit: "He will come like a rushing stream, which the wind [or Spirit] of the Lord drives" (Is 59:19). This is why the Apostle says: "The love of Christ impels us" [2 Cor 5:14]. Thirdly, the Spirit will glorify Christ by accomplishing marvelous works in and through the apostles: "All things are inspired by one and the same Spirit" (1 Cor 12:11).

2107 Now we see the reason why the Holy Spirit will glorify Christ: it is because the Son is the principle of the Holy Spirit. For everything which is from another manifests that from which it is. Thus the Son manifests the Father because he is from the Father. And so because the Holy Spirit is from the Son, it is appropriate that the Spirit glorify the Son. He says, **he will glorify me, for he will receive from me**. However, the Holy Spirit does not receive in the same way creatures do.

When creatures receive, three things are found, and two of these are not found in the divinity. In creatures, that which receives is one thing, and what is received is something else. This is not so in the divinity, since the divine persons are

simple, and not composed of several elements. Indeed, the Holy Spirit receives his entire substance from whomever this Spirit receives, and so does the Son. Another difference is that among creatures the one who receives did not have at one time what he receives, as when matter receives a form, or a subject receives an accident: for at some time the matter was without such a form, and the subject without that accident. This is not so in the divinity, because what the Son receives from the Father the Son has from eternity, and what the Holy Spirit receives from the Father and the Son, the Spirit has from eternity. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit receives from the Son like the Son receives from the Father: "What my Father has given to me is greater than all" (10:29). Thus, when the expression "to receive" is used of the divinity, it indicates an order in origin. [\[22\]](#)

2108 Note that when he says, **he will receive from me**, the word **from** (*de*, "from" or "of") does not indicate participation, but consubstantiality, because the Spirit receives all that the Son has. For just as the Son is from (*de*) the substance of the Father, because he receives the entire substance of the Father, so also the Holy Spirit is from (*de*) the substance of the Son because the Spirit receives the whole substance of the Son. Thus, because **he will receive from me**, and I am the Word of God, therefore he will **declare it to you**.

2109 Now this reason is further explained when Christ shows that the Holy Spirit received from him because of the unity and consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. First, we see the consubstantiality of the Father and Son; secondly, the conclusion is drawn, **therefore I said that he will receive from me**.

2110 He says: he will receive from me because **all that the Father has is mine**. This is like saying: Although the Spirit of truth proceeds from the Father, yet because **all that the Father has is mine**, (and the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father), the Spirit receives from me.

Note that one "has" something in two ways: in one way as a possession, and in the other way as something existing in oneself, as a form or a part. The Father has as a possession and as something subject to himself the totality of created things: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Ps 24:1). The Father also has something which is in him, indeed, which is himself, because the Father is whatever is in Christ, since the Father is his own essence, own goodness, own truth and own eternity. The word "has" is being used in this sense here. And so whatever the Father has is the Son's, because the Son has the same wisdom and the same goodness that the Father also has: "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself" (5:26); "All things have been delivered to me by my Father" (Mt 11:27).

2111 As Didymus says, some might make this objection: If all that the Father has the Son also has, then since the Father has the characteristic of fatherhood, it follows that the Son also has this. [\[23\]](#) I answer that this argument would appear to be valid if our Lord had said, "All that God has is mine." But he says, **all that the Father has is mine**, and this keeps a distinction between the Father and the Son, and leads us to understand that all that the Father has is the Son's, except that by which the Father is distinguished from the Son. For by using the word Father, Christ declares that he is the Son, and has not usurped the attribute of fatherhood.

2112 We have conceded that whatever the Father has the Son has, but not that the Son has it in the same order as the Father. For the Son has as receiving from another; while the Father has as giving to another. Thus, the distinction is not in what is had, but in the order of having. Now relations of this kind, that is, of fatherhood and sonship, signify a distinction of order: for fatherhood signifies a giving to another and sonship a receiving from another.

2113 One might ask whether a relation is something real in the divinity. It seems that it is: for if not, then since the divine persons are distinguished by relations, the distinction of the persons would not be real. The answer to this is that in the divinity a relation is considered in two ways. In one way, a relation is considered in comparison to the essence or person of the Father. And in this way the relation of Father is not other than the essence or person of the Father. In the other way, a relation can be considered in comparison to the opposite relation, for example, to sonship. In this way fatherhood is a real relation, because it signifies an order of the nature which the Father gives the Son by an eternal generation. And this order is really in God. Therefore, if fatherhood is compared to the essence of the Father, all that the Father has the Son has, because fatherhood is not other than the essence of the Father, but the Son does not have it in the same order, as was said.

2114 Now he draws his conclusion, that the Holy Spirit receives from the Son. If all things which the Father has are the Son's, and the Son is consubstantial to the Father, it is necessary that the Holy Spirit proceed from the Son as he proceeds from the Father, as Hilary and Didymus argue. [\[24\]](#) To understand this we should note that among created things in every procession or origination that by which the agent acts or gives what it has is the same as what the recipient receives. For instance, fire which has been generated receives the form of fire which the generating fire gives it by its own form. There is something similar to this in the origin of the divine persons, because that by which the Father gives his nature to the Son (not by will, but by nature), is the same as that which he gives. Still there is an unlikeness in this way: in creatures, that which is communicated and

that by which it is communicated is only the same in species, not the same individual; but in the divinity, what the Father gives to the Son and that by which he gives or communicates it is the same individual nature.

2115 Note that we say that the Son receives from (*de*) the substance of the Father, that is, he receives the substance of the Father; and we say that the Holy Spirit receives from the substance of the Father and the Son; and that the Father, by virtue of his nature, gives his substance to the Son, and the Father and the Son give to the Holy Spirit. But we do not say that the Father is from (*de*) the substance of the Son, or that the Father and the Son are from the substance of the Holy Spirit, because the "from" (*de*) signifies consubstantiality with an order of origin. Thus, what is communicated to the Holy Spirit is what is common to the Father and the Son. Now in the divinity the principle of communication must be the same as what is communicated. And so if what is communicated to the Holy Spirit is as essence, that which communicates must be this essence. This essence, however, is common to the Father and the Son. So, if the Father gives his essence to the Holy Spirit, the Son must also do so. For this reason he says, **all that the Father has is mine**. And if the Holy Spirit receives from the Father, he will also receive from the Son. And for this reason he says, **therefore I said that he will receive from me and declare it to you**, for according as he receives from me, so he will show you.

LECTURE 5

16 "A little while, and you will see me no more; again a little while, and you will see me [because I go to the Father]." 17 Some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this that he says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me', and, 'because I go to the Father'?" 18 They said, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We do not know what he means." 19 Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him; so he said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'? 20 Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice, you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. 21 When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child [man] is born into the world. 22 So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will

take your joy from you."[\[25\]](#)

2116 Above, our Lord explained one reason for their consolation, that was his promise of the Holy Spirit. Here he gives the second, which is that they will see him again. First, the promise that they will see him again is made; secondly, we see the perplexity of the disciples (v 17); and thirdly, their perplexity is answered (v 19).

2117 When our Lord foretold that he would leave his disciples, he also promised that they would see him again. He insists on this several times so that by considering the fact that he would come again they might better endure his absence. He actually mentions three things to console them: his absence will be brief; he will be with them again; and he will leave with honor.

2118 His absence is brief because **a little while and you will see me no more**, so that the **little while** refers to the time when **you will see me no more**. It is like saying: I will be taken from you by death **and you will see me no more**; but do not be sad, because the time during which you will not see me will be a **little while**, for I will rise at dawn, that is, on the third day: "Hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past" (Is 26:20).

2119 Yet I will be with you again because **again a little while**, that is, during a brief time after the resurrection, for forty days, "appearing to them during forty days" (Acts 1:3), **you will see me**: "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (20:20).

2120 And this is because I am leaving with honor, because I go to the Father: "As they were looking on, he was lifted up" (Acts 1:9).

Another interpretation would be that the **little while** refers to the time before Christ's death, so that the meaning is: It will just be a **little while** until I am taken from you, that is, on the morrow: "Yet a little while I am with you" (13:33). **And you will see me no more**, that is, in mortal form, because "yet a little while, and the world will see me no more," as mortal (14:19); yet it will see him at the judgment and coming in majesty. But the disciples will see Christ when immortal, after the resurrection, because as we read in Acts (10:40): "God ... made him manifest, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses." And so he adds, **a little while, and you will see me**, for I will remain in death only for a little while: "In a moment of indignation I hid my face from you for a little while" [Is 54:8].

Or this **little while** and we will see him can refer to the time of our entire life

until the judgment; and then we will see Christ at the judgment and in glory. It is called a "little while" in relation to eternity: "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past" (Ps 90:4). **Because I go to the Father**, by my resurrection and ascension: "Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father" (13:1).

2121 Now we see the perplexity of the disciples: first, they talk it over among themselves; secondly, we see the reason for their perplexity; and thirdly, we see their point of view and attitude.

2122 The disciples questioned one another about the Lord's statement, saying, **What does he mean by a little while?** They show an admirable respect for Christ for it was so great that they did not presume to question him. The angels do the same: "Who is this that comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah" (Is 63:1). And he answers: "It is I who am speaking of righteousness and a defender who saves you" [Is 63:1]. We see from the words of the disciples that they did not yet have a complete understanding of what Christ said, either because they were still sunk in sorrow or because the words themselves were obscure: "Are you also still without understanding?" (Mt 15:16).

2123 The reason for their perplexity was that Christ's statements seemed to be incompatible. They understood well enough when he said, **you will not see me**, and **because I go to the Father**. But they were perplexed as to how they could see the same person a little while after he had died, for they did not yet know of the resurrection, and we read "What man can live and never see death? Who can deliver his soul from the power of Sheol?" (Ps 89:48); "No one has been known to return from Hades" (Wis 2:1).

2124 This is why the disciples say, **What does he mean by a little while and we will see him? We do not know what he means**, they reply in an unassuming way. As Augustine remarks, when some do not understand the words of Scripture they belittle it, preferring their own theories to the authority of Scripture. Yet others, when they do not understand, unpretentiously admit their own lack of knowledge: "I am ... a man who is weak and short-lived, with little understanding of judgment and laws" (Wis 9:5).[\[26\]](#) This is what the apostles are doing here, for they do not say that Christ was wrong or that he said nothing. They ascribe their lack of understanding to their own ignorance.

2125 Now their perplexity is revealed. First, it is acknowledged [by Christ]; secondly, it is cleared up (v 20); and thirdly Christ presents a similar situation (v 21).

2126 He does two things about the first. First, he shows how the perplexity of the disciples was recognized by Christ, when he says, **Jesus knew**, by reason of his divinity, **that they wanted to ask him**, about this difficulty: "He himself knew what was in man" (2:25); "Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Sam 16:7). Then he shows how this recognition was expressed in words, when Christ said to them, **Is this what you are asking yourselves ... ?** "I made them known; then suddenly I did them and they came to pass" (Is 48:3).

2127 Now he explains his words and removes the perplexity of the disciples, not just repeating what he had said, but setting their minds at ease. First, he states that there will be a division of those who are sad and those who are joyful; secondly, he mentions their own interior sorrow; and thirdly, the joy that will follow.

2128 About the first, he says, **Truly, truly I say to you** that during that little while in which you will not see me **you will weep**, groaning aloud in sad tones, and lament, shedding tears: "She weeps bitterly in the night," referring to the first, "tears on her cheeks" referring to the second (Lam 1:2); "Keep your voice from weeping" (Jer 31:16).

2129 But their interior sadness will be in contrast to the joy of the world. Thus he says, **but the world will rejoice**. This can be understood in a particular way as referring to the time of Christ's passion, and then **the world**, that is, the Scribes and Pharisees, **will rejoice** that Christ is killed: "Ah, this is the day we longed for; now we have it; we see it!" (Lam 2:16). Or **the world**, that is the evil members of the Church, will rejoice that the saints are persecuted: "The inhabitants of the earth will rejoice" [Rev 17:8]. Or in a general sense, **the world**, those living carnally, **will rejoice** in worldly things: "And behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine" (Is 22:13).

The sorrow of the disciples follows, and so he says, **you will be sorrowful**, because of the sufferings you will have in this world, or rather at my being killed. This is the way the saints are saddened: by the sufferings they endure at the hands of the world and by sin: "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation" (2 Cor 7:10).

2130 Yet joy will follow this sadness, because your sorrow, which you will experience over my passion, will turn into joy, at my resurrection: "The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord" (20:20). And in general, the sorrow of all the saints will be turned into the joy of the future life: "Blessed are those who mourn,

for they shall be comforted" (Mt 5:4); "He that goes forth weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy" (Ps 126:6). For the saints weep as they sow during this time of merit, but they will rejoice at the reaping, during the time of reward.

2131 Now our Lord mentions a similar case and then draws the parallels. The similar instance he gives is that of a woman about to give birth. First, he mentions the sorrow she has while in labor; and secondly, her joy once her child is born (v 21).

2132 In regard to the first he says, **When a woman is in travail she has sorrow**, very great sensible sorrow, **because her hour of pain has come**: "Anguish as of a woman in travail" (Ps 48:6). We can understand this pain as the pain of the passion of Christ, which was the greatest: "Look and see if there is any pain like my pain" [Lam 1:12]. We can also see in it the pain of the saints when repentant over their sins: "Like a woman with child, who writhes and cries out in her pangs, when she is near her time, so were we because of you, O Lord" (Is 26:17).

2133 Now he mentions the joy when it is over. After a birth there is a double joy: one, because the pain is past; the other, and greater, is over the birth of the child. This joy is greater if the child is of the male sex, since the male is complete, while the female is incomplete and fortuitous. "Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father, 'A son is born to you!'" (Jer 20:15). And in Genesis, when Sara conceived she said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me" [Gen 21:6]. So he says, **but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish**, rejoicing that the pain is over, but even more **for joy that a man is born into the world**.

This image is appropriate to Christ because by his suffering he delivered us from the anguish of death and gave birth to a new man, that is, he conferred on human nature a newness of life and glory which were not yet known to us. Thus he does not say, "a child is born," but rather **a man is born**, because Christ, in his human nature, rose from the dead, renewed, with the newness of a child at birth. This image also fits the Church militant, which walks in a newness of life; and the Church triumphant, which walks in a newness of glory. He does not say, "There will be no anguish," but **she no longer remembers the anguish**, because even though the saints in glory will remember the afflictions they endured, they will not experience them.

2134 Here he draws the parallels. As regards the present sorrow the apostles were experiencing he says, **So you have sorrow now**, now being from the time

of my passion, and the sorrow is over my death: "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk and look sad?" [Lk 24:17]. Or now, during your entire life, you have sorrow: "You will weep and lament" (16:20).

As regards their future joy he says, **but I will see you again**. This is the same as if he said "you will see me," because we can see him only if he shows himself. Yet he does not say, "You will see me," but **I will see you**, because this showing of himself to us springs from his compassion, which the very sight of him indicates. He says, **I will see you again**, at my resurrection and in future glory: "Your eyes will see the king in his beauty" (Is 33:17).

Secondly, he promises them a joyful heart and gladness, saying, **and your hearts will rejoice**, when you see me at my resurrection. Thus the Church sings: "This is the day the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad." **And your hearts will rejoice** at the vision of my glory: "Your face will fill me with joy" [Ps 16:11]; "Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice" (Is 60:5). For it is natural for each one to rejoice at the sight of what is loved. Now no one can see the divine essence unless he loves it: "He shows it to his friend, as it is his possession" [Job 36:33]. And so it is necessary that joy follow upon this vision: "You shall see," knowing with your mind, "and your heart shall rejoice" (Is 66:14). This joy will even spill over on to the body when it is glorified, and so Isaiah continues: "Your bones shall flourish like the grass"; "Enter into the joy of your master" (Mt 25:21).

Thirdly, he promises that this joy will last forever, saying, **and no one will take your joy from you**, that is, the joy you will have over my resurrection will not be taken from you, like the Jews took your joy during my passion. And this is because "Christ rising from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him" [Rom 6:9] Or, your joy in the fullness of your glory **no one will take from you** since it cannot be lost and is continuous: "Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads" (Is 35:10). For we will not lose this joy for ourselves by sin since our wills shall be fixed in the good; and no one can take this joy from us because then there will be no violence and no injuries will be inflicted on us, etc.

LECTURE 6

23 "In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father [in my name], he will give it to you in my name. 24 Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."[\[27\]](#)

2135 Above, our Lord enlarged on two things which would comfort his apostles, the promise of the Paraclete and his own return. Here he mentions a third reason by which he comforts them, promising them access to the Father. First, he promises them an intimate relationship with the Father; secondly, he gives a reason for this intimacy (v 25). He does two things about the first: he gives them that security that comes from confidence; secondly, he encourages them to act on their confidence (v 24). He does two things with the first: first, he rejects a need for an intercessor; secondly, he promises them an opportunity to ask (v 23).

2136 He says, **In that day you will ask nothing of me**. According to Augustine, where we have *ask*, the Greeks have a word which means two things: to ask for something, and to ask or pose a question. [\[28\]](#) Consequently, **In that day you will ask nothing of me** can mean two things: you will not ask me for anything, or you will not question me about anything.

In that day. What that day is can be seen from what he said before, "I will see you again" (v 22). This can be understood to be the day of his resurrection, or the day when we have the vision of his glory.

2137 Chrysostom understands this passage the first way. [\[29\]](#) Thus, **In that day**, when I arise from the dead, **you will ask nothing of me**, that is, you will not say such things as "Show us the Father." Augustine objects to this interpretation because after the resurrection the disciples did say: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6); and Peter poses the question: "Lord, what about this man?" (20:21).

Yet one can uphold Chrysostom's explanation by saying that our Lord calls **that day** not only the day of his resurrection, but also that day the disciples were to be taught by the Holy Spirit: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will teach you all truth" [16:13]. And so by speaking in a vague manner of that time, our Lord also includes the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is like saying: **In that day**, once the Holy Spirit has been given, **you will ask nothing of me**, because you will know all things by the Holy Spirit: "His anointing teaches you about everything" (1 Jn 2:27). Again, according to Chrysostom, **In that day**, when the Holy Spirit comes, **you will ask nothing of me**, that is, you will have no need to ask me.

2138 But after the resurrection did not the apostles pray to Christ for things? It seems so, for the Apostle says: "Three times I besought the Lord," that is, Christ (2 Cor 12:8). I answer that there are two natures in Christ: his human nature, by which he is the mediator between God and us (1 Tim 2:5), and his divine nature, by which he is one God with the Father. Christ, considered as having a human

nature, was not a mediator who never united us to God, like some mediators who never unite extremes. So, Christ joins us to the Father. Now to join God the Father and to join Christ as God are the same. Thus he says: It is not necessary for you to use my mediation as man. Thus, **In that day you will ask nothing of me** as mediator, because you will have access to God by yourselves • but you will ask me as God. Although Christ intercedes for us, as the Apostle says (Rom 8:34), still the Church does not ask him as an intercessor. Thus we do not say, "Christ, pray for us"; but we do ask him as God, adhering to him as God by faith and love.

2139 Augustine explains this passage as referring to the day of the vision of glory in this way: **In that day**, when I see you in glory, **you will ask nothing of me**, that is, you will not ask me for anything because there will be nothing left to desire, since all goods will be ours in superabundance in our homeland: "You will fill me with joy by your face" [Ps 16:11]; and again, "I will be satisfied when your glory appears" [Ps 17:15].[\[30\]](#) Also, you will ask no questions because you will be filled with the knowledge of God: "In your light do we see light" (Ps 36:9).

2140 An objection can be raised against both of these points. The saints do pray in our homeland: "Call now, if there is any who will answer you; and turn to some of the saints" [Job 5:1]; and in 2 Maccabees (15:12) we see that a saint prayed for the entire Jewish people. Nor can one say that the saints pray just for others and not for themselves, for we read: "O Sovereign Lord ... how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?" (Rev 6:10). Further, the saints ask questions: for they will be equal to the angels (Mt 22:30), and the angels question: "Who is the King of glory?" (Ps 24:8), and "Who is this that comes from Edom?" (Is 63:1). Therefore, the saints do question.

Two points can be made in answer to this. The time of glory can be considered in two ways: the time of the beginning of glory, and the time of its full completion. The time of the beginning of glory lasts until the day of judgment: for the saints receive glory in their soul, but something still remains to be received, that is, the glory of the body for each one, and the completion of the number of the elect. Consequently, till the day of judgment the saints can both ask for things and question, but not about what pertains to the very essence of beatitude. The time of fully complete glory is after the day of judgment, and after this nothing is left to be asked for, and nothing left to be known. It is about this that he says, **In that day**, of consummated glory, **you will ask nothing of me**.

The observation about the angels asking questions is true in his way: they do ask about the mysteries of the humanity of Christ and the incarnation, but they do not question about the divinity.

2141 Now he promises them an opportunity to ask. This is related to the above in two ways. According to Chrysostom, this refers to the time of the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. [\[31\]](#) It is like saying: It is true that in that day of the resurrection and of the Holy Spirit that you will not ask me; yet you will have my help, because you will ask the Father, to whom you have access through me, **in my name**.

Augustine explains it the other way. "In that day," of my glory," you will ask nothing of me"; but in the meantime, during your sorrowful pilgrimage, **if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you**. So according to this explanation, **if you ask anything of the Father**, does not refer to "in that day," but to what precedes that day. [\[32\]](#)

2142 Our Lord lays down seven conditions for good prayer. The first is that spiritual goods should be sought, when he says, "**If you ask anything**." For what is entirely earthly, even though it is something in itself, is nothing when compared to spiritual goods: "I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her" (Wis 7:8); "I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void" (Jer 4:23). But an objection: In Matthew (6:11), our Lord teaches us to ask for temporal goods: "Give us this day our daily bread." I answer that a temporal good asked for in relation to a spiritual good is then something. The second is that it be made with perseverance; as to this he says, **If you ask**, with perseverance: "They ought always to pray and not lose heart" (Lk 18:1); "Pray constantly" (1 Thess 5:17).

Thirdly, we should pray in harmony with others; he says, **if you**, in the plural, **ask**: "If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven" (Mt 18:19). Thus the Gloss says, about Romans (c 16), that it is impossible for the prayers of many not to be heard. [\[33\]](#) Fourthly, it should arise from an affection like that of a child for its parents, as he says, **the Father**. One who asks out of fear does not ask a father, but a master or an enemy: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Mt 7:11).

The fifth condition is that it be made with piety, that is, with humility: • "He will regard the prayer of the humble and will not despise their petitions" [Ps 102:17] • with confidence that it will be granted • "Let him ask in faith, with no doubting" (Jas 1:6) • and it should be made correctly • "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly" (Jas 4:3). In regard to this he says, **in my name**, which is the name of the Savior, in which name one asks when asking for things pertaining to salvation, and when asking in that way by which one can

attain salvation: "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The sixth condition is that prayer be made for an appropriate time, so he says, **he will give**. One should not stop praying if one does not immediately receive; it will be given to us even if it is postponed till a better time, so as to increase our desire: "You give them their food in due season" (Ps 145:15). Seventhly, one should ask for himself. Thus he says, **to you**, because sometimes prayers for others are not heard because the demerits of those we ask for stand in the way: "Do not pray for this people" (Jer 7:16); "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people" (Jer 15:1).

2143 Now he encourages them to act with the confidence he has given them: first, he reminds them of what they lacked in the past; secondly, he encourages them to advance in the future, **ask**.

2144 What they lacked in the past was not asking; thus he says, **Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name**. But this seems to conflict with Luke (9:1) where it says that Christ gave the twelve "power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases"; and the same in Matthew (10:1). Now they did these things by praying. Therefore, they did ask something in the name of Christ, especially because the disciples said: "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name" (Lk 10:17).

We must say, then, that this can be explained in two ways. First, **Hitherto you have asked nothing**, that is nothing great, **in my name**. For to ask for cures for the body is a small matter compared to the great things they would accomplish by their prayers; nor had they yet received the Spirit of adoption to make them aspire to spiritual and heavenly things. And if you object that they did ask for something great when they asked before, "Lord, show us the Father" (14:8), I answer that they were not asking the Father (which is what Christ is talking about here), but only Christ as man, trusting that as a mediator he would show them the Father.

Another explanation: **if you ask anything of the Father in my name**. Up to now they had not asked in his name because they did not have a complete knowledge of the name of Christ.

2145 When he says, **ask, and you will receive**, he is urging them to make progress, that is, they are now to ask: "Ask, and it will be given you" (Mt 7:7). **Ask**, I say, **and you will receive**, that is, what you are asking for, that your joy may be full: "The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are

subject to us in your name" (Lk 10:17). The phrase **that your joy may be full** can be taken to indicate the reason why their prayers are heard. Or, it can point to what they are praying for, so the meaning is: **ask, and you will receive**, and what you should ask for is **that your joy may be full**.

2146 Note that the object of joy is a good that is desired. Since desire is a kind of movement toward a good, and joy is rest in that good, a person has joy when he rests in a good, now possessed, to which his desire was moved. And one's joy is proportionate to the good possessed. There cannot be full joy in a created good because it does not give complete rest to man's desires and yearnings. Our joy will be full when we possess that good in which all the goods we can desire are found superabundantly. This good is solely God "who satisfies our desire with good things" [Ps 103:5]. Therefore he says, **ask this, that your joy may be full**, that is, ask to enjoy God and the Trinity, as Augustine says, and no joy is greater: "You will fill me with joy with your face" [Ps 16:11].[\[34\]](#) And why is this? Because "all good things came to me along with her," that is, with the contemplation of divine wisdom (Wis 7:11).

LECTURE 7

25 "I have said this to you in figures [proverbs]; the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in figures [proverbs] but tell you plainly of the Father. 26 In that day you will ask in my name; and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; 27 for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from the Father [from God]. 28 I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

2147 Above, our Lord promised his disciples an access and intimacy with the Father. Now he gives the reason for this intimacy. There are two things that make a person intimate with another and foster confidence when asking for something: knowledge and love. Thus our Lord gives these two reasons here. The first is taken from their clear knowledge of the Father; the second, from his special love for them (v 26).

2148 He does two things about the first: first, he reminds them of their previous imperfect knowledge of the Father; secondly, he promises them complete knowledge, **the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in proverbs**.

Indeed, their knowledge was imperfect; so he says, **I have said this to you in proverbs**. A proverb, strictly speaking, is a maxim, a common expression, as "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prv 22:6). Now because proverbs are sometimes not clear and are metaphorical, the word "proverb" is sometimes used to indicate a parable, which states one thing while actually meaning something else. This is the case here, and "proverb" should be taken to mean parable.

2149 The statement, **I have said this to you in proverbs**, can be taken in four ways. The first is literal, and refers to what he had said immediately before this. Then the sense is: I said to you that hitherto you have asked nothing in my name, and that you will ask in my name, and **I have said this to you in proverbs**, and obscurely. But **the hour is coming** when what I said obscurely I will say plainly. Thus he adds: "the Father himself loves you," and "I came from the Father and have come into the world." This seems to be the way the apostles understood it because when they heard him say these things they said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly, and not in proverbs" (16:29).

2150 In the second way, **I have said this to you in proverbs**, refers to everything which is read in this Gospel about the teaching of Christ. Then the next statement, **the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in proverbs**, would refer to the time of glory. For now we see in a mirror, in an obscure manner, since what we are told about God is presented to us in proverbs. But in our homeland we will see "face to face," as we read in 1 Corinthians (13:12). Therefore, we will then be plainly told of the Father, and not in proverbs. He says, **of the Father**, because no one can see the Father in that glory unless the Son reveals him: "No one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Mt 11:27). For the Son is the true light, and gives us the light by which we can see the Father: "I am the light of the world" (8:12).

2151 But the next statement, **in that day you will ask in my name**, does not fit this [second] explanation. For if that hour is the time of glory, we will not ask for anything because our desires will be satisfied with good. Accordingly, there are two other meanings. According to Chrysostom the sense is this: **I have said this to you**, that is, what I have just said, **in proverbs**, that is, in veiled language, not entirely expressing all that you should know about me and the Father, because "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (16:12). But **the hour is coming**, that is, when I have arisen from the dead, **when I shall no longer speak to you in proverbs**, that is, obscurely and in figures, **but tell you plainly of the Father**.^[35] Indeed, during those forty days during which he appeared to them, he taught them many mysteries and told many things about himself and the Father. Further, they had been raised

to higher things by their faith in the resurrection, firmly believing that Christ was the true God. So we read that Christ was "speaking of the kingdom of God" to them (Acts 1:3), and that "He opened their minds to understand the scriptures" (Lk 24:45).

2152 The other reading is given by Augustine, and is this.[\[36\]](#) When Christ said **I have said this to you in proverbs**, our Lord is promising to make them spiritual. There is a difference between one who is spiritual and one who is sensual: a sensual person understands spiritual words as proverbs, not because they were spoken as proverbs, but because the mind of such a person cannot rise above material things, and spiritual things are hidden (1 Cor 2:14). But one who is spiritual understands spiritual words as spiritual. At the beginning, the disciples themselves were sensual, and what was told them they found obscure, and took as proverbs. But after they were made spiritual by Christ and had been taught by the Holy Spirit, they clearly understood spiritual words as spiritual. And so Christ says, **I have said this to you in proverbs**, that is, you understood what I said as proverbs. But **the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in proverbs**: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness" (2 Cor 3:18).

2153 Now we see the second reason why they should have confidence, and it is based on the Father's love for the disciples: first, he shows the Father's love for them; secondly, the intimacy of the Father with the Son, I came from the Father. He does two things with the first: first, he repeats a promise he made to them; secondly, he gives the reason for what was promised, **for the Father himself loves you**.

2154 He does two things with the first: he repeats one of his promises; secondly, he promises that they will have confidence when they pray.

He says, **In that day**, when I tell you plainly of the Father, **you will ask in my name**; for when you plainly know the Father you will know that I am equal to him and of the same essence, and that it is through me that you can approach or have access to him. To have this hope of approaching or having access to the Father through Christ is what is meant by asking in the name of Christ: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses. But we will call upon the name of the Lord our God" [Ps 20:7]. But Christ is silent about asking the Father for them; he says, **I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you**.

2155 But doesn't Christ pray for us? Certainly: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jn 2:1); "He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him" (Heb 7:25). According to Augustine,

Christ says this so the disciples will not think that Christ, since he is a man, is limited to interceding for them. [37] So in that day when I tell you plainly, you will not only ask in my name, but you will know that I am one with the Father, and not just an intercessor, but in addition to interceding, I, as God, will hear your prayer.

According to Chrysostom, however, Christ probably says this so the disciples will not believe that they are to ask through the Son as if they could not approach the Father directly. [38] He is saying in effect: At present you come to me to intercede for you. But in that day you will have such confidence in the Father that you will be able to ask the Father in my name, without needing another to intercede for you.

2156 But the apostles did need Christ, as man, to intercede, didn't they? If not, then since he does intercede, his intercession is superfluous. We should say that Christ intercedes for them not as though they were strangers and had no access to the Father, but he makes their prayers more effective.

2157 Here he gives the reason for the promise, which is the Father's love for them: and first, he mentions the Father's love; secondly, the proof of this love, **because you have loved me.**

2158 He says: **I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you,** for then it might seem that the Father did not love them. Assuredly, **the Father himself**, who loves all things by willing them the goods of nature • "For you love all things that exist, and have loathing for none of the things which you have made" (Wis 11:26) • loves you, apostles and saints, with an exceptional love, by willing you the highest good, that is, himself. "He loved his people: all those consecrated to him were in his hand" (Deut 33:3), because he loved them that much. "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God" (Wis 3:1).

2159 He proves this from two facts, from the love of the disciples for Christ, and from their faith. With regard to the first he says, **because you have loved me.** This proof does not give the cause [why the Father loves them], for we read, "Not as though we had loved God, but because he has first loved us" [1 Jn 4:10]. Rather, it gives a sign [of God's love for them], for the fact that we love God is a sign that he loves us, for our being able to love God is a gift from God: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom 5:5); "He who loves me will be loved by my Father" (14:21).

Referring to the second he says, **and have believed that I came from the Father:** "Without faith it is impossible to please God" [Heb 11:6]. Our faith is due

to God's love for us, for "it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). Now a gift is not given except through the love of the giver. To believe in and to love Christ insofar as he comes forth from God is a clear sign of one's love for God, since that in virtue of which something is such is itself even more so. Therefore, when one loves Christ, who came forth from God, this love is particularly traced back to God the Father; but this is not so when one loves Christ precisely as human.

2160 Because he had mentioned his coming forth from the Father, he now comments more fully on it, saying, **I came** (*exivi*, came forth) **from the Father and have come** (*veni*) **into the world**. This shows his intimacy with the Father. He first mentions his coming forth from the Father; and secondly, his return to the Father (v 28).

2161 The Son proceeds or comes from the Father in two ways: one is eternal, the other temporal. He refers to the eternal procession when he says, **I came** (came forth, *exivi*) **from the Father**, eternally begotten from him.

Everything which comes forth from another was first in it. There are three ways one thing can be in something else. First, as what is contained is in its container; second, as a part in some whole; thirdly, as an accident in its subject and as an effect in its cause. What comes forth is in that from which it comes forth in one of these ways. In the first two ways, what comes forth remains the same individual it was. For example, what comes from the keg is the very same wine that was in the keg; and the very same part that was in the whole comes from the whole. In the other two ways [the third member] what comes forth is not the same individual. Now none of these ways apply to God: for since God is entirely simple, and is in some place only metaphorically speaking, we cannot say that the Son is in God like some part, or that the Son is contained in a container. Rather, the Son is in the Father by a oneness of essence: "I and the Father are one" (10:30). For the entire essence of the Father is the entire essence of the Son, and vice versa. Consequently, the Son does not come forth from the Father in the previously mentioned ways. For when a part comes from the whole, it is distinct from the whole in essence: for when a part comes from the whole it becomes a being in act, while in the whole it was only a being in potency. Likewise, what comes from being contained in some container now occupies a different place than it did. But the Son does not come forth from the Father to occupy a different place because he fills all things, "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" (Jer 23:24). Nor is the Son split off from the Father because the Father cannot be divided. Rather, the Son comes forth by reason of a distinction in person. Thus, insofar as the coming forth of the Son presupposes some kind of existing in another, this indicates a unity of essence; while insofar as there is a certain coming forth, a distinction in person is indicated. "His coming forth is from the highest heaven," that is, from God the Father [Ps 19:6]; "You are my son, born before the day•star rises" [Ps

110:3].

In material things, what comes forth from another is no longer in it, since it comes from it by a separation from it in place or in essence. This is not the kind of coming forth we have here, for the Son came forth from the Father from all eternity in such a way that the Son is still in the Father from all eternity. And so when the Son is in the Father, he comes forth, and when the Son comes forth he is in the Father: so the Son is always in the Father and always coming forth from the Father.

2162 He mentions his temporal coming when he says, **I have come into the world**. Just as the Son's coming forth from the Father from eternity does not involve a change of place, neither does his coming into the world imply a change of place. Since the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father, then just as the Father fills all things, so does the Son; nor is there any place to go. Thus the Son is said to have come into the world because he assumed a human nature, which had its origin from the world as far as its body was concerned. But the Son did not move to a new place. "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not" (1:11).

2163 Then when he says, **again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father**, he speaks of his return to the Father. First he mentions his leaving the world, **again, I am leaving the world**, but not ceasing to govern us by his providence, because he is always governing the world together with the Father, and he is always with the faithful by the help of his grace: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20). Rather, he left the world by withdrawing from the physical sight of the worldly.

Secondly, he mentions his return to the Father when he says, **and going to the Father**, whom he had never left. He goes insofar as he offered himself to the Father in his passion: "Christ ... gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:2). Again, he goes to the Father insofar as by his resurrection his human nature became like the Father in its immortality: "the life he lives he lives to God" (Rom 6:10). Further, he goes to the Father by ascending into the heavens where he shines in a special way with divine glory: "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mt 16:19); "But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'"

LECTURE 8

29 His disciples said, "Ah, now you are speaking plainly, not

in any figure [proverb]! 30 Now we know that you know all things, and need none to question you; by this we believe that you came from God." 31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? 32 The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone; yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. 33 I have said this to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

2164 After these consoling words spoken to the apostles, we now see their effect on them: first, their reaction is given; secondly, we see their condition; and thirdly, we see the intention of Christ, **I have said this to you, that ...** The reaction of the disciples is a profession of faith, **Ah, now you are speaking plainly** ... They profess three things about Christ: the clarity of his teaching, the certitude of his knowledge, and his divine origin.

2165 They profess the clarity of his teaching when they say, **Now you are speaking plainly, not in any proverb!** If we consider this with attention we see that there is scarcely any other place in sacred scripture where the origin of Christ is so openly expressed as here, when he says, "I shall tell you plainly of the Father," and "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world." And so believing that his promise to tell them plainly of the Father had now been kept so that they did not need any further teaching, they say, **Ah, now you are speaking plainly**. As Augustine remarks, the disciples were still so lacking in understanding that they did not realize they were lacking in understanding.^[39] For Christ had not promised to speak to them without proverbs at that time, but at the time of the resurrection or of glory. Yet as far as the disciples were concerned, he was now speaking more clearly, although they were later to understand his words still more clearly.

2166 They profess the certainty of his knowledge when they say, **Now we know that you know all things**. At first glance, the meaning seems to be that when one clearly explains the things he says, this is a proof of his certain and full knowledge of them: for the sign of one who knows is the ability to fully teach what he knows • "Knowledge is easy for a man of understanding" (Prv 14:6) • and what is beyond one's understanding cannot be plainly told in words. Yet the apostles said this for another reason, which is because the Lord knew all the secrets of their hearts, and could satisfy their perplexities. He consoled them by promising them the joy of the Holy Spirit, that they would see him again, and that the Father loves them. Thus they say, **Now we know that you know all things**, that is, the secrets of hearts: "Lord, you know everything" (21:17); "The Lord God knows all things before they are done" [Wis 8:8].

2167 Then they add, **and need none to question you**. This seems to contradict what they had just said, namely, that he knows all things; for one who is wise is questioned (rather than questioning others). Why then is it not necessary to question him? The answer is that they said this to indicate that he even knew the secrets of hearts, because even before he was questioned he satisfied their perplexity when they were saying to each other, "What does he mean by 'a little while'?" (16:18). Nevertheless, Christ does ask and is asked, not because he needs it, but because we do.

2168 They profess Christ's divine origin when they say, **by this we believe that you came** (came forth, *exist*) **from God**. This statement is appropriate for it is a distinguishing characteristic of the divinity to know all things and even the secrets of hearts: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it? 'I the Lord search the mind and try the heart' "(Jer 17:9). Thus they say, **you came from God**, consubstantial with the Father, and true God.

2169 Now we see the condition of the disciples, which is one of weakness: first, Christ reproaches their slowness to believe; secondly, he foretells their approaching troubles; thirdly, he shows that he cannot be injured by them.

2170 As to the first he says, **Do you now believe?** If this is understood as a question, it is a rebuke for being so slow to believe. It is like saying: Have you waited till now to believe? If we understand this remissibly, Christ is reproofing the instability of their faith. Then it is like saying: It is true that you believe now, but as soon as I am betrayed, you will leave me: "They believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away" (Lk 8:13).

2171 **The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave me alone**. Here we see their approaching troubles and falling away. Notice that by their falling away they lost what they had acquired through Christ. They had acquired the companionship of Christ, freedom from the burdens of ownership, and a life together. Peter mentions these three things in Matthew (19:27): "We," all of us, referring to their life together, "have left everything," referring to the freedom from the burdens of ownership, "and followed you," referring to their companionship with Christ. They lost these things and our Lord foretold this to them when he said: **The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered** (referring to their life together), because you will be dominated by such fear that you will not be able to run away together, as a group: "Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered" (Zech 13:7); **every man to his home**

(referring to their lost freedom from things), that is, returning to his desire to possess his own things. And we do see Peter and the others return to their boat and their own property: "They went out and got into the boat" (21:3). **And will leave me alone**, (referring to the loss of Christ's companionship): "My kinsfolk and my close friends have failed me; the guests in my house have forgotten me" (Job 19:14); "I have trodden the wine press alone" (Is 63:3).

2172 Yet Christ did not suffer any loss by the falling away of his disciples; thus he says, **yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me**. This is like saying: Although I am one with the Father by a unity of essence, I am not alone because distinct in person. Thus I have not come forth from the Father in such a way as to leave him.

2173 Here our Lord states the purpose of his teaching: first he mentions the benefit it brings; secondly, why we need this benefit, **in the world you have tribulation**.

2174 The benefit his teaching gives is peace. He says to them: I am telling you that you will be reduced to leaving me alone; and so I am teaching you so you do not continue in this abandonment. Indeed, everything I have said to you in this talk and everything I have spoken in the entire Gospel is aimed at having you return to me, **that in me you may have peace**.

Truly, the purpose of the Gospel is peace in Christ: "Those who love your name have great peace" [Ps 119:165]. The reason for this is that peace of heart is opposed to its disturbance, which comes from the evils that afflict it and grow worse. But if one has affliction only now and then, or a joy greater than one's evils, his disturbance does not last. This is why the worldly, who are not united to God by love, have troubles without peace; while the saints, who have God in their hearts by love, have peace in Christ even if they have troubles from the world: "He makes peace in your borders" [Ps 147:14]. And our purpose here should be to have peace in God: "My soul refused to be comforted," with things of the world, "but I remembered God and was delighted" [Ps 77:3].

2175 We need this peace because of the troubles imposed by the world; so Christ says, **In the world you have tribulation**. First, he foretells their future distress; secondly, he gives them confidence to meet it. In regard to the first he says, **In the world you have tribulation**, that is, from the worldly: "Do not wonder, brethren, that the world hates you" (1 Jn 3:13); "I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (15:19). Referring to the second, Christ says, **but be of good cheer [have confidence], I have overcome the world**. For Christ does free us: "You delivered me ... from choking fire on every

side" (Si 51:4). He is saying in effect: Return to me and you will have peace, for **I have overcome the world** which is oppressing you.

2176 Christ overcame the world, first of all, by taking away the weapons it uses to attack us: these are its allurements: "For all that is in the world [is] the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" (1 Jn 2:16). He conquered the allurements of riches by his poverty: "I am poor and needy" (Ps 86:1); "The Son of man has nowhere to lay his head" (Lk 9:58). Christ overcame the allurements of honors by his humility: "Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Mt 11:29). He overcame the lusts of the world by his sufferings and labors: "He ... became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8); "Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well" (4:6); "I have labored from my youth" [Ps 88:16]. Anyone who conquers these, conquers the world. And this is what faith does - "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (1 Jn 5:4) • because since faith is [the present possession of] the substance, the basic reality, of what we hope for, which is spiritual and eternal good, it causes us to disdain sensual and passing goods.

Secondly, Christ overcame the world by casting out the ruler of the world: "Now shall the ruler of this world be cast out" (12:31); "He disarmed the principalities and powers (Col 2:15). This shows us that the devil is also to be overcome by us: "Will you play with him as with a bird, or will you put him on a leash for your maidens?" (Job 41:5), which understood literally means that after the passion of Christ the little boys and young handmaids of Christ will make him their plaything.

Thirdly, Christ overcame the world by converting the people of this world to himself. The world rebelled by stirring up dissensions through worldly people. But Christ drew these to himself: "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" [12:32]. Thus it was said: "The world has gone after him" (12:19). So, we should not fear its oppression because it has been overcome: "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:57).

[1] St. Thomas refers to Jn 16:2 in the *Summa Theologiae*: I-II, q. 19, a. 6, s. c.

[2] *Tract. in Io.*, 93, ch. 3, col. 1866; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:1-4.

[3] *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:1-4.

[4] Cicero, *Tusculan Questions*.

[5] *Tract. in Io.*, 94, ch. 1, col. 1868; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:1-4.

[6] *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:1-4.

[7] *In Ioannem hom.*, 78, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 421; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:1-4.

[8] St. Thomas refers to Jn 16:7 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 57, a. 1, ad 3; q. 57, a. 6, s. c.; q. 72, a. 1, ad 1; q. 75, a. 1, obj. 4.

[9] *In Ioannem hom.*, 78, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 421; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:5-11.

[10] *Tract. in Io.*, 94, ch. 3, col. 1869; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:5-11.

[11] *De Trin.*, 1, ch. 9, no.19; PL 42, col. 833-4; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:5-11.

[12] *In Ioannem hom.*, 78, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 421; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:5-11.

[13] St. Thomas refers to Jn 16:8 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 57, a. 1, ad 3; q. 59, a. 1, obj. 3; Jn 16:12: *ST* III, q. 42, a. 3, ad 2; q. 45, a. 4, obj. 4; Jn 16:13: *ST* I-II, q. 106, a. 4, obj. 2; III, q. 39, a. 7.

[14] *Tract. in Io.*, 95, ch. 1, col. 1870; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:5-11.

[15] *Tract. in Io.*, 95, ch. 2, col. 1871; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:5-11.

[16] Augustine, *Sermones de Verbis Domini* 144; ch. 1; PL 38, col. 689; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:5-11.

[17] *Ibid*, ch. 5, col. 790.

[18] *In Ioannem hom.*, 78, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 422; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:5-11.

[19] *Tract. in Io.*, 96, ch. 1, col. 1874 ; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:12-15.

[20] Summa-Holy Spirit receives his essence and knowledge from the Father and the Son from eternity.

[21] St. Thomas quotes Jn 16:14 in the *Summa Theologiae*: I, q. 36, a. 2 ad 1.

[22] Summa-manner in which the Holy Spirit receives his being as opposed to the way creatures receive theirs. -thru 2115.

[23] *De Spiritu Sancto*, II, ch. 38; PL 23, col. 136A; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:12-15.

[24] Didymus, Ibid.

Hilary, *De Trin.*, 8; PL 10, col. 359-360; St. Thomas includes these references in the *Catena Aurea*, 16:12-15.

[25] St. Thomas refers to Jn 16:22 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 55, a. 3, ad 1.

[26] *Tract. in Io.*, 101 ch. 1, col. 1893; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 15:4-7.

[27] St. Thomas refers to Jn 16:23 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 83, a. 7, obj. 2.

[28] *Tract. in Io.*, 101, ch. 4, col. 1894; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:23-28.

[29] *In Ioannem hom.*, 79, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 427; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:23-28.

[30] *Tract. in Io.*, 102, ch. 2, col. 1897; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:23-28.

[31] *In Ioannem hom.*, 79, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 428; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:23-25.

[32] *Tract. in Io.*, 102, ch. 2, col. 1896-7.

[33] Gloss

[34] *De Trin.*, 1, ch. 11; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:23-28.

[35] *In Ioannem hom.*, 79, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 428; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:23-28.

[36] *Tract. in Io.*, 102, ch. 4, col. 1897; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:23-28.

[37] *Tract. in Io.*, ch. 3, col. 1897.

[\[38\]](#) *In Ioannem hom.*, 79, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 428.

[\[39\]](#) *Tract. in Io.*, 103, ch. 1, col. 1899; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16:29-33.

17

LECTURE I

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work which you gave me to do; 5 and now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made."[\[1\]](#)

2177 Above, our Lord consoled his disciples by example and encouragement; here he comforts them by his prayer. In this prayer he does three things: first, he prays for himself; secondly, for the group of the disciples (v 6); thirdly, for all the faithful (v 20). He does three things with the first: first, he makes his request; secondly, he states the fruit of this request, **that the Son may glorify you**; thirdly, he mentions why his request deserves to be heard (v 4). In regard to the first point: first, we see the order he followed in his prayer; secondly, the way he prayed; thirdly, the words he used.

2178 The order he followed was fitting, because he prayed after first encouraging them. So we read, **When Jesus had spoken these words**. This gives us the example to help by our prayers those we are teaching by our words, because religious teaching has its greatest effect in the hearts of those who hear it when it is supported by a prayer which asks for divine help: "Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph" (2 Thess 3:1). Again, our sermon should end with a prayer: "The sum of our words is: 'he is the all.'"

2179 The way he prayed is that **he lifted up his eyes to heaven**. There is a difference between the prayer of Christ and our own prayer: our prayer arises solely from our needs, while the prayer of Christ is more for our instruction, for there was no need for him to pray for himself, since together with his Father he answers prayers. He instructs us here by his words and actions. He teaches us by

his actions in lifting up his eyes, so that we also will lift our eyes to heaven when we pray: "To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!" (Ps 123:1). And not just our eyes, but also our actions, by referring them to God: "Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven" (Lam 3:41). He teaches us by his words, for he said his prayer publicly, and said, so that those whom he taught by teaching he might also teach by praying. We are taught not just by the words of Christ, but also by his actions.

2180 His words are effective; thus he says, **Father, the hour has come**. Their effectiveness is caused by three things. First, by the love of the one praying. For the Son is praying to his Father and petitioning the Father because of his love for the Father. So he says, **Father**, to show us that we should pray to God with the affection of his children: "And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me" (Jer 3:19).

Secondly, his prayer is effective because of the need for this prayer; for as he says, **the hour has come**, for his passion, about which he had said before: "My hour has not yet come" (2:4). The hour, I say, not the season, not the day, because Christ was to be seized right away. Not an hour fixed but fate, but chosen by his own plan and good pleasure. And it is appropriate that right before he prays he mentions his troubles, because God especially hears us when we are troubled: "In my troubles I cried to the Lord, and he heard me" [Ps 120:1]; "Since we do not know what to do, we can only turn our eyes to you" [2 Chron 20:12]. Thirdly, his prayer is effective because of its content, **glorify your Son**.

2181 But the Son of God is Wisdom itself, and this has the greatest glory: "Wisdom is radiant and unfading" (Wis 6:13). How then can he speak of glory being glorified, especially since he is the splendor of the Father (Heb 1:3)? We should say that Christ asked to be glorified by the Father in three ways. First, in his passion, and this was done by the many miracles which occurred: for the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent, and graves were opened. This was referred to before (12:28): "I have glorified it," by the miracles occurring before the passion, "and I will glorify it again," during the passion. With this understanding Christ says, **glorify** me in my passion by showing that I am your Son. And so the centurion, after seeing the miracles, said: "Truly, this was the Son of God" (Mt 27:54).

Secondly, Christ sought to be glorified in his resurrection. His holy soul was always joined to God and possessed glory from the vision of God: "We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (1:14). From the beginning of his conception, his soul was glorified, but in the resurrection he had glory of body also, referred to in "Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body" (Phil 3:21). Thirdly, he sought to be glorified in the

knowledge of all people: "Because of her I shall have glory among the multitudes and honor in the presence of the elders" (Wis 8:10).

And so he says, **glorify your Son**, that is, show the entire world that I am your Son, in the strict sense: by birth, not by creation (in opposition to Arius, who said that the Son of God is a creature); in truth, not just in name (against Sabellius, who said that the same person is now called Father and then called Son); by origin, not adoption (in opposition to Nestorius, who said that Christ was an adopted son).

2182 Now we see the fruit of his being glorified: first, the fruit is mentioned; secondly, it is explained, **since you have given him power...**

2183 The fruit of the Son's being glorified is that the Father is glorified; thus he says, **that the Son may glorify you**. When Arius observed that our Lord said, **glorify your Son**, he supposed that the Father is greater than the Son. This is true if we consider the Son in his human nature: "The Father is greater than I" (14:28). Consequently, Christ adds, **that the Son may glorify you** (in the knowledge of men) to show he is equal to the Father as regards the divine nature. Now glory is renown joined with praise. Formerly, God was renowned among the Jews: "In Judah God is known" (Ps 76:1); but later, through his Son, he was known throughout the entire world. Holy people also increase God's renown by their good works: "That they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5:16). Above Christ said: "I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it and he will be the judge" (8:50).

2184 Now we have the fruit of Christ's request: first, we see the benefit conferred on us by Christ; secondly, he shows that this benefit is related to the glory of the Father (v 3).

1285 He says, **that the Son may glorify you**, and this **since you have given him power over all flesh**. We should know that what acts in virtue of another tends in its effect to reveal that other: for the action of a principle which proceeds from another principle manifests this principle. Now whatever the Son has he has from the Father; and thus it is necessary that what the Son does manifests the Father. Thus he says to the Father, **you have given him power** over all human beings. By this power the Son ought to lead them to a knowledge of the Father, which is eternal life. This is the meaning of, **that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him power over all flesh**, that is, over all human beings: "All flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Lk 3:6).

You have given him [this power], says Hilary, by giving, through an eternal

generation, the divine nature to the Son, from which the Son has the power to embrace all things: "All things have been delivered to me by my Father" (Mt 11:27); "For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all that he himself is doing" (5:20).^[2] Or, in another way, **you have given** this power to Christ in his human nature because this nature is united with your Son to form one person. And in this way flesh has power over flesh: "All authority [power] in heaven and on earth has been given me" (Mt 28:18); "And to him," that is, the Son of man, "was given dominion and glory and kingdom" (Dan 7:14).

He says, Father, **you have given him power**: Father, just as you have power, not to wrest things from your human creatures, but to give yourself to them, so you have given power to Christ in his human nature, power **over all flesh**, so that he may **give eternal life to all whom you have given him**, through eternal predestination: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them" (10:27).

2186 But is the eternal life given to men related to the glory of the Father? Indeed it is, for **this is eternal life, that they may know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent**, who was sent so that the Father could be glorified by being known by men.

Two things need explanation here. First, why he says, **this is eternal life, that they may know**. Note that strictly speaking, we call those things living which move themselves to their activities. Those things which are only moved by other things are not living, but dead. And so all those activities to which an active thing moves itself are called living activities, for example, to will, to understand, to sense, to grow and to move about. Now a thing is said to be alive in two senses. First because it has living activities in potency, as one who is asleep is said to have sensitive life because it has the power to move itself about, although it is not actually doing so. Or, something is said to be alive because it is actually engaged in living activities, and then it is alive in the full sense. For this reason one who is asleep is said to be half alive. Among living activities the highest is the activity of the intellect, which is to understand. And thus the activity of the intellect is living activity in the highest degree. Now just as the sense in act is identified with the sense•object in act, so also the intellect in act is identified with the thing understood in act. Since then intellectual understanding is living activity, and to understand is to live, it follows that to understand an eternal reality is to live with an eternal life. But God is an eternal reality, and so to understand and see God is eternal life.

Accordingly our Lord says that eternal life lies in vision, in seeing, that is, it consists in this basically and in its whole substance. But it is love which moves one to this vision, and is in a certain way its fulfillment: for the completion and

crown of beatitude (happiness) is the delight experienced in the enjoyment of God, and this is caused by charity. Still, the substance of beatitude consists in vision, seeing: "We shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2).

2187 Secondly, we should explain the phrase, **you the only true God**. It is clear that Christ was speaking to the Father, so when he says, **you the only true God**, it seems that only God the Father is true God. The Arians agree with this, for they say that the Son differs by essence from the Father, since the Son is a created substance, although he shares in the divinity more perfectly and to a greater degree than do all other creatures. So much more that the Son is called God, but not the true God, because he is not God by nature, which only the Father is.

Hilary answers this by saying that when we want to know whether a certain thing is true, we can determine it from two things: its nature and its power.^[3] For true gold is that which has the species of true gold; and we determine this if it acts like true gold. Therefore, if we maintain that the Son has the true nature of God, because the Son exercises the true activities of divinity, it is clear that the Son is true God. Now the Son does perform true works of divinity, for we read, "Whatever he [the Father] does, that the Son does likewise" (5:19); and again he said, "For as the Father has life in himself," which is not a participated life, "so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself" (5:26); "That we may be in his true Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" [1 Jn 5:20].

According to Hilary, he says, **you the only true God**, in a way that does not exclude another. He does not say without qualification, **you the only**, but adds **and Jesus Christ whom you have sent**.^[4] It is like saying: that they know you **and Jesus Christ whom you have sent** to be the one and only true God. This is a pattern of speaking that we also use when we say [in the *Gloria*]: "*You alone, Jesus Christ, are the most high, together with the Holy Spirit.*" No mention is made of the Holy Spirit because whenever the Father and the Son are mentioned, and especially in matters pertaining to the grandeur of the divinity, the Holy Spirit, who is the bond of the Father and Son, is implied.

2188 Or, according to Augustine in his work, *The Trinity*, he says this to exclude the error of those who claim that it is false to say that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; while it is true to say that the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit are one God.^[5] The reason for this opinion was that the Apostle said that "Christ [is] the power of God and the Wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24). Now it is clear that we cannot call anyone God unless he has divine power and wisdom. Therefore, since these people held that the Father was wisdom, which is the Son, they held further that the Father considered without the Son

would not be God. And the same applies to the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The incarnation of the Son of God is indicated by saying that he was sent. So when he says here, **and Jesus Christ whom you have sent**, we are led to understand that in eternal life we will also rejoice in the humanity of Christ: "Your eyes will see the king," that is, Christ, "in his beauty" (Is 33:17); "He will go in and out and find pasture" (10:9).

2189 Now we see why Christ's prayer deserves to be heard: first, he mentions why he deserves this; secondly, he states the reward, **Father, glorify me**.

2190 He states that he merited to be heard for two reasons. First, because of his teaching, when he says, **I glorified you on earth**, that is, in the minds of men, by manifesting you in my teaching: "Glorify the Lord in teaching" [Is 24:15]. Secondly, I glorified you by my obedience; thus he said, **I ... having accomplished the work**. He uses the past tense in place of the future: **I glorified** for "I will glorify," and **accomplished** in place of "I will accomplish." He does this because these things had already begun, and also because the hour of his passion, when his work would be accomplished, was very near.

"The work which **you gave me** to do," not merely ordered. It is not enough [for a work to be accomplished] for Christ and us to be ordered by God, because whatever Christ as man accomplished and whatever we can do is God's gift, God gave us this: "I knew that I could not be continent unless God gave it" [Wis 8:21]. **You gave me**, I say, by the gift of grace, to do, that is, to accomplish.

2191 The reward for Christ's obedience and teaching is glory: "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name" (Phil 2:8). And so Christ asks for his reward, saying, **and now, Father, glorify me**. According to Augustine this does not mean, as some have thought, that the human nature of Christ, which was assumed by the Word, would at some time be changed into the Word, and the human nature changed into God. [6] This would be to annihilate the [human] nature of Christ, for when a first thing is changed into another in such a way that this other is not enriched, the first thing seems to have been annihilated [because it produced no effect]. But nothing can be added to enrich the divine Word of God.

Thus, for Augustine, **and now, Father, glorify me**, refers to the predestination of Christ as man. Something can be had by us both in the divine predestination and in actual fact. Now Christ, in his human nature, as all other human beings, was predestined by God the Father: "He was predestined Son of God" [Rom 1:4].

With this in mind he says, **and now** • after I have glorified you, having accomplished the work which you gave me to do • **Father, glorify me** in your own presence, that is, have me sit at your right hand, **with the glory which I had with you before the world was made**, that is to say, with the glory I had in your predestination: "The Lord Jesus ... was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God" (Mk 16:19).[\[7\]](#)

2192 Hilary gives the other interpretation.[\[8\]](#) The glory of human beings will be in a certain way similar to the glory of God, although unequal. Now Christ, as God, had glory with the Father from all eternity, a divine glory and equal to that of the Father. Accordingly, what he is asking for here is that he be glorified in his human nature, that is to say, that what was flesh in time and changed by corruption, should receive the glory of that brightness which is outside of time. He is asking not for an equal glory, but for one which is similar, which is to say that just as the Son is immortal and sitting at the right hand of the Father from all eternity, so he now become immortal in his human nature and exalted to the right hand of God.

LECTURE 2

6 I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world; thine they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you; 8 for I have given them the words which you gave me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came (*exivi*) from you; and they have believed that you did send me. 9 I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours; 10 all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11a And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.[\[9\]](#)

2193 Above, our Lord prayed for himself; here he prays for the society of his apostles: first, he states his reasons for praying; secondly, what he is praying for (v 11). He does two things about the first: first, he mentions his reasons for praying founded on his disciples; secondly, the reasons founded on himself (v 9). From the point of view of his disciples, he mentions three reasons for praying for them: first, because they were taught by him; secondly because they had been given to him; thirdly, because of their obedience and devotion.

2194 He mentions the first reason when he says, **I have manifested your**

name. We could add here, according to Augustine, "that the Son may glorify you" (v 1). The Father has already received some of this glory because **I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world.** [\[10\]](#)

Chrysostom reads it this way. I say that I have finished the work you gave me to do. [\[11\]](#) What this work was he adds by saying, **I have manifested your name to the men** This is the characteristic work of the Son of God, who is the Word, and the characteristic of a word is to manifest the one speaking it: "No one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Mt 11:27); "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (1:18).

2195 There is a problem with this: Since God the Father was known to men before Christ came • "In Judah God is known" (Ps 76:1) • why does Christ say, **I have manifested your name.** I answer that the name of God the Father can be known in three ways. In one way, as the creator of all things; and this is the way the Gentiles knew him: "His invisible nature ... has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (Rom 1:20); "God has shown it to them" (Rom 1:19). In another way [the Father can be known] as the only one to whom the veneration of *latría* [adoration] is to be given. He was not known to the Gentiles in this way, for they gave the veneration of *latría* to other gods. He was known in this way only to the Jews, for they alone had been commanded in their law to sacrifice only to the Lord: "Whoever sacrifices to any god, save to the Lord only, shall be utterly destroyed" (Ex 22:20). Thirdly, he can be known as the Father of an only Son, Jesus Christ. He was not known to anyone in this way, but did become so known through his Son when the apostles believed that Christ was the Son of God.

2196 He gives the second reason why he prays for them when he says, **whom you gave me.** First, he mentions that they were given to him, from which we can see the reason or way they were given. He says, **whom you gave me**, that is, it is to these that **I have manifested your name.** But did Christ possess them as the Father possessed them? Yes he did, insofar as he was God. But he says, **whom you gave me**, that is, to me as man, to listen to me and obey me: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (6:44). Those who come to Christ do so through the gift and grace of God: "For by grace you have been saved ... it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). You gave them to me out of the world, that is, they were chosen from the world: "I chose you out of the world" (5:19). For even though the entire world was given to the Son insofar as he was God, the apostles were given to the Son to obey. He mentions the reason for this giving when he says, **thine they were.** This is like saying: the reason

they were given is that **thine they were**, and mine, and predestined from eternity to attain by grace a future glory: "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4). **And you gave them to me**, that is, by making them adhere to me you accomplished in fact what was previously predestined for them with me and in me.

2197 The third reason for praying for the disciples, based on their devotion, is mentioned when he says, **they have kept your word**. First, he mentions their devotion to the Son; secondly, he shows that this devotion gives glory to the Father, **they know that everything that you have given to me is from you**; thirdly, we see the reason this gives glory to the Father: **for I have given them the words which you gave me**.

2198 As to the first: he had said that you gave them to me because **thine they were**. And they were devoted because **they have kept your word**, in their hearts by faith, and in their actions by fulfilling your words: "Keep my commandments and live" (Prv 7:2); "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love" (15:10).

2199 Father, the fact that they kept your word in this way gives you glory. For this is my word: everything I have I have from you. **Now they know that everything that you have given me**, that is, to your Son in his human nature, is from you: "We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (1:14), that is to say, we saw him as having everything from the Father. And because they know this, the Father receives glory in their minds.

2200 The reason this gives glory, that is, that this obedience of the disciples to the Son gives glory to the Father, is stated when he says, **for I have given them the words which you gave me**. First he states that knowledge comes from the Father to the disciples; secondly, that the minds of the disciples are led back to the Father.

2201 It is stated that knowledge is given in two ways. In the first way the Father gives to the Son. Thus he says: **the words which you gave me**, in my eternal generation, in which the Father gave words to the Son, although the Son himself is the Word of the Father. These words are nothing else than the patterns or plans of everything which is to be done. And all these patterns the Father gave to the Son in generating him. Or, it could be said that the you gave me refers to the humanity of Christ, because from the very instant of his conception the most holy soul of Christ was full with all knowledge of the truth, "full of grace and truth" (1:14), that is, with the knowledge of every truth: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3).

The other giving of knowledge is from Christ to his disciples, so he says, **I have given them**, by teaching them, both from without and from within: "For all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (15:15). By saying this he shows that he is the mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5), because what he received from the Father he passed on to the disciples: "I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord" (Deut 5:5).

2202 He mentions that the minds of the disciples were led back to the Father when he says, **and they have received them**. Two kinds of receiving are mentioned, corresponding to the two kinds of giving previously stated. One kind of receiving corresponds to the second kind of giving [the giving by Christ to the disciples] and as to this he says, **and they have received them**, from me, without resisting: "The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious" (Is 50:5); "Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me" (6:45). And receiving them, **they know in truth that I came from you**, that you have given me all things, and this corresponds to the first kind of giving [of the Father to the Son].

2203 According to Augustine the words that follow, **and they have believed that you did send me**, are added to explain the previous sentence, "I came from you."[\[12\]](#) Knowledge of God is of two kinds: one is perfect, by the clear vision of glory; the other is imperfect, through faith: "For now we see in a mirror dimly," in the second way, "but then face to face," in the first way (1 Cor 13:12). He says [in the previous sentence], **they know in truth that I came from you**. But what kind of knowledge was this? The knowledge of our homeland, heaven? No, it was the knowledge of faith. And so he adds, **and they have believed**, indicating that to know this is to believe it. **They have believed** I say, **in truth**, that is, firmly and strongly: "Do you now believe?" that is, firmly. "The hour is coming" when you will believe completely (16:31). He uses the past tense, **have believed**, in place of the future tense because of his certainty about the future, and because of the infallibility of divine predestination.

Or, according to Chrysostom, he uses the past tense to indicate that these things have already happened, because they had already begun.[\[13\]](#) We can harmonize both of these interpretations because all these things had already begun, but they still remained to be completed. Thus, in reference to what has already begun, he speaks in the past tense, but in reference to their completion he speaks in the future, because they would be accomplished by the coming of the Holy Spirit.

2204 But what did they believe? **That you did send me**: "God sent his Son" [Gal 4:4]. According to Augustine this is the same as "I came (*exire*, come,

come forth) from you" (v 8).[\[14\]](#) This does not agree with Hilary for whom, as was said, "to come forth" (*exire*) refers to the eternal generation of the Son, and "to be sent" refers to the incarnation of the Son.[\[15\]](#) But I say that we can speak of Christ in two ways. In one way, from the point of view of his divinity; and then, insofar as he is the Son of God "to come forth" and "to be sent" are not the same, as Hilary says. Or, we can speak of Christ from the point of view of his humanity; and then, insofar as he is the Son of man, "to come forth" and "to be sent" are the same, as Augustine says.

2205 Now we see the reasons, founded on himself, why Christ prayed for his disciples. He mentions three reasons.

2206 One is based on the authority he had received over them. In reference to this he says, **I am praying for them**, that is, the disciples. First we see the reason; secondly, its explanation, **for they are yours**.

The reason why a person's prayer should be heard and why he should pray for others is that they belong to him in a special way; for general prayers are less likely to be heard. Accordingly he says, **I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world**, that is, the lovers of the world, **but for those whom you have given me**, especially as obedient disciples, although all things are mine, under my authority: "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage" (Ps 2:8).

2207 To the contrary, it seems that he prayed for all: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jn 2:1); "God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4). We should say to this that Christ did pray for all because his prayer is powerful enough to benefit the entire world. Yet it does not produce its effect in all, but only in the elect and saints of God. This is because of the obstacles present in the worldly.

2208 He gives a reason for why he prays for them when he says, **for they are yours**, that is, by eternal predestination. But they were not yours in such a way that the Son could not have them; nor were they given to the Son in such a way that they were taken from the Father. Thus he says, **all mine are yours, and yours are mine**. This indicates the equality of the Son with the Father, for the Son, insofar as he is God, has from all eternity everything that the Father has.

2209 Note that the Father has certain things that belong to his essence, like wisdom, goodness, and things of that kind; and these things are nothing else but his essence. And the Son asserts that he himself has this when, speaking of the

procession of the Holy Spirit, he says: "He will receive from me and declare it to you" [16:14]. This is because "All that the Father has is mine" (16:15). He says all [using a plural form], because while all these things are one in reality, we apprehend them with many ideas.

Secondly, the Father has certain things that relate to those who possess holiness or sanctity, who are set apart for him through faith, such as all the saints and the elect, of whom it was said, "thine they were" (v 6). All these things, too, the Son asserts that he has when he says here, speaking of them, **and yours are mine**, because they have been predestined to enjoy the Son as well as the Father.

Thirdly, the Father has some things in a general way because of their origin, for example, all created things: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Ps 24:1). All these too belong to the Son. Thus in the parable of the prodigal son, the father says to his older son: "Son ... all that is mine is yours" (Lk 15:31).

2210 The second reason why Christ prayed for his disciples is based on the glory he had in them: for they already knew something of his glory, and would know it more fully: "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Pet 1:16).

2211 The third reason why he prays for them is his coming physical absence; so he says, **and now I am no more in the world**. Note that one is said to be "in the world" in two senses. First, by clinging to the world by one's affections: "For all that is in the world [is] the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" (1 Jn 2:16). This is not the sense in which Christ was no longer in the world, since he never clung to it with his affections. He is no longer in the world in another way, that is, by his physical presence, for while he had been in the world physically, he would soon physically leave it. But they, the disciples, are in the world, physically present. **And I am coming to you**, as regards my humanity, to share your glory and to be seated at your right hand. So it is fitting that I pray for those whom I will soon physically leave.

LECTURE 3

11b "Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you; and these things I

speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

2212 After Christ stated his reasons for praying for the apostles, he here makes his petitions: first, he asks for their protection; secondly, for their sanctification, sanctify them (v 17). They are to be protected from evil, and sanctified by good. In regard to the first he does two things: first, he asks for their protection; secondly, he mentions why they need protection (v 12).

2213 In regard to the first, four things must be considered: whom he asks; what he asks for; for whom he asks; and why he asks. The one he asks is the Father; so he says, **Father**: and with good reason, for the Father is the source of every good: "Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (Jas 1:17). He adds, **Holy**, because the Father is also the source and origin of all holiness and because, in the last analysis, he was asking for the sanctification of the apostles: "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev 19:2); "There is none holy like the Lord" (1 Sam 2:2).

He asks for their protection, saying, **keep them**, for as we read: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Ps 127:1). For our good consists not only in receiving existence from God, but also in being kept in existence by God, because as Gregory says: "All things would return to nothingness, if the hand of the Almighty did not uphold them" [\[16\]](#); "upholding the universe by his word of power" (Heb 1:3). Accordingly, the Psalmist prays: "Keep me, O Lord, for I have put my trust in you" [Ps 16:1]. Now we are kept from evil and from sin in the name of God; thus he says, **keep them in your name**, that means, by the power of your name and of your knowledge, for in these lay our glory and our well-being: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses. But we will call upon the name of the Lord our God" [Ps 20:7].

He is praying for those who were given to him; he says, **which you have given me**: "Consider the work of God; who can make straight what he has made crooked?" (Eccl 7:13). For one can be kept from evil only by God's choice, which is indicated when he says, **which you have given me**, that is, by a gift of grace, so that they remain with me: "Not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is given" (Mt 19:11). Those who are given to Christ in this way are kept from evil.

Then he states why he is asking for their protection, saying, **that they may be one, even as we are one**. This can be connected with what has gone before in two ways. In the first way, it shows the way they will be kept or protected. Then the meaning is: They will be kept and protected by being kept as one. For a thing is preserved in existence as long as it remains one, and it ceases to be when it become divided: "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste" (Mt 12:23). Accordingly, the Church and people can be preserved if they remain one. In another way this phrase can state the purpose of their being kept. Then the meaning is this: Let them be kept or protected so that they may be one: for our entire perfection lies in a unity of spirit: "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3); "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity" (Ps 133:1).

2214 He adds, **even as we are one**. This causes a problem. The Father and Son are one in essence. And so we also will be one in essence? This is not true. The solution is that the perfection of each thing is nothing but sharing a likeness to God; for we are good to the extent that we resemble God. Accordingly, our unity contributes to our perfection to the extent that it shares in the unity of God. Now there is a twofold unity in God. There is a unity of nature: "I and the Father are one" (10:30); and a unity of love in the Father and Son, which is a unity of spirit. Both of these unities are found in us, not in an equal way, but with a certain likeness. The Father and the Son have the same individual nature [literally "numerically the same nature"], while we have the same specific nature. Again, they are one by a love which is not a participated love and a gift from another; rather, this love proceeds from them, for the Father and Son love themselves by the Holy Spirit. We are one by participating in a higher love. [\[17\]](#)

2215 Then he mentions why they need this protection (v 2). They need it for two reasons: because he is leaving them; and because the world hates them (v 14). He does three things about the first: he recalls the eagerness with which he protected them while he was with them; secondly, he states he is leaving (v 13a); thirdly, he mentions why he is saying these things (v 13b). Three things are done with the first: first, he mentions the way he protected them; secondly, his obligation to protect them; and thirdly, the effectiveness of his protection.

2216 The way they were protected was appropriate, because it was by the power of the Father. Accordingly, he says, **While I was with them**, that is, physically present • "Afterward he appeared on earth and lived among men" (Bar 3:37) • **I**, the Son of man, **kept**, that is, protected **them** from evil and sin, not by human power, but rather by divine power, because it was **in your name**. This name is also common to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit • "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19) • because

the Father and the Son are one God, and because the name of "Son" is implied in the name "Father," for one who has a son is called a Father.

Note that before, when Christ denied that he had a devil, he did not deny that he was a Samaritan, that is, a guardian, because Christ is a guardian: "Watchman, what of the night?" (Is 21:11), that is, the night of this world, for like a shepherd, Christ guards his flock.

2217 His obligation to protect them is stated when he says, **which you have given me**, for a guardian is bound to protect those placed in his care: "Keep this man" (1 Kgs 20:39); "I will take my stand to watch" (Hab 2:1). This is the way a superior acts when he carefully watches over those entrusted to his care: "And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Lk 2:8).

2218 The effectiveness of Christ's protection is complete, because none of them is lost: "My sheep hear my voice ... and no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (10:27); "Every one who ... believes in him [the Son] should have eternal life" (6:40). One person is excluded, that is, **the son of perdition**, Judas. He is called the son of perdition as though foreknown and foreordained to eternal perdition. In this way those destined to die are called the sons of death: "You are the sons of death" [1 Sam 26:16]; "You traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte ... and you make him a son of death twice as much as yourself" [Mt 23:15].

A Gloss says that a "son of death is one who is predestined to perdition."[\[18\]](#) It is not customary to say that one is predestined to evil, and so here we should understand predestination in its general meaning of knowledge or orientation. Actually, predestination is always directed to what is good, because it has the double effect of grace and glory; and it is God who directs us to each of these. Two things are involved in reprobation: guilt, and punishment in time. And God ordains a person to only one of these, that is, punishment, and even this is not for its own sake. **That the scripture**, in which you predicted that he would betray me • "Wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me" (Ps 109:2) • **might be fulfilled.**

2219 **But now I am coming to you**, physically leaving them: "I am leaving the world and going to the Father" (16:28). He had said before, "I kept them in your name," so that some would not fall into unbelief by misunderstanding this present statement (v 13) to mean that he could not protect them after he had left, or that the Father was not protecting them before. The Father was protecting them before. And the Son could also protect them after he left.

2220 He gives the reason why he said these things when he says, **and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.** It is like saying: I am like a man who is praying, and I am speaking these things to console my disciples, who think that I am merely human, so that at least they can be consoled because I am entrusting them to you, Father, whom they believe to be greater than I, and so they can rejoice in your protection. This is the interpretation of Chrysostom.[\[19\]](#)

In the interpretation of Augustine, this present statement is related to "that they may be one, even as we are one" (v 11).[\[20\]](#) In this case, these words (v 13) indicate the fruit of being one. It is like saying: **that they may have my joy**, by which they can rejoice in me, or, which they have received from me, **fulfilled in themselves.** They will obtain this joy by a unity of spirit, which will give them the joy of eternal life, which is full joy. And so this joy follows upon being one, because unity and peace produce perfect joy: "Those who follow plans for peace have joy" [Prv 12:20]; "The fruit of the Spirit is joy" (Gal 5:22).

2221 Now we have another reason why they need protection, which is because of the hatred of the world. First he mentions the benefit he had given his disciples; secondly, the hatred of the world for them (v 14); and thirdly, he asks the Father's help to protect them (v 15).

2222 He says, **I have given them your word**, which I have received from you: "I have given them the words which you gave me" (17:7). Or, **I have given**, that is, I will give them, by the inspiration of the Paraclete, **your word**, that is, the word about yourself, which is the greatest of gifts and benefits: "I will give you a good gift, do not abandon my law" [Prv 4:2].

2223 The result of this is the hatred of the world: because they have received your word, **the world has hated them:** "Blessed are you when men hate you" (Lk 6:22); "Do not wonder, brethren, that the world hates you" (1 Jn 3:13). The reason for this hatred is that they have left the world. For the word of God causes us to leave the world since it unites us to God, and one cannot be joined to God without leaving the world, for one who loves the world does not have a perfect love for God. Thus he says, **because they are not of the world:** "I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (15:19). For it is natural for one to love others who are similar: "Every beast loves its own kind, and hates the others" [Sir 13:19]; "The very sight of him is a burden to us," and this is "because his manner of life is unlike that of others" (Wis 2:15).

2224 Then he mentions the model according to which they are not of the world when he says, **even as I am not of the world.** This should be understood to

refer to their affections, for just as Christ was not in the world by his affections, so neither were they. It does not apply to their origin, because at one time they were of the world, while Christ was never of the world because even considering his birth in the flesh he was of the Holy Spirit: "You are of this world, I am not of this world" (8:23).

2225 Then he asks for help in facing this hatred when he says, **I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from evil.** First, he makes his prayer; secondly, he gives the reason for what he asks, **they are not of the world.**

2226 He mentions two things in the first. He says he is not asking for one thing, which is that they be taken out of the world. But how can they be taken out of the world who are not of the world? We should say that they are not of the world as regards their affections, as we said before. But they are of the world by continuing to be physically present in it, and in this way he does not want them to be taken out of the world. This is because they would be of benefit to the faithful whom they would bring to the faith: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15).

He asks for something else, namely, that while they remain physically in the world the Father **should keep them from evil**, that is, worldly evil; for it is difficult for a person who lives among those who are bad to remain free from evil, especially since the entire world is set in evil: "When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you" (Is 43:2).

2227 He gives the reason for this request when he says, **they are not of the world.** This seems to be a useless repetition since he had just said the same thing. But, indeed, it is not useless, because they are spoken in different contexts. They were spoken before to show why the disciples were hated by the world; here they are spoken to show why they should be protected by God.

We can see from this that the reason why the saints are hated by the world is the same as the reason why God loves them, that is, their disdain for the world: "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him?" (Jas 2:5). Therefore, whatever good a person does makes this person hateful to the world, but loved by God: "We sacrifice what the Egyptians worship" [Ex 8:27].

LECTURE 4

17 "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you did send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate [sanctify] myself, that they also may be consecrated [sanctified] in truth."

2228 Above, our Lord prayed for the protection of his disciples; here he prays for their sanctification. First, he asks for their sanctification; secondly, he mentions why they need to be sanctified (v 18); thirdly, he says this sanctification has already begun (v 19).

2229 He says: I have prayed that my disciples be kept from evil; but this is not enough unless they are perfected by what is good: "Depart from evil, and do good" (Ps 37:27). Accordingly he prays, **sanctify them**, that is, perfect them and make them holy. **And do this in the truth**, that is, in me, your Son, who am the truth (14:6). It is like saying: Make them share in my perfection and holiness (sanctity). And thus he adds, **your word**, that is, your Word, **is the truth**. The meaning is then: **Sanctify them in me, the truth**, because I, your Word, am the truth.

Or, we could say this: **Sanctify them**, by sending the Holy Spirit. And do this **in the truth**, that is, in the knowledge of the truths of the faith and of your commandments: "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (8:32). For we are sanctified by faith and the knowledge of the truth: "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe" (Rom 3:22). He adds, **your word is truth**, because the truth of God's words is unmixed with falsity: "All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them" (Prv 8:8). Further, his word teaches the uncreated truth.

Another interpretation: In the Old Testament everything set aside for divine worship was said to be sanctified: "Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel to serve me as priests" (Ex 28:1). Accordingly he says, **sanctify them**, that is, set them aside, **in truth**, that is, to preach your truth, because **your word**, which they are to preach, **is truth**.

2230 The need for their sanctification is added when he says, **as you did send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world**. He is saying in effect: I have come to preach the truth: "For this I was born ... to bear witness to the truth" (18:37). And so I have sent my disciples to preach the truth: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15). Accordingly, they have to be sanctified in the truth: "As the Father has sent me,

even so I send you" (20:21).

2231 They need to be sanctified not only because of the task they have been given, but also because their sanctification has already been begun by me. Thus he says, **and for their sake I sanctify myself**. According to Augustine, we should note that there are two natures in Christ. [21] Christ is holy by essence, considering his divine nature; while he is holy by grace, which is derived from the divine nature, considering his human nature. Referring to his divine nature he says, **I sanctify myself**, by taking on flesh for them. I do this in order that the sanctity or holiness of grace, which is found in my humanity, but is also from me as God, might flow from me to them, because "from his fullness we have all received" (1:16). "It is like the precious oil upon the head," and this head is Christ, who is God, "running down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron," that is, upon his human nature, and from here, "running down on the collar of his robes," that is, to us. (Ps 133:2).

Or, according to Chrysostom, he is asking they be sanctified by a spiritual sanctification. [22] In the Old Testament there were sanctifications of the body: "Cleansing of the body imposed until the time comes to set things right" [Heb 9:10]. These were figures of a spiritual sanctification, and these figures involved the offering of some sacrifice. And so it was appropriate that some sacrifice be offered for the sanctification of the disciples. This is what he is saying: I sanctify myself in order that they might be sanctified, that is, I am offering myself as a sacrifice: "who offered himself without blemish to God" (Heb 9:14); "So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood" (Heb 13:12). He did this in truth, not in a figure, as was done in the Old Testament.

LECTURE 5

20 "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who [will] believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory which you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." [23]

2232 After our Lord prayed for his disciples, he now prays in general for all the

faithful. First, we see his prayer; secondly, he states why he should be heard (v 25). In his prayer he asks the Father two things for those who follow him: first, a perfect unity; secondly, the vision of glory, **I desire that they also ... may be with me** (v 24). He does two things about the first: he asks, as man, for a perfect unity; secondly, he shows that as God he gives them the ability to acquire this unity (v 22). He does two things with the first: he mentions for whom he is asking; secondly, what he is asking for, **that they may be one** (v 22b).

2233 He is praying for the entire community of the faithful. He says: I have asked that you protect my disciples from evil, and that you sanctify them in the truth; but **I do not pray for these only, but also for those who will believe**, that is, for those whose faith will be strengthened, **through their word**, the word of the apostles. It is right for him to ask this, because no one is saved except by the intercession of Christ. So that it was not only the apostles who were saved, but also others, he also had to pray for these others: "He loved your fathers and chose their descendants after them" (Deut 4:37); "Their prosperity will remain with their descendants" (Sir 44:11).

2234 The objection is made that he does not seem to be praying for all his faithful, because he is praying for those who would be converted by the word of the apostles. But the old fathers and John the Baptizer were not converted by their word. We should answer that these persons had already arrived at their destination; and although they were not enjoying the vision of God, since the price had not yet been paid, they went from this world with their merits, so that as soon as the gate was opened they would enter. Thus, they did not need such prayer.

2235 Again, what of others who did not believe through the word of the apostles, but through Christ's, like Paul believed: "I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12), or like the thief on the cross (Lk 23:43). It does not seem that Christ prayed for them. The answer, according to Augustine, is that those are said to believe through the word of the apostles who not only listened to the apostles, but those also who believed through the word [as coming from others] which the apostles preached, which is the word of faith (Rom 10:8).[\[24\]](#) The word of faith is called the word of the apostles because they were especially commissioned to preach it. The same word was divinely revealed to Paul and the thief on the cross. Or, one could say that those who were converted directly by and through Christ, like Paul and the thief on the cross, and others like these, are included in that part of the prayer in which our Lord prayed for his disciples. And so our Lord said: "whom you gave me" (17:6), or will give me.

2236 What about us, who do not believe through the apostles? We should say that although we do not believe through the apostles, we do believe through their disciples.

2237 He prays for a perfect unity when he says, **that they may all be one**. First, he mentions the unity he is asking for; secondly, he gives an example of it, and its cause, **as you, Father, are in me**; thirdly, he gives the fruit of unity, **that the world may believe**.

2238 He says: I am praying **that they may all be one**. As the Platonists say, a thing acquires its unity from that from which it acquires its goodness. For that is good for a thing which preserves it; and a thing is preserved only if it remains one. Thus when our Lord prays that his disciples be perfect in goodness, he prays that they be one. Indeed, this was accomplished: "Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32); "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity" (Ps 133:1).

2239 He gives an example of this unity and its cause, saying, **even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you**. Others are one, but in evil. Our Lord is not asking for this kind of unity, but that which unites in good, that is, in God. And so he says, **as you, Father, are in me, and I in you**, that is, let them be united by believing in me and in you: "We, though many, are one body in Christ" (Rom 12:5); "Eager to keep the unity of the Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph 4:3). We are one or united in the Father and the Son, who are one; for if we were seeking different things to believe and desire, our affections would be scattered.

2240 Arius uses this passage to argue that the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son in the same way that we are in God. However, we are not in God by a unity of essence, but by a conformity of will and love. Therefore, he says, like us, the Father is not in the Son by a unity of essence.

We should say to this that there is a twofold unity of the Father and the Son: a unity of essence and of love. In both of these ways the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father. The **even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you**, can be understood of the unity of love, according to Augustine, and then the meaning is: **even as you, Father, are in me**, through love, because love, charity, makes one be with God.[\[25\]](#) It is like saying: as the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father, so the disciples love the Father and the Son. Then the words even as do not imply equality but a remote likeness.

Or, according to Hilary, this statement can refer to a unity of nature; not indeed

that the same numerical nature is in us and in the Father and the Son, but in the sense that our unity resembles that of the divine nature, by which the Father and the Son are one.[\[26\]](#) In this case the words **even as** indicate a certain imitation. That is why we are invited to imitate divine love: "Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us" (Eph 5:1). And we are also to imitate the divine perfection or goodness: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48).

2241 He indicates the fruit of this unity when he says, **so that the world may believe**: for nothing shows the truth of the gospel better than the charity of those who believe: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (13:35). This will be the fruit of unity: because if my disciples are one, the world may believe that the teaching I gave to them is from you, and know that you have sent me. For God is a cause of peace, not of contentions.

2242 There is a problem here. If we will be perfectly one in our homeland, where we will not believe [but see], it seems out of place to say, after mentioning unity, **that the world may believe that you have sent me**. Our reply is that our Lord is speaking here of the unity which is taking shape and not of perfected unity.

2243 There is another problem. Our Lord is praying that those who believe in him may be one; therefore, even the believing world is one. Therefore, how can he say, after the world has become one, **that the world may believe**? One can answer by giving the mystical sense. Then our Lord is praying that all believers be one. Yet all would not believe at the same time; some would be the first to believe, and they would convert others. So when he says, **that the world may believe**, it refers to those who did not believe at first, from the beginning, but when they did believe they did become one. And the same applies to those who would believe after them, and continuing to the end of the world.

Hilary has another interpretation.[\[27\]](#) The words **so that the world may believe** indicates the purpose of their unity and perfection. It is like saying: you will perfect them so that they may be one, for this purpose, **so that the world may believe that you have sent me**. Here the words **so that** indicate a final cause.

A third interpretation is by Augustine.[\[28\]](#) For him, **that the world may believe**, is another petition. In this case the **I pray** (v 20) has to be repeated, so that the sense is: I pray that they may be one, and I pray that the world may believe.

2244 Christ's part in establishing this unity is mentioned when he says, **the glory which you have given me, I have given to them**, since what he is asking for as man he is accomplishing as God. First, he shows that he acted to make them one; secondly, he mentions the kind and degree of this unity, **I in them and you in me**; and thirdly, we see the purpose of this unity, **so that the world may know** (v 23).

2245 He says: Although, as man, I am asking for their perfection, still I am accomplishing this together with you, because **the glory**, of my resurrection, **which you, Father, have given me**, by an eternal predestination, and which you will soon give me in reality, **I have given to them**, my disciples. This glory is the immortality which the faithful will receive at the resurrection, an immortality even of the body: "Who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body" (Phil 3:21); "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory" (1 Cor 15:43). And this is **so that they may be one**, because by the fact that they have glory they will be made one, **even as we are one**.

2246 He seems to be distinguishing his own activity from that of the Father, for he says that the Father gave him glory, and Christ gave this to his faithful. If this is understood correctly, we see that he is not saying these things to distinguish their activities, but their persons. For the Son, as Son, together with the Father, gives glory to Christ in his human nature, and together with the Father Christ gives it to the faithful. But because Christ gave glory to his faithful especially through his own human nature, he attributes this giving to himself, while he attributes to the Father the giving of glory to his own human nature. This is the opinion of Augustine. [\[29\]](#)

Or, according to Chrysostom, **the glory**, that is, the glory of grace, **which you have given me**, in my human nature, giving me a superior knowledge, perfection, and power to accomplish miracles, **I have given to them**, in a limited way, and will give it later more fully: "We are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:18); "You have given gifts to men" [Ps 68:18]. [\[30\]](#) And this is in order **that they may be one even as we are one**, for the purpose of God's gifts is to unite us in a unity which is like the unity of the Father and the Son.

2247 The manner of this unity is added when he says, **I in them and you in me**. They arrive at unity, because they see that I am in them, as in a temple: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor 3:16), by grace, which is a certain likeness of the Father's essence, by which you, Father, are in me by a unity of nature: "I am in the Father and the Father in me" (14:10). And this is in order **that they may become perfectly**

one.

Above, he had said, "that they may be one" (v 22), while here he says, **perfectly one**. The reason for this is that the first time he was referring to the unity brought about by grace, but here to its consummation. Hilary gives another interpretation: **I in them**, that is, I am in them by the unity of human nature, which I have in common with them, and also because I give them my body as food; **and you in me**, by a unity of essence.[\[31\]](#)

2248 Referring to the first explanation [the unity from grace], since the Father also, as well as the Son, is in them by grace - "We will come to him and make our home with him" (14:23) • why does he say, **I in them**, without mentioning the Father? According to Augustine, he does this because they have access to the Father through the Son: "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access" (Rom 5:1); and it does not mean that the Son is in them without the Father. Or, according to Chrysostom, above Christ said, "We will come to him" (14:23), to indicate that there is a plurality of divine persons, contrary to Sabellius; but here he says, **I in them**, to indicate the equality of the Father and the Son, contrary to Arius. We can understand from this that it is enough for the faithful if the Son alone dwells in them.

2249 The purpose of this unity is given when he says, **so that the world may know that you have sent me**. If the "perfectly one" (v 23) refers to the perfection of this life, then **that the world may know** is the same as what he said before, "that the world may believe" (v 21). This would indicate just a beginning state. But here he is saying, **know**, because complete knowledge, not faith, comes after imperfect knowledge.

He says, **that the world may know**, not the world as it is now, but as it was [will be?], so that the meaning is: **so that the world**, now a believing world, **may know**. Or, **so that the world**, that is, the lovers of the world, **may know** that you have sent me: for by that time those who are evil will know by clear signs that Christ is the Son of God: "Every eye will see him" (Rev 1:7); "They shall look on him whom they have pierced" (19:37); "They will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Lk 21:27).

2250 The world will not only know this, it will also know the glory of the saints, **that you have loved them**, that is, the faithful. At the present time we cannot know how great God's love for us is: this is because the good things that God will give us exceed our longings and desires, and so cannot be found in our heart: "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor 2:9).

Thus the believing world, that is, the saints, will now know by experience how much God loves us; but the lovers of the world, that is, the wicked, will know this by seeing in amazement the glory of the saints: "This is the man whom we once held in derision ... Why has he been numbered among the sons of God? And why is his lot among the saints?" (Wis 5:4); and it continues, "Why has he been numbered among the sons of God? And why is his lot among the saints?" (v 4).

2251 He continues, **as you have loved me**. This does not imply an equality of love, but a similarity and a reason. It is like saying: the love you have for me is the reason and cause why you love them: for by the fact that you love me, you love those who love me and are my members: "The Father himself loves you, because you have loved me" (16:27).

God loves all the things he has made, by giving them existence: "For you love all things that exist, and have loathing for none of the things you have made" (Wis 11:24). But above all he loves his only Son, to whom he has given his entire nature by an eternal generation. In a lesser way he loves the members of his only Son, that is, the faithful of Christ, by giving them the grace by which Christ dwells in them: "He loved his people; all those consecrated to him were in his hand" (Deut 33:3).

LECTURE 6

24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which you have given me in your love for me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you; and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made known to them your name, and I will make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

2252 Above, our Lord prayed for the perfect unity of his disciples; here he is asking the vision of glory for them. First, he mentions the persons for whom he is praying; secondly, he shows the way he is praying; thirdly, he states what he is asking for.

2253 He is praying for those given to him; he says, **whom you have given me**. That is given to a person which is subject to his will, so he can do with it as he wills. We can distinguish two wills in Christ: a will to mercy and a will to justice. His will to mercy is fundamental and absolute, because "His compassion is over

all that he has made" (Ps 145:9); "who desires all men to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4). But his will for a punishing justice is not fundamental, as it presupposes sin: "God does not delight in the destruction of men" [Wis 1:13]; and in Ezekiel [18:32] we read: "I do not desire the death of the sinner," absolutely; but he wills it as a consequence of sin.[\[32\]](#)

All men have been given to the Son: "You have given him power over all flesh" (17:2), that is, over all men, to accomplish his will in their regard: his will for mercy, leading to salvation, or his will for justice, leading to punishment: "He is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42). But those were given to him absolutely who were given to him so that he might accomplish his will of mercy for their salvation; he says of these people, **whom you have given to me**, that is, in your predestination from all eternity: "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me..." (Is 8:18).

2254 The way he asks is given when he says, **I desire**. This can indicate authority or merit. It indicates authority if we refer this to Christ's divine will, which is the same as the will of the Father: for by his will he justifies and saves men: "He has mercy upon whomever he wills" (Rom 9:18). If we refer this to Christ's human will, it indicates merit, for Christ's human will merits our salvation. For if the wills of the just, who are the members of Christ, have merit entitling them to be heard • "Ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you" (15:7) • much more so does the human will of Christ, who is the head of all the saints.

2255 He mentions what he is asking for when he says, **that they also ... may be with me**. First, he asks that the members be united to the head; secondly, that his glory be shown to his members, **to behold my glory**.

2256 He says, **I desire that they also ... may be with me where I am**. This can be understood in two ways. In the first way it can be understood of Christ in his human nature. Christ, in his human nature, is soon to ascend and to be in heaven: "I am ascending to my Father and your Father" (20:17). Then the meaning is: **I desire that they also**, the faithful, **may be with me**, in heaven, **where I am** about to ascend: "Wherever the body is, there the eagles," that is, the saints, "will be gathered together" (Mt 24:28). For this is what Christ promised: "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven" (Mt 5:12).

2257 There is a difficulty with this meaning. Since Christ was not yet in heaven, he should have said, "where I will be," and not "where I am." And besides, he also said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven" (3:13).

I reply to the first that Christ, who was speaking, was both God and man. And although he was not yet in heaven in his human nature, he was there in his divine nature. And so, while present on earth, he was in heaven; and thus he says, **where I am**.

As to the second objection, when we read that "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven" (3:13), we should understand that the Son is in heaven by reason of his divinity, and descended by taking on a human nature, and then ascended by reason of his human nature, now glorified. But now we have been made one with him. Thus, he alone comes, in himself, by descending from heaven, and he alone returns there, now one with us, by ascending into heaven. This is the observation of Gregory, (*Morals*, 28). [\[33\]](#)

He says, **where I am**, using the present tense instead of the future, either because he would very soon be there, or because he was referring to Christ as God.

2258 But since God is everywhere • "Do I not fill heaven and earth" (Jer 23:24) • it seems to follow that the saints also will be everywhere. We should reply to this that God is related to us like light is. When the sun is over the earth, the light spreads everywhere. And although the light is with all, yet all are not in the light, but only those who see it. So, since God is everywhere, he is with all, wherever they are; yet not all are with God, but only those joined to him by faith and love; and they will be finally joined in complete joy: "I am continually with you" (Ps 73:23); "We shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess 4:17).

Thus the meaning is this: **where I am**, that is, in your divinity, Father, which I have by nature, **they may be with me**, by participating in grace: "He gave power to become children of God" (1:12); "He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jn 4:16).

2259 He speaks of manifesting his glory to his members when he says, **to behold my glory**. First, he makes his request; secondly, he mentions the source of this glory, **which you have given me**; thirdly, he gives the reason for this glory, **in your love for me**.

2260 He says that he not only wants them to be with him, but he also wants them **to behold my glory**, in a beatifying vision: "When he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2). This can be understood to refer to the glory of his human nature after the resurrection • "He will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body" (Phil 3:21) • or to the glory of his divine nature, for he is the radiance of the Father's glory and the image of his

substance, as we see from Hebrews (1:3); "The radiance of eternal light" [Wis 7:26]. The saints in glory will see both of these glories. We read about the first [the glory of Christ's human nature]: "Your eyes will see the king in his beauty" (Is 33:17). The wicked will see this glory only at the judgment: "And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and majesty" [Lk 21:27]; and Mark adds "and glory" (Mk 13:26). But the sight of this glory will be taken away from them after the judgment: "Let the wicked be taken away so they cannot see the glory of the Lord" [Is 26:10], as we read in one version. Yet the saints will see the second glory [that of the divine nature] forever: "In your light," that is, of grace, "do we see light," that is, of glory, which the wicked will never see.

2261 The source of this glory is the Father: so he says, **which you have given me**. He gave him the glory of his body at the resurrection. Although this still remained to be done, it had already been done in the divine decree; and this is why he says, **have given**: "You have crowned him with glory" [Ps 8:5]. But he gave him divine glory from all eternity, because the Son is from the Father from all eternity, like radiance from light.

2262 He gives the explanation for the glory given to him when he says, **in your love for me before the foundation of the world**. If we refer this to Christ in his human nature, then the *in* indicates the cause. For just as love and predestination are the cause why we have the radiance of grace in the present life and of glory in the future • "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4) • so also it is the cause of the radiance which Christ has in his human nature, "predestined the Son of God in power" [Rom 1:4]. So the meaning is this: I say that you have given me this radiance: and the cause of this is that you have loved me, **in your love for me before the foundation of the world**. The result being that this man is united to the Son of God to form one person: "Blessed is he whom you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts" (Ps 65:4).

If we refer this to Christ as God, then the *in* indicates a sign. For then the Father did not give because he loved: for when we say the Father gave to the Son we are referring to the eternal generation of the Son. If love is taken essentially, it indicates the divine will; if it is taken notionally, it indicates the Holy Spirit. Now it was by nature that the Father gave radiance to the Son, not by his will, because the Father begot the Son by nature. And so he also did not give to the Son because he brought forth the Holy Spirit. [\[34\]](#)

2263 Now he gives the reason why his prayer should be heard. Before, our Lord had included the faithful in his petition when he said, "I do not pray for these

only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word" (17:20). He also excluded the world and unbelievers when he said, "I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world" (17:9). Now he gives the reason for this: first, he mentions the failure of the world; secondly, the progress of the disciples (v 25).

2264 Note that when he prayed for their sanctification he called the Father **holy Father** (v 11). But now, calling for retribution, he refers to the Father as **righteous Father**. This eliminates the old error which said that there was a just God, the God of the Old Testament, and another God who was good, the God of the New Testament.

The failure of the world concerned its knowledge of God. He says, **the world**, not as reconciled, but damned, **has not known you**: "The world was made through him, yet the world knew him not" (1:10).

2265 But this seems to conflict with Romans (1:19) "For what can be known about God is plain to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made." We should say to this that knowledge is of two kinds: one is speculative, and the other affective. Through neither of these ways did the world know God completely. Although some Gentiles knew God as having some of those attributes which are knowable by reason, they did not know God as the Father of an only begotten and consubstantial Son • and our Lord is talking about knowledge of these things.

Again, if they did have some speculative knowledge of God, this was mixed with many errors: some denied his providence over all things; others said he was the soul of the world; still others worshipped other gods along with him. For this reason they are said not to know God. Composite things can be known in part, and unknown in part, while simple things are unknown if they are not known in their entirety. Thus, even though some erred only slightly in their knowledge of God, they are said to be entirely ignorant of him. Consequently, since these people did not know the special excellence of God, they are said not to know him: "For although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened" (Rom 1:21); "Nor did they recognize the craftsman while paying heed to his works" (Wis 13:1).

Furthermore, the world did not know God by an affective knowledge, because it did not love him, "like heathen who do not know God" (1 Thess 4:5). So he says, **the world has not known you**, that is, without error, and as a Father, through love.[\[35\]](#)

2266 Then the progress of the disciples is mentioned (v 25b). First, their progress in knowledge; secondly, the fruit of this knowledge (v 26). As regards the disciples' progress in knowledge he does three things: first, he gives the root and fountain of this knowledge of God; secondly, the rivulets and streams that flow from it; thirdly, we see their origin in the root or fountain.

2267 The root and fountain of our knowledge of God is the Word of God, that is, Christ: "The fountain of wisdom is the word of God" [Sir 1:5]. Human wisdom consists in knowing God. But this knowledge flows to us from the Word, because to the extent that we share in the Word of God, to that extent do we know God. Thus he says, **the world has not known you** in this way, **but I**, the fountain of wisdom, your Word, **have known you**, eternally and fully: "If I said, I do not know him, I should be a liar like you" (8:55).

2268 From this knowledge of the Word, which is the root and fountain, flows, like rivulets and streams, all the knowledge of the faithful. Accordingly he says, **and these know that** [*quia*, meaning "that," or "because"] **you have sent me**. Augustine understands the word as meaning "because," and it then indicates the reason for their knowledge. [36] The meaning is then: **I have known you**, by nature, **and these know** you by grace. Why? **Because you have sent me**, so that they may know you: "For this was I born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (18:37); "I have manifested your name" (17:6).

If we understand the word as meaning "that," it then refers to what is known. The meaning is: **and these know**. What do they know? **That you have sent me**, because he who sees the Son also sees the Father (14:9).

2269 They did not know this by themselves; they learned it from me because "No one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Mt 11:27). So he says, **I made known to them your name, and I will make it known**. He is indicating the two types of knowledge which the faithful have through him. First, there is the knowledge of his teaching, and he refers to this by saying, **I made known to them your name**, teaching them by my external words: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (1:18); "It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him" (Heb 2:3).

The other knowledge is from within, through the Holy Spirit. Referring to this he says, **and I will make it known** by giving them the Holy Spirit: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will teach you all truth" [16:13].

Or, alternatively, **I made known to them your name** by the knowledge of faith, "for now we see in a mirror dimly," **and I will make it known** through the vision of glory in their homeland, where they will see "face to face" (1 Cor 13:12).

2270 The fruit of this knowledge is **that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them**. This can be explained in two ways. The first and better way is that since the Father loves the Son, as is shown by the glory he gave him, consequently, he loves all those in whom the Son is present • and the Son is in them insofar as they have knowledge of the truth. So the meaning is this: I will make your name known to them; and by the fact that they know you, I, your Word, will be in them; and by the fact that I am in them, **the love with which you love me may be in them**, that is, will be given to them, and you will love them as you have loved me.

Here is the other explanation: **that the love with which you have loved me may be in them**, that is, as you have loved me, so they, by sharing in the Holy Spirit, may love. And by that fact I will be in them as God in a temple, and they in me, as members of the head: "He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jn 4:16).

[1] St. Thomas refers to Jn 17:1 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 21, a. 3, s. c.; q. 83, a. 4, ad 2; Jn 17:3: *ST* I, q. 18, a. 2, obj. 3; q. 31, a. 4, obj 1; I-II, q. 3, a. 2, ad 1; q. 3, a. 4, s. c.; q. 114, a. 4, s. c.; II-II, q. 1, a. 8; q. 24, a. 12, s. c.; III, q. 9, a. 2, obj. 2; q. 59, a. 5, ad 1; Jn 16:5: *ST* I, q. 46, a. 1, s. c. ; Jn 17:5: *ST* III, q. 83, a. 4, ad 7.

[2] *De Trin.*, 9, ch. 31; PL 10; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:1-5.

[3] *De Trin.*, 5, ch. 3; PL 10; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:1-5.

[4] *De Trin.*, 3, ch. 14; PL 10; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:1-5.

[5] Augustine, *De Trin.*, 6, ch. 9; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:1-5.

[6] Augustine, *De Trin.*, 105, ch. 5; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:1-5.

[7] Summa-Christ's human nature is glorified, but remains human.

[8] Hilary, *De Trin.*, 3; PL 10; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:1-5.

[9] St. Thomas refers to Jn 17:6 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 2, a. 8, obj. 2; Jn 17:10: *ST* III, q. 48, a. 1, s. c.

[10] *Tract. in Io.*, 106, ch. 1, col. 1908; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:6-8.

[11] *In Ioannem hom.*, 81, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 437; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:6-8.

[12] *Tract. in Io.*, 106, ch. 6, col. 1911; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:6-8.

[13] *In Ioannem hom.*, 80, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 435; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:1-5.

[14] *Tract. in Io.*, 106, ch. 6, col. 1911; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:6-8.

[15] Hilary.

[16] Gregory.

[17] Summa-

[18] Gloss.

[19] *In Ioannem hom.*, 81, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 440; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:9-13.

[20] *Tract. in Io.*, 107, ch. 8, col. 1914-5; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:9-13.

[21] *Tract. in Io.*, 108, ch. 5, col. 1916; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:14-19.

[22] *In Ioannem hom.*, 82, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 443; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:14-19.

[23] St. Thomas refers to Jn 17:22 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 183, q. 2, obj. 1; III, q. 23, a. 3.

[24] *Tract. in Io.*, 109, ch. 2, col. 1918; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:20-23.

[25] *Tract. in Io.*, 110, ch. 1, col. 1920; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:20-23.

[26] *De Trin.*, 7; PL 10; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:20-23.

[27] *De Trin.*, 8; PL 10; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:20-23.

[28] *Tract. in Io.*, 110, ch.2, col. 1920-1; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:20-23.

[29] *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:20-23.

[30] *In Ioannem hom.*, 82, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 444; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:20-23.

[31] *De Trin.*, 8; PL 10; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:20-23.

[32] Summa-mercy is fundamental to God-justice exists in relation to sin.

[33] Gregory, *Moralia*, 28; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:24-26.

[34] Summa--

[35] summa --speculative and affective knowledge.

[36] *Tract. in Io.*, 111, ch. 5, col 1929; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 17:24-26.

18

LECTURE I

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples across the Kidron valley [brook], where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas, procuring a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Then Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" 5 They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth. "Jesus said to them, I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When he said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Again he asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he; so, if you seek me, let these men go." 9 This was to fulfill the word which he had spoken, "Of those whom you gave me I lost not one."[\[1\]](#)

2271 Before his passion, as we saw above, our Lord prepared his disciples in many ways: teaching them by his example, comforting them with his words, and aiding them by his prayers. Now the Evangelist begins the history of the passion: first, he sets forth the mystery of the passion; secondly, the glory of the resurrection (20:1). Christ's passion was effected partly by the Jews, and partly by the Gentiles. Thus, he first describes what Christ suffered from the Jews; secondly, what he suffered from the Gentiles (19:1). He does three things regarding the first: he shows how our Lord was betrayed by a disciple; secondly, how he was brought before the high priests (v 13); and thirdly, how he was accused before Pilate (v 28).

In regard to Christ's betrayal, the Evangelist mentions three things: first, the place; secondly, the procedure; and thirdly, the willingness of Christ to submit to the betrayal (v 4). The place of the betrayal was shown to be appropriate in three ways: because it was outside the city; it was private and enclosed; and it was

known to the traitor.

2272 The place of the betrayal was some distance from the city, and so Judas could more easily do what he intended. The Evangelist says, **When Jesus had spoken these words**, the words we have read above. But since what Christ said belonged to his prayer, it would seem more appropriate for the Evangelist to say, "When Jesus had prayed." The Evangelist put it the way he did to show that Christ did not pray because of any need of his own, since he was the one who, as man, prayed, and who, as God, heard the prayer. Rather, Christ prayed in order to teach us. Thus this prayer is described as "spoken words."

2273 **He went forth with his disciples**, but not immediately after this prayer, as Augustine notes.^[2] Other things happened, omitted by this Evangelist, but mentioned by the others. For example, there was an argument among the disciples about who was to be regarded as the greatest (Lk 22:24); before setting out he said to Peter: "Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (Lk 22:31); again, the disciples recited a hymn with the Lord, as Matthew (26:30) and Mark (14:26) report. And so we should not think that they went out immediately after the words of the previous chapter, but that Christ said these things before they went out.

2274 He went forth **across the Kidron brook**. Matthew and Mark say that they went to the Mount of Olives, and then to a garden called Gethsemane. There is no conflict here, because all of them are referring to the same place, for the Kidron brook is at the foot of the Mount of Olives, where there was a garden called Gethsemane. In Greek, Kidron is genitive plural; and so in effect he is saying a brook "of cedars." Perhaps there were many cedar trees planted there.

It is fitting for this mystery that he cross a brook, because the brook indicates his passion: "He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head" (Ps 110:7). Again, it is fitting that he cross the Kidron brook for Kidron is interpreted to mean an overshadowing, and by his passion Christ removed the shadow of sin and of the law, and stretching out his arms on the cross, he protected us under the shadow of his arms: "Hide me in the shadow of your wings" (Ps 17:8).

2275 The place was especially suitable for the betrayal. He says, **there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered**. This was especially suitable because Christ was satisfying for the sin of our first parent which had been committed in a garden (for paradise means a garden of delights). It was also suitable because by his passion he is leading us into another garden and paradise

to receive a crown: "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Lk 23:43).

2276 It was also an appropriate place because it was known to the traitor, **now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with his disciples**, including Judas, who was like a wolf among sheep: "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (6:71). This wolf in sheep's clothing, who had been tolerated among the sheep according to the profound plan of the master, learned where he could scatter the small flock when the time came.

2277 Since Judas had left the supper a while before the others, how did he know that Christ would later be in the garden? Chrysostom says that it was Christ's custom, especially at the major feasts, to bring his disciples there after supper and teach them the deeper meaning of the feasts, things that others were not ready to hear.[\[3\]](#) And so, because this was an important feast, Judas surmised that Christ would be going there after supper. It was Christ's custom to teach his disciples these sublime matters in the mountains or in private gardens, seeking places free from disturbance so they would not be distracted: "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her" (Hos 2:14).

2278 Now the Evangelist shows the procedure of the traitor. Notice, as we see from Luke (22:4), that after Judas had agreed with the chief priests to betray Christ, he looked for an opportunity to deliver him without disturbing the people. Consequently, he wanted to come to him privately and at night, because during the day Christ was always busy teaching the people. Yet even at night it was possible that he be hindered by a quickly gathering crowd, or by the darkness in which Christ could be spirited away or escape from their hands. So against the crowd, he armed himself with weapons, and against the darkness he brought lanterns and torches. And because some of the crowd might resist, he took a band of soldiers, not from the Jews, but from the governor. In this way, no one would dare to resist because they would see the marks of legitimate authority. Further, some Jews might resist out of zeal for the law, especially because Christ was being taken by Gentiles. For this reason Judas took some servants or **officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees**: "He has run against God with his head held high" [Job 15:26]; "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?" (Lk 22:52)

2279 Now the Evangelist shows the promptness of Christ to willingly undergo betrayal: first, by voluntarily offering himself; secondly, by stopping one of the disciples who was resisting (v 10). In regard to the first, the Evangelist does two things: first, he tells how Christ identified himself to show his power; secondly, to show his patience (v 7). In regard to the first he does three things: first, he

states the question Christ asked; secondly, he shows Christ identifying himself, **I am he**; thirdly, we see the effect this has (v 6).

2280 He does three things regarding the first. First, he recalls Christ's knowledge: **Then Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him, came forward**; "Jesus knew that his hour had come" (13:1). The Evangelist mentions this for two reasons: first, so that it does not appear that the question he is asking comes from his ignorance; and secondly, so that it does not seem that he is offering himself unintentionally and without knowing that they have come to kill him. He knew everything that would happen to him.

Secondly, he states Christ's question, for although he knew all these things he **came forward and said to them, Whom do you seek?** But this was not because of his ignorance, as we said. Thirdly, he gives their answer, **Jesus of Nazareth**. They were seeking him not to imitate him, but to slander and kill him: "You will seek me and die in your sin" (8:21).

2281 Now we see Jesus identifying himself and offering himself so that they can seize him. **I am he**, he says, that is, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are looking for. The Evangelist adds that Judas was also there because he had mentioned before that Judas had left them (13:31). It could be expected that they might not recognize the face of Christ because of the darkness. But this darkness would not explain why they did not know Christ from his voice, especially those who were quite familiar with him. By saying, **I am he**, Christ shows that he was not recognized even by Judas who was with them and on close terms with Christ. This in particular shows the power of Christ's divinity. **Judas ... was standing with them**, that is, he continued in his evil to the point of identifying him with a kiss.

2282 Now we see the effect of his revealing himself: **they drew back and fell to the ground**. As Gregory says, sometimes we read that the saints fall to the ground: "The king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and did homage to Daniel" (Dan 2:46); "When I saw it, I fell upon my face" (Ez 1:28).^[4] We also read that the evil fall: "Your men shall fall by the sword" (Is 3:25). Yet there is a difference. It is said that the evil fall backward: "Eli fell over backward from his seat" (1 Sam 4:18); while the saints fall on their face. The reason for this is given in Proverbs (4:18): "The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn.... The path of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble." Now those who fall backward do not see where they fall. And so those who are evil are said to fall backward because they fall over things that are invisible. Those who fall forward see where they are falling. Thus the saints, who willingly cast themselves down with respect to visible things, so they can be

raised up to invisible things, are said to fall on their face because they humble themselves.

Mystically understood, we can say that by this falling backward we can understand that the Jewish people, who were a special people, because they did not listen to the voice of Christ in his preaching, fell backward, excluded from the kingdom.

2283 Now we see Christ questioning them a second time. First we see his question; secondly, he identifies himself; thirdly, he offers himself to them.

According to Chrysostom, there are two reasons why Christ asks them a second time whom they were seeking. [5] First, to teach the faithful that he was captured because he willed it: "He was offered because it was his own will" [Is 53:7]; he had already shown his power because when his enemies came against him, they fell backward to the ground before him. Secondly, he wanted, as far as he could, to give the Jews a reason to be converted, having seen this miracle of his power: "What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done it?" (Is 5:4). And when they were not converted by the revelation of his power, he voluntarily offered himself to be taken by them. When **Again he asked them, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth**, he again identified himself and answered, **I told you that I am he**. It is obvious from this that they were so blind that they could not recognize him.

He offers himself when he says, **if you seek me**, to arrest me, then do what you want, but **let these men go**, my disciples, for it is not yet their time to be taken from the world by suffering: "I do not pray that you should take them out of the world" (17:15). It is clear from this that Christ gave them the power to capture him, for just as he saved his disciples by his own power, so, much more clearly, he could have saved himself: "No one takes it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (10:18).

2284 The Evangelist shows that the officers allowed the apostles to leave not because Christ persuaded them to do so, but because of his power, when he says, **This was to fulfill the word which he had spoken**. The officers let the apostles go because they were not able to hold them, since Christ had said that **of those whom you gave me I lost not one**.

2285 On the contrary. When our Lord said that none was lost, he was referring to the soul. How can the Evangelist adapt this to refer to the loss of the body? We may answer, according to Chrysostom, that our Lord was speaking (17:12) of the loss of both the soul and the body. [6] And if he spoke only of the soul we could

say that here the Evangelist extends it to the loss of the body. Or, we could say, with Augustine, that we must understand these words to refer here also to the loss of the soul.^[7] The reason being that the apostles did not yet believe in the way that those who do not perish believe. And so, if they had left the world then, some would have perished.

LECTURE 2

10 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. 11 Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?"

2286 The Evangelist has shown how ready Christ was to suffer his betrayal since he willingly offered himself. He now shows this same readiness because Christ forbade a disciple to resist. First, he mentions the resistance of the disciple; secondly, his being restrained (v 11). In regard to the first he does two things: first, he shows the zeal of the disciple in striking the servant; secondly, we see the name of the servant.

2287 He says that the officers arrested Jesus, but that **then Simon Peter**, more volatile than that the other disciples, **having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave**, who was among the officers, **and cut off his right ear**. This was not his intention; rather, he wanted to kill him, but the strike to the servant's head missed and struck the ear. Peter aimed for the head so that he could more easily show that he was doing it out of zeal for his Lord: "I have been very jealous for the Lord" (1 Kgs 19:10).

2288 Two questions can be asked about this. Since the Lord had commanded his disciples not to have even two tunics (Mt 10:10), why was it that Peter had a sword? I answer that Christ gave them this command when he sent them out to preach, and it was to be in effect until his passion. But when his passion drew near, Christ revoked it: "When I sent you out with no purse or bag or sandals, did you lack anything?" (Lk 22:35). And then (in v 36): "But now, let him who has a purse take it, and likewise a bag. And let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one." Because of this permission Peter understood that he was allowed to carry a sword.

How could he get a sword so quickly, since our Lord had spoken these words such a short time before? According to Chrysostom, Peter obtained the sword earlier, when he heard that the Jews were planning to deliver Christ over to the

chief priests to be crucified.[\[8\]](#) Or, we could say, with the Interlinear, that "sword" is used here for a knife, which he probably had at the paschal meal, and which he took along when they left.[\[9\]](#)

2289 The second question is why Peter struck the servant of the high priest, since our Lord had told them not to resist evil (Mt 5:39). One could answer that they were forbidden to resist someone in order to defend themselves, but this did not apply to defending the Lord. Or, one could say that they had not yet been strengthened by a power coming from above: "Stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high" (Lk 24:49). And for this reason they were not yet so perfect that they could not resist evil entirely.

2290 Now the name of the servant is given. Only John mentions this name because, as stated below (v 15), John himself was known by the high priest, and so he also knew some of the priest's servants. Since John was certain of this servant's name, he gives it.

It is Luke (22:51) who adds that our Lord healed the ear. This is appropriate for a mystery: for the servant stands for the Jewish people, who were oppressed by the chief priests: "You eat the fat" (Ez 34:3). Peter, the head of the apostles, takes away this servant's sense of hearing, because he heard the words of the law in a defective way, in a carnal way. But our Lord gave him back a new sense of hearing: "As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me" (Ps 18:44). With this in mind the servant is fittingly named Malchus, which means "king," because through Christ we have become kings by having a new life: "You ... have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth" (Rev 5:10).

2291 Now we see the zeal of Peter being restrained. First, we see Peter's zeal; secondly, the reason it was restrained (11b).

2292 The Evangelist says that Peter drew his sword, and our Lord said to him, **Put your sword into its sheath.** It was like saying that it was not defense that was needed, but patience, and that he was not allowed to use a material sword: "Ah, sword of the Lord! How long till you are quiet?" (Jer 47:6). The mystical interpretation is that this signifies that the sword of God's word was to be put into its sheath, that is, into the faith of the Gentiles.

2293 The reason Christ restrained Peter is given when he says, **Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?** For one should not resist what has been arranged by divine providence: "Who has resisted him and has had peace?" [Job 9:4]. The passion is called a cup, a drinking vessel, because the

charity of the one suffering gave it a certain sweetness, but in its own nature it was bitter. It was like a healing medicine which, because it gives hope of being cured, acquires a certain sweetness, although it has a bitter taste: "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord" (Ps 116:13).

The Father gave Christ this cup because Christ willingly underwent the passion by his own will and by the will of the Father: "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above" (19:11).

LECTURE 3

12 So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews seized Jesus and bound him. 13 First they led him to Annas; for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. 14 It was Caiaphas who had given counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. 15 Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. As this disciple was known to the high priest, he entered the court of the high priest along with Jesus, 16 while Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the maid who kept the door, and brought Peter in. 17 The maid who kept the door said to Peter, "Are not you also one of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not." 18 Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves; Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself. 19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. 20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together, I have said nothing secretly. 21 Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them; they know what I said."[\[10\]](#)

2294 Now the Evangelist describes how our Lord was taken by the officers and led before the leaders. First, he is led to one of the leaders, Annas; secondly, to another, Caiaphas (v 24). In regard to the first he does two things: first, he mentions how he was presented before Annas; secondly, how he was questioned by Annas (v 19). In regard to the first he does two things: he mentions that he is led to Annas' house; secondly, that Christ's disciples followed him (v 15). In regard to the first he does two things: he mentions what was done to Jesus;

secondly, he describes the high priest before whom Jesus was brought (v 13b).

2295 Three things were done to Christ. First, he was seized; for he says, **the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews seized Jesus**, who is not apprehensible: "great in counsel, incomprehensible in thought" [Jer 32:19]. Perhaps they were thinking of the Psalm (71:11): "God has forsaken him; pursue and seize him, for there is none to deliver him." Again, "The breath of our mouth, Christ the Lord, is taken in our sins," that is, on account of our sins, in order to free us: "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken" (Is 49:25).

Secondly, Christ was bound, **and bound him**, who came to untie their bonds and break their chains: "You have loosed my bonds" (Ps 116:16).

Thirdly, he was led away, **they led him to Annas**, so that they might destroy him who came to lead all to the way of salvation: "You have led me, because you became my hope" [Ps 61:4].

2296 Two reasons can be given why Jesus was first brought to Annas. This could have been done by the order of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas did this because he would have had more of an excuse for condemning Jesus if Annas had already condemned him. The other reason was that they were nearer to the house of Annas, which was on their way. They were fearful that if the people became aroused Jesus might be taken away from them, and so they made straight for the house of Annas.

2297 Here the high priest is described by his relationship to Caiaphas, **he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas**. Then Caiaphas is described as **high priest that year**. We should remember that according to the law the high priest was to hold his office for life, and when he died to be succeeded by his son. But as the envy and the ambition of the leaders increased, not only did the son not succeed the father, but the office itself was not held for more than a year; and even then it was bought with money, as Josephus says. And so it is not out of character that in the year of that high priesthood, so wickedly obtained, that the high priest acted so despicably.

2298 He is described by the advice he gave: **It was Caiaphas who had given counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people** (in 11:50). The Evangelist recalls this to prevent the hearts of the faithful from faltering. He shows that even by the prophecy of the enemy Christ was captured and killed, not because he was weak and lacked power, but for the salvation of the people, that is, so the entire nation would not perish. For the

testimony of one's adversary is very effective; and truth is of such a nature that even its enemy is unable not to speak it.

2299 Now we see how the disciples joined Christ. First, how Peter and another disciple followed him; secondly, we see how they entered the place where Christ was; thirdly, how one denied him.

2300 In regard to the first he says, **Simon Peter followed Jesus**, because of his devotedness, but at a distance because of his fear, **and so did another disciple**, John, who out of humility does not mention himself. We can understand from this that the other disciples fled and abandoned Jesus, as Matthew says (26:56).

2301 In the mystical interpretation, these two disciples indicate the two ways of life in which Christ is followed: the active life, which is signified by Peter, and the contemplative life, signified by John. Those in the active life follow Christ by obedience, "My sheep hear my voice" (10:27). Those in the contemplative life follow Christ by knowledge and contemplation, "We will know and follow you" [Ps 4:3].

2302 These two disciples followed Christ because they loved him more than the others did; and so they were the first to come to the tomb (20:2). And it was these two who came because they were united to each other by a stronger bond of love; and so they are frequently mentioned together in the Gospel and in the Acts, where we read that "They sent to them Peter and John" (Acts 8:14), and again that "Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer" (Acts 3:1).

2303 Now the order in which they entered is given: John entered first and then he brought in Peter (v 16).

2304 It was John who entered first, with Jesus, **as this disciple was known to the high priest ... while Peter stood outside at the door**. Although John had been a fisherman and had been called as a young man by Christ, he was still known by the high priest, either because John's father was a servant of the high priest, or a relative. John did not mention that the high priest knew him because he was proud, but because of his humility, so that the fact that he was the first to enter, with Jesus, into the court of the high priest, ahead of Peter, would not be ascribed to his virtue and superiority rather than to his acquaintance with the high priest. Thus he says, **as this disciple**, John himself, **was known to the high priest**. Consequently, he was able to enter with Jesus into the high priest's court, where Christ had been led. **While Peter stood outside**; this was like a

foreboding of his future denial: "Those who saw me, fled outside from me" [Ps 31:11].

2305 Mystically understood, John enters with Jesus because the contemplative life is one of familiarity with Jesus: "When I enter my house, I shall find rest with her [wisdom]" (Wis 8:16). Peter stands outside because the active life is busy with exterior things: "Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving" (Lk 10:39).

2306 Here we see how Peter was let in due to John's intervention, because **the other disciple, John who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the maid who kept the door**, with the intention of bringing Peter in, and then he brought Peter in. The mystical interpretation of this is that the active life is brought to Christ by the contemplative life: for just as the lower reason is directed by the higher reason, so the active life is directed by the contemplative life: "Oh send out your light and your truth; let them lead me, let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling" (Ps 43:3).

2307 Now we see the denial of Peter: first, the circumstances or the incitement of his denial; secondly the denial itself (v 17b); thirdly, Peter strengthens his denial (v 18).

2308 The circumstances and incitement of his denial was the question of the maid who kept the door: **The maid who kept the door said to Peter, Are not you also one of this man's disciples?** She says **you also** because she knew that John was a disciple of Christ, but she did not mention this to him because of their friendliness. This incident shows how weak Peter was at that time, for he was incited to deny Christ under feeble circumstances. How weak these circumstances were is shown, first of all, from the person who asked him: for it was not an armed soldier or an imposing high priest, but a woman, and a door keeper at that. Secondly, from the very form of the question: she did not say, "Are you a disciple of that traitor?" but rather, **Are not you also one of this man's disciples?** This seemed to indicate a certain sympathy. We can learn from this that "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their power by the breath of his mouth" [Ps 33:6], because this same person who denied Christ at the questioning of a maid servant afterwards professed and preached the name of Christ before the chief priests (Acts 4:8).

2309 Now comes Peter's denial, when he says, **He said, I am not**. We should note, according to Augustine, that Christ is denied not only by those who say that he is not the Christ, but also by those who deny that they are Christians.[\[11\]](#) For Peter at this time did nothing other than deny that he was a Christian. Our Lord

permitted Peter to deny him because he wanted the very one who was to be the head of the entire Church to be all the more compassionate to the weak and sinners, having experienced in himself his own weakness in the face of sin: "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning" (Heb 4:15). This is true of Christ, and it can also be said of Peter, with his sins.

Some say that Peter's denial did not come from fear, but from love: for he wanted to always be with Christ and to follow him all the time. But he knew that if he admitted he was a disciple of Christ, he would have been separated from him and expelled. But this does not agree with our Lord's words: for Peter did not deny Christ because he feared to be separated from him, but because he was not willing to lay down his life for Christ. Before, when Peter said, "I will lay down my life for you," Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow, till you have denied me three times" (13:37).

2310 We see Peter strengthen his denial when we read, **Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire ... Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself**, so he would not seem to be one of Christ's disciples. Trying not to seem a disciple, he mixed with the servants and officers standing by the fire because of the cold, which sometimes occurs in March during the early spring. Peter was not attentive to the Psalm: "Be holy with the holy, persevere with those who persevere" [Ps 18:26]. Even the very time of the year corresponded to his heart, in which charity had grown cold: "Most men's love will grow cold" (Mt 24: 12).

2311 **The high priest then questioned Jesus.** First we see Christ's interrogation; secondly, his reply (v 20); thirdly, he is abused for his reply (v 22).

2312 Two charges were brought against Christ by the Jews: he had false and novel teachings: "What is this? A new teaching!" (Mk 1:27); and he was inciting civil discord, gathering his own followers: "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place" (Lk 23:5). Consequently, he is interrogated on these two points: first, about his followers, **about his disciples**, whom were thought to be misled; secondly, about **his teaching**, regarded as false.

2213 Now our Lord's answer is given: first, we see his manner of teaching; secondly, he asks for the testimony of others (v 21). Two things are done about the first: we see how Christ taught his doctrine; secondly, this is further described.

2314 He says, **I have spoken openly to the world.** This seems to conflict with "The hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in figures but tell you plainly of the Father" (16:25). So, if he had not yet spoken openly to his disciples, how could he have spoken openly to the world? I answer that he had not yet spoken openly to his disciples in the sense that he had set forth for them his most profound thoughts. But he did speak openly to the world in the sense that he spoke to many, publicly.

2315 This is described more fully as he says, **I have always taught in the synagogues and in the temple.** On the contrary, Matthew (c 16) shows that Christ taught his disciples when alone with them many things without using figures. This can be answered in three ways. First, what Christ said to the twelve disciples was not considered to be spoken in secret. Secondly, he did not teach these things to them with the intention that they be kept hidden. Thirdly, our Lord is speaking here of the teaching he gave to the people, which was not given to them secretly but in public places: "I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation" (Ps 40:9); "I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness" (Is 45:19).

2316 To support him he asks for the testimony of others, saying, **Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them.** First, he sends them to the testimony of others; secondly, he shows whose testimony he wants; thirdly, he gives the reason for this.

As to the first he says, **Why do you ask me?** He is saying in effect: You can find this out from others. And then he adds, referring to the second point, **Ask those who have heard me:** "Then the Pharisees went and took counsel how to entangle him in his talk" (Mt 22:15). Nevertheless, they could not find anything against him. Then he gives the reason for his request saying, **they know what I said,** and they can testify to this.

LECTURE 4

22 When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" 23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" 24 Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. 25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, "Are not you also one of his disciples?" He denied it and said, "I am not." 26 One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman of

the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" 27 Peter again denied it; and at once the cock crowed.[\[12\]](#)

2317 After telling us of our Lord's answer, the Evangelist now shows how it was rebuked: first, we see the rebuke given by an officer; secondly, our Lord's defense of his answer (v 23).

2318 An officer reproached our Lord's answer, first of all, by an action. He delivered a reproving blow; for the Evangelist says, **When he**, that is, Jesus, **had said this, one of the officers**, of the high priest, **standing by struck Jesus with his hand**. This did not happen by chance; it had been predicted long before and many times: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard" (Is 50:6); "Let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults" (Lam 3:30); "With a rod they strike upon the cheek the ruler of Israel" (Mic 5:1).

Secondly, the officer reproached Christ with words, saying, **Is that how your answer the high priest?** We can see from this that Annas was a high priest, and that Jesus had not yet been sent to Caiaphas. This is why Luke mentions two high priests: "in the high•priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas" (Lk 3:2). Two high priests are mentioned because they alternated as high priests, but that year Annas [really Caiaphas] was the high priest.

2319 Earlier, when the testimony of those who had heard Jesus was being sought, and the chief priests had sent their officers to arrest him (7:32), they themselves were captivated by the words of Jesus and returned saying, "No man ever spoke like this man" (7:46). The officer who now struck Christ was incited to do so in order to show that he had not been one of those in the prior group. He thought that Christ had shown a lack of respect because in saying, **Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me**, he seemed to be finding fault with the high priest for asking a thoughtless question, and it is written: "You will not speak evil of a ruler of your people" [Ex 23:28].

2320 Jesus justified himself, saying, **If I have spoken wrongly**, in my answer to the high priest, **bear witness to the wrong**. That is, if you have reason to reproach me for what I have just said, show that I have spoken badly, because "Only on the evidence of two witnesses, or of three witnesses, shall a charge be sustained" (Deut 19:18). **But if I have spoken rightly**, if you cannot show I have spoken badly, **why do you strike me?** Why flare up against me?

Or, this reply of Christ could be referred to what he had said before this time:

"Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them" (v 21). Then the meaning is: **If I have spoken badly**, in the synagogue and in the temple, which I should not have done, **bear witness to the wrong**, report what I have said to the high priest. But the officer was unable to do his. **But if I have spoken rightly**, that is, taught rightly, **Why do you strike me?** In other words: This is unjust: "Is evil a recompense for good? Yet they have dug a pit for my life" (Jer 18:20).

2321 A difficulty arises here for in Matthew our Lord commanded his disciples, "If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt 5:39). And we also read about Christ that "Jesus began to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). So, Christ ought to have done himself what he had taught others to do. But he did not do this. Indeed, he did the contrary and defended himself.

I say to this, with Augustine, that the statements and commands found in sacred scripture can be interpreted and understood from the actions of the saints, since it is the same Holy Spirit who inspired the prophets and the other sacred authors and who inspires the actions of the saints. As we read: "Moved by the Holy Spirit holy men of God spoke" (2 Pet 1:21); and "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom 8:14). Thus, sacred scripture should be understood according to the way Christ and other holy persons followed it. Now, Christ did not turn his other cheek here; and Paul did not do so either (Acts 16:22). Accordingly, we should not think that Christ has commanded us to actually turn our physical cheek to one who has struck the other. We should understand it to mean that we should be ready to do this if it turned out to be necessary to do so. That is, our attitude should be such that we would not be inwardly stirred up against the one striking us, but be ready or disposed to endure the same or even more. This is how our Lord observed it, for he offered his body to be killed.[\[13\]](#) So, our Lord's defense is useful for our instruction.

2322 Now there is mention that he was sent from one high priest to the other. First, it is mentioned that Jesus was sent to the other high priest; secondly, the narration of Peter's denial is completed (v 25).

2323 He says, **Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest**, to whom he was originally being led. We saw before why he had been first brought to Annas. Note the wickedness of Annas: although he ought to have released Christ, since he was without fault, he yet sent him tied to Caiaphas.

2324 Now the second and third denials of Peter are presented: first, the circumstances of the denials; secondly, the two denials; and thirdly, the fulfillment of Christ's prediction (v 27).

2325 The circumstance of Peter's second denial was his staying with the officers of the high priest who were standing near the fire. Chrysostom says that although Christ was on his way to Caiaphas, Peter still remained with the officers [by the fire]. Peter had become so preoccupied with his sin after his denial that he, who before was so ardent, now seemed not to care what happened to Christ: "No man repents of his wickedness, saying, 'What have I done?'" (Jer 8:6). For Chrysostom, **Simon Peter was still standing and warming himself**, although Christ had already left, unmindful of the saying: "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked" (Ps 1:1). [\[14\]](#)

But this interpretation is not acceptable because it would follow that Peter's second and third denials were made in the absence of Christ. This is contrary to Luke (22:61), who says that after the third denial of Peter, our Lord turned and looked at him. For this reason Augustine explains it another way and says that the Evangelist is giving a general view in his own way to show the connection and order of the denials. The Evangelist had said above that "the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves; Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself" (v 18). The Evangelist then interposes the examination of Christ by the high priest (v 19•23), and immediately returns to continue the series of Peter's denials, using practically the same words as before, "Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself" (v 25), that is, referring to the time before Christ was sent to Caiaphas.

2326 Then the Evangelist mentions the next two denials of Peter (v 25). Two things are stated about each: the circumstance of the denial, that is, the question, and the denial itself. There are two questions about the literal meaning. When Matthew speaks of the second denial, he says, "And when he went out to the porch, another maid saw him, and she said to the bystanders, 'This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.' And again he denied it with an oath" (Mt 26:71•2). There seems to be two disagreements here. John says that Peter denied Christ by the fire (v 25), and Matthew says this happened as Peter was going out to the porch. Again, in Matthew, Peter is questioned by another maid, but John has him questioned by others, that is, a number of others, for he says, **They said to him, Are not you also one of his disciples?** (v 25). Luke also says that Christ was questioned by one person, "And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, 'Certainly this man also was with him'" (Lk 22:59). [This is the third denial in Luke, and his second denial is also instigated by one person, Lk 22:58].

We should say to these points that after Peter first denied Christ, he then got up and as he was going out to the porch another maid questioned him. Or, this maid told others that Peter was one of them, as Matthew says (Mt 26:71). Thus Peter

denied Christ a second time. After this Peter returned so as to avoid seeming to be a follower of Christ and sat with the others. As he was sitting there, bystanders, who had heard it from the maid, questioned him again, as Matthew says (Mt 26:73). Or, one of the servants asked first, as John has here (v 26) and then other bystanders joined in. This was Peter's third denial.

About this third denial, John says, **One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off.** This person testified to what he had seen, **Did I not see you in the garden with him?** And so after an interval of an hour Peter again denied it, the third time.

It is not important if other Evangelists say that the third question was asked by several persons, while John has it asked by one. For it is possible that this man, being more certain, asked first, and that incited the others to ask also. Those who were standing about said many things about this matter, and one Evangelist speaks of one of these, and another of something else. This happened because their main intention was not to note these details, but to show the statement Peter made and to show that what our Lord had said to Peter came true. Accordingly, all agree on what Peter said: "What the Lord speaks, that will I speak" (Num 24:13).

2327 Now he mentions the sign given by Christ which Peter recalled. **And at once the cock crowed,** moved by God's power, so that the prediction of the physician would be fulfilled and to demonstrate the presumption of the one who was sick.

LECTURE 5

28 Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the praetorium [to Caiaphas, to the praetorium]. It was early. They themselves did not enter the praetorium, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. 29 So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" 30 They answered him, "If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over." 31 Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." 32 This was to fulfill the word which Jesus had spoken to show by what death he was to die.

2328 Now the Evangelist tells about Christ's being handed over to the Gentiles:

first, we see him delivered to the governor; secondly, Christ is examined by him (v 29); thirdly, the governor declares that Christ is innocent (v 38b). He does three things about the first: the place where Christ was delivered is stated; secondly, the time; thirdly, the way he was handed over.

2329 The place was the praetorium, for he says, **They led Jesus to Caiaphas, to the praetorium.** This is the place where judgment is given. In the army the commander's tent was known as the praetorium; and so this residence of the governor was also called a praetorium.

But how can Christ be led to Caiaphas, to the praetorium? One could say that Caiaphas had come ahead to the residence of Pilate to tell him that Jesus would be handed over to him. And so Jesus was led to Caiaphas when he was in the praetorium with Pilate. Or, one could say that since Caiaphas was the high priest, he had a large dwelling, so large that the governor lived there and made it his residence. Then the meaning is: **they led Jesus to Caiaphas**, to his residence, and so **to the praetorium.**

Or, one could say that the Greek text is better, which says, **Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium.** This takes away the problem.

2330 The time is mentioned, **It was early**, for their villainy was so great that they could hardly wait to turn him over to Pilate to be killed: "Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil upon their beds! When the morning dawns, they perform it" (Mic 2:1); "The murderer rises at the light" (Job 24:14).

Here we find a difficult problem. The other three Evangelists say that early in the evening Christ was struck at the residence of Caiaphas, and questioned by him: "If you are the Christ, tell us" (Luke 22:67), and in the morning Christ was led to Pilate. But John says that he was led to Caiaphas. If we want to keep to the letter of the text, we could say that Caiaphas first saw Jesus when he was at the house of Annas, during the night, and at that time Christ could be examined by him.

But there still remains the difficulty that they say that Christ was struck at the residence of Caiaphas. This is solved by the Greek text which says that "they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium," because then during the night he was led from the residence of Annas to the residence of Caiaphas, where he was struck and examined by him, and in the morning he was led from Caiaphas to the praetorium.

2331 **They themselves did not enter the praetorium, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover.** Here we see, first, their useless

superstition, because they would not go into the praetorium. Secondly, we see the deference Pilate paid them, since he went out to meet them. A problem arises about the first point: that they would not enter the praetorium so as not to be defiled. The other Evangelists say that Christ was seized in the evening, on the day of the supper; and this would be the passover meal: "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you" (Lk 22:15). And then in the morning of the next day he was brought to the praetorium. Why then do we read **so that they might eat the passover**, since it was the day after the passover? Some of the modern Greeks say that we are now on the fourteenth lunar day of the month, and that Christ was crucified on the day the Jews celebrated the passover, but that Christ anticipated the passover by one day, since he knew he would be killed on the day of the Jewish passover. Thus, he celebrated the passover on the thirteenth lunar day, in the evening. And since the law commanded that the Jews should not have leavened bread from the fourteenth day of the first month to the twenty-first day, they say that Christ consecrated leavened bread.

2332 This is not acceptable for two reasons. First, the Old Testament has no instance where anyone was permitted to anticipate the celebration of the passover. But if one was prevented, he could postpone it to the next month: "If any man of you or of your descendants is unclean ... he shall still keep the passover to the Lord. In the second month on the fourteenth day in the evening they shall keep it "(Num 9:10). And since Christ never omitted any observance of the law, it is not true to say that he anticipated the passover. Secondly, Mark (14:12) states explicitly that Christ came on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the passover lamb; and Matthew says that "on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus saying, 'Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the passover?'" (Mt 26:17). So, we should not say that Christ anticipated the passover.

2333 Accordingly, Chrysostom explains this another way.[\[15\]](#) He said that Christ fulfilled the law in all matters and did observe the passover on the proper day, that is, the fourteenth day, in the evening. But the Jews were so intent on killing Christ that they did not observe it on the proper day, but on the day following, the fifteenth. Thus the sense is: **so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover** which they had neglected the day before.

This is not acceptable either, for in Numbers (9:10) it is said that if anyone is prevented from eating the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, he is to eat it, not on the following day, but on the fourteenth day of the second month.

2334 Therefore we should say with Jerome, Augustine and other Latin Fathers,

that the fourteenth day is the beginning of the feast; but the passover refers not just to that evening, but to the entire time of the seven days during which they ate unleavened bread, which was to be eaten by those who were clean.[\[16\]](#) And because the Jews would have contracted uncleanness by entering the residence of a foreign judge, they did not enter so that **they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover**, that is, the unleavened bread.

See their wicked blindness, for they feared becoming defiled from a gentile man, but did not fear to shed the blood of a God and a man, "Those who laid you waste go forth from you" (Is 49:17).

2335 Now we see the deference Pilate showed them when he says, **So Pilate went out to them**, to take Christ, whom they were offering, and said, **What accusation do you bring against this man?** In this examination of Christ, we see first, how Christ is examined before his accusers by Pilate; secondly, how Christ is examined by Pilate in private (v 33). Concerning the first he does two things: first, we have Pilate's questioning; secondly, his generous concession to the Jews, **Take him yourselves**.

2336 Concerning the first, we have the examination by Pilate, and then the malicious reply of the Jews. When Pilate saw Jesus bound and brought by so many seeking his condemnation, he said, **What accusation do you bring against this man?** Their reply was, **If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over**. They are saying here: We have already examined and condemned him, and are now handing him over to you to be punished. They were regarding their own judgment as sufficient for Pilate. Yet they were not speaking truly when they said he was an evildoer, for "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38). They were acting like the Psalm says, "They requite me evil for good" (Ps 35:12).

2337 Luke is different, for he says that the Jews accused Christ of many crimes: "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place" (Lk 23:5). I reply that, as Augustine says, the Jews said many things to Pilate at that time, and it could be that they first said what John reports, and then said what Luke tells us.[\[17\]](#)

2338 The Evangelist now mentions Pilate's generous concession (v 31): first, we see this concession; secondly, the Jews refuse it; and thirdly, we see the reason for their refusal (v 32).

2339 Pilate said, **Take him yourselves**, intending to do them a favor. Festus did the same to Paul: "But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, 'Do

you wish to go up to Jerusalem, and there be tried on these charges before me?" (Acts 25:9). Or, this could be said as a taunting remark: for they had already examined and condemned Christ, and Pilate wanted those who had condemned Christ as an evildoer to pass the sentence, because "It was not the custom of the Romans to give up any one before the accused met the accusers face to face, and had opportunity to make his defense concerning the charge laid against him" (Acts 25:16). So the meaning is then: You want my judgment, but **Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law**, for I will never be that kind of a judge.

2340 The refusal of the Jews is mentioned when he says, **The Jews said to him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.** This seems not to agree with Exodus [22:18]: "You will not permit a sorcerer to live." And they regarded Jesus as a sorcerer.

According to Augustine the meaning is, **It is not lawful for us to put any man to death** on a feast day, but it is lawful on other days.[\[18\]](#) Or, according to Chrysostom, the Jews had lost much of their power: for they could not pass judgment on a crime against the state.[\[19\]](#) But here they intended to condemn Christ especially for matters against the state: "Everyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar" (19:12). This is why they said, **It is not lawful for us to put any man to death**, for crimes against the state, although we can do this for some sins against the law, for this kind of judgment was reserved to them. Or, it could be said that some things are not lawful either because they are prohibited by divine law • and they were not prohibited from doing this by divine law • or because they are forbidden by human law • and in this way it was not lawful for them to put anyone to death, for such power was now in the hands of the governor.

2341 There is another question: How then could they have stoned Stephen (Acts 7:58)? Chrysostom answers this by saying that the Romans allowed the Jews to make use of their own laws, and because the punishment of stoning was part of their law, the Romans allowed them to do this.[\[20\]](#) But in the law death on the cross was abhorred: "A hanged [on a tree] man is accursed by God" (Deut 21:23). And so they did not use this kind of death. The Jews, in their malice, were not satisfied just to stone Christ, they wanted to condemn him to the most disgraceful of deaths, as we see from Wisdom (2:20). Thus they now say, **It is not lawful for us to put any man to death**, meaning the death on the cross. Or, one could say that Stephen was stoned during a change of governors, when many laws were violated.

2342 The Evangelist gives the reason the Jews refused when he says, **This was**

to fulfill the word which Jesus had spoken to show by what death he was to die. The words **this was to fulfill** do not indicate the intention the Jews had, but the arrangement of God's providence. For Jesus had said (Mt 20:19) that it was by the Gentiles that he would be crucified and killed, but that he would be handed over to them by the Jews. So, in order that this be accomplished, the Jews were unwilling to judge and kill him themselves.

LECTURE 6

33 Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" 34 Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" 35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?" 36 Jesus answered, "My kingship [kingdom] is not of this world; if my kingship [kingdom] were of this world, my [ministers] servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship [kingdom] is not from the world." 37 Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Every one who is of the truth hears my voice." 38 Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again, and told them, "I find no crime in him. 39 But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover; will you have me release for you the King of the Jews?" 40 They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.[\[21\]](#)

2343 Above, the Evangelist told how Pilate examined Christ before those who accused him; here he describes how Pilate questioned him in private. First, the Evangelist gives Pilate's question; then, the answer of Jesus (v 34). In regard to the first he does two things: first, we have Pilate's question; secondly, we see Christ asking the reason for the question, **Do you say this of your own accord?**

2344 In regard to the first, note that Pilate, as a just judge, and as one proceeding cautiously, did not immediately agree with the accusation of the high priest, "You shall not follow a multitude to do evil; nor shall you bear witness in a suit, turning aside after a multitude, so as to pervert justice" (Ex 23:2). Rather, **Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus** aside, because he

had serious doubts about him. So he called Christ over to examine the case more closely and to allow Christ to answer in more peace and away from the shouts of the Jews: "I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know" (Job 29:16).

2345 Then Pilate said to him, **Are you the King of the Jews?** This shows, as Luke says (Lk 23:2), that the Jews were accusing Christ of this crime, although John says only that "If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over" (18:30), and many other crimes were laid on him. But the charge about his being a king touched the heart of Pilate most, and that is why he questioned him only about this: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt 12:34).

2346 Then (v 34), Jesus is seen questioning his examiner: first, we have Christ's question; then Pilate's answer, **Am I a Jew?**

2347 The Evangelist says, **Jesus answered**, asking a question in return, **Do you say this of your own accord or did others say it to you about me?** There are two reasons why someone asks a question. Sometimes it is to find out something that the questioner does not know; as when a student questions his teacher. Sometimes one asks a question about things he already knows in order to learn what answer will be given; as when a teacher questions his student. Now our Lord knew both what he asked about, and what answer would be given, and thus he was not asking out of ignorance, "All are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb 4:13). Rather, he asked so that we might know what the Jews and Gentiles thought, and at the same time be taught about that kingdom.

2348 **Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?** Why did he answer this way? Because our Lord had asked him whether he said this on his own. Pilate showed by this that it was not his concern to inquire if Christ was the King of the Jews; it was rather the affair of the Jews, whose King he said he was. By giving this answer Pilate showed that it was others who had told him that Christ was the King of the Jews. Accordingly he says, **Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me**, by bringing this charge against you. He says, **your own nation**, because, considering his human nature, Christ was born a Jew: "For I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side. 'Denounce him! Let us denounce him!' say all my familiar friends" (Jer 20:10); "A man's enemies are the men of his own house" (Mic 7:6). And we read **chief priests**, because the greater their power the greater their crime: "And in this faithlessness the hand of the officials and chief men has been foremost" (Ezra 9:2); "I will go to the great, and will speak to them; for they know the way of the Lord, the law of their God. But they all alike had broken the yoke, they had burst the bonds" (Jer 5:5). If they have handed you over to me, **What have you done?** It's unbelievable that they

would have handed you over to me except for some serious matter.

2349 Now Christ's answer is given: and first, the mistaken impression about his kingdom is corrected; secondly, the truth is established (37b). As to the first he does two things: the mistaken impression is corrected; and a sign is given as proof, **if my kingdom were of this world....**

2350 The false idea of Christ's kingdom is rejected by his saying, **My kingdom is not of this world.** The Manicheans misunderstood this, and said that there were two gods and two kingdoms; there was a good god, who had his kingdom in a region of light, and an evil god, who had his kingdom in a region of darkness, and this darkness was this world, because all material things, they said, were darkness. The meaning would then be, **My kingdom is not of this world**, that is, God, the Father, who is good, and I, do not have our kingdom in this region of darkness.

But this is contrary to, "God is the king of all the earth" (Ps 47:7); and again, "Whatever the Lord pleases he does, in heaven and on earth" (Ps 134:6). Thus we should say that Christ said this for the sake of Pilate, who believed that Christ was claiming an earthly kingdom in which he would reign in the physical way that those of earth do, and so should be punished by death for trying to reign unlawfully.

2351 Sometimes the word **kingdom** means the people who reign, and sometimes the authority to reign. Taking the word in its first sense, Augustine says, **My kingdom**, that is, my faithful • you "have made them a kingdom ... to our Lord" (Rev 5:10) • **is not of this world.**[\[22\]](#) He does not say they are not "in the world" (17:11), but that they are **not of this world**, because of what they love and imitate, since they have been wrested from it by grace. For this is how God has delivered us from the power of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of his love.

Chrysostom explains this sentence by taking **kingdom** in the second sense, and says, **My kingdom**, that is, the power and authority which makes me a king, **is not of this world**, that is, does not have its origin in earthly causes and human choice, but from another source, from the Father: "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away" (Dan 7:14).[\[23\]](#)

2352 Here he shows by clear signs that his kingdom is not of this world: first, a sign is given; secondly, the conclusion is drawn (v 36).

2353 In regard to the first, note that one who has an earthly kingdom, whether

by right or by force, needs associates and ministers to keep him in power: the reason being that he is powerful through his ministers, not all by himself: "There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker" (2 Sam 3:1). But the heavenly king, because he is powerful by himself, gives power to his servants; and consequently he does not need ministers for his kingdom. And thus Christ says that his kingdom is not of this world, because **if my kingdom were of this world, my ministers would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews**. When Peter started to fight for Christ (18:10), he forgot that he was not of this world. Still, our Lord did have some ministers, the angels, who could have rescued him from the hands of the Jews, but he chose not to be rescued: "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Mt 26:53).

2354 **But my kingdom is not from the world**, that is, because Christ does not need such ministers, he concludes that his **kingdom is not from the world**, that is, does not have its source from this world. And yet it is here, because it is everywhere: "She [Wisdom] reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well" (Wis 8:1); "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession" (Ps 2:8); "And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him" (Dan 7:14).

2355 Now our Lord reveals the truth about his kingdom: first, we see the circumstances for this; secondly, the revelation itself; and thirdly, the effect this revelation had, **What is truth?**

2356 In respect to the first, note that Pilate understood our Lord's statements to mean that he did have a physical kingdom, but far away: "The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God ... and he is not able to understand them" (1 Cor 2:14). Accordingly he was in a hurry to know the truth, and so said, **So you are a king?**, you also?

2357 When he answers, **You say that I am a king**, Christ first says that he is a king; secondly, he shows the nature of his kingdom (v 37); thirdly, he mentions those over whom he reigns, **Every one who is of the truth**.

2358 With regard to the first, note that our Lord's answer about his kingship was so worded that he neither seemed to be clearly asserting that he was a king • since he was not a king in the sense in which Pilate understood it • nor denying it • since spiritually he was the King of Kings.

He says, **You say that I am a king**, in the physical sense in which I am not a king; but in another way I am a king, "Behold a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice" (Is 32:1).

2359 He shows the character and nature of his kingdom when he says, **For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth**. This is explained in two ways.

In one way by Augustine, so that the kingdom of Christ is his faithful, as was said above. Thus, Christ reigns over his faithful; and he came into the world to gather his faithful to himself and establish a kingdom: "A nobleman went into a far country to receive a kingdom" [Lk 19:12]. The meaning then is this: **For this I was born**, that is, for this purpose I was born in the flesh. He explains this saying, **and for this I have come into the world**, by physical birth • for this is the way he came into the world, "God sent his Son into the world" [Gal 4:4] • **to bear witness to the truth**, that is, to myself, who am the truth, "Even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true" (8:14). And to the extent that I manifest myself, the Truth, to that extent I establish my kingdom. For this cannot be done without manifesting the truth, which can only be done fittingly by me, who am the light: "The only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (1:18); "It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Heb 2:3).

2360 Chrysostom explains it differently, this way. [\[24\]](#) You ask if I am a king, and I say that I am: but I am a king by divine power, because **for this I was born**, that is, born from the Father, by an eternal birth; just as I am God from God, so I am king from king: "I was appointed king" [Ps 2:6], and then follows, "Today I have begotten you" [v 7]. Then when he adds **and for this I have come into the world**, it is not to explain the previous words, but to refer to his birth in time. It is like saying: Although I am an eternal king, yet I have come into the world for this, **to bear witness to the truth**, that is, to myself, that I am a king from God the Father.

2361 Now he shows over whom he reigns. Before (10:11), he said that he was a shepherd and those under him were sheep; that is the same as what he is saying here, that he is a king and his subjects are the kingdom. This is so because a king is to his subjects as a shepherd to his sheep; and just as a shepherd feeds his sheep • "Should not shepherds feed the sheep?" (Ez 34:2) • so a king supports his subjects. He said in particular, "My sheep hear my voice" (10:27); accordingly, he also says here, **every one who is of the truth hears my voice**, not just outwardly, but with an interior belief and love, and carrying this

out in action: "Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me" (6:45). But why does a person hear my voice? Because such a one is **of the truth**, which is God.

2362 But since all of us are from God, all are of the truth and hear his voice. We can answer this by saying that all are from God by creation, and this is one way we are of God. But besides this, some are said to be of God because they love and imitate him. We read before, "You are not of God" (8:47), that is, considering your affections, but you are of God by creation. **Every one hears my voice**, with belief and love, **who is of the truth**, that is, who has accepted the duty of loving the truth.

2363 He does not say, "Every one who hears my voice is of the truth," because it would follow that we are of the truth because we believed. But actually, we believe because we are of the truth, that is, because we have received the gift of God which enables us to believe and love the truth: "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8); "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake" (Phil 1:29).

2364 Now the Evangelist tells us the effect of Christ's answer. We can see from this that Pilate abandoned his idea that Christ had an earthly kingdom, and now thought of Christ as a king in the sense of one who teaches the truth. He desired to learn this truth and to become a member of this kingdom and so he said, **What is truth?** He was not asking for a definition of truth, but wanted to know that truth by whose power he could become a member of this kingdom. This indicates that truth was not known by the world and had vanished from almost everyone, as long as they remained unbelievers: "Truth has fallen in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter" (Is 59:14); "Truth has decayed in the children of men" [Ps 12:1]. But Pilate did not wait for Christ's answer.

2365 Apropos of this question, note that we find two kinds of truth in the gospel. One is uncreated and making: this is Christ: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6); the other truth is made, "Grace and truth came [were made] through Jesus Christ" (1:17).

By its nature truth implies a conformity between a reality and the intellect. The intellect is related in two ways to reality. An intellect can be related to things as a measure of these things; that would be the intellect which is the cause of these things. Another intellect is measured by things, this would be an intellect whose knowledge is caused by these things. Now truth is not in the divine intellect because the intellect is conformed to things, but because things are conformed to

the divine intellect. While truth is in our intellect because it understands things, conforms to them, as they are. And so uncreated truth and the divine intellect is a truth which is not measured or made, but a truth which measures and makes two kinds of truth: one is in the things themselves, insofar as it makes them so they are in conformity with what they are in the divine intellect; and it makes the other truth in our souls, and this is a measured truth, not a measuring truth. Therefore, the uncreated truth of the divine intellect is appropriated, especially referred, to the Son, who is the very concept of the divine intellect and the Word of God. For truth is a consequence of the intellect's concept. [\[25\]](#)

2366 Now, (v 38) we see Pilate's finding in regard to Christ: first, Pilate states his innocence; secondly, we see his intention to show mercy (v 39).

2367 Concerning the first, note that Pilate, as Augustine says, was eager to free Christ. [\[26\]](#) When he had asked Christ, **What is truth?** he suddenly realized how he could free Christ by means of a custom which allowed him to release a prisoner at the time of the passover. And so, not waiting for an answer to his question, he decided to make use of this custom to do this. This is why the Evangelist says about Pilate, **After he had said this.**

Pilate heard the cries of the Jews, and thinking that he could calm them and then listen to Christ's answer to this difficult question under more tranquil conditions, **went out to the Jews again**, and declared Christ's innocence, **I find no crime in him**, that is, nothing deserving death: "He committed no sin" (1 Pet 2:22). But even if he did commit a crime, I, who have authority in these matters, and especially the authority to judge of matters against the state, I wish to free and release him.

2368 Accordingly he says, **But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover.** First, he offers to release Christ; secondly, the Evangelist gives the reply of the Jews.

2369 This practice was started by Pilate or some other Roman governor as a favor to the people. Wishing to free Christ using this custom Pilate said, **Will you have me release for you the King of the Jews?** He did not call him this as if this were a crime, but to heighten their malice. It was like saying: Even if he is the king of the Jews, which is not your role to judge, but mine, still, if you want me to, I will release him for you.

2370 The Jews **cried out again, Not this man, but Barabbas!** Then to indicate the malice of the Jews, the Evangelist mentions the crime committed by the one they wanted released, saying, **Now Barabbas was a robber:** "Your

princes are rebels and companions of thieves" (Is 1:23). This fulfills the words of Jeremiah (12:8): "My heritage has become to me like a lion in the forest." "But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you" (Acts 3:14).

[1] St. Thomas refers to Jn 18:6 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 44, a. 3, ad 1.

[2] *Tract. in Io.*, 112, ch., 1, col 1930; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:1-2.

[3] *In Ioannem hom.*, 82, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 447; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:1-2.

[4] *Commentarium in Esaiam*, 9; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:3-9.

[5] *In Ioannem hom.*, 83, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 448; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:3-9.

[6] *In Ioannem hom.*, 83, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 448; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:3-9.

[7] *Tract. in Io.*, 112, ch. 4, col 1931; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:3-9.

[8] *In Ioannem hom.*, 83, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 449; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:10-11.

[9] Interlinear (Theophyl); cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:10-11.

[10] St. Thomas refers to Jn 18:20 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 42, a. 3, s. c.

[11] *Tract. in Io.*, 113, ch. 2, col. 1933; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:-17.

[12] St. Thomas refers to Jn 18:23 in the *Summa Theologiae*: II-II, q. 72, a. 3.

[13] *Tract. in Io.*, 113, ch. 4, col. 1934-5; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:22-24.

[14] *In Ioannem hom.*, 83, ch. 3; PG 59, col. 451; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:25-27.

[15] Chrysostom-(This is NOT what Chrysostom says in *In Ioannem hom.*, 83.3.452) Chrysostom says that the whole feast was called the Passover and that Christ died on the high day of the Feast, on which day the Passover was

customarily/formerly celebrated.) This should probably be looked at by a better Latinist.

[16] Augustine, *Tract. in Io.*, 114, ch. 1, col. 1936; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:28-32.

[17] *De consensus evangelistarum*, 3, ch. 8; PL 34; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:28-32.

[18] *Tract. in Io.*, 114, ch. 4, col. 1937; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:28-32.

[19] *In Ioannem hom.*, 83, ch. 4; PG 59, col. 452; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:28-32.

[20] *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:28-32.

[21] St. Thomas refers to Jn 18:35 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 47, a. 3, obj. 3; q. 47, a. 6, ad 2; Jn 18:37: *ST* III, q. 3, a. 8, obj. 1; q. 12, a. 3; q. 35, a. 7, obj. 3; q. 40, a. 1.

[22] *Tract. in Io.*, 115, ch. 1, col. 1938-9; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:33-38.

[23] *In Ioannem hom.*, 83, ch. 4; PG 59, col. 453; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:33-38.

[24] *In Ioannem hom.*, 83, ch. 4; PG 59, col. 453; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:33-38.

[25] Summa-truth.

[26] *Tract. in Io.*, 115, ch. 5, col. 1941; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 18:38-40.

19

LECTURE I

1 Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. 2 And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe; 3 they came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands.

2371 Above, the Evangelist gave us an account of what Christ suffered from the Jews; here he describes what in particular he endured from the Gentiles. He suffered three things, as he had predicted: "They will deliver him to the Gentiles, to be mocked and scourged and crucified" (Matt 20:19). First, he deals with the scourging of Christ; secondly, with his mockery (v 2); and thirdly, with his crucifixion (v 4).

2372 He says, **Then**, after all their shouting, **Pilate took Jesus and scourged him**, not with his own hands, but using his soldiers. He did this hoping that the Jews would be satisfied with these wounds and be softened so as no longer to demand his death. For it is natural for our anger to subside if we see the one we are angry at humiliated and punished, as the Philosopher says in his *Rhetoric*.[\[1\]](#) This is true of that anger which seeks to inflict a limited amount of harm; but it is not the case of that hatred which seeks the entire destruction of the one hated: "An enemy ... if he finds an opportunity his thirst for blood will be insatiable" (Sir 12:16). Now the Jews hated Christ, and so his scourging did not satisfy them: "All the day long I have been scourged" [Ps 73:14]; "I gave my back to the smiters" (Is 50:6).

2373 Does this intention excuse Pilate for the scourging? It does not; because of all those things which are evil in themselves (*per se*), none can be made totally good by a good intention. Now to harm an innocent person, and especially the Son of God, is in the highest degree an evil in itself. Consequently, it cannot be excused by any intention.

2374 Now the Evangelist shows us Christ being ridiculed: first, the mock honors paid to him; secondly, the real dishonor showed him, **and struck him**. They pay

him mock honors by calling him a king, thus adverting to the charge lodged by the Jews, who said that he made himself king of the Jews. Therefore, they pay him the three honors given to a king, but in a derisive way. First, we have a mock crown; and then mock clothing and acclamations.

2375 They mock him with a crown, because it is customary for kings to wear a crown, a crown of gold: "A crown of gold upon his head" [Sir 45:12]. The Psalm (21:3) mentions this: "Thou dost set a crown of fine gold upon his head." **And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head**, the head of him who is a crown of glory to those who belong to him: "In that day the Lord of hosts will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people" (Is 28:5). It was appropriately made of thorns, because by them he removes the thorns of sin, which pain us through remorse of conscience: "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns" (Jer 4:3). These thorns also take away the thorns of punishment which burden us: "Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you" (Gen 3:18).

Was this crowning done by the governor's order? Chrysostom says that it was not, but that the soldiers were bribed with money and did this to satisfy the Jews. [2] On the other hand, Augustine says that this was done by the command or the permission of the governor to the end that the hatred of the Jews would be satiated and Pilate could more easily release Jesus. [3]

2376 Secondly, they mock him with clothing. **The soldiers ... arrayed him in a purple robe**, which was the sign of a royal dignity for the Romans. In 1 Maccabees (8:14) we read that when the Romans ruled they wore a crown and were clothed in purple. This clothing of Christ in purple fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah (63:2): "Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his that treads in the wine press?" At the same time it indicates the sufferings of the martyrs, which stains red the entire body of Christ, that is, the church.

2377 Thirdly, they mock him the way they address him: **they came up to him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!** It was the custom then, as it is now, for subjects to salute their king when they came into his presence: "And when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, 'Long live the king ! Long live the king!'" (2 Sam 16:16).

As for the mystical interpretation, those greet Christ mockingly who profess him with words "but deny him with their deeds" (Titus 1:16).

2378 Now he mentions the real dishonor shown to Christ, **and struck him with their hands**, in order to show that the honor they did gave him was in mockery:

"I gave my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard" (Is 50:6); "With a rod they strike upon the cheek the ruler of Israel" (Mic 5:1).

LECTURE 2

4 Pilate went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no crime in him." 5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" 6 When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." 7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." 8 When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid; 9 he entered the praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. 10 Pilate therefore said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin." 12a Upon this Pilate sought to release him.[\[4\]](#)

2379 Now the Evangelist treats of the crucifixion of Christ: first, the crucifixion itself; secondly, the death of Christ (v 28); and thirdly, his burial (v 38). As to the crucifixion, he first mentions the dispute Pilate had with the Jews; secondly, we have the sentencing of Christ (v 8); and thirdly, the sentence is carried out (v 17). Pilate, wanting to release Christ, began arguing with the Jews. First, the Evangelist shows how Pilate tried to release Christ by exhibiting him to the crowd; secondly, by declaring his innocence, **I find no crime in him**. As regards the first, the Evangelist shows Jesus being shown to the crowd; and secondly, the effect this had, **Crucify him**.

2380 Three things are mentioned concerning Christ's exhibition to the Jews. First there is the intention of Pilate, which was to free him. He says, **Pilate went out again**, from the praetorium, **and said to them**, to the Jews who were waiting there, **Behold, I am bringing him out to you**, for this purpose, **that you may know that I find no crime in him**, deserving of death. Why then, unrighteous Pilate, was there this shameful bargaining if there was no crime in him? Was it so the Jews would not believe that you would release him because you were partial to him? What kind of partiality is that when you give one so much thrashing? Or

perhaps it was so that his enemies, gladly seeing his disgrace, would no longer thirst for blood. Pilate is saying in effect: If there were a reason for his death, I would condemn him just like I have scourged him. Perhaps he has committed some minor infraction of the law, which did deserve a scourging, but there was nothing deserving of death.

2381 Secondly, we see Christ being presented before the crowd, **Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.** He was exhibited in the same robe he wore when he was mocked by the officers in the hope that the crowd would be appeased when they saw him, not respected for his authority, but entirely dishonored: "For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that shame has covered my face" (Ps 69:7). This teaches us that we should be ready to undergo any kind of disrespect for the name of Jesus Christ: "Fear not the reproach of men, and be not dismayed at their revilings" (Is 51:7).

2382 Thirdly, Christ's exhibition is further described through the words of Pilate, **Here is the man!** spoken in a sarcastic way, as if one so disgraced would dare to usurp a kingship. Look at the kind of person you are accusing of this! The words of the Psalm (22:6) apply to him: "I am a worm, and no man." And so, if you do hate your king, spare him now because you see him dishonored. "When disgrace increases, let your hatred decrease," [\[5\]](#) as Augustine says.

2383 Now we see the effect of this exhibition on the Jews. No matter how disgraced and wretched and beaten he appeared, their hatred did not lessen, but was still burning and growing. **When the chief priests and the officers saw him,** when Jesus was brought out, **they cried out, Crucify him, crucify him!** Their desire was so strong that they shouted this twice. And they will not be satisfied with any kind of death, but demand the most dishonorable kind, crucifixion: "Let us condemn him to a shameful death" (Wis 2:20). He said, **When they saw him,** because the sight of the one they hated only served to incite and inflame their hearts with more hatred: "The very sight of him is a burden to us" (Wis 2:15).

2384 Now the Evangelist shows how Pilate tried to free Christ by declaring his innocence. As a result, a disagreement arose because, first, Pilate declared the innocence of Christ; while secondly, the Jews repeated his guilt, **We have a law.**

2385 As to Christ's innocence, Pilate said to them, **Take him yourselves, and crucify him.** It is like saying: I do not want to be a judge who judges unjustly. I will not crucify him. You crucify him if you want, but I find no crime in him, deserving of crucifixion: "The ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me" (14:30); Jesus "whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate,

when he had decided to release him" (Acts 3:13).

2386 But the Jews repeat Christ's offense: **We have a law....** They seemed to understand from Pilate's response that he would not go against Christ because of a charge of claiming a kingdom, although they had thought he would be especially inclined by this to kill him. And since this crime was not enough to put Christ to death, the Jews thought that when Pilate said, **Take him yourselves and crucify him**, he was asking if they had another crime, a violation of the law, for which he could be condemned and for which they were condemning him. Thus they say, **by that law he ought to die**. First, they charge Christ with a crime against the law of the Jews; secondly, against the law of the Romans (v 12). In regard to the first, we see the accusation of the Jews against Christ; secondly, the effect of this on Pilate, **he was the more afraid**.

2387 The crime against the Jewish law that they charged Christ with was that **he has made himself the Son of God**, and for this he deserved death: "This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath, but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God" (5:18); and again, "We stone you for no good work but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God" (10:33). They always said that "he made himself the Son of God," assuming he was not. But this was not against the law, as Christ proved to them before (10:34), by citing the Psalm (82:6): "I say, You are gods." For if other people, who are adopted children, can call themselves children of God without blasphemy, how much more can Christ do this, who is the Son of God by nature. But they regarded him as a liar and blasphemer, each of which deserved death, because they did not understand his eternal generation [from the Father].

2388 Now the Evangelist mentions the effect the accusation of the Jews had on Pilate. The first was that it produced fear: **When Pilate heard these words**, that is, that Christ made himself the Son of God, he was the more afraid that it might be true and that it would be disastrous to proceed against him without cause.

2389 Secondly, he mentions another effect it produced: doubt and questioning (v 9). First, we have the question Pilate asked; secondly, the silence of Christ; and thirdly, the reproach of Pilate.

2390 In regard to the first he says, **he entered the praetorium again**, stricken with fear, **and said to Jesus**, whom he had led back with himself, **Where are you from?** trying to find out whether Jesus was God, with a divine origin, or a man, with an earthly origin. This could be answered by what was said before,

"You are from below, I am from above" (8:23).

2391 Jesus, because he chose to, did not give an answer, so that he might show that he was unwilling to overwhelm by words and to make excuses, since he had come to suffer. At the same time he is for us an example of patience, and fulfilled what is found in Isaiah (53:7): "like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." It says, "like a sheep," to show that the silence of Jesus was not that of a man convicted of sin and aware of his evil, but the silence of a gentle person being sacrificed for the sins of others.

2392 Then the Evangelist shows how Pilate reproached him for his silence (v 10): first, we see Pilate boasting of his power; secondly, we have what Christ said about this power.

2393 Pilate was displeased that Jesus did not answer him, and said, **You will not speak to me?** He has condemned himself, for if this entire matter lay in his power, why does he not release Jesus since he has found him without crime? "I will condemn you out of your own mouth" (Lk 19:22); "Because you have authority among men, mortal though you are, you do what you please" (2 Mac 7:16).

2394 Pilate was boasting about his power, "Men who ... boast of the abundance of their riches" (Ps 49:6). So our Lord curbs him, saying, **You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above.** It was like Augustine said: "When Christ was silent, it was like a lamb; when he spoke, he taught as a shepherd." [6] So, first Christ teaches Pilate about the source of his power; secondly, about the greatness of his sin.

2395 In regard to the first he says, **You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above.** He is saying in effect: If you seem to have some power, you do not have this from yourself, but it has been given to you from above, from God, from whom all power comes: "By me kings reign" (Prv 8:15). He says **no power**, that is, no matter how little, because Pilate did have a limited power under a greater one, the power of Caesar: "For I am a man under authority" (Mt 8:9).

2396 **Therefore**, he concludes, **he who delivered me to you**, that is, Judas or the chief priests, has the greater sin. He says **greater**, to indicate that both those who delivered him up to Pilate and Pilate himself were guilty of sin. But those who delivered him up had the greater sin because they delivered him up out of ill•will, whereas Pilate did what he did because he was afraid of a superior power. This refutes those heretics who say that all sins are equal, for if they

were, our Lord would not have said, **the greater sin**. "Woe to that man by whom the temptation comes!" (Mt 18:7).

2397 The effect of all this was that **upon this Pilate sought to release him**. As we saw before, Pilate tried to release Christ from the very beginning. Thus the **upon this** indicates he now sought it for another reason, that is, to escape from sinning. Or, he had tried to release him **before, but upon this**, from now on, he was fully and firmly determined to release him.

LECTURE 3

12b But the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar." 13 When Pilate heard these words [he grew more fearful], he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat [tribunal] at a place called The Pavement [Lithostrotos], and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" 15 They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." 16 Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. 17 So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull [Calvary], which is called in Hebrew Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.[\[7\]](#)

2398 Above, the Jews accused Christ of a crime against their law, but Pilate seemed to consider this a slight matter since he himself was not subject to this law. So they now accuse Christ of a crime against the Roman Law, hoping this would press Pilate into taking his life. First, they state the danger which is hanging over Pilate if he releases Christ; secondly, they give the reason for this danger (v 12).

2399 He says that after Pilate tried to release Christ, **the Jews cried out, If you release this man**, who is making himself king, **you are not Caesar's friend**, that is, you will lose his friendship. It frequently happens that we estimate others based on the way that we ourselves are. And since it was written of these Jews that "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (12:43), they thought that Pilate would prefer the friendship of Caesar to the friendship of justice • even though the opposite is commanded: "It is better to take refuge in

the Lord than to put confidence in princes" (Ps 118:9). The Philosopher says that truth is to be preferred to friendship.

2400 They add the reason for the danger which threatened Pilate when they say, **every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar**, for it is the nature of earthly power that one power cannot endure the presence of another power. And so Caesar did not allow another to rule: "Do not seek from men the highest office, nor the seat of honor from the king" [Sir 7:4].

2401 In treating the condemnation of Christ, the Evangelist mentions the place, secondly the time (v 14), and thirdly the manner of the condemnation (v 14b).

2402 In regard to the first, the Evangelist indicates the motive of Pilate when he says, **When Pilate heard these words he grew more fearful**, for it was not as easy for him to ignore Caesar, the source of his power, as it was to disdain the laws of a foreign people. So he says, **he brought Jesus out**. But there was no reason for Pilate to fear, because Jesus was not setting himself against Caesar. Christ had no purple, no scepter, no diadem, no chariots, no soldiers to indicate that he was seizing a kingdom. Rather, Christ always sat alone with his disciples, plain in food, in clothing and in dwelling. Yet as we read in Proverbs (28:1), "The wicked flee when no one pursues." "They trembled in fear when there was no fear" [Ps 53:5]; "Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks" (Ez 2:6).

2403 Then he mentions the place saying, **and sat down on the tribunal**. A tribunal is the seat of a judge, like the throne is the seat of a king, and the professor's chair is the seat of a master: "A king who sits on the throne of judgment winnows all evil with his eyes" (Prv 20:8). It was called a tribunal because among the Romans it was the tribunes (named from the tribes they headed) who adjudicated in certain cases. This tribunal was **at a place called Lithostrotos**, that is, a pavement of stones. "Lithos" in Greek means the same as "stone," and the place where Pilate sat in his judgment seat had been paved with stones. In Hebrew this place was called Gabbatha, that is, a mound formed from stones.

2404 The time of the condemnation is given when he says, **Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour**. Among the Jews the Sabbath was in some respects more solemn than any other feast, insofar as out of reverence for that day no food was prepared on the Sabbath; it was prepared on the preceding Friday. Thus this Friday was called the day of Preparation of the Passover. This practice had its origin when the Jews in the desert were forbidden to gather manna on the Sabbath, but were directed to

gather a double supply the day before (Ex 16:24). In this matter they yielded to no feast. Accordingly, although the present Friday was a solemn feast for them, they still prepared the Sabbath food on that day.

2405 He adds, **it was about the sixth hour**. This does not agree with Mark (15:25), who says, "And it was the third hour, when they crucified him." It is clear that Christ was before the tribunal before he was crucified.

According to Augustine, there are two explanations for this.^[8] The first, and better, is that Christ was crucified two times: once by the tongues and words of the shouting Jews, "Crucify him, crucify him" (v 6), and the second time by the hands of the soldiers who nailed him to the cross. Now the Jews wanted to blame the crucifixion on the Gentiles. And so Mark, who wrote his gospel for the Gentiles, blamed it on the Jews, saying that Christ was crucified by the Jews when at the third hour they shouted, "Crucify him, crucify him." It is John who follows the real time and he says, **it was about the sixth hour**. For when Christ was on the cross it was at the end of the fifth hour and at the beginning of the sixth, when darkness came and lasted three hours, that is, until the ninth hour. He says, **about the sixth hour** because the sixth hour had not yet begun.

The second explanation is that the preparation of the Passover was mentioned, and our Passover, Christ, was about to be immolated. Thus the preparation of the Passover is the preparation for the immolation of Christ. This preparation began at the ninth hour of the night, when the Jews shouted, to the captured Christ, "He deserves death" (Mt 26:66). If to the three remaining hours of the night we add the three hours of the day, when Christ was crucified, we can see that he was crucified at the sixth hour of the preparation, although this was the third hour of the day, as Mark says. And it was appropriate that he was crucified at the sixth hour because by his cross he restored human nature which was created on the sixth day.

2406 Now the Evangelist tells us about the manner and order of the condemnation (v 14). Pilate still wanted to free Christ, although his fear of Caesar weighed upon him. First we see Pilate's attempt to free Christ; secondly, he consents to have him crucified. (v 16). Concerning the first, we see the attempt of Pilate; and then the malice of the Jews (v 15b).

2407 The Evangelist says that after Pilate sat down on the judgment seat, he said to the Jews, in exasperation, **Here is your King!** It was like saying: I am astonished that you fear to have this man, so humiliated and destitute, as your king. For only the wealthy and strong aspire to the throne, and this man is neither. As the Psalm [88:15] said: "I am poor and in labor from my youth."

2408 This did not lessen the malice of the Jews. In inexhaustible hatred **they cried out**, doubling their already great malice by repeating the words, **Away with him, away with him, crucify him!** This shows that they could not stand the sight of him: "They say to God, 'Depart from us! We do not desire the knowledge of thy ways'" (Job 21:14); "The very sight of him is a burden to us" (Wis 2:15). Therefore, "Let us condemn him to a shameful death" (Wis 2:20), which is the same as **crucify him!**

2409 Now we see how Pilate tried to free Christ by shaming the Jews. First, we see Pilate's attempt, **Shall I crucify your King?** He is saying in effect: If you are not affected by his humiliation, your own sense of shame should move you, because I am going to crucify the one who is trying to be your king. And this is to your disgrace since it is being done by a foreigner.

Secondly, we see how unyielding the Jews are when they say, **We have no king but Caesar.** By thus refusing to be subject to the authority of Christ, they have submitted themselves to perpetual subjection. And so even to this very day, they are strangers to Christ, and have become servants of Caesar and earthly powers: "For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them" (1 Sam 8:7); "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water and hewed out cisterns for themselves; broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer 2:13).

2410 Then the Evangelist mentions the consent of Pilate to the killing of Christ, **Then he handed him over to them**, to the Jews, who had been subject to the power and the will of the Romans, **to be crucified.** This was against the advice of Exodus (23:2): "You shall not follow a multitude to do evil." "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked" (Job 9:24); "I have given my dear soul into the hands of her enemies" [Jer 12:7].

2411 Now the Evangelist deals with the crucifixion of Christ: first, the dishonor of the cross; secondly, the events surrounding the crucifixion (v 19).

The dishonor of the cross is indicated by those who crucified Christ, by the way he was led to his death, by the place where this happened, and by those crucified with him.

2412 Those who crucified him were soldiers. **So they took Jesus.** This was done in deed by the soldiers • for we read below (v 23), "When the soldiers had crucified Jesus" • but done in desire by the Jews, because they brought about by threats what happened. For this they ought to lose the benefits of Christ's cross and have the Gentiles acquire them: "The Kingdom of God will be taken away

from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it" (Mt 21:43).

2413 The way Christ was brought to his crucifixion was a dishonor, **bearing his own cross**, for death on a cross was a disgrace: "A hanged man is accursed by God" (Deut 21:23). Avoiding the cross as something unholy, and fearing even to touch it, they laid the cross on the condemned Jesus. He went out, **bearing his own cross**.

2414 Matthew (27:32) says that they compelled a certain Simon of Cyrene, on his way from the fields, to carry Christ's cross. We should say that Christ carried his cross from the beginning, but as he went along they found Simon to help him.

This does not lack its own mystery: for although Christ was the first to endure the sufferings of the cross, others did so after in imitation of him, especially strangers, that is, the Gentiles: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example" (1 Pet 2:21); "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24).

Although this seems extremely bizarre to the irreligious and to unbelievers, it is a great mystery for believers and the devout: "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18). Christ bore his cross as a king does his scepter; his cross is the sign of his glory, which is his universal dominion over all things: "The Lord will reign from the wood" [Ps 95:9 *sic*]; "The government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'" (Is 9:6). He carried his cross as a victor carries the trophy of his victory: "He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in himself" [Col 2:15]. Again, he carried his cross as a teacher his candelabrum, as a support for the light of his teaching, because for believers the message of the cross is the power of God: "No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light" (Lk 11:33).

2415 The place where Christ suffered was also dishonorable, and for two reasons. First, it was outside the city, **he went out to the place called Calvary**, which is outside the walls of the city: "So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood" (Heb 13:12). This passion of Christ was outside the walls of the city to show that the effectiveness of his passion was not enclosed within the boundaries of the Jewish nation, and to indicate that those who want to obtain the fruit of his passion also have to go out from the world, at least with their affections. Thus the Apostle says in his next sentence, "Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp" (Heb 13:13).

2416 Secondly, this place was dishonorable because it was one of the lowest and basest, **to the place called Calvary**. "I am reckoned among those who go down to the Pit" (Ps 88:4). Chrysostom tells us that there are some who say that Adam died and was buried at this very place. This is why it was called Calvary, from the skull (*calvaria*) of the first man. And just as death reigned there, so there also Christ erected the trophy of his victory.

However, as Jerome says, this is the popular interpretation and attractive to the people, but it is not true, because Adam was buried at Hebron: "Adam the greatest among the Anakim was buried there" [Jos 14:15].[\[9\]](#) So we should say that this place was outside the gate of Jerusalem, and it was there that the heads of the condemned were cut off. It was called Calvary because the skulls of the beheaded were strewn there.

2417 Those who suffered with him also added to his dishonor, for they crucified **with him two others**, who were criminals, as Luke mentions (Lk 23:33). **One on either side**, one on the right and one on the left, **and Jesus between them**, in the middle. Even in his suffering Christ stood in the middle, a fact that the Jews intended should add to his dishonor, for it implied that the cause of his death was similar to that of the criminals: "He was numbered with the transgressors" (Is 53:12).

But if we contemplate this mystery, we see that it is related to the glory of Christ. It shows that by his suffering Christ merited the authority to judge: "Your cause has been judged as one of the wicked. You will recover cause and judgment" [Job 36:17]. And it is the function of a judge to be in the middle of the parties; so the Philosopher says that to go to a judge is to go to the middle.[\[10\]](#) Christ was also placed in the middle, one on his right, another on his left, because in the judgment he will place the sheep on his right, and the goats on his left. It was the criminal on his right who believed and was saved; the one on his left, who reproached him, was condemned.

LECTURE 4

19 Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." 20 Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. 21 The chief priests of the Jews then said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" 22 Pilate answered, "What I

have written I have written." 23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; 24 so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the scripture, "They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." 25 So the soldiers did this. But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home [to his own].[\[11\]](#)

2418 The Evangelist just told of Christ's crucifixion; now he mentions things that accompanied and followed it: first, as they relate to Pilate; secondly as they relate to the soldiers; and finally, he tells about Christ's friends who were standing by (v 25). Concerning Pilate, we see the title being written on the cross, its being read, and its retention.

2419 Two things are mentioned about the first of these. First, the writing of the title, **Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross**. This was understandable, for it was a way of getting back at the Jews by showing their malice in rising up against their own king. It was also appropriate for this mystery, for just as inscriptions are placed on trophies of victory so the people will remember and celebrate the victory • "Let us make a name for ourselves, before we are scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" [Gen 11:4] • so it was arranged that a title was put on the cross so that the sufferings of Christ would be remembered: "Remember my affliction and my bitterness, the wormwood and the gall!" (Lam 3:19).

2420 Secondly, he mentions the content of the title, **Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews**, words which are very fitting for this mystery of the cross. The word Jesus, which means Savior, corresponds to the power of the cross by which we have been saved: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). The word Nazareth, which means abounding in flowers, corresponds to the innocence of the one suffering: "I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys" (Song 2:1); "A flower will rise up out of his root" [Is 11:1]. The words **King of the Jews** accord with the power, the dominion, which Christ earned by his suffering: "Therefore God has highly exalted him" (Phil 2:9); "He shall reign as King and be wise" (Jer 23:5); he will sit "upon the throne of

David and over his kingdom" (Is 9:7).

2421 Through his cross Christ is not just the King of the Jews, but of all people • for after we read, "I have set my king on Zion," there follows, "Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage" (Ps 6:8). Why then did the Evangelist write only **King of the Jews**? I answer that the Gentiles were grafted on to the abundant olive tree (Rom 11:17). And just like a graft comes to share in the abundance of the olive tree, and it is not the olive tree that acquires the bitterness of the graft, so those Gentiles who were converted to the faith were made spiritually Jews, not by a circumcision of the flesh, but of the spirit. And so in saying the **King of the Jews**, non•Jewish converts are also included.

2422 Next we see that the title was read, **Many of the Jews read this title**. The fact that it was read signifies that more are saved by faith, by reading about the passion of Christ, than were saved by actually seeing it: "These are written that you may believe" (20:31). Secondly, the Evangelist mentions how easy this was to read: first, because Jesus was crucified near the city, **the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city**, where many people passed; and secondly, because it was written in a number of languages, and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek, so that no one would fail to know it, and because these three languages were the most widely known. Hebrew was known because it was used in the worship of the one true God; Greek was known because it was used in the writings of the wise; and Latin was known due to the power of Rome. As Augustine says, these three tongues assumed a certain dignity by being associated with the cross of Christ. [\[12\]](#) Further, the Hebrew tongue signified that by the cross of Christ those who were devout and religious were to be converted and ruled; and so were the wise, indicated by the Greek language; and so were those enjoying power, signified by the Latin language. Or, the use of Hebrew signified that Christ was to rule over theological teaching, because the knowledge of divine matters was entrusted to the Jews. The Greek signified that Christ was to rule over the knowledge of nature, for the Greeks were engaged in speculation about nature. Latin signified that Christ will rule over practical philosophy, because moral speculation was especially flourishing among the Romans. And so, all thought is brought into captivity and obedience to Christ, as we see in 2 Corinthians (10:5).

2423 We now read that this title was not changed (v 21). First we see the Jews trying to have the title changed, **The chief priests of the Jews then said to Pilate, Do not write, The King of the Jews, but, This man said, I am King of the Jews**. The title **King of the Jews** was a praise for Christ, but a disgrace for the Jews, for it was a disgrace to the Jews that they had their king crucified. But if the title had read, **This man said, I am King of the Jews**, it would have been a taunting sarcasm against Christ and have indicated his crime. And this

was what the chief priests wanted to do, to take away the reputation of the one they crucified as they had already taken away his life: "I am the talk of those who sit in the gate" (Ps 69:12).

2424 Secondly, we read that Pilate was insistent on keeping the title. He refused to change it because he wanted to disgrace them. He said, **What I have written I have written**. This did not happen by chance; it had been arranged by God and predicted long before. Certain Psalms have as a title, "Do not Destroy. For David, for an inscription of a title." Indeed, Psalm 59 especially concerns the passion, "Deliver me from my enemies, O my God." And so do the two preceding Psalms: "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in thee my soul takes refuge" (Ps 57) and Psalm 58. And so it was folly for the chief priests to complain, for just as they could not destroy what the Truth had said, so also they could not destroy what Pilate had written. Pilate said, **What I have written I have written**, because what the Lord said, He said, as Augustine remarks. [\[13\]](#)

2425 Now the Evangelist shows the role played by the soldiers (v 23): first, he mentions that Christ's garments were distributed among them; and secondly, we see that lots were cast for his tunic.

2426 He says, **When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his garments**. We can gather two things from this: the debasement of the dying Christ, for the soldiers stripped him, which was done only to those they despised; secondly, we see the greed of the soldiers, because they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier. Soldiers were a very rapacious group, and so John the Baptizer told them to "Rob no one ... and be content with your pay" (Lk 3:14); "They send men away naked, taking away their clothes" [Job 24:7].

2427 In regard to the second, he says, **also his tunic**. First, his tunic is described; and then lots are cast for it (v 24).

2428 He says, **also his tunic**, that is, they took that along with his other garments. **But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom**. He says that it was without a seam to indicate its unity. Some say this shows how valuable it was. On the other hand, Chrysostom says that the Evangelist says this to suggest that it was common and ordinary; for in Palestine the poor wear clothing made from many pieces of cloth, one sewn over another: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor" (2 Cor 8:9).

2429 As for the mystical interpretation, this passage can be referred to the mystical body of Christ. Then Christ's garments are divided into four parts because the Church is spread over the four parts of the world: "As I live, says the Lord, you shall put them all on as an ornament, you shall bind them on as a bride does" (Is 49:18). The tunic without seam, which was not divided, indicates charity, because the other virtues are not united by themselves, but by another, because all of them are directed to the ultimate end, and it is charity alone which unites us to this end. While it is faith which makes known our ultimate end, and by hope we tend toward it, only charity unites us to it: "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together" (Col 3:14).

The tunic is said to be woven from the top because charity is above, at the top, of all the other virtues: "I will show you a still more excellent way" (1 Cor 12:31); "To know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19). Or, it is woven from the top because our charity does not come from ourselves, but from the Holy Spirit: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). The tunic woven from the top can also signify the real body of Christ, because the body of Christ was formed by a higher power, one from the top, by the Holy Spirit "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 1:20).

2430 The Evangelist says that lots were cast for Christ's tunic, **they said to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.** There is one way of casting lots which is a form of divination; this is unlawful because there is no necessity for it. Sometimes lots are cast to know how things should be allotted or divided up; and this is lawful in earthly matters but not in spiritual things. The purpose of this is to submit to God's plan and will those matters that we cannot decide by ourselves. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly from the Lord" (Prv 16:33); and again, "The lot puts an end to disputes" (Prv 18:18).

2431 Matthew says something different, that "they divided his garments among them by casting lots" (Mt 27:35). The reply is that Matthew does not say that they cast lots for all his garments. Indeed, while they divided some among themselves, they cast lots for his tunic.

2432 Mark is still more forceful, saying, "They divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take" of all his clothes (Mk 15:24). According to Augustine, this means they cast lots for one of his garments, to decide which one would take the tunic [which was left over].[\[14\]](#)

2433 Now the Evangelist brings in the prophecy of this event (v 24). First, he mentions the prophecy. The prophet's exactness is remarkable, for he foretold in detail some of the things that were done to Christ. Clearly these things did not happen by chance; thus he says, **this was to fulfill the scripture**, one thing after another, which said (Ps 22:18) that **they parted my garments among them**, not saying garment, because there were more than one, **and for my clothing**, that is, for my tunic **they cast lots**.

Secondly, he states that the prophecy was fulfilled, **So the soldiers did this**. We can see from this that the divine Scripture is fulfilled even in its details: "Not an iota, not a jot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Mt 6:18); "Everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44).

2434 Thirdly, we see the part played by the friends of Jesus. First, the Evangelist mentions the women who were standing there; secondly, his eagerness for the care of his mother (v 26); thirdly, the ready obedience of the disciple (v 27).

2435 Three women are mentioned as standing by the cross of Jesus: **his mother, then his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene**. When the Evangelists mention the women who were standing with Christ, it is only John who mentions the Blessed Virgin. Two questions occur about this incident.

2336 Matthew (27:55) and Mark (15:40) say that the women were standing far off, while John says that they stood by the cross. One could say in answer that the women mentioned by Matthew and Mark were not the same as those mentioned by John. However, the difficulty with this answer is that Mary Magdalene is in the group mentioned by Matthew and Mark, and also in the group mentioned by John. So one should say that all were referring to the same women. But there is no contradiction. Near and far are relative; and nothing prevents something from being near in one sense and far in another. The women were said to be near because they were within the range of sight, and they could be described as afar because other people were between them and Jesus. Or, one could say that when the crucifixion was beginning, the women were standing near Christ and were able to speak to him; while later, when a number of people came forward to taunt him, the women withdrew and stood further away. Thus John is telling what happened at first, and the other Evangelists what happened after.

2437 The other issue is that John mentions Mary of Clopas, while in place of her, Matthew and Mark mention Mary, the mother of James, who is also described as

Mary of Alphaeus. We should say about this that Mary of Clopas, mentioned by John, is the same as Mary of Alphaeus, mentioned by Matthew. For this Mary had two husbands, Clopas and Alphaeus. Or, one could say that Clopas was her father.

2438 The fact that the women stood by the cross while the disciples left Christ and ran away is an expression of their unfailing affection. As Job [19:20] says: "My flesh is consumed, my bones cleave to my skin," where the flesh can stand for the disciples, who ran off, and the skin can stand for the women, for they stayed close to Christ.

2439 The Evangelist now mentions Christ's concern for his mother (v 26). But first we see his solicitude for the welfare of his disciple, whom he entrusted to his mother; then we see his concern for his mother, whom he gave into the keeping of his disciple.

2440 As to the first he says, **When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, Woman, behold, your son!** He is saying: Up to now I have taken care for you and watched over you. Now, you take care for my disciple. This shows the eminence of John.

Before, when the Mother of Jesus said, "They have no wine," (2:3), he replied, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come," that is, the hour of my passion, when I will suffer by means of what I have received from you [my human nature]. But when that hour comes I will acknowledge you. And now that the hour has come, he does acknowledge his mother. Yet I do not have the power to work miracles through what I have received from you [my human nature], but rather through what I have from the generation of the Father, that is, insofar as I am God.

2441 As Augustine says, Christ hanging on the cross is like a teacher in his teaching chair.[\[15\]](#) He is teaching us to help our parents in their needs, and to take care of them: "Honor your father and your mother" (Ex 20:12); "If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim 5:8).

Why is the contrary found in Luke? "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26). I answer that when our Lord commands us to hate our parents and ourselves, he is commanding us to love them, their own individual nature and our own individual nature, and to hate moral evil and what turns our natures away from God. This means that we

must aid our parents, love and reverence them as these human beings, but hate their moral vices and what in them turns us away from God.

2442 As to the second, he says, **Behold, your mother!** so that John will care for her as much as a son cares for his mother; and Mary is to love John as a mother loves her son.

2443 The Evangelist shows the obedience of the disciple when he says, **and from that hour the disciple took her to his own.** For Bede, this should read **as his own** (*in suam*); and so the meaning is, **the disciple**, John, **took her**, the mother of Jesus, **as his own**, mother. [\[16\]](#) But according to Augustine, and agreeing with the Greek text, we should read it as **to his own** (*in qua*), not to his own home, for John was one of those who said, "We have left everything and followed you" (Mt 19:27); Rather, the disciple took Mary to his own guardianship, to eagerly and respectfully care for her. [\[17\]](#)

LECTURE 5

28 After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst." 29 A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. 31 Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; 33 but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. 35 He who saw it has borne witness • his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth • that you also may believe. 36 For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him shall be broken." 37 And again another scripture says, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." [\[18\]](#)

2444 After dealing with the crucifixion and the events that accompanied it, the Evangelist now describes the death of Christ, which we should reverence. First,

he shows that it was at the appropriate time; secondly its manner, **he bowed his head**; and thirdly, the piercing of the dead body (v 31).

He shows that the time was fitting because **all was now finished**, accomplished. First, he mentions that Christ knew that all things had been accomplished; secondly, we see Christ doing what remained to be done (v 30).

2445 In regard to the first he says, **After this**, after the things that had just been mentioned, **Jesus, knowing that all was now finished**, that is, all that the law and the prophets had foretold about him had now been accomplished: "Everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44); "I have seen the end of every consummation" [Ps 119:96].

2446 But because another thing foretold in scripture had to be done, the Evangelist adds that Jesus **said (to fulfill the scripture), I thirst**. First, we see the words spoken by Christ; then, how his desire could be satisfied; and finally, he is given the vinegar.

2447 The Evangelist says that Jesus said this **to fulfill the scripture**. This indicates the sequence of events, and does not state the cause why Jesus spoke, for he did not speak in order to fulfill the scripture of the Old Testament. Rather, things were written in the Old Testament because they would be fulfilled by Christ. If we say that Christ acted because the scriptures foretold it, it would follow that the New Testament existed for the sake of the Old Testament and for its fulfillment, although the opposite is true. Therefore, it was because these things would be accomplished by Christ that they were predicted.

By saying, **I thirst**, he showed that his death was real, and not just imaginary. It also indicated his intense desire for the salvation of the human race: "God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4); "For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Lk 19:10). Indeed, we express our intense desires in terms of thirst: "My soul thirsts for God" (Ps 42:3).

2448 This desire could be satisfied because **a bowl full of vinegar stood there**. This bowl signified the Jewish synagogue, in which the wine of the Patriarchs and Prophets had degenerated into vinegar, that is, into the malice and severity of the chief priests.

2449 Christ is given the vinegar, for **they put a sponge full of vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth**. There is a question on the literal meaning. How could they put the sponge to Christ's mouth, since he was hanging high off

the ground? This is answered by Matthew (27:48), who says that the sponge was put on a reed. Or, according to others, it was put on hyssop, which was long, and this is what Matthew called a reed.

2450 As for the mystical sense, these three things signify the three evils that were present in the Jews: the vinegar signifies their ill•will; the sponge, full of crooked hiding places, signifies their craftiness; and the bitterness of the hyssop stands for their malice. Or, the hyssop represents the humility of Christ, for the hyssop is a bush used for purification, and our hearts are purified especially by humility: "Sprinkle me with hyssop and I will be cleansed" [Ps 51:7].

2451 The final fulfillment is mentioned when the Evangelist says, **When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished.** This can be understood to refer to the fulfillment accomplished by Christ by dying: "For it was fitting that the author of our salvation be fulfilled by glory through his passion" [Heb 2:10]. Or, it can be understood to refer to the fulfillment or accomplishment of our sanctification, which was brought about by his passion and cross: "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Heb 10:14). It can also refer to the fulfillment of the scriptures: "Everything that is written of the Son of man by the prophets will be accomplished" (Lk 18:31).

2452 Then the Evangelist describes the death of Christ. First, he mentions the cause of his death, **he bowed his head.** We should not think that because he gave up his spirit, he bowed his head; rather, because he bowed his head, he gave up his spirit, for the bowing of his head indicated that he died out of obedience: "He became obedient unto death" (Phil 2:8).

Secondly, the Evangelist mentions the power of the one dying, **for he gave up his spirit**, that is, by his own power: "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (10:18). As Augustine says, we do not have the power to sleep when we will to, but Christ had the power to die when he willed to.

2453 Some think that the phrase, **gave up his spirit**, implies that man has two souls: an intellectual soul, which they call the spirit, and an animal soul, that is, a vegetative•sensitive soul which gives life to the body and is called a soul in the proper sense. So they say that Christ gave up only his intellectual soul. This is false, both because the assertion that there are two souls in man is listed among the errors compiled in the book *The Dogmas of the Church*, and because if Christ had given up his spirit, and retained a soul, he would not have died. [\[19\]](#)

Therefore, since in man the spirit and the soul are the same, we must say that Christ gave up his spirit, that is, his soul.

This also destroys the error of those who say that the human souls of those who have died do not go directly after death to paradise or to hell or to purgatory, but remain in the grave until the day of judgment. For our Lord immediately gave up his spirit to the Father, from which we see that "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God" (Wis 3:1).

2454 Now we see the piercing of Christ's body: the act itself; and then the certainty of what the Evangelist tells us (v 35). With respect to the first he does two things: first, we see the intervention and intention of the Jews; secondly, this is partially accomplished; thirdly, how this was accomplished with regard to Christ.

2455 With respect to the first he says, **Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high day) the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.** In Deuteronomy (21:22) we see that it is a precept of the law that the bodies of the dead who had been hanged for crimes were not to be left hanging until the morning, lest the land be defiled, and to blot out the disgrace of those who were hanged, for this kind of death was regarded as most disgraceful: "a hanged man is accursed by God" (Deut 21:23). Although the Jews did not now have the authority to inflict this punishment, they still tried to do what they could. And so because it was the Preparation day they asked Pilate **that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away**, so that Christ's body and those of the others would not remain on the cross on the sabbath, which was a very solemn day, and particularly this sabbath during the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. They were careful to keep the law in small matters, but they ignored it in important things: "You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!" (Mt 23:24).

2456 He says how this was done in part, **So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first thief**, to whom they had come first, **and of the other who had been crucified with him**, with Jesus. This shows their cruelty: "You eat the flesh of my people" (Mic 3:3).

2457 Why does the Evangelist add, **but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs**? Surely Jesus was crucified between the two others? We should say that one soldier went to one of the criminals and another soldier went to the other one to break their legs, and when they were done with this they both came to Jesus. We are told why they pierced his side, because when the soldiers saw that he was already dead, **they did not break his legs**.

2458 To make sure that Jesus was dead one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear. It deserves notice that he does not say "wounded" but "pierced," that is "opened," because in his side the door of eternal life is opened to us: "After this I looked, and lo, in heaven, an open door!" (Rev 4:1). This is the door in the side of the ark through which those animals entered who were not to perish in the flood (Gen 7).

This door is the cause of our salvation; and so, **at once there came out blood and water**. This is a remarkable miracle, that blood should flow from the body of a dead person where blood congeals. And if someone says that this was because the body was still warm, the flow of the water cannot be explained without a miracle, since this was pure water. This outpouring of blood and water happened so that Christ might show that he was truly human. For human beings have a twofold composition: one from the elements and the other from the humors. One of these elements is water, and blood is the main humor.

Another reason why this happened was to show that by the passion of Christ we acquire a complete cleansing from our sins and stains. We are cleansed from our sins by his blood, which is the price of our redemption: "You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things, such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Pet 1:18). And we are cleansed from our stains by the water, which is the bath of our rebirth: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness" (Ez 36:25); "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness" (Zech 13:1). And so it is these two things which are especially associated with two sacraments: water with the sacrament of baptism, and blood with the Eucharist.

Or, both blood and water are associated with the Eucharist because in this sacrament water is mixed with wine, although water is not of the substance of the sacrament.

This event was also prefigured: for just as from the side of Christ, sleeping on the cross, there flowed blood and water, which makes the Church holy, so from the side of the sleeping Adam there was formed the woman, who prefigured the Church.

2459 Now the Evangelist shows that these events are certainly true: first, from the testimony of the Apostle himself; secondly, from a prophecy in the scriptures (v 36).

2460 He does three things about the first: he mentions the credentials of the witness, **he who saw it has borne witness**, and this is John himself: "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you" (1 Jn 1:3). Secondly, he affirms that this testimony is true, **his testimony is true**: "I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying" (Rom 9:1); "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (8:32). Thirdly, he asks us to believe, **and he knows that he tells the truth that you also may believe**: "These are written that you may believe" (20:31).

2461 This truth is not just guaranteed by the testimony of the apostle; there is also a prophecy of scripture. Thus he says, **these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled**. Here again, as before, the phrase **that the scripture might be fulfilled**, indicates the sequence of events. The Evangelist cites two authorities from the Old Testament. One refers to his statement that **they did not break his legs** and is found in Exodus (12:46), "You shall not break a bone of it," that is, the Passover lamb, which was a prefiguration of Christ, because as we read in 1 Corinthians (5:7), "Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed." It was commanded that the bones of the Passover lamb should not be broken in order to teach us that the courage of the true Lamb and unspotted Jesus Christ would in no way be crushed by his passion. The Jews were trying to use the passion to destroy the power of Christ's teaching, but his passion only made it stronger: "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18). This is why Jesus said before: "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he" (8:28).

2462 The second authority refers to his statement, **one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear**, and is taken from Zechariah: **They shall look on him whom they have pierced**. Our text of Zechariah reads: "They will look on me whom they have pierced" [Zech 12:10]. If we join the statement of the Prophet to what the Evangelist says, it is clear that the crucified Christ is God, for what the Prophet says he says as God, and the Evangelist applies this to Christ.

They shall look on him, he says, at the coming judgment. Or, they will look on him when they have been converted to the faith, and so forth.

LECTURE 6

38 After this Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away his body. 39 Nicodemus

also, who had at first come to him by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred pounds' weight. 40 They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. 42 So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

2463 After the Evangelist has told us about the crucifixion and death of Christ, he now turns to his burial: first, the permission for his burial; secondly, the care in preparing his body (v 40); thirdly, the place where Christ was buried (v 41); and, the burial itself (v 42).

2464 He says, **After this**, the passion and death of Jesus, **Joseph of Arimathea**, this is the same city as Ramatha (1 Sam 1:1), **who was a disciple of Jesus**, not one of the twelve, but one of the many other believers, for at first all those who believed were called disciples, **asked Pilate** for the body of Jesus. Joseph was a disciple, **but secretly, for fear of the Jews**, like many others were before Christ's passion: "Many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue" (12:42). We can see from this that while the other disciples, who went into hiding after the passion, lost their confidence, this man gained in confidence and openly tended to Jesus.

This man **asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus**, take the body from the cross and bury it. He did this because the human laws required permission to bury the bodies of those who had been condemned. And Pilate gave him leave, because Joseph was an important person and known to Pilate; Mark refers to Joseph as "a respected member of the council" (15:42).

2465 In regard to the second he says, **So he came and took away his body**. Here we see Joseph's concern to prepare the body: first, the things used in the preparation; secondly, the preparation itself (v 40).

2466 The body of Jesus was prepared with a mixture of myrrh and aloes, which Nicodemus had purchased in large quantity. So the Evangelist mentions both of them: Joseph, who claimed the body, and Nicodemus, who brought the spices. This is the same Nicodemus who came to Jesus at night, but this was before the passion (3:2). The Evangelist commemorates Nicodemus here to show that even though he had been a secret disciple, now he became a public one • and he had already mentioned that Joseph had been a secret disciple because he feared the

Jews. But Nicodemus did not yet have true faith in the resurrection because he brought myrrh and aloes, thinking that the body of Christ would soon corrupt without them: "You will not give your holy one to corruption" [Ps 16:10].

As for the mystical sense, we understand from this that we should bury the crucified Christ in our hearts, with the sadness of contrition and compassion: "My hands dripped with myrrh" (Song 5:5).

2467 With the spices ready, they prepared the body of Jesus, **they took the body of Jesus**. There is a question here, for John says that they bound it in linen cloths, while Matthew (27:59) says that they wrapped it in a linen cloth. One can answer, according to Augustine, that Matthew speaks of one linen cloth because he only mentioned Joseph, and he brought this one cloth. [20] John alone mentions Nicodemus, and so he says "linen cloths," because Nicodemus brought the other cloth. Or, again, the body of Christ was also wrapped in winding bands, as we read in the case of Lazarus, because this is the way the Jews buried their dead. A small cloth was also placed over his head. John includes all these in his words "linen cloths." From the fact that they anointed the body of Jesus with spices, we are taught that in the performance of such humane duties, we should follow the customs of each country.

2468 The place where Christ was buried is then mentioned, **Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden**. Christ was arrested in a garden, underwent his agony in a garden, and was buried in a garden. This indicates to us that by the power of Christ's passion we are freed from the sin which Adam committed in the Garden of delights, and that through Christ the Church is made holy, the Church, which itself is like a garden enclosed.

And in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. There are two reasons why Christ wanted to be buried in a new tomb. The first is literal, and was so that no one would think that some other body which had been buried there had risen, and not Christ, or think that all bodies were of equal power. The other reason was that it was appropriate that he who was born of a virgin should be buried in a new tomb, so that just as there was no one before or after him in the womb of Mary, so also in this tomb. This also indicates to us that by faith Christ is hidden in the newborn soul: "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Eph 3:17).

2469 Now follows the burial. So **because of the Jewish day of Preparation**, because evening was approaching when because of the sabbath no work was permitted, **as the tomb**, the new tomb, **was close at hand, they laid Jesus there**. Christ died about the ninth hour, but because his body had to be prepared

for burial and other things had to be done, the day had grown into evening. **As the tomb was close at hand**, to the place where he was crucified, **they laid Jesus there.**

[1] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*.

[2] *In Ioannem hom.*, 84, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 456; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:1-5.

[3] *Tract. in Io.*, 116, ch. 1, col. 1941; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:1-5.

[4] St. Thomas refers to Jn 19:7 in the *Summa Theologiae*: q. 47, a. 4, obj. 3; Jn 19:11: ST I-II, q. 73, a. 2, s. c.; II-II, q. 67, a. 4; III, q. 47, a. 6, obj. 2; q. 49, a. 6.

[5] *Tract. in Io.*, 116, ch. 2, col. 1942; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:1-5.

[6] *Tract. in Io.*, 116, ch. 5, col. 1943; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:9-12.

[7] St. Thomas refers to Jn 19:14 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 83, a. 2, ad 3; Jn 19:16: ST III, q. 47, a. 3, obj. 3.

[8] *Tract. in Io.*, 117, ch. 1, col. 1944; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:12-16.

[9] *Commentarium in Matthaeum*, 27; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 16-18.

[10] Aristotle.

[11] St. Thomas refers to Jn 19:25 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 28, a. 3, obj. 6; Jn 19:28: ST III, q. 46, a. 9 ad 1; Jn 19:30: ST I-II, q. 103, a. 3, ad 2; q. 47, a. 2, ad 1; Jn 19:32: ST III, q. 46, a. 5, s. c.; Jn 19:33: ST III, q. 46, a. 5, s. c.; q. 47, a. 1, ad 2; Jn 19:34: ST III, q. 79, a. 1; Jn 19:35: ST III, q. 74, a. 8, obj. 1; Jn 19:36: ST III, q. 59, a. 4, ad 1.

[12] *Tract. in Io.*, 117, ch. 4, col. 1946; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:12-16.

[13] *Tract. in Io.*, 117, ch. 5, col. 1946; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:19-22.

[14] *Tract. in Io.*, 118, ch. 2, 3, col. 1947-9; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:23-4.

[15] *Tract. in Io.*, 119, ch. 1, col. 1950; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:24-27.

[16] cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:24-27.

[17] *Tract. in Io.*, 119, ch. 2, col. 1951; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:24-27.

[18] St. Thomas quotes Jn 19:30 in the *Summa Theologiae*: I, q. 73, a. 1, arg. 1.

[19] The Dogmas of the Church.

[20] *De consensus evangelistarum*, 3, ch. 23; PL 34; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 19:38-42.

20

LECTURE I

1 Now on the first day of the week [one day of the Sabbath] Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. 4 They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; 5 and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.[\[1\]](#)

2470 Having related the mysteries of the passion of Christ, the Evangelist now speaks of the resurrection. First, he says the resurrection was made known to certain women; secondly, to the disciples (v 19). The revelation of Christ's resurrection to the women went in stages: first, there is the open tomb; secondly, the appearance of the angel (v 11); thirdly, the sight of Christ (v 14). In regard to the first, he first mentions the sight of the open tomb; secondly, this news is reported to the disciples (v 2); and thirdly, they see for themselves (v 3).

2471 Four things can be noted about the first. First, the time: it was **one day of the sabbath**, that is, the first day of the week. The Jews considered the sabbath as a very sacred day, and all the other days were described in reference to the sabbath. Thus they spoke of the first day of the sabbath, the second day of the sabbath, and so on. Matthew [28:1] speaks of the "first day of the sabbath". But John speaks of "one day of the sabbath" because he is referring to a mystery, for this day of the resurrection was the beginning of a new creation: "When you send

forth your Spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground" (Ps 104:30); "For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Gal 6:15). In Genesis (1:5), when Moses is speaking of the first day of creation he says "one day." "God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day." And so the Evangelist uses these words of Moses because he wants to express a newness. And also because this day begins the day of eternity, which is one day, no night interrupting it, because the sun which makes this day will never set. "And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb" (Rev 21:23); "There will be one day, which is known to the Lord, not day and night, for at evening time there will be light" [Zech 14:7].

2472 Secondly, the person who saw the tomb is given, **Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark.** A question arises here because Mark (16:1) makes mention of Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome; and Matthew (28:1) also mentions "the other Mary." According to Augustine the resolution is that Mary Magdalene was more ardent and more devoted to Christ than the other women.[\[2\]](#) Thus we read that "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much" (Lk 7:47). And for this reason the Evangelist mentions her by name. This is also the reason why the Lord appeared to her first, "He appeared first to Mary Magdalene" (Mk 16:9); "She [Wisdom] hastens to make herself known to those who desire her" (Wis 6:14).

2473 Thirdly, the time is given, **early, while it was still dark.** Luke (23:55) tells us that the women who had come with Christ from Galilee saw his tomb and how his body was laid, and they prepared spices and ointments for it. They rested on the sabbath according to the commandment. As soon as the sabbath was over, on the first day of the week, before daylight, she [Mary Magdalene] came to the tomb, incited by her exceedingly great love: "Its flashes," the flashes of love, "are flashes of fire" (Song 8:6).

2474 The question arises why Mark says "very early, after the sun had risen" [Mk 16:2], while the Evangelist says, **while it was still dark.** The answer is that what Mark says should be understood as referring to the breaking of the day, so that the sun had risen, but had not yet appeared in the sky.

2475 Fourthly, we are told what Mary saw, she **saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.** This was a sign that either someone had taken Christ away, or that he had arisen. When Matthew (28:2) says that "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone," we should not think the stone was rolled away before Christ arose, but only after. For since

Christ came forth from the closed womb of the Virgin even though his body was not glorified, it is not surprising if he passed through the tomb with his glorified body. The stone was taken away so that people could see that Christ was not there, and more easily believe in his resurrection.

2476 Next the Evangelist mentions that this was reported. Because of Mary's exceeding love she could not delay telling what she had seen to the disciples, **so she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved**: "This day is a day of good news; if we are silent and wait until the morning light, punishment will overtake us" (2 Kgs 7:9). And so one who hears the words of God should tell it to others without delay: "Let him who hears say, 'Come'" (Rev 22:17). Mary came to those who were the more important, and who loved Christ more ardently, so that they might either look for Jesus with her or share her sorrow.

She said to them, **They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him**. Mary saw the empty tomb, and not yet having it in her heart that Christ had risen, she said, **and we do not know where they have laid him**. We can see from this that Mary had not been alone at the tomb, and that she still had doubts about the resurrection. So it was not without reason that the Evangelist wrote that **it was still dark**, for this indicated the condition of their minds, in which there was the darkness of doubt: "They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness" (Ps 82:5). Note that in the Greek manuscripts it reads, **my Lord**, which shows the impetus of her love and her affectionate devotion: "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing upon earth that I desire besides you.... God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever" (Ps 73:25).

2477 The Evangelist next shows how this was investigated. First, he indicates the eagerness with which Peter and John acted, for they left the place where they were, **Peter then came out with the other disciple**. Those who want to look into the mysteries of Christ have in a sense to come out from themselves and from their carnal way of living: "Come out, O daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon" [Song 3:11].

2478 Secondly, we see the details of their search. First, it is said that they ran, **they both ran**, they who loved Christ more than the others: "I will run in the way of your commandments" (Ps 119:32); "So run that you may obtain it," the prize (1 Cor 9:25).

2479 Secondly, we see how the disciples arrived, **the other disciple outran Peter**. John arrived first, and Peter followed.

2480 It is not without reason that the Evangelist is careful to tell us the smallest details. For these two disciples signify two peoples, the Jews [by John] and the Gentiles [by Peter]. Although the Jews were the first to have knowledge of the one true God, the Gentiles were an older people, because even the Jews originated from the Gentiles: "Go from your country and your kindred" (Gen 12:1). These two people were both running over the course of this world: the Jews using the written law, the Gentiles using the law of nature. Or, they were both running by their natural desire for happiness and for a knowledge of the truth, which all men desire to know by their very nature. **But the other disciple**, that is, the younger one, **outran Peter**, because the Gentiles came to a knowledge of the truth more slowly than the Jews, since formerly God was known only in Judea. So the Psalm says, "He has not dealt thus with any other nation" (Ps 147:20).

The other disciple **reached the tomb first**, because he [John, the younger, representing the Jews] was the first to look upon the mysteries of Christ, and the promise was first made to the Jews: "They are the Israelites, and to them belong the ... promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ" (Rom 9:4).

And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. And stooping, under the yoke of the law, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (Ex 24:7), **he saw the linen cloths lying there**, that is, the figures or foreshadowings of all the mysteries, "But their minds were hardened; for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains uplifted" (2 Cor 3:14). **But he did not go in**, for as long as he was unwilling to believe in the one who was dead he had not yet come to the knowledge of the truth. Another who did not go in was the brother of the prodigal son, for when he heard the celebrations, the music and the dancing, he "refused to go in" (Lk 15:28). Nevertheless, David promised that they would enter: "I will go to the altar of God" (Ps 43:4).

2481 Now the Evangelist recounts the arrival of Peter. As for the literal meaning, the fact that they ran together was a sign of their passionate devotion. John arrived first because he was a younger man than Peter. But considering the mystical sense, Peter follows John because the Gentiles who were converted to Christ were not joined to another church different from the church of the Jews, but were grafted on to the already existing olive tree and church. The Apostle praises them saying, "For you brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus which are in Judea" (1 Thess 2:14).

2482 Thirdly, we see the order in which they entered, Peter first, and then John.

2483 The Evangelist says that Peter entered the tomb. According to the literal meaning, although John arrived first, he did not enter because of his respect for Peter. But considering the mystical interpretation, this signifies that the Jewish people, who were the first to hear of the mysteries of the incarnation, would be converted to the faith after the Gentiles: "That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness have attained it ... but that Israel who pursued the righteousness which is based in law did not succeed in fulfilling that law" (Rom 9:30). John saw only the linen cloths. He, Peter, also **saw the linen cloths** because we [Gentiles] do not reject the Old Testament, for as Luke says, "Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures" (Lk 24:45). But in addition Peter saw **the napkin which had been on his head**: "The head of Christ is God" (1 Cor 11:3). Thus to see the napkin which had been on the head of Jesus is to have faith in the divinity of Christ, which the Jews refused to accept. This napkin is described as **not lying with the linen cloths, and rolled up, having a place by itself**, because the divinity of Christ is covered over, and it is apart from every creature because of its excellence: "God who is over all be blessed for ever" (Rom 9:5); "Truly, you art a God who hides yourself" (Is 45:15). He saw the napkin **rolled up**, to form a circle. And when linen is rolled this way one can not see its beginning or end, for the eminence of the divinity neither begins nor ends: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8); "You are the same, and your years have no end" (Ps 102:27). The napkin was in one place, **a place by itself**, because God does not dwell where minds are divided; those who merit his grace are those who are one in charity: "His place is in peace" [Ps 76:2]; "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (1 Cor 14:33).

2484 Or, in another interpretation, the napkin, which workers use to wipe the sweat off their faces can be understood to indicate the labor of God. For while God always remains tranquil, he presents himself as laboring and burdened when he endures the stubborn depravity of mankind: "They have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them" (Is 1:14). Christ took on this burden in a special way when he took on a human nature: "Let him give his cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults" (Lam 3:30). This napkin is found separate and apart from the other cloths because the sufferings of our Redeemer are far apart and separate from our sufferings. The other linen cloths, which are related to the members of the body as the napkin is to the head, indicate the sufferings of the saints, which are separate from the napkin, that is, the sufferings of Christ, for Christ suffered without fault what we suffer because of our faults: "For Christ also died ... the righteous for the unrighteous" (1 Pet 3:18). He went to his death willingly • "No one takes it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (10:18); "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us" (Eph 5:2) • while the saints go to their death reluctantly, "Another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go" (21:18).

2485 Why was the Evangelist so careful to mention all these details? Chrysostom says this was done to counter the false rumor spread by the Jews that the body of Christ had been secretly taken away, as we see from Matthew (28:13).^[3] For if Christ's body had been stolen away as they said, the disciples would surely not have removed the wrappings, especially since they had to work fast because the guards were near. Nor would they be so careful to lift off the napkin and roll it up and place it in a separate place. They would simply have taken the body as they found it. This was why he allowed himself to be buried with myrrh and aloes: they glue the cloths to the body so that they cannot be quickly removed.

2486 When the Evangelist says, **Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in**, he tells of John's entrance. John did not remain outside but entered after Peter, because when the world is ending, the Jews will also be gathered into the faith: "A hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:25); "A remnant will be saved" [Is 10:21].

2487 Or, another interpretation, in the mystical sense. These two disciples stand for two kinds of people: John represents those who are devoted to the contemplation of truth, and Peter stands for those whose main interest is to carry out the commandments. In fact, "Simon" means "obedient." Now it very often happens that contemplatives, because they are docile, are the first to become acquainted with a knowledge of the mysteries of Christ • but they do not enter, for sometimes there is knowledge, but little or no love follows. While those in the active life, because of their continuing fervor and earnestness, even though they are slower to understand, enter into them more quickly, so that those who are later to arrive, are the first to penetrate the divine mysteries: "So the last will be first, and the first last" (Mt 20:16).

2488 Next when he says, **he saw and believed**, we see the effect of the investigation. At first glance it seems to mean that he saw the situation and believed that Christ had arisen. But according to Augustine this is not correct, because the next thing the Evangelist says is, **for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.**^[4] Therefore, one must say that he saw the empty tomb **and believed** what the woman had said, which is that someone had taken the Lord. Then we read, **for as yet they did not know the scripture**, because the meaning of the Scripture was not yet opened to them so they could understand it (Lk 24:45).

But certainly Christ had foretold his passion and resurrection? "I will rise on the third day" [Mt 20:19]. I answer that we should say that in keeping with the way they heard his parables, they failed here also to understand many things which

he had said plainly, thinking that he meant something else.

2489 Or, according to Chrysostom's understanding, **he saw** the linen cloths so folded and arranged which would not have been the case if the body had been furtively snatched away; **and believed**, with a true faith, that Christ had risen from the dead. [5] What follows, **for as yet they did not know the scripture**, refers to the statement, **he saw and believed**. It was like saying: before he saw these things he did not understand the scripture **that he must rise from the dead**; but when he saw he believed that he had risen from the dead.

LECTURE 2

10 Then the disciples went back to their homes. 11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

2490 Having told how Mary Magdalene came to the opened tomb, the Evangelist now tells how she came to see the angels: first, we see her devotion; secondly, she sees the angels (v 12); thirdly, we have her conversation with them (v 13). Her devotion, which made her fit to see the angels, is praised for three things.

2491 First, it was constant, and it deserves praise, especially considering that the disciples left, **the disciples went back**, not yet understanding the scripture "that he must rise from the dead," **back to their homes**, where they were staying and from where they had run to the tomb. Their fear was so great that they did not stay together: I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter" [Zech 13:7]; "The holy stones lie scattered at the head of every street" (Lam 4:1). Further, she stood there, lingering near the tomb, **Mary stood weeping outside the tomb**. The disciples had left, but a stronger and more burning affection fixed the weaker sex to the spot.

2492 A question arises here, because Mark (16:5•8) says that the women "went out and fled from the tomb." Therefore, they must have been within it. Why then does John say that **Mary stood outside**? We should say to answer this that the tomb of Christ was hewn out of rock and surrounded by a garden, as was stated before. Sometimes, therefore, the Evangelists calls only the place where the body of Christ had been laid the tomb, and at other times the entire enclosure is called

the tomb. Thus when the women are said to enter into the tomb [as in Mark 16:5], this should be understood to mean the entire enclosure. But when it says here that **Mary stood outside**, the Evangelist is referring to the tomb hewn out of rock. But this rock-hewn tomb was within the enclosure they had already entered. Mary was standing here because of the unwavering love which had inflamed her heart "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor 15:58); "Our feet have been standing within your gates" (Ps 122:2).

2493 Secondly, Mary's devotion is admired because it issued in tears, for she stood there **weeping**: "She weeps bitterly in the night" (Lam 1:2). There are two kinds of tears: tears of compunction, to wash away sins • "Every night I flood my bed with tears" (Ps 6:7) • and tears of devotion, from a desire for heavenly things • "He goes forth," hastening towards heavenly things, "weeping, bearing the seed for sowing" (Ps 126:6). Mary Magdalene had copious tears of compunction at the time of her conversion, when she had been the village sinner. Then, in her love for the truth, she washed the stains of her sins with her tears: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much" (Lk 7:47). She also shed abundant tears of devotion over the passion and resurrection of Christ, as we see here.

2494 Thirdly, her devotion is admired because of her earnest search for Christ, **and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb**. This weeping of Mary came from the desire of love. For it is the nature of love to want its beloved present; and if the beloved cannot be really present, it at least wants to think of the beloved: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21). Mary shed these bitter tears because the eyes which had sought her Lord and did not find him were now freed for tears, and she grieved the more because he had been taken from the tomb. The life of such a Teacher had been destroyed, but his memory remained. Since Mary could not have him present, she wanted at least to look at the place where he had been buried, so **she stooped** to look into the tomb. We learn from this that we should look at the death of Christ with a humble heart: "You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes" (Mt 11:25). She stooped **to look**, giving us the example to look continually on the death of Christ with the eyes of our mind, for one look is not enough for one who loves, for the force of love increases the desire to explore: "Looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb 12:2). **She stooped to look**, pressed down by the love of Christ: "The love of Christ presses us" [2 Cor 5:14]. Or again, according to Augustine, by a divine impulse in her soul she was made to look about, and saw something greater, the angels: "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom 8:14).[\[6\]](#)

2495 Next the Evangelist describes the sight of the angels (v 12). He mentions four things.

2496 First, what Mary saw, which was that **she saw two angels**, which goes to show that all orders of angels, both those "assisting" and those "ministering," were in service to Christ: "Let all God's angels worship him" (Heb 6:1).

A question arises here because Matthew (28:2) and Mark (16:5) say that Mary and the other women saw one angel on the right side of the tomb, while here we have two angels and they are inside. Each one is correct, for Matthew and Mark tell what occurred first, when the women first came, and believing that Christ was taken, returned to the disciples. But John recounts what happened after Mary returned with the disciples and remained after they had left.

2497 Secondly, he mentions their raiment, **in white**. This shows the splendor of the resurrection and the glory of the risen Christ: "They shall walk with me in white" (Rev 3:4). Indeed, we read that the armies of heaven followed him and were clothed in white, that is, raised to heavenly glory (Rev 19:14).

2498 Thirdly, we see that they were **sitting**. This indicates the calmness and power of Christ, who being now at rest from all afflictions, reigns in immortal flesh and sitting at the right hand of the Father: "Sit at my right hand" (Ps 110:1); he will sit "upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom" (Is 9:7).

2499 Fourthly, we see how they were positioned, **one at the head and one at the feet**. We can refer this to three things. First, to the two Testaments. The word "angel" in Greek means "messenger," and both Testaments brought messages about Christ: "And the crowds that went before him and that followed him shouted, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!'" (Mt 21:9). So the angel sitting at the head signifies the Old Testament, and the angel at the feet the New Testament.

Secondly, we can relate this to those who preach Christ. There are two natures in Christ, the divine and the human: the head of Christ is God (1 Cor 11:3), and the feet of Christ are his human nature: "We will adore in the place where his feet stood" [Ps 132:7]. So, those who preach the divinity of Christ • as in "In the beginning was the Word" (1:1) • are sitting at the head; those who preach his humanity • as in "And the Word became flesh" (1:14) • are sitting at the feet.

Thirdly, we can refer this to the time when the mysteries of Christ are announced. Then one angel sits at the head and the other at the feet because they signified that the mysteries of Christ would be announced from the head or

beginning of the world to its end: "You proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26).

2500 Next, the Evangelist gives the greeting of the angels (20:13): first their question; and then Mary's answer.

2501 Concerning the first, the angels knew that Mary was uncertain about the resurrection and so as if beginning anew they asked her the reason for her tears: they, the angels, said to her, **Woman, why are you weeping?** This was like saying: Do not cry for there is no need for it, because "Weeping may tarry for the night," of the passion, "but joy comes with the morning," of the resurrection (Ps 30:5); "Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded" (Jer 31:16). In this regard we can recall to mind that Gregory said that the very same sacred words which excite our tears of love console those same tears when they promise us hope in our Redeemer: "When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul" (Ps 94:19).[\[7\]](#)

2502 Mary thought that they were questioning her because of their ignorance, and regarded them not as angels but as men; so she gave the reason for her tears: **They have taken the Lord**, that is, the body of my Lord. Here she was referring to a part by mentioning the whole, just like we profess that the Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God was buried, although only his flesh was buried, because his divinity was never separated from his flesh. **And I do not know where they have laid him.** This was the reason for her desolation: she did not know where to go to find him to soothe her sorrow.

2503 Is it a consolation for one who loves to have something that belonged to the beloved? According to Augustine, in his *Confessions*, this would be more a cause of sorrow. For this reason he said that he fled from all the places where he had formerly spent time with his friend. [\[8\]](#) Still, Chrysostom says that this would be a cause of consolation. [\[9\]](#) Each of these is true. In all cases where there is a mixture of joy and sadness, the hope for the thing desired brings pleasure • "Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation" (Rom 12:12) • and also brings sorrow • "Hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Prv 13:12). But hope does not cause these from the same point of view. Hope causes joy because it regards the thing loved as able to be obtained; but insofar as this thing is actually absent it produces sorrow. It is like that here: something belonging to a friend, because it stands for the friend, is pleasant to the lover; while inasmuch as it recalls the absence of the one loved it produces sadness.

LECTURE 3

14 Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the [my] Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." 18 Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.[\[10\]](#)

2504 Now the Evangelist shows how Mary came to see Christ: first, he tells how she saw Christ; secondly, how he was recognized by her. Concerning the first, we see her seeing Christ; and then what Christ said to her.

2505 Firstly, then, **Saying this**, that is, when Mary said this to the angels, **she turned round**. Chrysostom wonders why Mary, who was speaking to the angels, whom she considered to be at least men deserving of respect, turned around before they had a chance to answer her.[\[11\]](#) The answer is that while Mary was responding to the angels' question Christ arrived and the angels stood out of reverence. When Mary saw this, she was puzzled and turned around to see what had made them stand up. Thus in Luke (24:4) mention is made that the two angels were seen standing.

Having turned around, Mary **saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus**, for he did not appear glorious to her, although the angels saw him as glorious and were honoring him. We see from this that if anyone desires to see Christ, they must turn round to him: "Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you" (Zech 1:3). Those come to the point of seeing him who entirely turn themselves to him by love: "She [Wisdom] hastens to make herself known to those who desire her" (Wis 6:14).

Mystically, this signifies that at one time Mary had turned her back to Christ by her disbelief, but when she turned her soul to knowing him, she turned round to him.

2506 Why didn't Mary recognize Christ, since he was the same person as before? We should say that it was either because she did not believe that the one she had seen dead had risen, or else her eyes were held so that she would not

recognize him, like the two disciples on their way to Emmaus (Lk 24:16).

2507 The words of Christ are now given: **Woman, why are you weeping?** First we see Christ's question; then Mary's answer.

2508 Concerning the first, note that Mary was advancing step by step: for the angels asked her why she was weeping, but Christ asked her whom she was looking for, for her weeping was caused by the desire which led her to look. Christ asked her whom she was looking for in order to increase this desire, for when she spoke of the one she was seeking, her love burned more intensely, and so she would continue to seek him: "Seek his presence continually" (Ps 105:4); "But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day" (Prv 4:18).

2509 When the Evangelist says, **Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him**, we see Mary's answer: first, whom she thought was questioning her; then her response.

2510 Mary thought the gardener was speaking to her, because she knew that the guards had already fled, frightened by the earthquake and the sight of the angels, and that the only one who would be there would be the one taking care of it, the gardener. As Gregory says: "This woman, in erring did not err, when she thought that Christ was a gardener, for he planted the seeds of virtue in her heart by the strength of his love."[\[12\]](#) "I will water my orchard and drench my garden plot" (Sir 24:31).

2511 Mary said to Jesus, **Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me**. She calls him **Sir** in order to gain his good•will. But since this "gardener" had just arrived, and Mary had not told him whom she was looking for, why does she say, **if you have carried him away?** Who was **him**? We should say that the force of love usually causes the lover to think that no one would be ignorant of the one who is always in his thoughts. For example, we read in Luke that our Lord asked [on the road to Emmaus] "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And one of the disciples answered, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days" (Lk 24:17).

2512 When Mary says, **tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away**, she shows a wonderful courage which would not be driven off by the sight of a dead person, and she would have tried to carry the body away even though it was beyond her strength. But this is what 1 Corinthians (13:7) says, "Love hopes all things." She wanted to take him so the Jews would not violate

the dead body and to carry it to another secret grave.

2513 Next the Evangelist shows Mary recognizing Christ. The Evangelist uses the name Mary, while before he had used the general word "woman," (v 13;15). He calls her by her own name to show that she was well known to the saints • "He determines the number of the stars, he gives to them their names" (Ps 147:4); "I know you by name" (Ex 33:12) • and to indicate that although all things are moved by God with a general motion, yet a special grace is needed for a person's justification.

The effect of her being called by Christ was that **she turned and said to him in Hebrew, Rabboni! (which means Teacher).**

2514 Wasn't Mary always looking at Christ when he was speaking to her? According to Augustine, this present turning refers to her interior state of mind: before, although she was facing Christ, she thought he was someone else, the gardener; but now her heart was turned and she recognized him for what he was. [\[13\]](#)

Or, one could say that, as was said, she thought he was someone else, and so while she was talking to him she did not look at him but was concerned with the Christ she carried in her heart, and was looking about for some trace of him.

Christ called her by her own name, **Mary**: This was like saying: Where are you looking? Recognize him who has recognized you. As soon as she heard her name she recognized him, and said, **Rabboni, which means Teacher**, for this was what she used to call him. We can understand from this that the cause of our justification and of our profession of faith is to have been called by Christ.

2515 Next, the Evangelist shows Mary receiving instructions from Christ: one of them is negative, the other positive, **go to my brethren.**

2516 He does two things about the first: he states the prohibition, and then gives the reason for it. Christ warns Mary not to touch him, saying, **Do not hold me.** Even though we do not read here that Mary wanted to touch Christ, Gregory says we can see from this that Mary fell at the feet of Christ and wanted to grasp the one she had recognized. [\[14\]](#) He adds the reason, **for I have not yet ascended to my Father.** It seems from this that after his resurrection, Christ did not want to be touched before he ascended. But the opposite is found in Luke (24:39): "Handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones." It is no answer to say

that Christ wanted to be touched by his disciples, but not by the women, for we see in Matthew (28:9), that Mary Magdalene and other women came to him and did grasp him by his feet. Therefore, we should understand, according to the letter of the text, that Mary saw angels at two times: the first time was with the other women, when she saw one angel sitting on the stone, as Matthew (28:2) says, and Mark (16:5); the second time was when she returned and saw two angels inside the tomb, as John (20:12) says. Similarly, she also saw Christ two times: first in the garden, when she thought he was the gardener, as we just saw; secondly, she saw him when she was running with the other women to tell the disciples what they had seen (in order to strengthen them in their faith in the resurrection). It was this second time that they approached and held Christ's feet, as Matthew (28:9) and Mark (16:9) say.

2517 There are two mystical reasons why Christ did not want to be touched. First, because this particular woman signified the Church of the Gentiles, which was not to touch Christ by faith until he had ascended to the Father: "A congregation of people will surround you; for their sakes return on high" [Ps 7:8]. The other reason is given by Augustine in his work on *The Trinity*.[\[15\]](#) It is that touch is the last stage of knowledge: when we see something, we know it to a certain extent, but when we touch it our knowledge is complete. Now this particular woman had some faith in Christ, which was that he was a holy man; and this was why she called him Teacher. But she had not yet reached the point of believing that he was equal to the Father and one with God. Thus Christ says, **Do not hold me**, that is, do not allow what you now believe of me to be the limit of your faith, **for I have not yet ascended to my Father**, that is, in your heart, because you do not believe that I am one with him - yet she did believe this later. In a way Christ did ascend to the Father within her when she had advanced in the faith to the point of believing that he was equal to the Father.

2518 Or, we could say, with Chrysostom, that after this woman saw that Christ had arisen, she thought he was in the same state as he was before, having a life subject to death.[\[16\]](#) She wanted to be with him as she was before his passion, and in her joy thought there was nothing extraordinary about him, although Christ's flesh had become much better by arising. To correct this impression Christ said, **Do not hold me**. It was like saying: Do not think that I have a mortal life, and can associate with you as before: "Even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer" (2 Cor 5:16). This is what he adds when he says, **for I have not yet ascended to my Father**. Accordingly, this statement does not give the reason for his prohibition, but an answer to an implicit question. It was like saying: Although you see me remaining here, it is not because my flesh is not glorified but because **I have not yet ascended to my Father**. For before he ascended he wanted to strengthen in the hearts of the apostles their faith in his resurrection and in his

divinity.

2519 After this he gives his positive directions, **go to my brethren**, that is the apostles, because they are his brethren by his having the same nature: "He had to be made like his brethren in every respect" (Heb 2:17); and they are his brethren by being adopted through grace, because they are the adopted children of his Father, of whom he is the natural Son.

Notice the three privileges given to Mary Magdalene. First, she had the privilege of being a prophet because she was worthy enough to see the angels, for a prophet is an intermediary between angels and the people. Secondly, she had the dignity or rank of an angel insofar as she looked upon Christ, on whom the angels desire to look. Thirdly, she had the office of an apostle; indeed, she was an apostle to the apostles insofar as it was her task to announce our Lord's resurrection to the disciples. Thus, just as it was a woman who was the first to announce the words of death, so it was a woman who would be the first to announce the words of life.

2520 **And say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father.** "I go to the Father" (14:12); "He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens" (Eph 4:10). Arius based his error on these words, **my Father and your Father**. He took it to mean that God is the Father of the Son in the same way that he is our Father, and that he is the God of the Son in the same way that he is our God. The answer to this is that the meaning of these words must be gathered from the circumstances in which they were spoken. Christ said before, **go to my brethren**. But Christ had these brethren insofar as he had a human nature, and in his human nature he is subject to the Father as a creature to the Creator, for the body of Christ is something created.

2521 Or, according to Augustine, Christ is speaking of himself and referring to each of his natures. [\[17\]](#) **I am ascending to my Father and your Father** refers to his divine nature, and from this point of view he has as Father God, to whom he is equal and like in nature. Thus, the meaning is my Father by nature, and your Father by grace. It is saying in effect: the fact that you are adopted children by grace is due to me: "God sent forth his Son ... so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal 4:4); "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom 8:29). When he adds, **to my God and your God**, he is referring to his human nature. From this point of view God rules him; thus he says, **my God**, under whom I am a man. **And your God**, and between him and you I am the mediator: for God is our God because through Christ we are pleasing to him: "Having then been justified by faith, we have

peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained access by faith to this grace in which we stand; and we exult in the hope of the glory of the children of God" [Rom 5:1]; "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5:19).

2522 Mary was quick to obey, as we see from **Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples** etc. "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you" (1 Cor 11:23); "What I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God is Israel, I announce to you" (Is 21:10).

LECTURE 4

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were [gathered together], for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."[\[18\]](#)

2523 Having described how Christ appeared to the holy women, the Evangelist now tells of his appearance to the apostles: first, his appearance at Jerusalem before all except Thomas; secondly, his appearance when Thomas was present (v 26); thirdly, the events near the Sea of Tiberias (ch 21). Three things are done regarding the first: first, we see our Lord appear; secondly, we see a duty imposed on the apostles, **I send you**; thirdly, our Lord gives them a spiritual gift, **Receive the Holy Spirit**. He does three things about the first: he mentions the circumstances of Christ's appearance; secondly, the details of the appearance, (v 19); thirdly, the result of this, **the disciples were glad**.

The Evangelist mentions four circumstances in our Lord's appearance to the disciples. First, he mentions the time of day, **on the evening**; secondly, what day it was, **of that day**, thirdly, the condition of the place, **the doors being shut**; and fourthly, the state of the disciples, **where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews**.

2524 The time of our Lord's appearance was in the evening; and there were two literal reasons for this. First, he wanted to appear when they were all together;

consequently, he waited until evening, so that those who had been at various places during the day would be found together in the evening, when they gathered together. Secondly, our Lord appeared to strengthen and comfort them. And so he chose a time when they would be more afraid and in need of comfort and strength; this was in the evening: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps 46:1).

There is also a mystical reason: for at the end of the world our Lord will appear to the faithful in the middle of the night when the cry is heard that the bridegroom is coming to reward them. "And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to the steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages' (Mt 20:8).

2525 The day Christ appeared was the very day on which he arose, for it was the evening **of that day, the first day of the week**, Sunday. We saw this day mentioned in (20:1).

From the Gospels we can see that our Lord appeared five times on that day: Once to Magdalene alone (which we just considered v 14), and again to her when she was returning to the disciples with the other women, when they approached and held our Lord's feet [Mt 28:9]. The third time was to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13). The fourth time was to Simon Peter; but how, when or where he appeared we do not know, but just that he appeared: "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon" (Lk 24:34). The fifth time was when he appeared to all the disciples together in the evening, as John mentions here (v 19).

This is the reason why we sing: "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps 118:24). We can also understand from these events that on the day of the general resurrection Christ will appear openly to all women, sinners, pilgrims, apostles and apostolic men, because "Every eye will see him, every one who pierced him" (Rev 1:7).

2526 The place is described as having **the doors shut**. The literal reason for this being that it was late, during the night, and also **for fear of the Jews**. From Christ's point of view the doors were shut so he could show them his power by entering through closed doors.

2527 Regarding this point, some say that to enter through closed doors is a property of the glorified body. They say that due to some inherent property in a glorified body, it can be simultaneously present in the same place as another body. Thus, this is accomplished without a miracle. But this position cannot

stand, for the fact that a non•glorified human body cannot be simultaneously in the same place as another body is due to its very nature. Consequently, if the glorified body has an inherent ability to be in a place occupied at the same time by another body, it must be because it lacks the property which now prevents this in the case of a non•glorified body. But this latter property cannot be separated or destroyed from a body, since it is not a mathematical bulk, as they say, but the very dimensions of the quantified body through which it has a local position. Thus the Philosopher, when he argues against those who posit ideas and matter, asserts that even on the assumption that the entire region above the earth is a vacuum, no sense•perceptible body could exist there in the same place as another body because of their quantitative dimensions. [\[19\]](#) Now no property of a glorified body can remove the dimensions from a body and have it still remain a body. Thus we should say that Christ did this miraculously, by the power of his divinity, and that whenever something similar happens with the saints, it is miraculous and requires a new miracle. Augustine and Gregory teach this explicitly. Augustine says: "Do you want to know how Christ could enter through closed doors? If you understood how, it would not be a miracle. Where reason falls, faith instructs." [\[20\]](#) And he adds: "He was able to enter with the doors shut, who was born without his mother's virginity being taken away." [\[21\]](#) So, just as Christ's leaving the womb of his virgin mother was a miracle of his divine power, so was his entering through closed doors.

2528 In the mystical interpretation we can understand that Christ appears to us when our doors, that is, our external senses, are closed in prayer: "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door" (Mt 6:6). It is also a reminder that at the end of the world those who are prepared will be admitted to the marriage feast, and then the door will be shut (Mt 25:10).

2529 We should imitate the conduct of the apostles, for they are described as **gathered together**. This too is not without its mystery: for Christ came when they were united together, and the Holy Spirit descended on them when they were united together, because Christ and the Holy Spirit are present only to those who are united in charity: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20).

2530 Now three things are mentioned about the appearance of Christ: the way he showed himself; the greeting he gave them; and the way he gave them definite evidence of his real presence.

2531 Christ showed that he was present with them beyond any doubt because **Jesus came and stood among them. Jesus came**, personally, as he had promised: "I go away, and I will come to you" (14:28). And he **stood among**

them, so that each one could recognize him with certainty. Thus the Jews who did not know him are blamed "Among you stands one whom you do not know" (1:26). Again, Jesus **stood among them**, the disciples, to show that he was human like them: "with a garland of brethren around him, he was like a young cedar on Lebanon" (Sir 50:12). Again, he **stood among them**, lowering himself, for he lived among them as one of them: "If they make you master of the feast, do not exalt yourself; be among them as one of them" (Sir 32:1); "I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:27). Also, he wanted to show that we ought to stand among the virtues: "This is the way, walk in it; do not turn aside to the right or to the left" [Is 30:21]. One who goes beyond the middle road of virtue goes to the right; one who falls short of the middle road goes to the left.

2532 He greets them with the words, **Peace be with you**. It was necessary to say this because their peace was disturbed in many ways. Their peace with God was troubled; they had sinned against him, some by denying him, others by running away: "You will all fall away because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered'" (Mt 26:31). To cure this Jesus offers them the peace of reconciliation with God: "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom 5:10), which he accomplished by his suffering. Their peace with themselves was disturbed because they were depressed and hesitant in their faith. And he offers his peace to cure this: "Great peace have those who love your law" (Ps 119:165). Their peace with others was disturbed because they were being persecuted by the Jews. And to this he says, **Peace be with you**, to counter the persecution of the Jews: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you" (14:27).

2533 Jesus gives them sure proof that it is really himself by showing them his hands and side. **When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side**, because in them the marks of his passion remained in a special way: "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself" (Lk 24:39). And when in glory he will show himself in the same way: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word" (14:23), "and I will manifest myself to him" (14:21).

2534 Now the effect of his appearance is mentioned: this was the joy in the hearts of the disciples when they saw the Lord, as he had promised: "I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice" (16:22). This joy will be complete for the good in their native land, when they have the clear vision of God: "You shall see and your heart shall rejoice; and your bones shall flourish like the grass" (Is 66:14).

2535 Now he charges the apostles with their ministry: first, he grants them the bond of peace; secondly, he charges them, **as the Father has sent me**.

2536 Jesus said to them again, **Peace be with you**. He said this to counter a twofold anxiety. The first time he said, **Peace be with you**, was to combat the anxiety caused by the Jews; but when he said the second time, **Peace be with you**, this was to deal with the anxiety to come from the Gentiles: "In me you may have peace ... in the world you have tribulation" (16:33). He said this because they were about to be sent to the Gentiles.

2537 Accordingly, Jesus immediately enjoins them, **As the Father has sent me, even so I send you**. This shows that he is the intermediary between us and God: "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5). This was a source of strength for the disciples: for they recognized the authority of Christ, and knew that he was sending them by divine authority. They were also strengthened because they recognized their own dignity, the dignity of being apostles; for an apostle is one who is sent. **As the Father has sent me, even so I send you**: that is, as the Father, who loves me, sent me into the world to suffer for the salvation of the faithful • "For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (3:17) • so I, who love you, send you to undergo suffering for my name • "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Mt 10:16).

2538 Jesus makes them adequate for their task by giving them the Holy Spirit, "God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:6). In this giving of the Spirit, he first grants them a sign of this gift, which is, that **he breathed on them**. We see something like this in Genesis (2:7), when God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," of natural life, which the first man corrupted, but Christ repaired this by giving the Holy Spirit. We should not suppose that this breath of Christ was the Holy Spirit; it was a sign of the Spirit. So Augustine says, in *The Trinity*: "This bodily breath was not the substance of the Holy Spirit, but a fitting sign that the Holy Spirit proceeds not just from the Father but also from the Son."[\[22\]](#)

2539 Notice that the Holy Spirit was sent over Christ, first, in the appearance of a dove, at his baptism (1:32), and then in the appearance of a cloud, at his transfiguration (Mt 17:5). The reason for this is that the grace of Christ, which is given by the Holy Spirit, was to be distributed to us by being proliferated through the sacraments. Consequently, at Christ's baptism the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, which is an animal known for its proliferation. And since the grace of Christ comes through teaching, the Spirit descended in a luminous cloud, and Christ is seen to be a Teacher, "Listen to him" (Mt 17:5). The Spirit descended over the apostles the first time through a breath to indicate the proliferation of grace through the sacraments, whose ministers they were. Thus Christ said, **"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven"**: "Go therefore

and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). The second time the Spirit descended on them in tongues of fire to indicate the proliferation of grace through teaching; and so we read in Acts (2:4) that right after they were filled with the Holy Spirit they began to speak.

2540 We see the words used when the Spirit was given, **Receive the Holy Spirit**. But did they receive the Holy Spirit then? It seems not, for since Christ had not yet ascended, it was not fitting that he give gifts to us. Indeed, according to Chrysostom, there were some who said that Christ did not give them the Holy Spirit at that time, but prepared them for the future giving of the Spirit at Pentecost. [23] They were brought to this opinion because Daniel (10:8) could not endure his sight of an angel, and so these disciples could not have endured the coming of the Holy Spirit unless they had been prepared. But Chrysostom himself says that the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples, not for all tasks in general, but for a specific task, that is, to forgive sin. Augustine and Gregory say that the Holy Spirit has two precepts of love: love of God and of neighbor. [24] Therefore, the Holy Spirit was given the first time on earth to indicate the precept of the love of neighbor; and the Spirit was given the second time from heaven to indicate the precept of the love of God.

2541 Thirdly, we see the fruit of the gift, If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven. This forgiving of sins is a fitting effect of the Holy Spirit. This is so because the Holy Spirit is charity, love, and through the Holy Spirit love is given to us: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). Now it is only through love that sins are forgiven, for "Love covers all offenses" (Prv 10:12); "Love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pet 4:8).

2542 We can ask here why we read, **If you forgive the sins of any**, for only God forgives sins? Some say that only God forgives the sin, while the priest absolves only from the debt of punishment, and pronounces the person free from the stain of sin. This is not true: for the sacrament of Penance, since it is a sacrament of the New Law, gives grace, as does Baptism. Now in the sacrament of Baptism, the priest baptizes as an instrument, and yet he confers grace. It is similar in the sacrament of Penance, the priest absolves from the sin and the punishment as a minister and sacramentally, insofar as he administers the sacrament in which sins are forgiven. The statement that God alone forgives sins authoritatively is true. So also, only God baptizes, but the priest is the minister, as was said.

2543 Another question arises from the statements, **Receive the Holy Spirit**. If

you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven. It seems from this that one who does not have the Holy Spirit cannot forgive sins. We should say about this that if the forgiveness of sins was the personal work of the priest, that is, that he did this by his own power, he could not sanctify anyone unless he himself were holy. But the forgiveness of sins is the personal work of God, who forgives sins by his own power and authority. The priest is only the instrument. Therefore, just as a master, through his servant and minister, whether good or bad, can accomplish what he wills, so our Lord, through his ministers, even if they are evil, can confer the sacraments, in which grace is given.

2544 Again, there is a question about, **If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven.** We should say, as we already did, that in the sacraments the priest acts as a minister: "This is how one should regard us, as servants [ministers] of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1). Thus, in the same way that God forgives and retains sins, so also does the priest. Now God forgives sins by giving grace, and he is said to retain by not giving grace because of some obstacle in the one who is to receive it. So also the minister forgives sins, insofar as he dispenses a sacrament of the Church, and he retains insofar as he accounts someone unworthy to receive the sacrament.

LECTURE 5

24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin [Didymus], was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe."[\[25\]](#)

2545 After describing our Savior's appearance, the Evangelist now mentions the doubt of one of the disciples. First, we see that this disciple was absent; secondly, he is told about our Lord's appearance; and thirdly, we see his stubborn doubt.

2546 The disciple who was absent is first identified by his name, **Thomas**, which means a "twin" or an "abyss." An abyss has both depth and darkness. And Thomas was an abyss on account of the darkness of his disbelief, of which he was the cause. Again, there is an abyss • the depths of Christ's compassion - which he had for Thomas. We read: "Abyss calls to abyss" [Ps 42:7]. That is, the depths of Christ's compassion calls to the depths of darkness [of disbelief] in Thomas, and Thomas' abyss of unwillingness [to believe] calls out, when he professes the faith, to the depths of Christ.

Secondly, the dignity of the disciple is mentioned, for he was **one of the twelve**. There were not actually twelve at that time, for Judas had died (Mt 25:5), but he was called one of the twelve because he had been called to that elevated rank which our Lord had set apart as twelve in number: "He called his disciples, and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles" (Lk 6:13). And God wanted this number to always remain unchanged.

Thirdly, he is described by the meaning of his name, **Thomas, called Didymus**. Thomas is a Syrian or a Hebrew name and has two meanings: twin and abyss. The English word "twin" is "Didymus" in Greek. Because John wrote his Gospel in Greek, he used the word Didymus. Perhaps he was called the Twin because he was from the tribe of Benjamin, in which some or all were twins. Or, this name could be taken from his doubting, for one who is certain holds firmly to one side, but one who doubts accepts one opinion but fears another might be true.

2547 **Thomas ... was not with them**, the disciples, **when Jesus came**, for he returned later than the others who had scattered during the day, and so he had missed the comfort of seeing the Lord, the conferring of peace and the breath giving the Holy Spirit. This teaches us not to become separated from one's companions, "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some" (Heb 10:25). As Gregory says, it was not by accident that this chosen disciple was missing, but by God's will. [\[26\]](#) It was in the plans of the divine pity that by feeling the wounds in the flesh of his Teacher, the doubting disciple should heal in us the wounds of disbelief.

Here we have the strongest signs of God's profound pity. First, in this: that he loves the human race so much that he sometimes allows tribulations to afflict his elect, so that from these some good can accrue to the human race. This was the reason he allowed the apostles, the prophets and the holy martyrs to be afflicted: "Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth" (Hos 6:5); "If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted it is for your comfort which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer" (2 Cor 1:6). Even more remarkable is that God allows some saint to fall into sin in order to teach us. Why did God allow some saints and holy men to sin gravely (as David did by adultery and murder) if not to teach us to be more careful and humble? It is so that one who thinks he is standing firm will take care not to fall, and so that one who has fallen will make the effort to rise. Thus, Ambrose said to the Emperor Theodosius: "The one you followed by sinning, try now to follow by repenting." [\[27\]](#) And Gregory says that the disbelief of Thomas was of more benefit to our faith than the faith of the disciples who did believe. [\[28\]](#)

2548 Thomas is told about our Lord's appearance. Because he had not been with the others, **the other disciples told him, We have seen the Lord.** This was by the divine plan, which is that what one receives from God should be shared with others: "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another" (1 Pet 4:10); "I have seen the Lord, and I have been saved" [Gen 32:30].

2549 When Thomas said, **Unless I see the print of the nails....** we see how stubborn he was in doubting. It would have been justifiable if he had not immediately believed, for we read, "One who trusts others too quickly is light-minded" (Sir 19:4). But to overdo one's search, especially about the secrets of God, shows a coarseness of mind: "As it is not good to eat much honey, so one who searches into the majesty [of God] is overwhelmed by its glory" [Prv 25:27]; "Seek not what is too difficult for you, nor investigate what is beyond your power. Reflect upon what has been assigned to you, for you do not need what is hidden" (Sir 3:22).

2550 Thomas was difficult to convince and unreasonable in his demands. He was difficult because he refused to believe without some sensible facts, not just from one sense but from two, sight • **unless I see in his hands the print of the nails** • and touch • **and place my hand in his side.** He was unreasonable because he insisted on seeing the wounds before believing, although he would be seeing something greater, that is, the entire person risen and restored. And although Thomas said these things because of his own doubts, this was arranged by God for our benefit and progress. It is certain that Christ, who arose as a complete person, could have healed the marks of his wounds; but he kept them for our benefit.

LECTURE 6

26 Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? [Because you have seen me, Thomas, you have believed.] Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe [have believed]." 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of

God, and that believing you may have life in his name.[\[29\]](#)

2551 Now the Evangelist presents our Lord's second appearance. It was to all the disciples, including Thomas. First, he mentions Christ appearing; secondly, we see that Thomas is now convinced; thirdly, the Evangelist comments on what he has included in his gospel (30). He does three things about the first: the time of Christ's appearance is mentioned; then to whom he appeared; and thirdly, the way he came (v 26).

2552 The time was **eight days later**, that is, from the day of our Lord's resurrection, on the evening of which he first appeared. One literal reason for mentioning the time was so that the Evangelist could show that although Christ had appeared frequently to the disciples, he did not remain with them continually, since he had not arisen to the same kind of life, just as we will not rise to the same kind of life: "All the days of my service I would wait, till my release should come" [Job 14:14]. A reason for the delay was so that Thomas, hearing about our Lord's first appearance from the disciples, would develop a stronger desire and become more disposed to believe. A mystical reason for our Lord's appearance after eight days is that this indicates how he will appear to us in glory [as immortal, etc.]: "When he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2). He will appear to us in the eighth age, which is the age of those who have risen from the dead.

2553 The Evangelist shows to whom he appeared when he says, **his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them**. We should note that Thomas was the only one who needed this appearance of Christ, but even so our Lord did not appear to him alone, but to the group. This shows that it is not very pleasing to God to exist in isolation, but it is to live in a unity of charity with others: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20). Those to whom Christ appears [in this life] are not all gathered into one group, and this present assembly of the disciples did not include every such one. But in the future all will be gathered together, and no one absent: "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together" (Mt 24:28); "He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Mt 24:31).

2554 He shows the way Christ appeared by saying, **The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, Peace be with you**. This was explained before. The Evangelist notes three things here. First, how Christ came, **the doors were shut**. As Augustine says, this was done miraculously, by the same power which enabled him to walk on the water.[\[30\]](#) Secondly, where he

stood, **among them**, so he could be seen by all, as was fitting. Thirdly, we see what he said, **Peace be with you**, that is, the peace coming from reconciliation, reconciliation with God, which Jesus said had now been accomplished: "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom 5:10); "making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20). Jesus also announced to them the future peace of eternity and immortality, which he had promised them: "He makes peace in your borders" (Ps 147:14); and also the peace of charity and unity, which he commanded them to maintain: "Be at peace with one another" (Mk 9:49).

2555 Now the Evangelist shows how the doubting disciple was rescued and persuaded. Here we see a second sign of God's pity, which is that he quickly comes to help his elect even though they fall. Indeed, the elect fall at times, just like the reprobate. But there is a difference: the reprobate are crushed, but the Lord quickly puts his hand under the elect so they can rise up: "When a just person falls he will not be crushed, for the Lord will put his hand under him" [Ps 37:27]; "When I thought, 'My foot slips,' your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up" (Ps 94:18). And so our Lord quickly puts his hand under the fallen Thomas so that when Thomas said, **Unless I see ... I will not believe**, our Lord rescues him, saying, **Put your finger here**. Three things are mentioned here: first, our Lord shows his wounds; secondly, we see Thomas' profession; and thirdly, his slowness to believe is reproved.

2556 Regarding the first, note that Thomas laid down his own conditions for believing, which were that he see and feel Christ's wounds, as was said. If these conditions were met, he promised to believe. So our Lord, helping him by the presence of his divinity, rescued him by meeting these conditions. First, we see the conditions being met; secondly Thomas is asked to keep his promise (v 27).

2557 One condition was that he feel the wounds, so Christ said, **Put your finger here**. A problem arises here because there can be no defects in a glorified body, and wounds are defects. How then can there be wounds in the body of Christ? Augustine answers this in this book, *On the Creed*, when he says: "Christ could have removed all traces of his wounds from his risen and glorified body, but he had reasons for retaining them. First, to show them to Thomas, who would not believe unless he touched and saw. Again, he will use them to rebuke unbelievers and sinners at the judgment. He will not say to them, as he did to Thomas, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed,' but rather, to convict them, 'Behold the man you have crucified, the wounds you have inflicted. Look at the side you have pierced. It was opened for your sake, and you refused to enter.'" [\[31\]](#)

2558 Another question on this point is whether or not the traces of the martyrs'

wounds will remain on their bodies. Augustine, in his *The City of God* (22), answers this in a similar manner, saying they will remain, not as a disfigurement but like a great ornamental beauty. He says "These wounds in their body will not be a deformity, but a dignity. And although on their bodies, they will radiate not a bodily but a spiritual beauty. Of course, the martyrs who suffered amputation or decapitation will not appear in the resurrection without their hands and members • for they too have been told that not a hair of their head would perish. Indeed, even though their members were mutilated or cut off, they will be restored, yet the traces of their wounds will remain." [32]

2559 Gregory asks how the Lord could offer his body to be touched because it was incorruptible, for what is incorruptible cannot be touched. [33] "Christ being raised from the dead will never die again" (Rom 6:9). The heretic, Eutyches, was influenced by this to say that the body of Christ and the bodies of all those who rise will not be touchable, but fine and spiritual, like the wind or a breath. But since this is contrary to what our Lord said - "Handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Lk 24:39) • our Lord showed that he was incorruptible and touchable to demonstrate that his body after his resurrection was of the same nature as before, and what had been corruptible had now put on incorruption (1 Cor 15:53). It was the same in nature, but with a different glory: for what had been heavy and lowly arose in glory and subtlety, as the effect of spiritual power.

2560 Our Lord continued, saying, **see my hands**, which hung on the cross, **and put out your hand, and place it in my side**, which was pierced by the spear, and realize that I am the same person who had hung upon the cross. As for the mystical interpretation, a finger signifies knowledge, and a hand signifies our works. Thus when Thomas is told to put his finger and hand into the wounds of Christ, we are being told to use our knowledge and works for the service of Christ: "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal 6:14).

2561 Our Lord holds Thomas to his promise saying, **do not be faithless, but believing**: "Be faithful unto death" (Rev 2:10).

2562 The Evangelist now mentions Thomas' profession. It seems that Thomas quickly became a good theologian by professing a true faith. He professed the humanity of Christ when he said, **My Lord**, for he had called Christ this before the passion: "You call me Teacher and Lord" (Jn 13:13). And he professed the divinity of Christ when he said, **and my God**. Before this, the only one who had called Christ God was Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16); "This is the true God and eternal life" (1 Jn 5:20).

2563 Our Lord reproaches Thomas for being slow to believe, **because you have seen me, Thomas, you have believed**; and then he praises the others for being quick to believe.

2564 **Because you have seen me, Thomas, you have believed.** There is a problem here: for since faith is the substance of the things we hope for, the conviction about things that are not seen (Heb 11:1), why does our Lord say, **because you have seen me you have believed**? We should say in answer that Thomas saw one thing and believed another. He saw the man and the wounds, and from these he believed in the divinity of the one who had arisen.

2565 There is a second question. Because Thomas said that he would not believe unless he saw and touched, and our Lord was willing for him to see and touch, it seems our Lord should have replied, "because you have seen and touched me you have believed." One can say, with Augustine, that we use the sense of sight for any of the senses.[\[34\]](#) We say, "See how warm it is"; "See how it sounds"; "See how it tastes and smells." So our Lord said, **Put your finger here, and see**, not because the finger can see, but as meaning, "Touch and perceive." So Christ says here, **because you have seen me**, that is, because you have perceived through touch. Or, one could say that Thomas became flustered when he saw Christ's wounds and scars, and before he touched Christ with his finger he believed and said, **My Lord and my God.** For Gregory, Thomas did touch Christ, but did not profess his faith until he saw [the wounds].[\[35\]](#)

2566 When Christ said, **Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed**, he was praising the readiness of others to believe; and this applies especially to us. He says, "have believed" rather than "shall believe" because of the certitude [of his knowledge].

Luke seems to say the contrary: "Blessed are the eyes which see what you see" (Lk 10:23). Thus, those who have seen are more blessed than those who have not seen. I answer that blessedness is of two kinds. One is the actual state of blessedness, which consists in God's reward, where the better one sees the happier, the more blessed, he is. In this respect, the eyes that see are blessed, because this is the reward of grace. The other blessedness is the hoped-for blessedness, which is based on one's merits. And in this case the more one can merit the more blessed he is. And, the one who believes and does not see, merits more than one who believes when he sees.

2567 Now the Evangelist gives his epilogue: first he mentions the incompleteness of his gospel; secondly, the benefits it will give (v 31). Its incompleteness is clear, for **Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples**, "Lo, these

are but the outskirts of his ways; and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job 26:14); "Many things greater than these lie hidden, for we have seen but few of his works" (Si 43:32). According to Chrysostom, John said this because he mentioned fewer miracles than the other evangelists and he did not want it to be thought that he was denying these other miracles, and so he especially added, **which are not written in this book.**^[36] Or, John could be referring to the passion and resurrection of Christ, meaning that after his resurrection Christ gave many indications of his resurrection "in the presence of the disciples" that were not shown to others: "God ... made him manifest; not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses," (Acts 10:40).

2568 Now he mentions the benefits given by this gospel. It is useful for producing faith: **these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.** Indeed, all Scripture, both the Old and New Testaments, are for this purpose: "The beginning of the book writes about me" [Ps 40:7]; "Search the scriptures ... it is they that bear witness to me" (5:39). Another benefit of his gospel is that it also produces the fruit of life, **and that believing you may have life:** the life of righteousness, which is given by faith • "The righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:4) • and in the future, the life of vision, which is given by glory. This life is in his name, the name of Christ: "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

^[1] St. Thomas refers to Jn 20:1 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 51, a. 4, ad 2; q. 53, a. 2, obj. 3; q. 83, a. 2, ad 4.

^[2] *De consensus evangelistarum*, 3, ch. 24; PL 34; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:1-9.

^[3] *In Ioannem hom.*, 85, ch. 5; PG 59, col 466; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:1-9.

^[4] *Tract. in Io.*, 120, ch. 9, col. 1955; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:1-9.

^[5] *In Ioannem hom.*, 85, ch. 5; PG 59, col 466.

^[6] *Tract. in Io.*, 121, ch. 1, col. 1956; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:10-18.

^[7] *XL homiliae in Evangelista*, fin; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:10-18.

[8] Augustine, *Confessions*.

[9] *In Ioannem hom.*, 86, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 467; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:10-18.

[10] St. Thomas refers to Jn 20:17 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 20, a. 2, s. c. 3; q. 23, a. 2, obj. 2; q. 23, a. 2, ad 2; q. 55, a. 6, obj. 3; q. 57, a. 1, obj. 4, and s. c.; q. 80, a. 4, ad 1.

[11] *In Ioannem hom.*, 86, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 468; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:10-18.

[12] *XL homiliae in Evangelista*, 25; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:10-18.

[13] *Tract. in Io.*, 121, ch. 2, col. 1956-7; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:10-18.

[14] *XL homiliae in Evangelista*, 25; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:10-18.

[15] *De Trin.*, 1, 3; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:10-18.

[16] *In Ioannem hom.*, 186, ch. 2; PG 59; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:10-18.

[17] *Tract. in Io.*, 121, ch. 3, col. 1957-8; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:10-18.

[18] St. Thomas refers to Jn 20:19 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 54, a. 1, obj. 1; q. 55, a. 3, s. c.; Jn 20:20: *ST* III, q. 55, a. 3, obj. 1; Jn 20:22: *ST* I, q. 91, a. 4, ad 3; III, q. 3, a. 8, obj. 3; Jn 20:23: *ST* III, q. 3, a. 8, obj. 3; q. 84, a. 3, ad 3.

[19] Aristotle.

[20] *Serm. Pasch.*, 110; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:19-25.

[21] *Tract. in Io.*, 121, ch. 4, col. 1958; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:19-25.

[22] *De Trin.*, 4, ch. 20; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:19-25.

[23] *In Ioannem hom.*, 86; PG 59; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:19-25.

[24] *XL homiliae in Evangelista*, 26; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:19-25.

[25] St. Thomas refers to Jn 20:25-28 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 14, a. 4, s. c.

[26] *XL homiliae in Evangelista*, 26; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:26-31.

[27] Ambrose.

[28] *XL homiliae in Evangelista*, 26; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:26-31.

[29] St. Thomas refers to Jn 20:26 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 55, a. 3, s. c.; Jn 20:27: *ST* III, q. 54, a. 4, s. c.; Jn 20:26: *ST* III, q. 55, a. 3, obj. 4 and s. c.; Jn 20:29: *ST* II-II, q. 1, a. 4, obj. 1; III, q. 41, a. 2, ad 1; q. 55, a. 5, obj. 3; Jn 20: 31: *ST* I, q. 1. a. 8, obj. 1; I-II, q. 106, a. 1, obj. 1.

[30] *Serm. Tap. ad Cat.*, 2, 8; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:26-31.

[31] *De Symbolo*, 2, 8; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:26-31.

[32] *De Civitate Dei*, 22, 19; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:26-31.

[33] *XL homiliae in Evangelista*, 26; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:26-31.

[34] *Tract. in Io.*, 121, ch. 5, col. 1958; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:26-31.

[35] *XL homiliae in Evangelista*, 26; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:26-31.

[36] *In Ioannem hom.*, 87; PG 59; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:26-31.

21

LECTURE I

1 After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he revealed himself in this way. 2 Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin [Didymus], Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing. 4 Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any fish?" They answered him, "No." 6 He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish.[\[1\]](#)

2569 The Evangelist has just told of two appearances of Christ to his disciples. Now he mentions a third appearance. If we consider the order and purpose of these appearances, it is evident that the first showed Christ's divine authority by his breathing the Holy Spirit upon them; the second showed that he was the same person as before, since he let them view his wounds; and the third showed the reality of his risen human nature, for he ate with them.

There are two parts in this. The Evangelist first mentions Christ's dealing with a group of the disciples; secondly, with two of them he especially loved (v 15). As to the first, the Evangelist mentions the time and circumstance of his appearance, and then adds a short epilogue, **This was now the third time....**

2570 The time is **After this**, after what the Evangelist just narrated. It is significant that he says this for it shows that Christ was not with them continuously, but appeared to them at intervals. The reason for this was that he had not risen with the same life as before, but with a glorious life, as the angels have and the blessed will have: "Except the gods," that is, the angels, "whose dwelling is not with flesh" (Dan 2:11).

2571 The Evangelist seemed to be ending his gospel before, when he wrote, **these are written that you may believe....** Why, then, does he add on this appearance? Augustine gives a mystical reason for this, which is that this appearance signifies the glory of the future life, when Christ will appear to us as he is.[\[2\]](#) And so the Evangelist put this appearance after what seemed to be the end of his gospel so that this could be better understood.

2572 The circumstance of his appearance was that **Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias.** It is in the nature and power of a glorified body that it can be seen or not seen, as the person wishes, by non•glorified bodies. That is why he says, **revealed**, i.e., Christ made himself visible. In the same way he is said to appear, which means the same thing as to reveal, "appearing to them during forty days" (Acts 1:3). As Ambrose says, that appears in whose power it is to be seen or not seen.[\[3\]](#)

2573 The place is **by the Sea of Tiberias**, which is the Sea of Galilee. It is called the Sea of Tiberias after the city of Tiberias, which was built in honor of Tiberius Caesar. The Evangelist mentions this, first, to show that our Lord had kept the promise made to the disciples, "he is going before you to Galilee" (Mt 28:7). Secondly, he wanted to show that our Lord had banished the very great fear from the hearts of his disciples, so that they no longer remained shut up in their house, but even traveled as far as Galilee.

2574 In describing this appearance, he first mentions the persons to whom Christ appeared; what they were doing; and thirdly, the circumstances of this appearance.

2575 Christ appeared to seven persons. The Evangelist says that there were together **Simon Peter**, who had denied him, **Thomas called the Twin**, who was not present at the first appearance, **Nathanael of Cana in Galilee**, who is thought to be the brother of Philip, **the sons of Zebedee**, that is, James and John, and **two others of his disciples** not explicitly named. In the mystical sense, this number signifies the state and appearance of future glory, which will be after the seventh age, that is, in the eighth, which is the age of those who arise: "From new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me" (Is 66:23).

2576 They were fishing, and so we first see Peter asking about this; the willingness of the others to go with him; and then their efforts.

2577 Peter asks them to go fishing, saying, **I am going fishing.** In the mystical

interpretation, this signifies the work of preaching: "I will make you fishers of men" (Mt 4:19). So when Peter said, **I am going fishing**, the mystical sense is that he is taking the others to share in his concerns and preaching: "So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you" (Ex 18:22).

2578 Their actual fishing seems to go against Luke (9:62): "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." And it is clear that Peter had given up his work as fisherman. Why then did he return to it and look back? I answer, with Augustine, that if he had returned to this work of fishing before Christ's resurrection and before seeing Christ's wounds, we would think that he was acting out of despair. But now, even after Christ returned from the grave, after they had seen his wounds, and had received the Holy Spirit by Christ's breathing on them, they became what they were before, fishers of fish [not of men]. [4] We can learn from this that a preacher can use his abilities to earn the necessities of life and still preserve the integrity of his apostolate, if he has no other means of sustenance. For if St. Paul learned an art he did not previously have in order to obtain the food he needed, so as to avoid being a burden to others, Peter could all the more do this by using his own skill.

2579 Augustine says that a preacher can do this when he cannot gain a living in any other way. But in this case Peter did have another way, for our Lord promised: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well," that is, what is necessary for life (Mt 6:33). The answer is that it is true that these things will be added, with our cooperation. So our Lord did keep his promise here, with the cooperation of Peter. For who else but our Lord caused the fish that were caught to be within the range of their net?

2580 Gregory remarks that there are two kinds of work. [5] One absorbs the mind, and hinders our spiritual concerns, as tax collecting. No one should return to such work, even to provide food. So we do not read that Matthew returned to his tax collecting post. There is another kind of work which can be done without sin and without absorbing the mind, such as fishing and things like that. And it was not a sin for Peter to return to this kind of work after his conversion.

2581 The others agree to this, **We will go with you**. This sets an example for preachers and prelates to encourage each other in their work of turning people to God: "A brother helped is like a strong city" (Prv 18:19); "He was like a young cedar on Lebanon; and they surrounded him like the trunks of palm trees" (Sir 50:12).

2582 Next, we see that they were working at this, **They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing**. Here he touches on three

things that preachers ought to do. First, they should leave those places which are sunk in sin: "Come out from them," the Chaldaeans, "and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; and I will welcome you" (2 Cor 6:17). And they should go out from their carnal affections: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house" (Gen 12:1). And also leave the quiet of contemplation: "Let us go forth into the fields, and lodge in the villages; let us go out early to the vineyards" (Song 7:11). Secondly, preachers should get into the ship, that is, go forward in charity within the unity of the Church, which is called a ship: "In the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water" (1 Pet 3:20). They should also board the ship of the cross by depriving the flesh: "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal 6:14); "Blessed is the wood by which righteousness comes" (Wis 14:7).

Thirdly, preachers should have total confidence in the help of Christ. All **that night they caught nothing**, because as long as God's help and the interior Preacher are not there, the words of the preacher have no effect. But when the light comes, enlightening hearts, the preacher makes a catch: "Send out your light and your truth" (Ps 42:3). Here, night indicates the lack of divine help: "Night comes, when no one can work" (9:4). Or, one could say, **that night**, during the time of the Old Testament, **they caught nothing**, because they could not bring the Gentiles to the faith: "The night has passed" [Rom 13:12]. According to Augustine, they were fishing at night because they were still afraid. [\[6\]](#)

2583 Now we see the way and stages in which Jesus appeared: first, he allows himself to be seen; secondly he is recognized; and thirdly, he eats with the disciples.

2584 The Evangelist says that the **day was breaking**, it was morning. In the mystical interpretation, morning or the break of day indicates the glory of the resurrection: "Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning" (Ps 30:5); "In the morning I will stand before you, and will see you" [Ps 5:5].

2585 Before his passion, on the occasion of a similar miracle, Jesus did not stand on the shore, but was in a boat. Why, after the passion, does he stand on the shore? The reason is that the sea signifies the troubles and tribulations of this present life, but all these end at the shore [of eternal life]. So, before his passion, Christ stood on the sea, because he had a body subject to death; but after the resurrection, he had surmounted the corruption of the flesh and stood upon the

shore.

2586 **The disciples did not know that it was Jesus** because of their own ignorance. We can see from this that on this turbulent sea of the present, we cannot know the hidden things of Christ: "The eye has not seen, O God, besides you, what things you have prepared for those who wait for you" [Is 64:4].

2587 Next, Jesus brings them to recognize him. First, the Evangelist shows how they came to recognize him; and who was the first to do so.

2588 The Evangelist does three things regarding the first. First, he shows our Lord asking for food, **Children, have you any fish?** The disciples did not think it was Christ asking, but someone who wanted to buy fish, for he spoke like a customer. In the mystical interpretation, Christ asks us for food to refresh himself. And we do this for him by obeying the commandments "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (4:34). **They answered him, No**, that is, not of themselves: "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it" (Rom 7: 18).

2589 Secondly, the Evangelist mentions Christ's order, **Cast the net on the right side of the boat.** In Luke (5:4) there is a similar incident, but there Christ did not tell them to cast their nets to the right side, as he does here. The reason for this is that the fishing mentioned by John signifies that fishing by which the predestined are taken to eternal life, and it is only those children on the right who are brought there: "The Lord knows the ways that are on the right; those on the left are perverse" [Prv 4:27]; "The right hand of the Lord does valiantly!" (Ps 118:16). The fishing mentioned in Luke signified the call into the Church, and so the net is cast to all sides because people are caught and brought to Christ from all over: "Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame" (Lk 14:21).

2590 The obedience of the disciples is shown when the Evangelist says, **So they cast it**, the net; and the effect of this obedience, **and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish**, that is, for the great number of those who would be saved: "By your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves, because you have obeyed my voice" (Gen 22:18); "Behold, a great multitude which no man could number" (Rev 7:9). This fishing differs from that mentioned by Luke because there (Lk 5:6) the nets broke; and in a like way the Church is rent by disagreements and heresies. But in the fishing mentioned by John the net does not break because there will be no lack of unity in the future life. Again, in the incident mentioned by Luke, the fish were taken into the boat. But here in John's incident, the fish are brought to the shore, because the saints

destined for glory are hidden from us: "In the covert of your presence you hide them from the plots of men" (Ps 31:20). [Augustine remarks that when on the sea of this life the elect are not known to us, they are hidden from us; they become known to us only when we arrive at the shore, at eternal life.][7]

LECTURE 2

7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards [two hundred cubits] off. 9 When they got out on land, they saw [hot coals] a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty•three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them. "Come and [dine] have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.[8]

2591 The Evangelist, having shown how the taking of the great number of fish lead the disciples to recognize Christ, now mentions the order in those recognizing him. First, he mentions John; then Peter; and then actions of the other disciples.

2592 John, being quick in understanding, recognized Christ at once. So he said to Peter, whom he loved more than the others, and also because Peter was above the others in rank, **It is the Lord!** John was convinced of this by the catch of the fish: "Thou dost rule the raging of the sea" (Ps 88:8); "Whatever the Lord pleases he does, in heaven and on earth in the seas and all deeps" (Ps 134:6). He said, **It is the Lord!** because they usually called him this: "You call me teacher and Lord" (13:13).

2593 Peter is seen as passionately devoted to Christ. His devotion is clear, first of all, by his quickness to act: **When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the**

sea. But the other disciples came in the boat. As soon as he heard it was the Lord, Peter went without delay.

Secondly, we see his devotion for Christ, for out of modesty he did not want to appear naked, but put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, because it was hot and it made working easier. We can learn from this that those coming to Christ ought to put off the old man and put on the new, which has been created for God in faith: "He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life" (Rev 3:5).

Thirdly, his devotion is shown by his lack of fear: for because of his great love he was unwilling to stay in the boat, which was moving too slowly, and so he **sprang into the sea**, to reach Christ more quickly.

2594 In the mystical interpretation, the sea signifies the troubles of this present world. Those who desire to come to Christ cast themselves into the sea, and do not refuse the tribulations of this world: "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22); "My son, if you come forward to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for trials" (Sir 2:1). Now Peter did cast himself into the sea and he reached Christ unharmed because the servant of Christ is kept safe and unharmed in the midst of tribulations: "You have given a path in the sea, and a safe way through the waves" [Wis 14:3]. As Chrysostom says, this incident very well brings out the difference between John and Peter: for John is seen to be greater in understanding, while Peter is more ardent in his affections. [\[9\]](#)

2595 The other disciples remained on the boat. First, the Evangelist mentions what they did, **the other disciples came in the boat**, because they were not as ardent as Peter. The boat signifies the Church: "The hope of the world took refuge on a raft, and guided by your hand left to the world the seed of a new generation" (Wis 14:6). This text refers to the Church as we see from 1 Peter (3:20).

The other disciples came in the boat, that is, protected by the society of the Church, which is as formidable as an army prepared for battle: "In the covert of your presence you hide them from the plots of men" (Ps 31:20).

2596 Secondly, the Evangelist gives the reason why they did this, **for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off**. This could be the reason why Peter sprang into the sea, because the land was near; and it could explain why the others arrived so quickly. Indeed, they were not far away, because the Church is not far from the land of the living, for the Church is "none other than the house of God, and ... the gate of heaven" (Gen 28:17); and the

saints think about this land every day: "We look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen" (2 Cor 4:18); "Our commonwealth is in heaven" (Phil 3:20).

He says, **two hundred cubits**, which signifies the same thing as the two boats mentioned by Luke (5:2), that is, the two peoples from which the elect are drawn to eternal life: "That he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross" (Eph 2:15). The net by which the fish are taken is the teaching of the faith, by which God draws us by inspiring us from within: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (6:44). The apostles also draw us by their exhortations.

2597 Next, the Evangelist tells how Christ affectionately prepared a meal for his disciples. He mentions its preparation; Christ's invitation; and the meal itself. In the preparation of the meal we see what was contributed by Christ, and what was brought by the disciples.

2598 Christ prepared three things. The Evangelist continues, **When they got out on land, they saw hot coals there, with fish lying on it, and bread**, which Christ by his power had created from nothing, or had formed from some nearby matter. In a previous miracle (6:11), Jesus fed the people with bread he had multiplied from previously existing bread. Now, after his passion, he creates or newly forms things, because it is no longer the time to show weakness but his power. For what he did before his passion in the multiplication of the bread was done in condescension, because if he wanted, he could have created it from nothing or newly formed it.

2599 We can understand from this that Christ prepares a spiritual meal or banquet. If we take this present meal symbolically for the Church's meal, Christ also prepares these three things. First the hot coals of charity: "You will heap coals of fire on his head" (Prv 25:22); "Fill your hands with burning coals" (Ez 10:2). Christ carried these burning coals from heaven to earth: "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another" (13:34); "I came to cast fire upon the earth" (Lk 12:49). Also, Christ prepares the fish laid over the coals, which is Christ himself: for the cooking fish outspread over the hot coals is the suffering Christ who is spread over the hot coals when because of the fire of his love for us he is immolated on the cross: "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:2); "Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:1).

He also prepares the bread which nourishes us, and this bread is himself. Christ is called a fish insofar as his divinity is hidden, for it is characteristic of fish to remain hidden in the water: "Truly, you are a God who hides yourself" (Is 45:15). While insofar as Christ nourishes us by his teaching, and even gives us his body for food, he is truly bread: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (6:51); "The bread will be rich and abundant" [Is 30:23]. The ministers of the Church should also bring something to this meal; but whatever it is, it has come from God.

2600 The Evangelist now mentions what was brought by the disciples: first, we see the Lord's command; and then one of the disciples acts on it.

2601 Our Lord tells them to bring some of the fish they have caught. It was like saying: I have given you the gift of charity, I have roasted my body upon the cross and given you the bread of my teaching, which perfects and strengthens the Church. Now it is your task to catch others. These are the ones who will be converted by the preaching of the apostles: "Bring to the Lord, O children of God" [Ps 29:1]; "And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the Lord" (Is 66:20).

2602 If this meal is understood to be a moral meal, then Christ first prepares as food for the soul the burning coals of charity: "God's love has been poured into our hearts" (Rom 5:5); "I came to cast fire upon the earth" (Lk 12:49). Then he prepares the fish, that is, a hidden faith, since it is concerned with things that are not evident (Heb 10:1); and also the bread, that is, solid teaching: "Solid food is for the mature" (Heb 5:14). Our contribution to this meal is to make good use of the grace given to us: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain" (1 Cor 15:10). Thus our Lord asks us to **bring the fish**, bring your good works, which have been granted to you to accomplish: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works" (Mt 5:16).

2603 The Evangelist mentions that this was done by one of the disciples, Peter, who was more ardent than the others, **So Simon Peter went aboard**; he also went up to the helm of the Church: "I will climb the state of perfection" [Song 7:8]; "In his heart he is set to ascend" [Ps 64:6]. **And hauled the net ashore**, because the holy Church has been entrusted to him, and it was said to him in particular, "Feed my lambs" (21:15). Peter now foreshadows this by his action in drawing the fish to the solid land, because he will show the solidity of the eternal homeland to the faithful.

2604 He said, **full of large fish**, because "those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified" (Rom 8:30); "Men renowned

for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and proclaiming prophecies; leaders of the people in their deliberations" (Si 44:3). At the other catch of fish (Lk 5:4) the number of fish taken was not mentioned, but it is here; here there were **a hundred and fifty•three**. The reason for this is that those called to the Church of the present time include both those who are good and bad: "The number of fools is infinite" [Eccl 1:15]. Thus in Genesis (22:17), when Abraham is told of his calling, we read, "I will multiply your descendants as the sand which is on the seashore," which refers to the bad. While referring to the good, God says, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them So shall your descendants be" (Gen 15:5); for God especially counts the good, "He tells the number of the stars" [Ps 147:4].

2605 Does this mean that no more than a hundred and fifty•three will be saved? No indeed! There will be more, but this number indicates a mystery. For no one can reach the homeland without observing the commandments of the decalogue; and the commandments can only be kept with the help of the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit: "The spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude; the spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and you will be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" [Is 11:2]. Further, the first recorded instance of sanctification occurred on the seventh day: "God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it" (Gen 2:3). Adding ten and seven gives seventeen. Now if we add the cardinal numbers successively • one plus two gives three, plus three gives six, plus four gives ten, plus five gives fifteen, plus six gives twenty•one, and so on in this way till we have reached the number seventeen • we arrive at the number one hundred and fifty•three.

Or, in another way: Christ now was appearing to seven disciples. If we multiply this seven by seven (the gifts of the Holy Spirit) we get forty•nine. Now if we add one to indicate that perfection of unity which is characteristic of the children of God who act by the Spirit of God, we get fifty. If we triple this, and also add three, to indicate our faith in the Trinity (which we profess with our heart, our words and our actions), we get a hundred and fifty•three. Thus, those who are perfected by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, and united by their faith in the Trinity, come to the Father.

2606 The Evangelist continues, **and although there were so many, the net was not torn**. In the incident related by Luke (Lk 5:6) the net broke because in the present Church [in this world], which the net signifies, there are many rips of schisms, heresies and seditions. But the Church is not entirely torn apart because "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20). But in the future, in our homeland, heaven, which is signified by the net which was not torn, that is, in that peace which will be in the saints, there will be no schisms: "He makes peace in your borders" (Ps 147:14).

2607 When the Evangelist says, **Jesus said to them, Come and dine**, we see his invitation to the meal he had prepared. First, we see Christ's invitation; then the attitude of the disciples.

2608 Christ invites us to dine with him by inspiring us himself from within, saying, **Come and dine**: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you" [Mt 11:28]; "Eat, O friends, and drink; drink deeply, O lovers!" (Song 5:1). He also invites us to dine by encouraging and teaching us from without through others: "A man once gave a great banquet ... he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, Come" (Lk 14:16).

2609 The Evangelist gives their attitude when he says, **Now none of the disciples dared ask him, Who are you?** According to Augustine, this indicates the disciples' certainty about Christ's resurrection; they were so certain that it was Christ that none of them presumed to doubt that it was he.[\[10\]](#) And because a question indicates a doubt, no one presumed to ask, **Who are you?** "In that day you will ask nothing of me" (16:23). For Chrysostom, it indicates a reverence of the disciples for Christ which was greater than usual.[\[11\]](#) They would have liked to have questioned him; but Christ appeared to them in such grandeur and glory that they did not dare to question him because of their amazement and respect. It was this that particularly stopped them from questioning him, for **they knew it was the Lord**.

2610 Next, Jesus came and took bread and gave it to them, and we see the meal they had, with Jesus eating with them: "You open your hand, you satisfy the desire of every living thing" (Ps 145:16). For he is the one who gives nourishment at the appropriate times.

2611 But did Christ really eat with them? We should say that he did, although it does not say this here. Luke (24:43) explicitly says that he ate with them, and in Acts [1:4] we read that "while eating with them, he charged them not to leave Jerusalem."

2612 But did he truly eat? We should say to this that a thing is said to be true in two ways: true with the truth of signification, and true with the truth of its species. A thing is true in the first way when it corresponds to what is signified. For example, if I want to signify something by speech, and what I signify by it is true and agrees with the thing signified, my speech is true with the truth of signification, although not [necessarily] true with the truth of the species. When Christ said "I am the true vine" (15:1), that was true, although he is not a true vine in the sense that he has the species or nature of a vine, but he is a vine

considering what vine signifies. On the other hand, something is said to be true with the truth of its species or kind, when it has what belongs to the truth of its species. These things are the principles of the species, not their subsequent effects. Thus the utterance, "Man is an animal" is true in the first way, with the truth of signification, because it signifies what is true. But is not true with the truth of species unless it is spoken by the mouth of a [human] animal using its normal organs of speech. Its truth does not depend on the effects of the speaking, for example, that it be heard by someone. So, applied to the act of eating: some cases are true only with the truth of signification, as the eating ascribed to an angel, because an angel does not have the organs for eating. But what is signified by their eating is true, that is, the desire they have for our salvation. But Christ's act of eating after the resurrection was true both with the truth of signification, because he did it to show that he had a human nature, which he did in truth have, and his eating was true according to its species, because he had the organs used for eating. However, the effects consequent on eating were not present, since the food was not transformed into his substance, since he had a glorified and incorruptible body. It was dissolved into pre-existing matter by the divine power. However, this effect does not alter the truth of the species, as was said.[\[12\]](#)

2613 The Evangelist summarizes the appearances by saying, **This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples.** According to Augustine, if this **third time** refers to the number of times, it is not true.[\[13\]](#) For as was said, on the first day Christ appeared five times, again on the eighth day when Thomas was present, again by the Sea as recorded here, again on the mountain in Galilee (Mt 28:16), again when they were at table (Mk 16:14), and again on the day of his ascension, when "as they were looking on, he was lifted up" (Acts 1:9). Further, he appeared to them many other times during the forty days, but these are not recorded (Acts 1:3).

Thus the **third time** must refer to the days on which Christ appeared. The first day he appeared was the day of the resurrection; the second day was eight days after the resurrection, **eight days later** (20:26); and the third day was the appearance by the lake mentioned here. Or, one could say, this statement can be true even if it is referred to the number of times: for the only times we read that he appeared to a *number* of the disciples gathered together was on the first day in the evening, when the doors were shut; secondly, eight days later, when the disciples were gathered together; and thirdly, here at the Sea. Thus, he explicitly says, **this was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples.**

LECTURE 3

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 A second time he said to him, "Simon, Son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep" [Feed my lambs]. 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."[\[14\]](#)

2614 The Evangelist just showed what the Lord did for the disciples in general; here he shows him dealing with his two especially loved disciples: first, what he did for Peter; and how he dealt with John (v 20). He does two things with the first: first, he lays on Peter the pastoral office; secondly, he predicts that he will be martyred (v18).

He imposes the pastoral office on Peter only after an examination. Thus, those who are to be raised to this office are first examined, "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands" (1 Tim 5:22). Christ examined him three times, and so this part is divided into three parts. In the first part we see our Lord's question (v 15); Peter's answer; and the imposition of the office (v 15). Looking at the first, we can consider three things: the time of the examination; the tenor of the conversation; and on what Peter was examined.

2615 The order of this event is given as **When they had finished** the meal. This signifies the spiritual meal by which the soul is refreshed with spiritual gifts, even when it is united to the body: "I will come in to him and eat with him" (Rev 3:20). Therefore it is appropriate that one who is raised to this office be already refreshed with this joyous meal. Otherwise, how could he refresh the hungry ones that come to him: "I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance" (Jer 31:14), with that abundance mentioned in Psalm 63 (v 5): "My soul is feasted as with marrow and fat."

2616 The tenor of the conversation is seen when he says, **Jesus said to Simon Peter**. Three things are given here which are necessary for a prelate. First, obedience, when he says, **Simon**, which means obedient. A prelate needs to be obedient because one who does not know how to obey superiors does not know how to govern inferiors: "An obedient man will speak of victory" [Prv 21:28]. Secondly, a prelate needs knowledge, indicated by **Peter**, which means

understanding. A prelate needs understanding for he is the appointed watchman, and one who is blind is a poor watchman: "His watchmen are blind" (Is 56:10); "Because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me" (Hos 4:6). Thirdly, a prelate needs grace, for he says **son of John**. Prelates need grace because if they do not have grace they do not have anything: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor 15:10); "And when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship" (Gal 2:9).

2617 The questions are about love; and Jesus asks, **Do you love me more than these?** This was a suitable question, for Peter had previously fallen, as we saw before, and it was not appropriate that he be preferred to the others until his sin was forgiven • which is only brought about by charity: "Love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pet 4:8); "Love covers all offenses" (Prv 10:12). So it was fitting that his charity be made known by this questioning, not indeed to him who looks into the depths of our hearts, but to others. So Christ said, but not as one who did not already know, **Do you love me more than these?** Now we read that "perfect love casts out fear" (1 Jn 4:18). Thus it was that when our Lord was about to die, Peter was afraid and denied him; but the risen Lord restored love and banished his fear. So Peter, who before had denied Christ because he was afraid to die, now, after our Lord has arisen, feared nothing. Why should he be afraid, since he now realized that death had died?

2618 This questioning was also appropriate for the office, since many who assume a pastoral office use it as self-lovers: "In the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of self" (1 Tim 3:1). One who does not love the Lord is not a fit prelate. A fit prelate is one who does not seek his own advantage, but that of Christ's; and he does this through love: "The love of Christ controls us" (2 Cor 5:14). Love also becomes this office because it benefits others: for it is due to the abundance of love that those who love Jesus will at times give up the quiet of their own contemplation to help their neighbor. Although the: Apostle said, "I am sure that neither death nor life ... will be able to separate us from the love of God" (Rom 8:39), he added, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren" (Rom 9:3). Thus a prelate should be questioned about his love.

2619 He adds, **more than these**, for even as the Philosopher says in his *Politics*, it is the natural order of things that the one who cares for and governs others should be better.[\[15\]](#) Thus he says that just as the soul is to the body that it rules, and reason is to our lower powers, so man is related to the irrational animals. And there ought to be a similar relation between prelates and their subjects. Thus, according to Gregory, the life of a pastor should be such that he

is related to his subjects as a shepherd to his sheep.[\[16\]](#) So Christ says, **more than these**, because the more Peter loves the better he is: "Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among all the people" (1 Sam 10:24).

2620 But in selecting someone [to rule] is it always necessary to choose the one who is unconditionally better, even if the laws say that it is enough to choose one who is merely good? To answer this two distinctions must be made. Some things are sufficient according to human judgment which are still not sufficient according to the divine judgment. According to human judgment, if a person cannot be reproached for something, this is sufficient for his election to stand. For it is obvious that it would be difficult to have elections if they could be nullified because someone was found who was better than the one actually chosen. So, according to our human judgment, it is sufficient if an election is honest and a suitable person is chosen.

But, so far as concerns the divine judgment, and our own conscience, it is necessary to choose that person who is better. Now a person can be unconditionally better; and this is the way a holier person is said to be better, for holiness makes one good. Yet such a person might not be better for the Church. For this purpose, that person would be better who is better educated, more competent, more discerning, and chosen more unanimously. But if other things are equal, such as the benefit and welfare of the Church, one would sin if he were to choose a person who was less unconditionally good than another. There has to be a reason for such a choice. This is either the honor of God and the benefit of the Church, or some private motive. If the motive is the honor of God and the benefit to the Church, these goods will be regarded as linked to the one chosen, and will make him the better person, in these respects. If there is some private motive for the choice, such as some carnal love, the expectation of ecclesiastical advancement, or temporal advantage, the election is a fraud and there has been partiality.

2621 Now we see Peter's answer, **Yes, Lord; you know that I love you**. This is a clear sign that he had retracted his previous denial. And it shows that if the predestined fall, they are always better after they are corrected. Before his denial, Peter thought that he was better than the other apostles, saying, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away" (Mt 26:33). And when Jesus said to him, "You will deny me three times," Peter went against this and even boasted that "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you" (Mt 26:35). But now, Peter, having been conquered by his own weakness, does not presume to state his love unless it is attested to and confirmed by the Lord. He humbles himself before Christ, saying, **You know that I love you**: "My witness is in heaven, and he that vouches for me is on high" (Job 16:19). He also humbles

himself in respect to the apostles, for he does not say that he loves Jesus more than they do, but simply, **I love you**. This teaches us not to rank ourselves before others, but others before ourselves: "In humility count others better than yourselves" (Phil 2:3).

2622 We can also notice, as Augustine points out, that when our Lord asks, **Do you love (diligis) me**, Peter does not answer with the same word, but says **I love (amo) you**, as if they were the same.[\[17\]](#) And they are the same in reality, but there is some difference in meaning: Love (*amor*) is a movement of our appetitive power, and if this is regulated by our reason it is the will's act of love, which is called "direction" (*dilectio*) • because it presupposes an act of election, choice (*electio*). This is why the brute animals are not said to love (*diligere*). For if the appetitive movement is not regulated by reason, it is called *amor*.

2623 After this examination, Christ assigns Peter his office, saying, **Feed my lambs**, that is, my faithful, which I, the Lamb, call lambs: "Behold, the Lamb of God" (1:29). Thus, one should not be called a Christian who says he is not under the care of that shepherd, that is, Peter: "They shall all have one shepherd" (Ez 37:24); "They shall appoint for themselves one head" (Hos 1:11). It was appropriate that this office be assigned to Peter, the others being passed over, because, according to Chrysostom, he was the extraordinary apostle, the voice of the disciples, and the head of the group.[\[18\]](#)

2624 Now we have the second examination. In order to avoid a lot of repetition, note that Christ says three times, **Feed my lambs**, because Peter ought to feed them three ways. First, they are to be fed by being taught: "And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer 3:15). Secondly, they are to be fed by example: "Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim 4:12); "Upon the mountain heights of Israel," that is, in the excellence of great men, "shall be their pasture" (Ez 34:14). Thirdly, they are to be fed by being offered temporal help: "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep?" (Ez 34:2).

2625 The third time Christ says to him, **Feed my sheep**. This is because there are three types of people in the Church: beginners, those who have made some progress, and the perfect. The first two types are the lambs, since they are still imperfect. The others, since they are perfect, are called sheep: "The mountains," that is, the perfect, "skipped like rams," and "the hills," the others, "like lambs" (Ps 114:4). And so all prelates ought to guard their charges as Christ's sheep and not their own. But alas! As Augustine says in his *Easter Sermon*: "We witness the appearance of certain unfaithful servants who have abandoned

Christ's flock and by their thefts have made gold their flock. You hear them say, 'These are my sheep. What do you want with my sheep? I will not let you come to my sheep.' But if we say "my sheep," and others talk about their sheep, then Christ has lost his own sheep."[\[19\]](#)

2626 Note also that just as Peter was assigned his office three times, so he was examined three times. This was because he had denied Christ three times. As Augustine says: "A threefold profession was required so that Peter's tongue might show as much love as it had shown of fear, and that life gained would wrest more words than the threat of death."[\[20\]](#) Another reason for this was because Peter was obligated to love Christ for three things. First, because his sin was forgiven, for the one who is forgiven more loves the more (cf. Lk 7:43). Secondly, because he was promised a great honor: "On this rock I will build my Church" (Mt 16:18). Thirdly, because of the office entrusted to him, as right here, when Christ entrusts the care of the Church to him, **Feed**. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart," so that you will direct your entire intention to God, "and with all your soul," so that your entire will might rest in God through love, "and with all your might," so that the performance of all your actions will serve God.

2627 Peter became sad because asked three times. As was seen, he was rebuked by our Lord before the passion when he so quickly asserted that he loved him. Now, seeing that he is questioned so many times about his love, he is afraid he will be rebuked again and becomes sad. Thus he says, **Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you**. He is saying in effect: I do love you; at least I think I do. But you know all things, and perhaps you know of something else that will happen. And so the final commitment of the Church is given to the humbled Peter. According to one of the Greek doctors, this is also the reason why catechumens are questioned three times during their baptism.[\[21\]](#)

LECTURE 4

18 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." 19a (This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God.)

2628 Above, our Lord entrusted the office of shepherd to Peter. Now he foretells his martyrdom. This was pertinent because a good shepherd should lay down his life for his sheep (10:11). It was not granted to the young Peter to lay down his life for Christ; but rather to the old Peter to lay down his life for his sheep. This is what Christ foretold to him. Christ first tells of Peter's past life; then he predicts

the end of his future life (v 18). Thirdly, the Evangelist explains our Lord's words (v 19).

2629 Peter's past life showed certain shortcomings, for as a young man he was too presumptuous and self-willed. But this is characteristic of the young, as the Philosopher says in his *Rhetoric*.^[22] Thus we read in Ecclesiastes (11:9) a kind of reproach: "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes." Our Lord refers to this trait of Peter and says, **When you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would.** He says, **you girded yourself**, that is, you restrained yourself from certain unlawful and superfluous things, **but walked where you would**, not allowing yourself to be kept in check by anyone. That is why you always wanted to be in danger for my sake. But it was not granted to you that you suffer for me when young, **but when you are old** I will fulfill your desire because **you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you.** What a wondrous prediction! It gives both the time and the suffering. From the time these words were spoken until Peter's death, about thirty-seven years went by. We can see from this that Peter was quite old.

2630 According to Chrysostom, he says, **when you are old**, because human affairs are different than divine affairs: in human affairs the young are useful, and the old are not of much use; but in divine matters virtue is not taken away by old age, rather it sometimes becomes even stronger: "My old age is exalted in abundant mercy" [Ps 92:10]; "As the days of your youth, so shall your old age be" [Deut 33:25].^[23] But this is to be understood only of those who have practiced virtue in their youth, as Cicero says.^[24] For those who have passed their youth in idleness will become of little or no value when old. This also teaches us that we rarely find rulers and teachers who are useful to the Church dying young, as Origen remarks in his explanation of Matthew (25:19): "Now after a long time the master of those servants came."^[25] He gives Paul as an example. In Acts (7:58) Paul is seen as "a young man," but in Philemon (1:9) he is "an old man." The reason for this is that people of this caliber are so rare, that when they are found, the Lord preserves them to a ripe old age.

2631 He mentions the way he will suffer when he says, **you will stretch out your hands**, for Peter was crucified. Yet he was crucified using ropes, not nails, so he would not die so quickly. This is the girding spoken of by Christ.

Three things can be considered in the sufferings of the saints. First, there is a natural affection: there is such a natural love between the soul and the body that the soul never desires to be separated from the body, nor the body from the soul: "For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would

be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed" (2 Cor 5:4); "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death" (Mt 26:38). This is why Christ says, **where you do not wish to go**, that is, by the impulse of nature, which is so rooted in nature that even old age could not destroy it in Peter. Yet, the desire due to grace weakens this: "My desire is to depart and be with Christ" (Phil 1:23); "We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8). Secondly, the intentions of the persecutors and the saints are different, **and carry you where you do not wish to go**. Thirdly, we see that we should be prepared to suffer, but not to kill ourselves. Thus Christ says, **you will stretch out your hands**. This clearly was the case with Peter: for when the people wanted to rebel against Nero and deliver Peter, he forbade it: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example" (1 Pet 2:21).

2632 The words **another will gird you** rightly come before **and carry you**, the thought being that **another will gird you** because he will **carry you where you do not wish to go**. Lest one think this statement was lightly written, it was written after the death of Peter. Peter was killed during Nero's lifetime; and John wrote this Gospel after he returned from the exile to which he had been banished during the reign of Domitian, there being several other emperors between Nero and Domitian.

2633 John mentions this as something in the future, saying, **This he said to show by what death he was to glorify God**, for the death of the saints gives glory to Christ: "Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death" (Phil 1:20); "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief ... yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God" (1 Pet 4:15). Indeed, the greatness of the Lord is shown by the fact that the saints brave death for his truth and faith.

LECTURE 5

19b And after this he said to him, "Follow me." 20 Peter turned and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If [So] it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" 23 The saying spread abroad among the brethren that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If [So] it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"[\[26\]](#)

2634 After the Evangelist showed what our Lord had in mind for Peter, he now tells about John. First, we see the commendation of the disciple, John; secondly, his gospel is commended (v 25). In regard to the first, we see the occasion for John's commendation; and then the commendation itself, **the disciple whom Jesus loved**.

2635 The occasion for John's commendation was Christ's invitation to Peter to follow him. **And after he said this to him**, that is, after Christ told Peter about his office and martyrdom, he **said to him**, Jesus said to Peter, **Follow me**. For Augustine, this means follow me in martyrdom, by suffering for me; for it is not enough just to suffer in some way, but this must be done by following Christ, that is, by suffering for his sake: "Blessed are you when men hate you ... on account of the Son of man" (Lk 6:22); "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Pet 2:21).[\[27\]](#)

2636 Many others who were present would also suffer for Christ, especially James, who was the first to be killed: "He killed James the brother of John with the sword" (Acts 12:2). Why then does Christ say to Peter in particular, **Follow me**? The reason, according to Augustine, was that Peter not only suffered death for Christ, but also followed Christ even in the kind of death, that is, death by the cross: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24).[\[28\]](#) Or, according to Chrysostom, in saying **Follow me**, Christ means in your office as prelate, leader.[\[29\]](#) He was saying in effect: As I have the care of the Church, received from my Father • "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage" (Ps 2:8) • so will you be, in my place, over the whole Church.

2637 But after Christ's ascension, why did James hold first place in Jerusalem? We can say that James had a special jurisdiction over that place, but Peter had the universal authority over the whole Church of believers.

2638 Now we see that John is commended: first, as to his past; then with respect to his future (v 21). John is commended on three points in his past.

2639 First, John had the privilege of having Christ's special love. The Evangelist says, **Peter turned**, for he had begun to follow Jesus even bodily, **and saw following them the disciple whom Jesus loved**. Here we see that Peter, already made a shepherd, was intent on the care of others: "And when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren" (Lk 22:32). Now Jesus loved John without excluding the others, for above he said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you" (15:9). But he loved John above the others with a special love.

There were three reasons for this. First, because of his penetrating understanding: for teachers especially love their intelligent students: "A servant who deals wisely has the king's favor" (Prv 14:35). Secondly, because of his purity, for he was a virgin: "He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend" (Prv 22:11). Thirdly, because of his youth, for we have tender feelings for the young and the weak, and act with friendship towards them. And this is the way Christ acted with the youthful John: "When Israel was a child, I loved him" (Hos 11:1). We can see from this that God especially loves those who serve him from their youth: "My soul desires the first ripe figs" [Mic 7:1].

2640 But this seems to go against Proverbs (8:17): "I love those who love me." Peter loved Christ more than the others: "Do you love me more than these?" (21:15). Therefore, Christ should have loved Peter more than John. I answer: it could be said that John, because he was more loved, was happier; while

Peter, because he loved more, was better. But this would be a violation of justice. Consequently, this refers to a mystery: that is, Peter and John stand for two kinds of life, the active and the contemplative, and the end and object of each is Christ. The active life, which Peter signifies, loves God more than the contemplative life (which is signified by John) because it feels more keenly the difficulties of this present life, and more intensely desires to be freed from them and to go to God. But God loves the contemplative life more, because he preserves it longer: it does not come to an end with death, as does the active life: "The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob" (Ps 87:2).

2641 Some try to solve this problem using the literal sense. They distinguish two kinds of love in Christ, according to his two wills, his human and divine will. They say that Christ loved Peter more with his divine love, but he loved John more with his human love. The objection to this is that Christ's human will was entirely conformed to his divine will; and so the more he loved one with his divine will, so also he loved that one more with his human will. Therefore, we should say that he loves that one the more to whom he wills more good. He loved Peter more in the sense that he made Peter love him [Christ] more; Christ loved John more in another sense, that is, by giving him a keener understanding. "The Lord will fill him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding" [Sir 15:3]. Accordingly, Peter is better because charity is better than knowledge (cf. 1 Cor 13:8); but John is better in keenness of understanding. However, only God can weigh their merits: "The Lord weighs the spirit" (Prv 16:2).

And so others say, and this is better, that Peter loved Christ more in his members; and in this way he was also more loved by Christ. For this reason the

Church was entrusted to him. But John loved Christ more in Himself, and in this way was more loved by Christ, who entrusted his mother to John's care. Or, one could say that Peter loved Christ more readily and fervently. While John was more loved by being given tokens of intimate friendship, which Christ gave him on account of his youth and purity.

2642 John adds, **who had lain close to his breast at the supper**, which commends him to us on the second point, his special intimacy with Christ. This was just explained.

2643 Thirdly, John is commended on account of the special confidence he had in Christ, so that he could question Christ with more assurance than all the others. Thus he adds that this disciple **had said, Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?** This was also explained before (13:25).

John is recalling his own privileges in order to exalt Peter. One might suppose that because Peter had denied Christ he would not be allowed back to his former intimacy. To reject this, John shows that he was admitted to a greater intimacy. The one who did not dare to question Christ at the supper, but asked John to do it, was made head over his brethren after the passion, and is now questioning Christ not only for himself, but also for John. We can understand from this that those who fall into sin sometimes rise in greater grace: "For just as you purposed to go astray from God, return with tenfold zeal to seek him" (Bar 4:28).

2644 And so the Evangelist immediately shows Peter asking a question, **When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, Lord, what about this man?** This concerns the future of John. First, we have Peter's question; Christ's answer; and then the interpretation of the answer (v 23).

2645 Regarding the first point, note that when our Lord said to Peter, "Follow me" (v 19), Peter did begin to follow him with bodily steps, and so did John. When Peter noticed John following he asked Christ about him, saying, **Lord, what about this man?** This was like saying: I am following you in your suffering. But this man, will he die also? John would have asked the same question had he dared.

But according to Chrysostom, Peter was questioning about the leadership [of the Church], not about John's martyrdom.[\[30\]](#) For Peter loved John more than all the other disciples, and they are always found together in the Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles. So Peter wanted to have John as his companion in the work of preaching. Peter says, **Lord, what about this man?** as if to say, "Let him come with me."

2646 Christ's answer is given, **So it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?** Notice that the Greek text does not have "So" but **If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?** Yet the difference is not too important, for whatever the expression, the meaning understood by the apostles from the beginning was that John was not going to die. So **it is my will that he remain until I come**, was [for them] the same as saying, John will not die until I come.

But this interpretation is rejected by what follows: **yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, So it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?**

2647 Those who defend the first interpretation, claim that John added this not to exclude the first interpretation but to show that our Lord did not convey that meaning by these words, but only by the words, **So it is my will that he remain**. This is the reason they say that John has not yet died.

There are various opinions about John's burial. All say that it is true that he was buried in a tomb which still exists. But some say he entered his tomb while still alive, and then left it by divine power, transported to the region of Enoch and Elias, and he is being kept there until the end of the world. According to this, the meaning is: **So it is my will that he remain** alive until the end of the world; and then, under the Antichrist, he will be martyred along with those other two. For it is not right that he should not die, for whatever is born dies: "It is appointed for men to die once" (Heb 9:27).

Others say he entered his tomb at Ephesus alive, and he remains there still alive, but sleeping, until the Lord comes. They base their theory on the fact that the soil there moves up and down in rhythm with John's breathing. Augustine rejects this by saying that it is not as good to be alive and sleeping as to be alive and blessed. [31] Why then would Christ reward the disciple he loved above the others with a long sleep and deprive him of that great good for the sake of which the apostle wanted to be dissolved and to be with Christ (Phil 1:23). Thus, we should not believe this. Rather, we should say that he died and arose with his body indicated by the fact that his body cannot be found • and remains happy with Christ, as Christ invited him: "He who testifies to these things says, Surely I am coming soon" (Rev 22:20).

2648 Augustine explains this passage mystically. [32] Then the word remain means "continue on," or "persist," as in "Remain in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high" [Lk 24:49]. Consequently, our Lord is saying about John, that is, about the contemplative life, **So it is my will that he remain**,

that is, continue on, **until I come**, either at the end of the world, or at the death of any contemplative; for the contemplative life although begun here is not completed here. It remains incomplete and continues on till Christ comes to complete it: "Then they were ... told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete" (Rev 6:11); "Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her" (Lk 10:42); "Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor" (Prv 3:16). Meanwhile, the active life, completed and vivified by the example of Christ's passion, follows him by suffering for him.

2649 Chrysostom understands it this way: **So it is my will that he remain**, that is, to remain in Judea, and to preach on this earth; and I want you [Peter] to follow me by having a concern for the entire world, and by suffering for me; and John is to remain **until I come**, to destroy the Jewish nation. [\[33\]](#) **What is that to you?** means "These things are for me to decide." For we do see from history that John did not leave Judea until Vespasian came to Judea and took Jerusalem; then John set out for Asia.

2650 Then there is the interpretation of Jerome: **Follow me!** Peter, by your martyrdom; and so, now speaking about John, **it is my will that he remain**, without the sufferings of martyrdom and death, **until I come**, to call him to myself • "I will come again and take you to myself" (14:3) • **what is that**, this privilege, **to you?** And so in the stories about blessed John it is said that when he was ninety years old our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and invited him to his banquet.

2651 Then the Evangelist shows how the disciples understood these words of our Lord. They thought that John would not die. **The saying spread abroad among the brethren**, the disciples • "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" (Ps 133:1) • **that this disciple, John, was not to die**. But he corrects this error, saying, **Yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die**: "Are you also still without understanding?" (Mt 15:16). The rest has been explained.

LECTURE 6

24 This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true. 25 But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the

books that would be written.[\[34\]](#)

2652 Now we have the last part of this Gospel, which is a kind of epilogue. First, the Gospel is commended; and then the vastness of the subject treated (v 25). The Gospel is commended because of two things: its author, and its truth. Three things are mentioned about the author.

2653 First, there is the authority of the author, because **This is the disciple** • understanding what was mentioned before who was loved above the others, intimate with Christ, able to question him with confidence, and to whom it was granted to remain until Christ came. All these things refer to the authority of the author.

John is said to have been loved more than the others because of his unique charity: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (13:35). None of the other apostles speak so much of love for others as does John in his letters. We also read that as an old man he was carried to the church by his followers to teach the faithful. He taught only one thing: "Little children, love one another." This is the perfection of the Christian life.

2654 Secondly, John's office is mentioned, which was to give testimony, for he says, **who is bearing witness to these things**. This is the special office of apostles: "You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8); "You are my witnesses!" (Is 44:8).

2655 Thirdly, he refers to his zeal when he says, **and who has written these things**. As an apostle he testified to the actions of Christ to those who were present; and in his zeal he recorded these actions in writing for those who were not with him and were to come after him: "Take a large tablet and write upon it in common characters" (Is 8:1); "The wisdom of the scribe depends on the opportunity of leisure; and he who has little business may become wise" (Sir 38:24). For it was granted to John to live until the time when the Church was at peace; and this is the time when he wrote all these things. John mentions such things so that we will not think that his gospel has less authority than the other three, seeing that he wrote after the death of all the other apostles, and the other gospels, especially that of Matthew, had been approved by them.

2656 Now John states that his Gospel is true, and he speaks in the person of the entire Church which received it: "My mouth will utter truth" (Prv 8:7). We should note that although many have written about Catholic truth, there is a difference among them: those who wrote the canonical scriptures, such as the evangelists

and apostles and the like, so constantly and firmly affirm this truth that it cannot be doubted. Thus John says, **we know that his testimony is true**: "If any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed" (Gal 1:9). The reason for this is that only the canonical scriptures are the standard of faith. The others have set forth this truth but in such a way that they do not want to be believed except in those things in which they say what is true.

2657 Now John states the incompleteness of his Gospel as compared with the reality, because Christ not only did these things **but there are also many other things which Jesus did**.

2658 His statement, **were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written**, can be understood in two ways. First, the word **contain** can refer to the capacity of our minds to understand. So the meaning is: So much could be said about Christ that the world could not understand all that could be written: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now," that is, understand them (16:12). We could also regard this statement as a deliberate exaggeration; and it then indicates the abundance of Christ's works.

2659 How reconcile this? He had just said, **we know that his testimony is true**, and then immediately resorts to hyperbole, exceeding the truth. According to Augustine, Scripture does use figures of speech, such as "I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne" [Is 6:1], and such statements are not false. [35] This is so when hyperbole is used. The desire of the speaker is not that we accept the literal meaning of the words, but what they were intended to mean, that is, the great number of Christ's works. Hyperbole is not used to explain what is obscure or doubtful, but to exaggerate or minimize what is obvious. For example, to emphasize how plentiful something is, one can say that there is enough for a hundred or a thousand people. And to minimize something, one could say that there is hardly enough for three. This is not speaking falsely, because it is so obvious that the words contort the reality that they show that one does not intend to lie, but to indicate that something is great or small.

2660 Or, this statement could be understood to refer to the power of Christ, who performed these signs; and the emphasis is on **every one of them**. For to write about each and every word and deed of Christ is to reveal the power of every word and deed. Now the words and deeds of Christ are also those of God. Thus, if one tried to write and tell of the nature of every one, he could not do so; indeed, the entire world could not do this. This is because even an infinite number of human words cannot equal one word of God. From the beginning of

the Church Christ has been written about; but this is still not equal to the subject. Indeed, even if the world lasted a hundred thousand years, and books written about Christ, his words and deeds could not be completely revealed: "Of making many books there is no end" (Eccl 12:12); The works of God "are multiplied above number" [Ps 50:5].

[1] St. Thomas refers to Jn 21:6 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 44, a. 4, ad 1.

[2] *Tract. in Io.*, 122, ch. 1, col. 1959; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 20:1-11.

[3] Ambrose.

[4] *Tract. in Io.*, 122, ch. 2, col. 1959-60; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:1-11.

[5] *XL homiliae in Evangelista*; PL 76; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:1-11.

[6] Augustine.

[7] *Tract. in Io.*, 122, ch. 7, col. 1962; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:1-11.

[8] St. Thomas refers to Jn 21:12 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 53, a. 2, obj. 3.

[9] *In Ioannem hom.*, 87, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 475; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:1-11.

[10] *Tract. in Io.*, 123, ch. 1, col. 1965; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:1-11.

[11] *In Ioannem hom.*, 87, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 475; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:1-11.

[12] *summa*

[13] *Tract. in Io.*, 123, ch. 3, col. 1966; also *De consensus evangelistarum*, 3, ch. 26; PL 34; cf. *Catena Aurea*,

[14] St. Thomas refers to Jn 21:17 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 7, a. 3, s. c.

[15] Aristotle, *Politics*.

[16] Gregory.

[17] *Tract. in Io.*, 123, ch. 5, col. 1968; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:15-17.

[18] *In Ioannem hom.*, 88, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 478; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:15-17.

[19] *Serm. Pasch.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:15-17.

[20] *Tract. in Io.*, 123, ch. 5, col. 1967; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:15-17.

[21] Greek Doctor.

[22] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*.

[23] *In Ioannem hom.*, 88; PG 59, col. 479; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:18-19.

[24] Cicero.

[25] Origen, *Explanation of Matthew*.

[26] St. Thomas refers to Jn 21:21 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 83, a. 4, ad 2.

[27] *Tract. in Io.*, 124, ch. 1, col. 1969; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:19-23.

[28] *Ibid.*, col. 1970; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:19-23.

[29] *In Ioannem hom.*, 88, ch. 1; PG 59, col. 480.

[30] *In Ioannem hom.*, 88, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 480; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:19-23.

[31] *Tract. in Io.*, 124, ch. 2, col. 1970; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:19-23.

[32] *Ibid.*; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:19-23.

[33] *In Ioannem hom.*, 88, ch. 2; PG 59, col. 480.

[34] St. Thomas refers to Jn 21:25 in the *Summa Theologiae*: III, q. 42, a. 4; q. 83, a. 4, ad 2.

[35] *Tract. in Io.*, 124, ch. 8, col. 1976; cf. *Catena Aurea*, 21:24-25.

APPENDICES OF NOTES HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL

James A. Weisheipl, O.P., S.T.M.

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I

BRIEF NOTE ON THE TEXT OF ISAIAH (6:1) USED FOR THE PROLOGUE

It was customary for medieval sermons to be based on a special text of Scripture, which would be developed phrase by phrase in the course of the sermon. Naturally, every text was adapted to the ultimate purpose the preacher had in mind. Similarly, every book or important treatise in the Middle Ages would be introduced by a Prologue, which was likewise a development of a text chosen by the author from Scripture. The development of this text was not necessarily an explanation of the literal sense of the passage. It was rather an explanation adapted by the author to prepare the reader for the book about to follow. Usually the text chosen was adapted to cover the special range of material to be discussed, and thus served as a division of the matter about to be treated. There

is nothing unusual about this.

Since, as St. Augustine says, St. John's purpose in writing his gospel was "to inform us about the *contemplative life*," St. Thomas chose the text from Isaiah (6:1) to show the reader something about John's own contemplation in that the Lord Jesus is contemplated therein in a threefold fullness: sublime (*alta*), expansive (*ampla*), and perfect (*perfecta*). (See Prologue, n. 1). Hence, St. Thomas adapts the text of Isaiah (6:1) to fit this threefold fullness of John's contemplation revealed in his Gospel. This is a very normal and ordinary procedure. Indeed almost any text is flexible and adaptable in many ways according to the purpose of the preacher or writer.

St. Thomas, in fact, uses the text chosen for two purposes: first, to explain the threefold fullness of John's contemplation; second, to divide the following exposition of John's Prologue into three parts: namely 1 (1-2) concerning the sublimity of the Word, 1 (3- 13) concerning the totality of the universe through the Word, and 1 (14a) concerning the Incarnation of the Word. The first division corresponds to Lecture 1, the second to Lectures 2 to 6, and the third to Lecture 7. Consequently, the tripartite reading of the text of Isaiah (6:1) is essential to Thomas' development in the Prologue of his explanation of the Gospel.

The Latin Vulgate that Thomas used had this threefold division of the text of Isaiah (6:1): *Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum, et plena erat domus a maiestate eius, et ea quae sub ipso erant replebant templum*. In the commentary we have translated this literally as, "I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the whole house was full of his majesty, and the things that were under him filled the temple," as required by the exposition of Thomas. Moreover, it is clear from Thomas' running gloss, which he gave in class some time between 1248 and 1252 as a young *cursor biblicus* at Cologne under St. Albert the Great, that this was the actual reading of his personal Bible. (See *Expositio super Isaiam ad Litteram*, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Leon. 28 [Rome 1974], 6:1, lines 96-103). What is more, St. Albert the Great himself used this full text from Isaiah (6:1), as above, and adapted it for his own purposes for the Prologue to his *Commentary on the Second Book of the Sentences* (ed. Borgnet 27:1-3), which he wrote when he was already a Master in Sacred Theology at Paris toward the end of 1245 or the beginning of 1246. (See my *Friar Thomas d'Aquino*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1974, p. 45). He too needed all three parts of the text to show the division of Book Two into three parts or three "Treatises."

The historical and textual problem with all of this is that the Latin phrase, *et plena erat domus a maiestate eius*, the second phrase, is not found in the ordinary editions of the Latin Vulgate, neither in the old Clementine version nor in

the critical edition prepared by Dom Robert Weber in 1975 (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 2 vols.). Nor is this second phrase to be found in the Greek Septuagint nor in the Hebrew Massoretic text of Isaiah. The historical and textual problem is to locate the vulgate tradition to which the Bible of Thomas and Albert belonged; this has not yet been done. The text of Isaiah (6:1) in the critical edition simply reads: *Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum, et ea quae sub eo erant implebant templum.*

The text in Thomas' Bible was somehow a conflation from Isaiah (6:4), *et domus repleta est fumo*, "and the house was filled with smoke," while the reading in the Piana edition of Thomas' works and all subsequent editions, including the Marietti, is a conflation from Isaiah (6:3), *plena est omnis terra gloria eius*, "the whole earth is full of his glory."

The Hebrew author of Isaiah 6 (1-4) wished to say that he saw the splendor of the All High God fill the *temple* (6:1), the whole *earth* (6:3), and the *house* (6:4). This kind of Hebraic development is completely missed in the version Albert and Thomas had before them. But, then, this particular text would not have been suitable for the kind of development Thomas wished to present in his Prologue. Nor would it have been suitable for Albert's purposes either when he commented on Book II of the *Sentences*.

Nothing I have said here makes the slightest difference to our understanding or appreciation of St. Thomas' Prologue. Isaiah 6 (1-4) as St. Thomas had it helps to explicate John's Gospel in a way that the passage as established by biblical criticism does not. Nevertheless, for the study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, the study of medieval exegesis, and a fuller understanding of St. Thomas and his sources, it would be helpful if we could discover St. Thomas' Bible or at least the manuscript tradition to which it belonged. (See the editors of *Expositio super Isaiam*, ed. cit., Preface, pp. 43-47).

II

PROOFS FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE

Despite the constant teaching of the Catholic Church, many Catholics are surprised to learn that it is reasonable and also a matter of divine revelation that the human mind *can* arrive at a clear and unshakable conviction of the existence of one God as creator of the universe. Many non-Catholics insist that the question of God's existence is strictly a personal matter, and one of faith, not reason.

Usually what is meant by "strictly a personal matter" is HANDS OFF! It is a religious question, and of concern only to me! This attitude, however, is not only an insult to God, but also to human reason. Man has an intellect by which he can discover truth, all truth, and even the cause of all truth. By his intellect man knows very few things intuitively and easily; his normal path is one of arduous learning, reasoning, discovering, and problem-solving. This winding path by which he comes to see *why* things are so and not otherwise than they are, is called "proof" or "evidence." On the basis of the proof or evidence the human mind can readily see the truth or falsity of the claim. "Proof" is always our reason for making the claim; that is, the "proof" contains the *cause* of the conclusion we have just drawn. As long as the area of investigation is co-natural to man, i.e., within the ambit of his experience, the "evidence" or "proof" he digs up will very often coincide with the real cause in nature which brought the situation about. That is to say, in all the natural sciences (involving sensible bodies and activities), in the numerous branches of mathematics (involving imagination and consistency), as well as in most human affairs (dealing with right and wrong, responsibility, guilty or not guilty), we can very often amass our evidence from the very causes that produced the situation in question. In that case, the cause of our knowing a truth conclusively coincides with the causes that brought the real situation about. But when, on the other hand, our investigation carries us beyond the realm of human experience, then the only evidence we have is the effects we have in front of us. That is to say, when we raise such basic questions as the efficient designer and creator of our whole being and the totality of the universe, or ask why we ourselves are on this earth, we are asking about causes that transcend all our experience and imagination. But we do have the evidence in front of us all the time that there must *exist* some cause because of the nature of the effects we behold. That is, the totality of the evidence within ourselves and around ourselves is contained *in the effects*. Human footprints in the sand indicate that a man has walked this way before, the evidence is the footprint, an effect. *That* there is a creative God is the most important truth the human mind can reach, because it makes all the difference in our response, our daily lives, our total attitude. To deny human reason the possibility of proving with certitude *that* there is a First Cause of all within range of human experience is to deny our intelligence.

Modern academicians and politicians are all too ready to leave God out of the picture. Rather than say, "He does not exist," as atheists, Marxists, and materialists do say, they would prefer to be skeptical, agnostic, or say it is a matter of religion, not of reason and debate. Because of the prevailing agnosticism, or better, indifference, toward the real existence of a creating God, who is the total efficient, exemplar, and final cause of every single reality outside himself, the First Vatican Council (1870) explicitly declared what was always taught: the human mind can prove with absolute certainty that only one creating

God exists, from the evidence of his handiwork, his effects within us and around us. This declaration of the First Vatican Council was not a new truth, but the constant teaching of the Scriptures and the living Church. Time and again the Scriptures declare that the glory and love of the Lord are manifest in his handiwork; and St. Paul insists that even the pagans and irreligious men have no excuse for ignoring God, for "whatever can be known about God is clear to them, as he himself made it so. Since the creation of the world, invisible realities, God's eternal power and divinity, have become visible, *recognized through the things he has made*" (Rom 1:19-20). St. Thomas did not need the First Vatican Council to tell him that the human mind *can* arrive at a firm conviction of the existence (*an sit*) of a First Cause from his *effects* (*Sum. theol.* I, q.2, a. 1-2). As to *what* God is or *who* he is, we can know very little indeed, because his nature has got to be radically different from anything we experience humanly. Even the most sublime terms in the human vocabulary when applied to God pale utterly: terms such as "love," "forgiving," "generous," "all knowing," "all powerful," and the like. It is more honest to say with St. Thomas that we know much more what God is not than what he is (*Sum. theol.* I, q.3, prol.). Imagination gives an utterly distorted picture of God, this is inevitable. The capacity of the human mind, however, is such that it can not only know *that* God exists, but also it great deal about what he *is not*, and a little bit about what we must say he is, even though human words and experience cannot do justice to the reality, as the prophet Isaiah well understood (Is 64:3; 1 Cor 2:9).

It is particularly important today that all Christians acknowledge the fundamental ability of the human mind *to know* with certitude that God exists. God made man in "his own image and likeness" (Gn 1:26) for this very purpose: that he might know him, love him and serve him on this earth and be happy with him forever in heaven. St. Thomas credits the human mind with far greater potential than would the sceptic and agnostic. What is more, the human mind has every *right to know* about the existence of God, since our whole manner of life depends upon that knowledge. To deny man the right to know God's existence, that is, to prevent him from knowing that God exists, is a far greater crime than a simple denial of man's capacity, for the latter is only an insult, the former adds the perversion of justice. No one today can be complacent about this contemporary insult and injustice presented in the societal game of "important things do not count."

Despite the fact that man can know by reason that God exists, God still chose to reveal his own existence through the Scriptures. For reason is pushed to her greatest efforts when she seeks the highest truth, Truth Itself. Indeed, to Thomas it seemed remarkable that some philosophers, i.e., those gentiles without the Christian revelation, did in fact arrive at the inevitable conclusion that God exists. That is his actual starting point: a few philosophers, highly gifted, using human reason unaided by revelation did, in fact, arrive at the most

important issues concerning man: the first of these being that he has a Creator. Thomas, however, was not only a fighting optimist, but also a factual realist. He knew that only a *few* men arrived at the really important truths in human life, and only after a *long time* of persistent struggling against error, and even then, arriving at a few gems of *truth mixed with much dross of falsehood*. These are the three reasons St. Thomas gives (*Sum. theol.* I, q.1, a.1) why God in his infinite mercy felt obliged to reveal even these: so that *all men*, no matter how ungifted, no matter how busy, might know at least the essential truths without any error. In other words, considering the actual condition in this hectic world, God in his infinite goodness revealed even those truths that the human mind can in fact know with its native powers, so that the most important truths of human life "could be known by all men easily, with absolute certitude, and with no admixture of error" (Vat. Council 1: sess. 3, cap. 2, Denz 3005). At the same time, that Council condemned as contrary to the true Catholic faith the outright denial that "the one and true God, our Creator and Lord, can be known with certitude from the things he has made, by the natural light of human reason" (Chap. 2, can. 1, Denz. 3026).

In other words, there are two kinds of truths that God has chosen to reveal to mankind: (1) those that we could never know by any amount of human reason, such as man's destiny to eternal beatitude, the Word made flesh for our salvation, the triune nature of God, and the final resurrection of the human body; (2) those that "the human mind" can know, and in fact, that some gifted few have discovered, after a long struggle, and even then with a great admixture of error, such as the existence of one Creator of the universe, his providence over all things, and the immortality of the human soul. The first kind God alone could tell us, and he had to tell us, granting that he freely chose to predestine man to a supernatural end: if God decided to give man a home beyond his nature, then he had to tell us how to get there, namely, by following his Son to Calvary. The second kind, however, God had no need to reveal at all, but he did so that *all men* could come to the essential truths of human life more easily, with absolute certitude, and without any admixture of error. The most important truth in human life is that there is but one God, the Creator and Lord of all.

Thomas always maintained that many philosophers of the past have *in fact* come to know God's existence through his created effects. At the same time, he was well aware how few these highly gifted "philosophers" were compared to the totality of mankind, the length of time they devoted to the search, and the great number of erroneous notions these philosophers had about "God," as they understood him. Nevertheless, Thomas never failed to point out the many different paths philosophers found to God. (See J. A. Baisnée, "St. Thomas Aquinas' Proofs of the Existence of God Presented in Their Chronological Order," *Philosophical Studies in Honor of the Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O.P.*, ed. J.

K. Ryan, Westminster: Newman, 1952, pp. 29-64). In Thomas' own presentation of the various paths the philosophers took, he often simplified, clarified, and strengthened the tortuous paths actually marked out by various philosophers. He often saw more clearly what Plato, Aristotle, Avicenna, or John Damascene wanted to say, and said it with greater precision and less admixture of error. In the *Summa theologiae* I, 2, 3, Thomas gives only five of the simplest and most convincing ways various philosophers actually used. These "five ways," of course, were not the only ways in which philosophers have come to know the one, true God. Thomas himself enumerated other ways, and in one's own personal experience one can find many other ways to God. So there is nothing exclusive, sacrosanct, or all-inclusive in the "five ways" (*quinque viae*) presented to beginners in the *Summa theologiae*. (See Joseph Owens, "Aquinas and the Five Ways," *The Monist*, 58, 1974, 16-35).

In his Prologue to St. John, Thomas indicates "four" especially selected ways, suitable to his purpose in the commentary, that have brought philosophers to the contemplation of God's existence, and which are most appropriate to point out to the reader of St. John's Gospel. The contemplative is most easily brought to a knowledge of God's creative existence by perceiving his authority, eternity, and incomprehensibility.

(i) Here St. Thomas points out that the "most efficacious way" (*via efficacissima*) for philosophers to know God is through his *authority* over all things.: We see things in nature that act for an end they do not and cannot know; such is true of the entire universe with all its stars and galaxies. Since such things lack intelligence, they cannot direct themselves to an end, but must be directed and moved by some Intelligence. Since the whole course of nature is most fittingly ordered to a complexity of ends, there must be something beyond nature with intelligence to direct all things as Lord and Master. In the Prologue, Thomas sees all this expressed by Isaiah in the use of the word "Lord," when he says, "I saw the Lord." And Thomas notes that John reflects the authority of the Incarnate Word when he says, "He came unto his own," that is, into the world that belonged to him. This philosophical argument corresponds to the "fifth" of the famous "five ways" in the *Summa theologiae*. In the *Summa contra gentiles* (I, c. 13, n. 115), written in Paris early in 1259, this argument is attributed to St. John Damascene (*De fide orthodoxa*, I, c. 3) and also associated with Averroes' *In II Phys.*, com. 75. Altogether, St. Thomas uses this argument from "the governance of all things in the world" eight times, and here he calls it the "most efficacious way." (See Baisnée, *loc. cit.*, p. 63). Surely, this way strikes most scientists and those who contemplate the stars and the world of nature. By way of contrast, it might be noted here also, that in the *Summa theologiae* Thomas called the "first" way, the argument from change throughout the universe, the "more manifest"—and so it was for Aristotle.

(ii) Thomas goes on to say that some philosophers come to the knowledge of God through his *eternity*. Many are struck by the constant fluidity, flow, and mutability of everything in our human experience: "Time and tide wait for no man." But some are struck by the fact that certain things are subject to more change than others. The higher a thing is in nature, the less subject to change it seems to be. Thus terrestrial bodies change in every way, and different living things have longer or shorter life-spans, while celestial bodies seem to us only to change their position in the heavens. Nevertheless, all things in the heavens and on the earth are in the constant flow of time. This "historicity" of all things in time and place would lead us to think that the cause of things in time and place must itself be beyond all time. Thus the contemplation of the temporality of every thing we experience has led some philosophers to a God who is eternal and unchanging.

This argument, it would seem, was never used elsewhere by St. Thomas. It suggests, however, Plato's famous argument that from contemplating "that which is Becoming always and never is Existent" one is led to "that which is Existent always and has no Becoming" (*Timaeus* 27D6-28C4)—an idea Thomas could have read in the translation and commentary by Calcidius (early 4th century). A similar argument from the mutability of all creatures to the absolute immutability of God is also suggested in Malachi (3:6): "I, the Lord, do not change"; while the whole universe constantly changes. The theme of the absolute contingency and temporality of creatures in contrast to the constancy and eternity of God runs throughout all the writings of St. Augustine; it is one of his fundamental themes.

In the Prologue to John, Thomas suggests that Isaiah implies this view when he uses the word "seated," that is, without change and forever. John the Evangelist suggests the same when he says, "In the beginning was the Word." Some contemporary commentators, however, have reduced this argument to the "first" given in the *Summa Q. A. Baisnée, op. cit.*, p. 63). But this view does not seem tenable, since the argument in the Prologue is cast entirely in terms of temporality and eternity, which is not at all the same as Aristotle's argument from motion (the first way in the *Summa*). For Aristotle, both God and the universe are eternal, yet God is its First Cause and Mover.

(iii) Other philosophers, Thomas continues, come to the knowledge of God from his *dignity*. "And these," he says, "were the Platonists." They saw that everything that *shares* "being" depends on one who has it *essentially*. That is to say, since everything that exists, diverse as things are, shares in the common act of existing (*esse*), there must be a first Being, whose very nature must be *esse* itself *ipsun esse subsistens*. This same argument is used by Thomas also in *De potentia*, q.3, a.5, and is there attributed to Avicenna (*Metaph.* VIII, c.7, IX, c.4). The

underlying principle, however, is fundamental to the whole of Thomas' metaphysics: "Whatever is possessed by participation (*per participationem*) is reduced to one that has it by essence (*per essentiam*)." (Cf. Peter of Berganlo, *Tahula aurea*, s.v. "Participare"). This is the argument Thomas uses to establish the fundamental principle of his existentialist metaphysics: in God alone are *esse* and *quod est* (essence, or nature) identical; in all creatures, even angels, they are truly distinct (cf. *Sum. theol.* I, q.3, a.4). In the Prologue to John, Thomas sees this unique *dignity* of God as expressed in the phrase of Isaiah when he says, "on a high ... throne." John implies the same when he says, "The Word was God," which brings us back to the very name of God as "I am who am" (Ex 3:14), the source of the name *Yahweh*.

(iv) Finally, there were other philosophers who came to the knowledge of God from the basic *incomprehensibility* of truth. It is obvious to most people that the human mind is limited in its ability to know the truth. Only the most arrogant "rationalist"—usually the very ones who deny the human mind's ability to prove God's existence—would say, "Given time, man will know and be able to explain everything." The reasonable philosopher, as opposed to the "rationalist," is fully aware of the mind's limitations in every sphere of human activity, especially the most important ones. Therefore, those realists have argued there must be some Intellect that not only knows all truth, but is Truth Itself (*ipsa veritas*) and the ultimate cause of all truth. That is to say, if truth exists in the mind, and human minds come and go in the course of human generation and death, and the foundation of our knowledge is a passing world, then there must be some ultimate ground for all truth, even the truth that "two and two are four." In the Prologue, Thomas seems to attribute this way of reasoning to St. Augustine, who is quoted at this point (Prol. n.6). In his careful study, J. A. Baisnée found no other use of this argument by St. Thomas (See *op. cit.*, p. 64). Cornelio Fabro, moreover, sees this, as a "refreshing novelty" in Aquinas, carrying expressly the signature of St. Augustine (see C. Fabro, "Sviluppo, Significato, e Valore della Quarta Via," *Doctor Communis*, 7, 1954, 82). In any case, Thomas sees this incomprehensibility of God's ways in Isaiah's use of the word "lofty" (*elevatum*), meaning beyond the understanding of every creature. St. John himself intimates this when he says in 1:18: "No one has ever seen God." This reminds one very much of St. Augustine's favorite quotation from St. Paul, "How deep are the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!" (Rom 11:33). Almost anyone who considers even briefly the unfathomable ways of human life and experience comes to one of two conclusions: either there is a God great enough to draw good out of evil or life is "absurd." But even the "absurdity" of life should be enough to lead men to the Lord of the absurd!

These are only four of the many ways Thomas could have chosen to show how

serious, contemplative philosophers have come to a knowledge of God's existence and his ways. In the Prologue, St. Thomas uses these four paths by which contemplative philosophers have come in order to expand on only one point: the *sublimity* of St. John's contemplation (*alta*). This, for Thomas, was the first aspect of John's contemplation of the Word that he wished to convey to us in the Gospel. The other aspects of this contemplation—its expansiveness and perfection—are explained and exemplified in the subsequent paragraphs of this Prologue by Thomas.

III

THE CONCEPTS OF "NATURE" AND "PERSON"

The eternal salvation to which God has freely ordained mankind is a blessed, consummate happiness that cannot be attained by the powers of sheer created nature itself—much less by fallen human nature—even though in creating human nature "in his image and likeness" God intended, that this nature should partake of the intimate life of his own dynamic being, Life Itself. That such a sublime happiness is in store for those who freely choose to serve the one true God, and him alone, has been *revealed* to mankind by God himself; man could not otherwise conceive even the possibility of such eternal bliss beyond the grave. "No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him 15 (Is 64:3, cf. *Sum. theol.* I, q. 1, a. 1). In order to know that such eternal happiness exists for and can be attained by each individual human being, every person needs the special grace (*gratia*) of God, a purely unmerited "gift" (the meaning of the word *gratia*). Only by grace can man know the wonders of that goal, and the way to the goal, as well as obtain the help (*auxilium*), the actual, daily grace necessary to achieve that goal.

Man receives the message, the "Good News" (*Evangelium*), about this. salvation through faith (*fides*) in the God-Man Christ Jesus, "the one mediator between God and men, who gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim 2:5-6). Each person works out his salvation with "fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12), having confidence and hope (*spes*) in God's abundant mercy and power. We achieve this salvation, however, through a total, unconditional affirming love of God and neighbor (*caritas*) exercised daily through all the other virtues required to live a full Christian life as a "pilgrim" passing this way but once to our true home, heaven, "the holy city, the new Jerusalem" (Rv 21:2). "For we do not have here a lasting city; but we are seeking one that is to come" (Heb 13:14). Thus the whole focus of our pilgrim life is the Word-made-flesh, Christ Jesus, who not only merited

redemption for us, but is also the true example of the way we must live. He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6), and only through him can we go to the Father. So, Christian life consists in accepting Jesus as our Lord and Master, and in imitating him, especially in obedience to the will of the Father.

Since God himself freely chose the ultimate goal for man, he alone is free to determine the means to that goal, the road by which we must travel to attain the destined happiness beyond our dreams. God could have chosen any number of ways, but in fact he chose only one. That one way is the person of Jesus Christ, who within himself unites our human nature with his divine nature. For this reason Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6). That just happens to be the one and only means set for us before we were born, not by nature, but by the grace of God.

In order that man be saved, he must accept as absolutely certain—through the gift of "faith"—two fundamental mysteries of revelation that defy human language and human comprehension. They are the mysteries of the *Incarnation*.—or "the Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14) and of the *Trinity*: or the ultimate mystery of God as three Persons in one nature. These are the two basic mysteries, enigmas, puzzles, incomprehensibles, that every person must take on faith, with love, in order to follow the way of Christ to the Father, by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The fundamental teaching in this matter is expressed quite simply by St. Thomas:

The way for men to arrive at eternal happiness is the mystery of the Incarnation and passion of Christ, for it says. "There is no salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given to men, by which we can be saved" (Acts 4:12). And therefore belief in some way, in the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ was necessary at all times and for all people; but this belief is different according to the different times and persons. (*Sum. theol.* II-II, q.2, a. 7)

But Thomas goes one step farther:

One cannot believe explicitly in the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ without belief in the Trinity.- because the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ includes that the Son of God [the Father] became man; that he renewed the world through the grace of the Holy Spirit; and that he was conceived [in the womb of Mary] by the Holy Spirit. (*Sum. theol.* II-11, q. 2, a. 8,- see also Nicene Creed, Denz. 125, among others)

Although neither the mystery itself nor anything affirmative and unpuzzling about the mysteries can be proved by human reason, it is a *human intellect* that tries to understand the meaning of the terms used by God in revealing himself to us, and tries also to show what the mystery is *not*, at least by showing that the mystery is not absurd or impossible (See *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 1, a.8). The English word "mystery" comes from the Greek *mysterion*, meaning what is "secret or hidden from comprehension"; it usually has to do with divine truths, or secrets hidden behind sacred signs and symbols (*sacramenta*). We sometimes speak of the many natural "mysteries" that are around us, in actual fact, the whole of human life is one big "mystery" beyond our comprehension. But there is one big difference: natural mysteries may some day come to be understood, but supernatural mysteries, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and God's love, can never be understood, much less comprehended by any created mind. The best the human mind can do is recognize that it is rational for a man to believe in the truth of the mystery.

The special role of theology, as St. Anselm and all the scholastics following Augustine knew, comes from the dynamism of *faith seeking to understand*, insofar as is humanly possible, the revealed word of God: *Fides quaerens intellectum* (Anselm, *Proslogion*, prooem. Opera Omnia, ed. F. S. Schmitt, I, 1938, p. 94. See M.-D. Chenu, *La théologie comme science au XIII siècle*, 2nd ed., Paris: Vrin, 1943 or any of Chenu's works on theology as a science). For St. Augustine, it was not so much a matter of understanding in order to believe, but a matter of believing in order to understand: *Credo ut intelligam*. Quoting the Latin wording from the Septuagint, Augustine based his view on Isaiah (7:9): "Unless you believe, you will not understand" (Aug., *Sermo* 53.7, PL 38:257; *Ennar. in A.* 118, serm. 18. 3-4, PL 37:1552-53). What little understanding we are capable of having in this life presupposes two things: a lively faith, and a humble inquisitive mind. To understand as well as possible what faith holds, we must employ every bit of learning, especially philosophical learning, which sheds light on what has been revealed. The words "nature" and "person," each of which has a precise meaning in philosophy, are essential to our understanding of what we believe. For in our Christian faith we assert that Jesus Christ is one *person*, the Son of the eternal Father, and that he has two *natures*, the truly human and the truly divine. The Holy Trinity is three *persons*, and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in being or *nature*. Our task then throughout the rest of these notes will be to explain as carefully as we can in "the words of men" what we believe, so that through them we might catch some glimmer of the great mystery that is God himself. To accomplish this task we must first examine the words "nature" and "person." In this particular note we shall explain the various meanings these terms have in everyday use, the way they must be understood at the crucial juncture where reason meets faith, where reason surrenders to the mystery of revelation.

"Nature" as a Philosophical Concept

"Nature" is a wider and more comprehensive term than "person," being used of many more things. Thus every person has a nature, but not every nature has or is a person. The various meanings the word "nature" has in common speech and in its philosophical refinements are what concern us here.

The word *nature* in English today is used in all sorts of loose ways. "Nature lovers" think of the great outdoors; "naturalists" usually think of plants and animals, or else of the great variety of "health foods" that help to make one strong physically. Literary people often use the term "nature" in the sense of "the *universe* out there," a meaning more or less synonymous with that of the Greek word *kosmos* (from which we get our English word "cosmetics"). Intellectuals with a deeper understanding of medicine, sociology, or even law, think of nature as a "normal course of events," or "behavior that is found among many," or "laws of behavior" acceptable in civilized society and codifiable. While all these meanings (and many others) can be traced back to ancient usage, none of them focuses fully on the precise philosophical meaning the word had for the ancient Greeks and Latins and on through the Middle Ages as well. Renaissance humanists often distinguished between Nature with a capital N, meaning God acting in the universe (*Natura naturans*), and nature with a small *n*, meaning the created universe as an instrument of God (*natura naturata*). This distinction was also utilized by St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and many philosophers of the thirteenth century. Even in that context, a certain dynamic character was thought to belong to the universe as God created it. That is to say, in most of these usages the implication is that there is some innate source *within things* for their "normal," "usual," "codifiable" behavior. In all of these usages derived from antiquity, there is implied an inner dynamism that defies our every attempt to turn them into machines.

Our own thoughts about "nature" have to a large extent been molded and influenced by the mechanistic philosophy dominant in academia since the seventeenth century. Today it is hard for us *to avoid* thinking in clear and distinct- mechanical terms. We tend to imagine the universe as a big machine, something like a watch, made up of ever smaller and smaller particles that operate according to determined or determinable mathematical laws. All mathematical formulations, even statistical laws of "random probability," are necessarily mechanical, as Leibniz (1646-1716) saw so clearly; but he ended by acknowledging two parallel worlds—the mechanical and mathematical (the phenomenological), and the "real," ontological, and metaphysical (the monodological and non-mechanical) world. For Leibniz, the phenomenological world appears to be mechanical and mathematically determinable, but the real

world behind the phenomena consists of monads, each of which is self-contained and non-causal. In order that such a parallelism exist at all and make any sense, Leibniz had to postulate a pre-established harmony determined by God, the Lord of both worlds. It was inevitable that Leibniz's metaphysics, and even Newton's, passed into oblivion, while their mechanical and mathematically determinable world became the dominant philosophy of modern science.

If we wish, however, to appreciate what the word *nature* meant to the Greek pagans and Christians, to the Middle Ages and the whole history of Christian thought, we must put aside for the moment any mechanistic notions we may have about the universe in which we live, and try to appreciate a philosophical language that expresses what really lies at the foundation of our human experience, a language that describes a world made up of such principles as potency and act; the four radically different kinds of causality (formal, material, efficient and final); real substances that are things (*res*); accidental characteristics (nine of them, not counting the post-predicaments and modes), matter and form; essence and actuality of being, or *quod est* and *esse*. This philosophical language is difficult for us moderns to grasp precisely because it is non-mechanistic and apparently foreign to our "scientific" minds and "analytic" philosophy. But in fact, the older, philosophical vocabulary is much less difficult to grasp than are modern "scientific" and "analytic" concepts, contrary to what might have been expected. Therefore it is intelligible to more people and is grounded more securely in human experience. Whatever may be said about the Semitic mind and the picturesque language of the Old Testament, the Christian experience in both East and West, in both Greek and Latin, is more deeply rooted in history and in personal experience than any of the fleeting modern systems of thought. There is indeed a chasm of sorts between the modern "scientific" and "analytic" vocabulary on the one hand and the traditional personalist vocabulary of the ancients. But it is not a chasm between East and West. The clash between the Eastern and Western theologies is not a clash between Greek and Latin mentalities, but a clash between Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies—both of which are Greek.

As to the word "nature," there is an important history of Greek and Latin Philosophical usage (see my "Concept of Nature," *The New Scholasticism*, 38, 1954, 377-408; and "Aristotle's Concept of Nature: Avicenna and Aquinas," in press. See also, G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments*, Cambridge, 1954, index).

For our purposes here it is sufficient to note three historical points briefly before zeroing in on the analogical use of the term in Aristotelian and Scholastic philosophy. 1) The Greek seekers of wisdom before Socrates (d. 399 B.C.), the pre-Socratics, are frequently called *physiologoi* because their whole enterprise

was a search for the underlying active "source" (*arche*) of all natural processes in the world, including the origin and nature of man. This underlying active source they called *physis* (nature), from which we derive our English words *physics*, *physical*, *physician*, and the like. For most of these pre-Socratics, one or other of the basic elements were sought out as the ultimate, active *nature* of things, as though the whole universe had to have been made from one single element; they are commonly called philosophical Monists, from the Greek word *monos*, "single." 2) Socrates and his disciple Plato (427-347 B.C.) gave up the enterprise of the *physiologoi* as hopeless, Socrates establishing a moral or ethical philosophy, and Plato turning from the world of *nature* to the world of separated, subsistent Ideas that defined each thing in itself, and establishing the primacy of *art* over *nature*, and of *mind* or *spirit* over *matter* (See, *Laws* X, 884A913D). Plato, responding to Parmenides, established a dualism that enticed a host of eminent Fathers of the Church, mystics, separatists, and modern dualists. This is not the Pauline warfare between the "spirit" and the "flesh," but the Cartesian separation of mind and body that overflowed into the pseudo-conflict of faith and reason, Church and science, *sacerdotium* and *regnum*, Church and State. 3) Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), a disciple of Plato, tried to reinstate the quest of the ancient *physiologoi* in order to establish a realist foundation for his metaphysics of being. That Aristotle would have wished to re-establish the investigation of *nature* is not at all surprising, for his father was court physician to Philip of Macedonia and was himself a born naturalist in the pay of Alexander the Great. What is surprising, however, is that he should have found such a simple truth whereby to succeed in his quest. The simple truth was that the word "is" can be used in many different ways, the fundamental distinction being between *actually* and *potentially*. While the *physiologoi* and the Platonists were rightly busy looking for the actual, Aristotle discovered the potential, that is, primary matter (*materia prima*), which was capable of becoming actual. For this simple discovery, the Thomistic commentator Cardinal Thomas de Vio Cajetan called him Divus *Aristoteles*, *quia invenit materiam* (Divine Aristotle, because he discovered matter).

To *physis* (nature) in the sense of an *active* principle, Aristotle gave the name "form", but to *physis* (nature) in the sense of a *passive* or *potential* principle, he gave the name "matter." Thus Aristotle could say that the word *nature* is analogical, i.e., "equivocal by intent" (*equivocatio a consilio*). For the word *nature* is used in at least two different senses: primarily as "form," and secondarily as "matter" (*Phys.* II, 1). Form as the actual principle is defined as the active "source or cause of being moved and of being at rest in those things to which it belongs primarily (*per se*) and not incidentally" (192b21- 23). Matter as the potential principle is defined as the passive "source of being moved and of being at rest in those things to which it belongs primarily and not incidentally" (*ibid.*). In either case, nature, strictly speaking, is a principle (*arche*, *principium*) or a "source" relative to observable and manifest behavior or properties, whether they

be movements such as growing or healing, or characteristics more or less static and proper to different kinds of natures, such as size, color, weight, habitat, and anatomy. St. Thomas is very explicit on this very difficult point: "In the definition of *nature*, the term "source" (*principium*) is used as a kind of generic classification rather than a term like "thing" (or any other *quid absolutum*), because the term *nature* bespeaks of a relationship of origin" (St. Thomas, *In II Phys.*, lect.1, n.5). Thomas rejects every attempt to make absolute Aristotle's concept by suggesting that it might be "an innate power within things" (*vis insita rebus*), as some of Aristotle's commentators have attempted to do. In scholastic terms, the noun "nature" is a *nomen relativum*, not a *nomen absolutum*. Thus *nature* is not really a thing, but an origin or "source" from which (*a quo*) other things proceed.

One further, somewhat epistemological or psychological observation ought to be made at this point. To understand the "nature" of anything living or non-living in this universe we must study the *manifestations* or phenomena that are observable to the senses or to the intellect, both static and dynamic. Some manifestations are sensibly observed, as in minerals, plants, and animals; others are only intellectually observed, such as thinking, willing, hating, loving, and other psycho-physical phenomena. In either case, it is the scientific mind that *projects* the notion of "source" as the root and origin of specific or typical diversities. The more a scientist knows about the observed phenomena, the better he understands the *nature* of the thing studied. One should not be misled by the logical or the lexicographical simplification of some definitions. The logical definition of "man" as "a rational animal," while quite good and complete in its way, should not lead us to think we know all there is to know about human nature. The truth is that this marvelous definition of "man" which includes both animality and rationality, is quite elementary and simplistic. It is not likely to carry one very far in understanding "human nature" with all its complexities. While such a definition clearly sets "man" off from "non-thinking animals" and "non-animal thinkers," it has minimal content. This content can come only from patient study, observation, and experience. An understanding of—let us say—"human nature" is directly proportional to the extent and analysis of one's experience, personal or vicarious. While it is easier to understand human nature, mainly because we are *human* and can reflect on ourselves and our inner states with an analytic mind, the same holds true of our understanding of all natures other than man: only through the phenomena can we claim some understanding of the "nature" of anything.

Simply put, therefore, *nature* is that which makes a thing to be *what* it is. It is the response to the question, "What is it?" In other words, the *nature* of a thing is the same as *its definition* (its *quod quid est*, or *ratio*). Aristotle explains that because of this wider meaning of the term, the word *nature* can be applied to

things that have no principle of motion, like the "nature" of a triangle, an idea, ideals, and even spiritual things. Thus, "by an extension of meaning from the original sense of *physis*, every essence in general has come to be called a nature" (*Metaph.* V, 4, 1015a1 1-12). St. Thomas adds that this latter usage is "by way of metaphor" (*In V Metaph.*, lect. 5, n. 823). In this extended sense, the term is understood in a somewhat static fashion as "whatever a thing is." In this sense it is identical with the term *essence*.

Finally, it should be noted that in the technical language of Latin and Greek, nature is not a thing, a *quod est*, but that *by which* a thing is what it is (*quo est*). For this reason, Aristotle can say that "Things 'have a nature' which have a principle of this kind" (*Phys.* II, 1 92b2-3). It is always an *it* that has a nature, and that *it* must be substantial, an *ousia*.

"Person " as a Philosophical Concept

Since nature is not an *it*, an existing thing, or supposit, it cannot properly be said to exist. Existence (*esse*) belongs to things that have a nature, not to nature itself. Aristotle uses two ways to speak of the concrete, existing thing that has a nature. 1) In the *Categories* 5, Aristotle speaks of substance (*ousia*) in the primary and truest sense as "that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject, whereas substance (*ousia*) in a secondary sense is the apprehended substantial nature or essence of a thing, which, in order to exist, must exist in a subject. This subject necessarily is the concrete, uniquely existing individual, "for instance, the individual man or horse" (2a3). Since the Greek word *ousia* played such an important part in the Christian theology of the fourth century, it is important to remember that for Aristotle, and for all the Greek thinkers, *ousia* in the primary sense is that alone which has existence. It is the ultimate given *suppositum* that has existence, but the kind of existence it has depends upon its *nature (physis)*. The Latins simply called it a *suppositum*, or first *substantia*, which possessed existence by reason of the "form" making the substance to have the *kind* of nature and existence it has. The scholastic axiom, "Form gives existence" (*Forma dat esse*) simply means that the *kind* of existence a thing has depends on its form, or nature. But ultimately, only the supposit itself can be said "to exist."

2) Frequently Aristotle speaks of this first *ousia* as an *hypostasis*, meaning "that which stands under" all properties and characteristics. Literally, the Greek word was translated as *subsistentia*, but it always had the sense of *substantia* in Latin. The Greeks, however, made a very important distinction between *ousia*, which, in the primary sense, alone had existence (*esse*), and *hypostasis*, which, in Christian thought, played the same role as (*persona*) "person" in Latin. The meaning of these terms must be carefully kept in mind when reading the early Greek and

Latin Fathers, as St. Thomas is careful to point out (*Contra errores Graecorum*, prol. *Opera Omnia* ed. Leon. XIL A 71, 1-72).

The English word *person* comes from two Latin words, *personare*, "to sound through," as through the mask used in an ancient dramatic performance. Thus we still list the "Dramatis personae" on the program of a play. Because of the influence of the Latin etymology of this word *persona*, some early Roman theologians, such as Sabellius, thought of God as one substance which spoke through three different masks: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. More will be said on this subject later.

An important point to establish here is that in Latin philosophy the term *person* was applied only to substances that had a particular kind of *nature*, namely, intellectual. Boethius gave the Latin scholastics the classical definition when he defined a person as "the individual substance of a rational nature" (*Contra Eutychem*, c. 3). Then he goes on immediately to say, "Now by this definition we Latins have described what the Greeks call *hypostasis*." The linguistic difficulty, however, was that the Greeks too had a word they used for the masks placed over the face of the actor playing different roles. As Boethius noted, their word for mask was *prosopon*, which never lost its original meaning. To convey the Greek reality signified by *hypostasis*, the Latins had to adapt their word *persona* to embrace substantial individuals of an intellectual nature. While there is a technical difference between "rational" and "intellectual," the latter being wider in extension, that difference is not the issue here. Only intellectual substances can be *persons*, and these intellectual substances must be individual and unique (See *Sum. theol.*, I, q.29, aa. 1-2).

When philosophy demonstrates the existence of a unique First Being, the First Cause of all that exists, it shows him necessarily to be pure spirit, intellect and free volition, the first beginning and last end of all that are created by himself alone. That is to say, philosophy, reasoning from all the effects in the universe, demonstrates that God is a *person*. When philosophers argue about the existence of a "personal" God, they are really asking whether he is an intellectual being, having knowledge and free will. The question has nothing to do with whether or not God has any personal meaning for me as a person, although this question, too, inevitably follows.

Philosophers, Christian or not, also have grounds for acknowledging the existence of pure spirits, both good and evil. Each such spirit, being an individual intellectual substance, is truly a *person*. These are not personifications of subsistent forces of good and evil, but subsistent intelligences, each one unique without the individuality and limitations of material substances. They are spiritual intelligences, created by God, that have certain powers over material things, but

belong to a vast world altogether different from our own material universe. Some of these personal spirits are irreparably evil because of a free choice made by each one, and hence are the cause of fiendish evil beyond the comprehension of man. Other personal spirits are pure, having made a free choice by the grace of God, and are now messengers of divine governance in the universe. From a Christian point of view, the world of human beings can be considered a kind of battle ground, a plaything or booty to be won over by the good angels in the name of God, or by evil spirits in the name of Satan, Lucifer (see Is 14:12), or Beelzebub, "the Prince of demons" (Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22). The important point here is that each individual spirit is an intelligence having a will that is either perverted or good. Therefore each "individual substance of an intellectual nature" is to be called a *person*. Each is unique and each has a name, whether we know it or not.

A consequence of what has been said is that each individual substance of, an intellectual nature is a *person* even though that nature exists only in an embryonic stage and needs a natural course of development to reach its full potential, which for a Christian is eternal happiness with God. Once an individual substance has been constituted by matter and by a form, namely, the "human soul," it is a true *person* in the strictest sense of the term. It therefore has certain natural "rights" that belong to it not by any human decree, but by the nature of a person being exactly that, a *person*. Any violation of those rights is a crime against humanity, not animality.

From this it also follows that no individual substance of a nonintellectual, non-human nature can possibly be a *person*. Thus a companionate dog, no matter how "loyal" or "intelligent" it may be, is in no way a *person*. Even if that dog responds to a name or its master's presence or absence, it is not a *person*. To use the word *person* of any individual substance of a non-intellectual nature is a misuse of the term, which cannot be tolerated in philosophy. On the other hand, a group of persons may constitute a legal entity known as a corporation or "moral person," which may be the subject of legal rights and obligations before the law. But this is merely a legitimate extension of a basically sound definition of *person*.

Briefly, *nature* is a reply to the question, "What is it?" It is the ultimate specific "source" of definite, characteristic phenomena, both static and dynamic. The active, automatic "origin" of these characteristics is the *form* or *species* of the thing, making it to be what it is, the passive, potential "abilities" of such an individual thing are the *matter*. The spiritual forms or species are immaterial natures: these may exist solely in the mind (such as "triangles" and "the square root of two"), or they may exist in physical reality, in which case they are necessarily intellectual substances. *Person*, on the other hand, is a reply to the question, "Who is it?" The *person* or "who" is an individual substance (material or immaterial) of an intellectual nature. In all creatures there is a distinction

between *person* (as a supposit or *quod*) and *nature*, as that by which (*id quo*) a thing is what it is. That is to say, in all creatures, every person “has” a nature by which he has existence. Thus existence and all actions belong to the *person* or supposit, but *nature* is the means by which the person or supposit has existence and its specific actions.

The importance of all of this will become evident when we consider the two great mysteries of our faith: the Trinity and the Incarnation.

IV

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRIUNE GOD

According to the Creed attributed to St. Athanasius, whoever wishes to be saved must hold to the Catholic faith whole and entire. “The Catholic faith, however, is this: that we adore one God in trinity and trinity in unity, neither mixing the persons nor separating the substance” (Denz. 75). The Athanasian Creed, dating at least to the fourth century, goes on in great detail to profess that “the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, but there are not three Gods, but one God.” All are equal in immensity, eternity, omnipotence, lordship, and creation. They are all one God. But each Person is really and truly distinct from the other two, and these Persons are only three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the incomprehensible mystery that God has revealed to us about his inner dynamic life.

When philosophers prove the existence of one God (cf. Note 11 above), they prove that in him his very *nature* or essence is to be (*esse*). St. Thomas proves this fundamental truth of his philosophy in many ways (See *Sum. theol.*, I, q.3, a.4 and all parallel places). Simply, in everything that exists, whatever is over and above the essence (*praeter essentiam*) must be caused either by the essence itself (or *nature*), as proper characteristics naturally springing forth from it, like risibility in man, or it must be caused by some extrinsic source, like heat in water being caused by fire. But since the very existence of a thing (*ipsum esse rei*) within our experience is other than its essence, then the thing’s existence must be caused either by its essential principles or by some exterior cause. Its own existence cannot in any way be produced by the essential principles of the thing, for then the essence could not but necessarily exist, since whatever is essential necessarily belongs to it. Therefore, the thing whose *esse* is other than its essence must have its existence caused by another—and ultimately by one whose very essence is *to be*. Therefore in God essence and existence (*esse*) are

identical. Thus God is *his nature* or essence, and he is his *esse* or existence. Expressed in more Platonic terms, *esse* is a reality in which different things share or participate in varying degrees, but whatever is had by participation (*per participationem*) presupposes one who has it essentially (*per essentiam*).

For St. Thomas the splendor of God's reality is expressed most fully in the identity of his essence and existence. The very *nature* of God is to be *ipsum esse subsistens*, "subsistent being itself." In human history, God, having chosen a special race of people among all those whom he had created, revealed to the Jews his own name, Yahweh, "I AM WHO AM" (Ex 3:14). This truth, as Gilson has constantly emphasized, is the basic principle of the whole of St. Thomas' philosophy. He has also noted that St. Thomas himself referred to this insight as *haec sublimis veritas* (*Sum. c. Gent.*, I, c.32; see E Gilson *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. K. Shook, New York: Random House, 1956, pp.84-95; *Le Thomisme*, 6th ed.,: Paris. Vrin, 1965, pp.99-112). It belongs to the *nature* of God necessarily to exist. That is, he cannot not exist.

From this basic truth it follows, first, that God is in every way uniquely and absolutely indivisible, or "simple," as St. Thomas puts it, having no distinctions within his nature whatever (*Sum. theol.*, I, q.3). Thus in God there is no distinction or difference between his intellect and will, truth and love, justice and mercy, and so forth, even though for us each of these words has a real and distinct meaning (*ratio*) that must be retained in our talking about God. In our talking about God, human language does not lose its meaning, but it takes on a subtlety and expansion in which we realize that words are being used differently of God and creatures. The difference is radical and absolute (*per se*), but there is a human reasonableness in using certain words of both God and creatures. This "equivocation by intent," as Aristotle calls it, is more properly called *analogy*, which is quite different from simple metaphorical language, such as God's "walking," or his "coming down" (*Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, etc.). Words such as "good" and "love" can be used properly both of God and man, but in two radically different ways; the reality as it is found in God infinitely transcends our conception of "good" and "love" realizable in man. Thus such statements as "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8), God is truth, God is good, and so forth, are more true and significant than we can possibly realize. The meaning such terms have for us is quite real and proper, but our understanding of those terms is but a shadow of the reality that is in God. Similarly, God's *nature* is *esse* in a way that surpasses our understanding of all the things of our human experience.

The second point is that God has revealed to us through the Law and the Prophets, through Jesus Christ, and through his Church, that he, the Father, "so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). The Son of God-made-

man himself stated time and again that he “was sent by the Father” to do the will of him who sent him, and that all he has is “from the Father.” But he also said that he would “ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth” (Jn 14:16-17), “the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your mind whatever I have said to you” (Jn 14:26). The Son-made-man also said: “When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will give testimony to me” (Jn 15:26). The last injunction of Jesus to his apostles was “go, therefore, and teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19). This baptismal formula reflects the Church’s gradual understanding of God as three Persons (See Acts 2:38; 2 Cor 13:13).

The only words God used in revealing himself to us are those of “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” (“Spirit” or “Paraclete,” meaning advocate or comforter). And it is only within this context that the theologian must try to understand the inner life of the Godhead. St. John also uses the word *logos*, *Verbum*, or Word, as synonymous for the Son. St. Paul speaks of Christ as “the image of God” (2 Cor 4:4- Col 1:15). There simply are no other words given to us for theological understanding. These are common enough terms, but how they are to be understood of the one God, whose *nature* is his *esse* is a difficult problem, where “faith seeks understanding” with the help of philosophy, the age-long “handmaid of theology” (the *ancilla theologiae*) as understood by the Alexandrine theologians, particularly St. Athanasius, and by the Cappadocian Fathers (St. Basil of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. Gregory of Nyssa) in the East, and by St. Augustine in the West.

In this note there are two major points that need clarifying. First, the doctrine of consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, which was the first really crucial development in Christian doctrine. Although the debate over this doctrine reached a climax in the fourth century, still there was the subsequent problem of *Filioque*, which came to a head in the ninth century. The second baffling mystery was how each of the three Persons is identical with the one nature, yet truly distinct from each other.

A. Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father

Frequently in the New Testament Scriptures, Jesus Christ seems to be presented as somehow less than Yahweh, the one true God of the chosen people, he speaks of himself as “sent by the Father” to do not his own will, but “the will of him who sent me.” He always speaks of himself as having only that teaching, that knowledge, that mission, that will, that judgment which has been committed to him by the Father. Throughout the Gospel of St. John, Jesus seems to

acknowledge a subservient position to the Father, depending upon the Father's acceptance and glorification of him as a loyal Son. In the Gospel according to St. John, Jesus even declares explicitly that "the Father is greater than I" (Jn 14:28). In the end he commends his spirit to the Father.

One of the prevalent assumptions of such ecclesiastical writers as Origen and Clement of Alexandria was that the Son, Jesus Christ, was *subordinate* to the Father. One form of "subordinationism" insisted that Jesus was no more than a mere man who was "adopted" by God. Other forms, like that held by Arius (c.250-c.336), maintained that the Person of Jesus was created by the Father from nothing in order to be the instrument of the divine plan; and thus that the Person of Jesus had a substance (*ousia*) different from God's. This was the extreme form of Arianism that developed from the "subordinationism" of the third century. A second party that developed in the early fourth century, called "Homoeans" (from *homoios*, "similar"), tried to avoid the very basic commitment of "What think you of Christ?" by saying that there was much similarity between Father and Son "according to the Scriptures." But the most influential group to emerge was the Semi-Arians, who claimed that the Father and Son were "similar in substance" (*homoiousios*), but not identical. Although the question of the *ousia* of Jesus was the central issue that directly occasioned the synod of Alexandria (c.320) in which St. Alexander condemned the teaching of Arius, the Catholic teaching was not universally proclaimed until the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, convoked by the Emperor Constantine at his summer palace in 325.

At the Council of Nicaea, under the presidency of Hosius of Spain and under the prosecution mainly by Saint Alexander of Alexandria, whose secretary was the deacon St. Athanasius, approximately 235 bishops (318 according to Athanasius) gathered to consider this crucial dogmatic problem and legislate a number of disciplinary decrees. Basing themselves on the texts "In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1), "The Father and I are one" (Jn 10:30), "That they may be one, even as we are one" (Jn 17:11), "That all may be one, as you Father, in me, and I in you" (Jn 17:21) and similar texts, the conciliar Fathers at Nicaea professed the ancient belief that the "Son is of one substance (that is, *homoousion*) with the Father." The Latin rendering is "consubstantial (*consubstantialis*) with the Father." This doctrine was directly opposed by the Semi-Arians under the leadership of Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia. Eusebius and his many followers insisted on the term *homoiousion*, "of *similar* substance with the Father," in place of the orthodox *homoousion*. Some so-called historians of this controversy of the fourth century have been so insensible and obtuse as to describe it as "a quibble about an *iota*." That *iota* made all the difference in the world between orthodoxy and heresy. As late as 359, St. Jerome could write: "The whole world groaned one day and marvelled to find itself Arian" (*Dial. adv. Lucif* 19, PL 23, 172C).

The significant point is that the word *homoousion* is nowhere to be found in the Canonical Scriptures, no more than is *homoiousion*. But *homoousion* was a soundly based philosophical term used in response to a Greek philosophical question. Consequently, the crucial question for modern man seeking the Christian truth is not so much "what think you of Christ? Whose Son is he?" (Mt 22:42), but rather, "What think you of *homoousion*? By what authority do you profess it?" In the earliest ages of Christianity, many thought highly of Jesus as the "adopted son of God," and accepted him as the "Christus" of faith giving us hope. But, as we shall see, the fundamental question is about the historical Jesus as "consubstantial with the Father," just as the bishops assembled at Nicaea openly declared to be the true teaching of the Church.

This is one of the earliest examples of the development of Christian doctrine which Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-90) helped us to understand (See especially his *Arians of the Fourth Century* (1833), *St. Athanasius*, 2 vols. (1843), *Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845)). The real meaning of the text "The Father and I are one" (Jn 10:30) is that the Son is "consubstantial with the Father" (*homoousion toi patri*). In theological terms, the *ousia* (substance) of the Son is identical to the *ousia* of the Father. From this it is only a short step to the recognition of the Holy Spirit as consubstantial to the Father and Son; that is, the *ousia* of the Holy Spirit is identical to that of the Father and the Son. Moreover, that unique *ousia* is "an individual substance of an intellectual nature"; that is, God is a "person" or "personal."

B. Three distinct Persons in one Nature

Nevertheless, there are three distinct persons (*hypostases*) identical with the one divine *nature* (*ousia*). Because the divine nature is identical with its existence (*esse*), as explained above, there can be only one God. Thus the *person* of the Father cannot be distinct in any way from the divine nature which is *esse*, or *ipsum esse subsistens* (*Sum. theol.* I, q.28, a.2). Although none of the three Persons is distinct from the one identical nature or *ousia*, each is really and truly distinct from the other two, as Father is from Son (*Sum. theol.* I, q.28, a.3). The only meaning open to our appreciation of the mystery is to be found in the terms God himself used to reveal himself, namely, the relative terms of "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" (*Sum. theol.* I, q.29, a.4).

The role of a father is "to beget," just as the meaning of sonship is "to be begotten." The Father, therefore, is unbegotten, but is origin and progenitor of the Son, who himself does not beget, for there is no "Son" in the Godhead other than himself. That is to say, the whole reality of the Father is to beget, to generate, to give all that he has, namely, his whole divine nature, to the Son.

And the whole reality of the Son is to be begotten, to be generated, to receive all that he has, namely, his whole divine nature, from the Father. This relation of Father and Son within the Trinity is clearly expressed throughout the Gospel of John: "All that the Father has are mine" (Jn 16:15). "Father, glorify your Son, since you have given him authority over all men" (Jn 17:1-2); "The teaching you gave me, I have given to them" (Jn 17:8); and again, "My teaching is not my own, but of him who sent me" (Jn 7:16). Both St. Augustine and St. Thomas were eloquent on the precision of this expression. Jesus' doctrine does not belong to himself as originating with him. Rather it belongs to, it is the possession of, the Father (in the genitive case); it is the Father's doctrine precisely *as received from* him by the Son. The life of the Father is an eternal *giving* of himself whole and entire to the Son. The life of the Son is an eternal *receiving* of the Father whole and entire. The life of the Father and the Son together is an eternal *breathing* of the Spirit, while the life of the Spirit is an eternal breath, or gift, whole and entire from the Father and the Son together.

It is obvious that the Spirit must proceed from the Father and the Son (*Patre Filioque*), and not from the Father alone, for in the latter case another "son" would be generated and there would be no distinction between the Son and the Spirit, as Catholic faith teaches (*Sum. theol.*, I, q.36, a.4; see *Sum. contra Gent.*, IV, cc.126, *Contra errores Graecorum*, etc.). The Holy Spirit thus possesses the identical nature of the Father and of the Son precisely *as breathed (spirata)* by Father and Son. He is the "gift" (*donum*) sent to the Church and into the hearts of all baptized in the Spirit. He is the "uncreated grace" (*gratia increata*) by whom all those with "created grace" (*gratia creata*) live the intimate life of the Godhead. He is the Spirit that Jesus *breathed* on the disciples that they might have his Spirit. In other words, the Spirit belongs to the Father and the Son, just as the Son belongs to the Father. Just as the Son *was sent* into the world at a particular period in human history "when the fullness of time had come" (Gal 4:4), so the Holy Spirit *was sent* in a visible way to men at a special time in human history (*Sum. theol.*, I, q.43, a.2 and a.7).

The precise problem where human understanding must give way to belief in a mystery is how can one personal God, who is *ipsum esse subsistens* and a *person*, be in fact three distinct Persons and not three gods. If there are three Persons, each "an individual substance of an intellectual nature," as Boethius and sound philosophy define "person," then why is not each Person a distinct substance with its own *esse*? That is to say, why are there not three gods, if there are three distinct Persons? Or rather still, why are there not four persons, a quaternity, as Peter of Poitiers seems to have implied, according to Geoffrey of Auxerre, St. Bernard's secretary, in his *Libellus* against the so-called *capitula* (PL 185, 598; cf. *Sum. theol.*, I, q.28, a.2; N. Haring, *The Commentaries on Boethius by Gilbert of Poitiers*, Toronto: PIMS, 1966, 3-13). To put the question in a less

philosophical context, how can *one* God be *three* Persons? Or conversely, how can *three* distinct Persons be only *one* subsistent *esse* and not three? At this point no amount of philosophical analysis and explanation can dissolve the real mystery, something transcending mere human intelligence. All we must insist upon is the absolute identity of *person* and *nature* in God and we must not think of the "person" as "an adjunct, or something extrinsically attached," as Gilbert seems to have suggested (*Sum. theol.*, I, q.28, a.2). Not even when we see God "face to face" and know him as he really is will the mystery dissolve. Only God can comprehend himself. Not even the angels and demons, whose spiritual intelligences far transcend every human intelligence, can understand the mystery.

The importance and sublimity of this mystery of the Trinity becomes more apparent when we prayerfully consider the mystery of the Incarnation: the fact that the Son of God (and only the Son) became true man for our sake, suffered, died, and triumphed over death, that we might have his life. This will be discussed in Note V below.

By way of summary, we can say that the one true God has only one *nature*, which, of itself, is the total actuality of being (*esse*), containing no distinctions, potentiality, temporality, or need, having no beginning or end or mutability. This *ousia* is subsistent truth and love, knowing all things, even what is "future and contingent" to us, and loving all those whom he has freely chosen to love and share in his eternal, dynamic bliss. By faith (and faith alone) we are given a glimpse of the dynamic nature of the Godhead in three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each Person, though identical with the divine nature, is distinct from the other two by the way in which that nature is possessed. The Father is the divine nature precisely as *giving it* whole and entire from all eternity to the Son. The Son is that same divine nature precisely as *being given* it whole and entire from all eternity, himself begotten, but in no way "created." The Holy Spirit is that same divine nature precisely as *breathed* by the Father and the Son, himself unbegotten and ungenerated, but simply the Father's breath of love for the Son and the Son's breath of love for the Father.

In human history the "Only Begotten Son of the Father" *was sent* into the world to become man, suffer under Pontius Pilate, die and be raised up again on the third day. Also in human history the Spirit of God, the gift of love, *was sent* by the Father and the Son into this temporal world to sanctify and to animate the "people of God" in their pilgrimage to their true home, which is eternal bliss with all the saints in seeing God face to face. "Then I shall know even as I am known" (1 Cor 13:12).

In the prologue to his *Contra errores Graecorum* St. Thomas manifests a fine sense of history, as well as the demands of a good translator. He notes that the

writings of our ancient holy Fathers must be seen in their historical context. That is, before the Arian heresy concerning the precise relationship between the person of Jesus and the person of God, ecclesiastical teachers were not as precise in speaking about the unity of the divine essence as were teachers after Arius. Similarly, even St. Augustine, one of the great doctors of the Church, was not as precise about grace and free will when he was writing against the Manicheans in his youth as he was in the face of the heresy of Pelagianism. Thus in his later writings, particularly in his anti-Pelagian works, Augustine speaks most cautiously about man's free will and the primacy of God's free gift of grace and final perseverance. And so, St. Thomas says, it is not surprising if modern doctors of the faith, coming after so many new errors, speak more cautiously and more elaborately concerning the doctrine of faith, so as to avoid all heresies. Hence if some things are found in the writings of the ancient doctors that are not as cautiously expressed as the moderns would like, those writings are not for that reason to be disdained or cast aside. Nor should those statements be expanded but reverently explained.

Coming to the main point in his prologue, St. Thomas notes with sympathy the problems of the translator. What might sound good in Greek may not always sound correct in Latin. For this reason the Latins and Greeks profess the same truth of faith in different words. An important example is the mystery of the Trinity itself. For among the Greeks it is correct and orthodox to say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three *hypostases*. But among the Latins it would not be correct to say that they are three *substances*, even though *hypostasis* for the Greeks is the same as *substantia* for the Latins in literal translation. For among the Latins the term *substantia* is more commonly taken to mean the essence, which both the Greeks and the Latins admit to be only one in God. For this reason, just as the Greeks say there are three *hypostases*, we say there are three *persons*, as even St. Augustine acknowledges in his *De trinitate* (VII, n.7, PL 42, 939).

Therefore, the question of precise language is extremely important for the preservation and development of the true Catholic faith. One of the most important functions of the Catholic theologian is to know exactly what can and what cannot be said consistent with the revealed Christian doctrine. The history of Christian belief or dogma may seem more like a history of heresies. But it is often the case that an outrageous statement or a view that is "offensive to pious ears," *male sonans*, or contrary to the living faith of the Church, occasions a clarification and more exact formulation of the true faith, thus contributing indirectly to the development of Christian doctrine in the history of the Church. Therefore each new formulation, like *homoousion*, must be understood in the historical context of the speculative problem; in this case it was a Greek philosophical problem that needed a Greek theological solution consistent with

divine revelation. The true development of Christian doctrine is never a case of abrogating or denying an earlier profession of faith, but always a more explicit profession of the one true faith in the face of given historical obsessions or preoccupations of a certain time in human history. It is only God himself who has no history. Everything created by God and governed by his immutable providence has a very definite history, one that is irreversibly unique and destined to manifest the glory of God.

V

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

The Catholic faith professes a firm belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, in the literal sense of the word “divine,” meaning God himself. That is:

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God (*Deum de Deo*), Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten (*genitum*), not made (*non factum*), one in Being (*consubstantialem*) with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation (*propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem*) he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man (*et homo factus sit*).

This is the ancient profession of faith approved by the Council of Nicaea (325), more fully formulated by the First Council of Constantinople (381), and recited weekly by the faithful in their Sunday liturgy. It is a belief that Jesus of Nazareth, “born of a woman, under the law” (Gal 4:4), is in his unique personality the Only Begotten Son of the Father, one in nature with him, truly God and at the same time truly man, and born as we are of a woman, “one tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). Quite simply, it is a belief that the historical Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, is one divine Person in two natures, one divine, the other human.

For St. Thomas, John the Evangelist proclaims for us in a special way the “mysteries of Christ’s divinity.” For him, St. John’s Prologue is a canticle of the Word become flesh, “full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14). The reality of *who* he is, therefore, is announced in the first strophe of the Prologue:

In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,

And the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.

To Thomas' Aristotelian mind, the first two phrases declare the existence (*an est*) of the Word and the other two declare the reality of who he is (*quid est*). The first phrase declares "when" he was, namely, *in the beginning*. The second declares "where" he was, namely, *with the Father*. The third phrase declares *who* he was, namely, *God*. The fourth declares the "manner" so as to exclude the two basic errors concerning the Word: (1) the error of gentiles, such as pagan Greeks and Romans, who thought there were many gods, and the Manichaeans, who thought there were two gods, one good, the other evil; and (2) that of the Arians, who thought that the Word was less than the Father, different in substance, and created by the Father. Both of these errors are excluded by the fourth phrase, that the unique Word *was with the Father from the beginning* and identical with him in nature.

In typical scholastic fashion Thomas sees in these four lines of the first strophe a refutation of *all the errors* of both heretics and philosophers. As for the heretics, there were (1) some like the Ebionites and Cerinthus, who denied the existence of Jesus Christ before his conception in the womb of Mary; that is, they thought Christ to be no more than "a mere man" who later deserved to be called "divine" being "adopted" by the Father and "accepted as the Christ" by his disciples. To this group belong Paul of Samosata (3rd cent.), Photius (9th cent.), Rudolf Bultmann and Hans Kung (20th cent.), and in a certain sense, Nestorius, about whom more will be said later. To all of these the Evangelist says, *In the beginning was the Word*. (2) Then there were those like Sabellius (3rd cent.) who denied the real distinction of Persons, thinking that "Father" and "Word" are two masks for the one true God (see Note 111). To these the Evangelist says, *And the Word was with God*, insisting on their distinction in Person. (3) Then there were the heretics like Eunomius (d. 394) and the other extreme Arians, who insisted that Jesus, though pre-existent to his incarnation, was very much unlike (*anomos*) the Father. To them the Evangelist says, *And the Word was God*. (4) Finally, there was Arius himself and all the semi-Arians, who said that the Word was less than the Father and created by him. To all these the Evangelist says, *He was in the beginning with God*.

As to the philosophers, there were (1) the pre-Socratics, who all, except Anaxagoras, were pure materialists, whether they acknowledged one or many elements as "nature," or only atoms in space, for them the universe came about not by Intelligence, but by chance. Against these the Evangelist says, *In the beginning was the Word*; all things come by his agency, not by pure chance. (2) Plato, however, admitted the reality of things immaterial, but for him these were subsistent, immaterial Forms, or Ideas, separate from God as well as from

matter. Against this the Evangelist says, *And the Word was with God*. (3) The later Platonists, especially Plotinus (c. 205-270 B.C.). acknowledged the existence of 'the One, from which proceeded Mind (*Nous*) containing all the Ideas, but who was less than the One. Lest anyone think that the Word was "with God" in this sense of being less than him, the Evangelist says, *And the Word was God*. (4) Finally, Aristotle placed the ideas of all things in God, and acknowledged the identity of intellect, act of intellection, and reality intellected (or known) in God, but he thought that the world was co-eternal with him, that is, created from all eternity by God. For St. Thomas, the word *he* in St. John (*hoc* in Latin; *houtos* in Greek) implies that he "alone" was *in the beginning with God*, excluding not other Persons, but any other co-eternal nature.

This is a typical example of how much a scholastic theologian like St. Thomas could see in a single strophe of John. Everything St. Thomas says in his commentary on the first strophe is entirely true and correct, but he does not mean to imply in any way that St. John had these ideas in his mind when he or his scribe wrote these opening lines of the Prologue. Here is an excellent example of St. Anselm's "Faith seeking understanding," or "an example of meditating on the rationale of the faith."

The climax of the entire Prologue for Thomas is the direct statement, *And the Word was made flesh* (Jn 1:14), because taken literally and strictly it excludes all errors concerning the one *person* and the two distinct *natures* in Christ, one fully divine, the other as fully human as we are. In this profession of faith lies the mystery of the Incarnation. Everything else in our Christian belief, that God became man "for us and for our salvation," that "by dying he destroyed our death," that "by rising he restored our life," and that "he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead," depends upon the basic mystery of the Incarnation, namely, that Jesus of Nazareth, born at a definite time in history of the Jewish Virgin Mary, is *one unique person*, "the Son of the living God," who united in his person *two* wholly complete and distinct *natures*: human and divine.

In this note we will restrict our analysis to the mystery of the union of the human and the divine in the one person of Jesus Christ. Among the many so-called Christological heresies concerning this central mystery of Christianity, we will restrict ourselves to the three most common ones: (a) Christ was not really "divine" either in his person or in nature; (b) Christ was not really "human" like all the rest of mankind, and not "one tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15); (c) there were two persons in Christ, one human, the other divine. But first we must begin with a preliminary note to focus the real problem.

Today it is common among historians of Christianity and Scripture scholars, at least since the time of H. S. Reimarus (1694-1768) to distinguish between the

Jesus of history and the Christ of faith (see Sebastian Bullough, O.P., "Scripture Survey: From Wrede to the New Quest," *Blackfriars*, 44, 1963, 79-82). Perhaps Rudolf Bultmann more than anyone else today has sharpened the distinction between *Geschichte* (the existential significance of history) and *Historie* (the empirical study of historical facts as objectively real). Although there are no two words in English to convey the difference between *geschichtlich* and *historisch*, the whole of Bultmann's work manifests the distinction which is fundamental to modern Christian studies and beliefs (see especially the article of Claude Geffré, "Bultmann on Kerygma and History," *Rudolf Bultmann in Catholic Thought*, ed. T. F. O'Meara, O.P., and D.M. Weissner, O.P., New York: Herder and Herder, 1968, pp. 167-95). Although the bibliography on this important modern distinction is vast, and although there are many ways to exemplify the distinction between "historical science" (*Historie*) and "existential history" (*Geschichte*), we will limit our brief and simple observations to the mystery of the Incarnation.

Simply put, *Historie* deals with what little we can know of the historical Jesus precisely as a human being said to have been born in Bethlehem of Jewish heritage, whose mother's name was Mary, and who was put to death. Many Protestant theologians have given up the quest for the "historical Jesus," claiming that all our knowledge is colored by a *later reaction*, expressed in a kerygmatic manner, by the so-called evangelists and preachers long after the factual historical events, which had by then ceased to be important. *Geschichte*, on the other hand, is the Christ event, the impact on a human being of the eschatological challenge put to each individual today as it was at the end of the first century through the basic kerygma. In other words, many Protestant theologians (and some Catholic ones) do not think that much, if anything, really certain can be known of the historical man known as Jesus of Nazareth. For most of them, the historical Jesus was an ordinary, idealistic Jewish man little different from other Jews at the beginning of the present era; perhaps in his idealism he was a "great man" who came to a tragic death and was buried.

The main thing is that *much was said about him* after his death and burial. And *what was said* is the reaction of living men accepting an eschatological challenge. Today the challenge made to the early Christians is made to each of us, the challenge of the existential acceptance of Jesus as "the Christ of faith." Inevitably the *acceptance* of the Christ event by the early Christians expressed itself in a multitude of "myths" that sprang from the believer. The most important of these "myths" was the "deification" or "divinization" of Jesus by the believer. For Bultmann it is the myths alone that are really important. When Christ is "demythologized" there is nothing left but a tragic life of a man called Jesus. Thus the quest for "the historical Jesus" is not only vain and futile, it is also un-Christian and of no salvific value whatever. It is empty *Historie*, having no contemporary existential significance.

Bultmann puts the matter simply when he says: "The saving efficacy of the cross is not derived from the fact that it is the cross of Christ: it is the cross of Christ because it has this saving efficacy. Without that efficacy it is the tragic end of a great man" (quoted by C. Geffré, *op. cit.*, p. 181).

This whole approach to the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith seems to be at the root of Hans Kung's best seller, *On Being a Christian* (trans. E. Quinn, Garden City: Doubleday, 1976, from *Christ Sein*, Munchen: R. Piper, 1974).

This preliminary note on the contemporary, mainly Protestant, approach to Christology has been introduced here solely to show how radically different is St. Thomas' approach to the mystery of the Incarnation. For St. Thomas (and all those before him in the Catholic faith) it is the historical Jesus who is one divine Person, the Only Begotten Son of the Father, who became man by being conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, thereby uniting to himself a truly complete human nature, subject to all the natural ills and pleasures that man is heir to, including suffering and death (but not sin).

(a) The most common error concerning Jesus Christ is the one we have just been talking about, namely, that he was not truly divine in his *Person* as the Only Begotten Son of the Father or in his *nature*, which is consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This heresy has assailed the Catholic faith from its very inception, and, as we have seen, some Protestant theologians embrace it today. The mystery of the Incarnation (or "coming in the flesh," *in carne*) does indeed baffle human credulity, and it cannot be accepted without the gift of faith that comes from the Holy Spirit in baptism.

At first, not even the apostles and the immediate disciples of Jesus knew what to make of the Son of Man, the miracles he worked, the doctrine of salvation he preached. Nor did they know what to make of his constant references to God as his Father, to his doing the will of his Father, to the close presence of the Kingdom, to the Father's Kingdom being already at hand, and to the death he was to suffer and to his ultimate victory over death. It was only with the coming of the Holy Spirit that the disciples began to understand the reality of the historical Jesus they had come to know and love. Even after his death and resurrection, Cerinthus and a large Jewish sect called the Ebionites refused to accept Christ as anything more than "a mere man" (*purus homo*). Various theories of "adoptionism" were common throughout the second and third centuries. This was the view that Jesus was born a mere man, but later (some put it at the baptism by John) he deserved to be "adopted" by God, much as parents might adopt an attractive boy as their son. Every form of "adoptionism" implies a "subordinationism" of Jesus, at least as a creature. It was inevitable that

Arianism of one kind or another should erupt in the fourth century. Every form of "Arianism" from the extreme "anomeanism" of Eunomius to the semi-Arianism of Eusebius of Caesarea (who baptized Constantine as he lay dying on the battlefield) denied the *identity of nature* in the Father and in the Word, who in the fullness of time became flesh.

It was inevitable that a subdued question raised since the first century should come to a head in the Arians of the fourth century. The question was: What is the relation between Jesus, the Son of Man, and the Father, who is Yahweh? How are Jesus, born of Mary, and the Father "One"? The only possible answer consistent with the biblical writings was the unbiblical term (*homoousion*) "consubstantial." The neo-Platonism of Plotinus unmistakably influenced Origen and many other Greek Christians. For Plotinus the *Logos* or *nous* emanates from the One and is less than the One, just as the Spirit emanates from the Logos and is less than it. Neo-Platonism together with the natural inability to accept any "man" as "God" inevitably resulted in the widespread Arianism of the fourth century. To appreciate even inadequately the threat Arianism posed for the Church even after the Council of Nicaea (325), one might recall how at one time the great St. Athanasius seemed to stand alone (*Athanasius contra mundum*), and how even St. Jerome in the West could say that the whole world woke up one day to find itself Arian. The fourth century, beset as it was by various forms of Arianism and the dubious "freedom" of the Church, was the greatest age of the Fathers, both Greek and Latin, in the history of the Church. It was the "golden age of the Fathers." Through them the Holy Spirit preserved orthodoxy through a development of doctrine and a flowering of heroic sanctity unparalleled since the age of the martyrs.

Possibly the climax of the fourth century came with the Council of Rome in 382 under Pope St. Damasus I, in which the whole development of Christian doctrine up to that date was summarized in the *Tomus Damasi*, and the canonical books of Sacred Scripture were fixed as we have them today (see Denz. 152-180).

The relation of Nestorianism to Arianism will be discussed under heading (c).

(b) The second most common heresy concerning the Incarnation is, in fact, the direct opposite of the first. Just as the first cannot accept a man who is God, so the second cannot accept a God who became man. Just as Arianism (and all forms of adoptionism, subordinationism, and the like) is a kind of *naturalism* that sees Jesus as a creature, so this second heresy (in its many forms) is a kind of *spiritualism* that disdains matter as something unworthy of being a creature of God at all. Basically it is a denial that Jesus had a real human body, and that he really suffered and died. In its earliest form it is called Docetism (from the Greek, *dokeo*, "I seem") and existed as a tendency rather than a formulated and unified

doctrine, which considered the humanity and sufferings of the earthly Christ as apparent rather than real. Evidence of its existence in the early Church is to be found in 1 John (4:1-3) and 2 John (v 7); see also Colossians (2:8-9). But it reached its zenith among the Gnostics of the second and third centuries (see G. Bareille, DTC, IV, cols. 1484-1501, s.v. "Docetisme"). Besides Gnostics like Serapion, Bishop of Antioch (190-203), there was Marcion (d. c. 160), who claimed that Christ, who was an "emissary" of the Father, suddenly appeared preaching and teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum, and was not born of woman at all, but whose passion and death were the work of the evil Creator God of the Old Testament.

The most complete formulation of this heresy seems to be that of Manichaeism, promulgated by a certain Manes (c. 216-276) from Persian Gnostic sources. Its basic principle is that matter is evil and the creature of an Evil God, or Demiurge. Thus the true God could not have assumed a real human body made up of flesh and bones and had been born in the manner of men. For them, the body of Jesus was an "apparent body," a "glorified" body. Manichaeism was established in Egypt before the end of the third century, but here its roots were deeply imbedded in the Egyptian Gnosticism of the second century. Early in the fourth century there were sects in Rome, and by the end of that century, Manichaeism spread throughout North Africa. Even St. Augustine himself was a Manichee for nine years before his conversion. Although the details of Manichaeism are complex, as are its subsequent forms as adopted by the Albigensians, Cathari, and Puritans, its basic principle is clear: Jesus Christ could not have been a true man like us. He gave only the "appearance" of joy and tears, suffering and death, since such physical things are unworthy of God. It is fundamentally a dualism unable to reconcile spirit and matter, God and man, divinity and humanity (or even flesh and spirit in man). Together with an irreconcilable dualism in Manichaean Christology, there is an irreconcilability in its puritanical spirituality, as well as a fundamental inability to accept the human body as a work of God's art, or man as the "image of God." St. Thomas combines all the various sects that deny the full reality of Christ's human body under the heading of "Manichaean."

The basic point Thomas insists on is the absolute reality of the concrete, individual human nature of Christ that was begotten of the Virgin Mary (*Sum. theol.* III, q.5, a.1). In the words of the *De ecclesiasticis dogmatibus* (c. 2; sometimes attributed to Augustine, but in reality the work of Gennadius), St. Thomas stressed that the "body" (*corpus*) assumed by the Word "was not putative, as though it were something imaginary" (PL 58, 981). For him, the whole significance and purpose of the Incarnation and Redemption of man would have been frustrated unless the "flesh" (Jn 1:14) assumed by the Word were a true physical and organic human body, made of flesh and blood as we are, possessing *all* that is needed to constitute a complete *human nature* without

original sin. Apart from Scriptural texts, Thomas relies most heavily on the Council of Ephesus (431), which declared the Virgin Mary to be in truth the "Mother of God, from whom that perfect, holy body, informed with an intellectual soul, was taken, to which the Word of God is united in his person (*secundum hypostasim*) and said to be born in the flesh" (Denz. 251; cf. *Sum. theol.* III, q.4, a.3, *Sed contra*, etc.).

Historically there were opinions, later condemned, that denied that Christ had a human soul; such was the position of certain Arians and later of Apollinaris (cf. St. Aug. *De haeres.*, 49. PL 42, 40; St. Athanasius, *Contra Apollinarium*, Lib. II, n. 3. PG 26, 1136; St. Thomas, *Sum. theol.* III, q.5, a.3). For them the place of the human soul was taken by Christ's divinity. Historically there were some, like the Monothelites, who denied that Christ had a human will, its place being taken by the divine will (on this point consult ODCC, 2nd ed. Oxford 1974, 932-33). But most extensive was the view of the Monophysites, whom we shall discuss later, who held that Christ has only *one nature* both divine and human. Such a union, according to St. Thomas, would result in a *tertium quid* that would be less than divine and more than human, which would in effect be a denial of the reality of both Christ's humanity and his divinity (*Sum. theol.* III, q.2, a. 1). An extreme form of Monophysitism was condemned in the person of Eutyches (d. 454) at the Council of Chalcedon (451), to which the Monophysites of today have remained implacably opposed (cf. ODCC, 931-32).

The basic view of St. Thomas is that the whole of human nature, past, present, and to come, was united to the divinity in the one, indivisible person of Jesus Christ. In this indivisible unity the eternity of God, which knows no beginning, middle, or end, was joined to the temporality and historicity of man, with all its yesterdays and tomorrows, all its aches and pains, all its grandeur and ignominy. How the eternal instant of God felt, thought, willed, grew, and matured, suffered and died in his human nature is a mystery that is too much for our all-to-temporal being to understand. But we must take consolation in the fact that Jesus fully experienced all the human loves, compassion, loneliness, joys and desires, affection and aspirations that we experience too often in an inhuman and incomplete way. And he endured incredible suffering and death. The same Jesus who could pour out his heart in love for his disciples (Jn 14-17) is the same Jesus who could say, "I am thirsty" (Jn 19:28), and "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46).

The less we appreciate the true humanity of the historical Jesus, the less we involve ourselves in the divinity that Christ came to give us. One constant theme of all the great Fathers of the Church, especially St. Athanasius and St. Augustine, is that God became a partaker of our humanity that we might become partakers of his divinity. There is only one point in which divinity and humanity

meet for all eternity, and that is in the person of the historical Jesus.

(c) The main theological and philosophical difficulty that arises from what has already been said is "Why is the historical Jesus not a human person?" If a *person* is "an individual substance of an intellectual nature," as Boethius had said (see above, Note III), then why is not the individual human nature born of the Virgin Mary not a human person, that is, a "man"? Could a divine Person, the Son of God, assume a human person, in which case there would be *two persons* in Jesus, just as there are *two natures*? As the Greeks put the question, "Why are there not two *hypostases* in Jesus?" We do not say that the Word assumed "a man," but a human nature. Technically, this is a real philosophical problem that has its roots in Aristotelian philosophy. Normally what Mary would have given birth to should have been a human person having an individual human existence (*esse*). But, in fact, she gave birth to a divine Person, the Only Begotten Son of the eternal Father, in human flesh.

Historically, Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (428-31), condemned the teaching of some monks concerning the divine maternity of Mary. These monks even went so far as to call Mary, the "Mother of God," *Theotokos* (*deipara*, or *Dei genetrix*), meaning "God-bearer." For Nestorius, God could have no mother, for he existed from all eternity; Nestorius therefore insisted that Mary could only be called *Christotokos*, the mother of Christ, or "Christbearer," thus teaching that the hypostasis or person of Christ, born of Mary, was *other than* the divine person begotten of the Father. Thus, while emphasizing the infinite gap between the human nature of Christ and his divine nature as God, Nestorius and his numerous followers (even to this day) also taught that an infinite gap exists between the hypostasis begotten of Mary and the Second Person (*hypostasis*) of the Holy Trinity. In other words, Nestorius taught not only a duality of nature (*physeis*) in Christ, but also a duality of substances (*hypostases*), that is, of persons. We have already touched upon the difficulties of the Greek and Latin terminology in this matter (Notes III and IV above).

The Council of Ephesus was convoked in 431 by Theodosius II at the instigation of St. Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria and representative of Pope Leo I at the Council. Much to the surprise of Nestorius, his views were condemned and the Council declared that the human nature of Christ is united to the divine, not by a fusion of natures (*secundum naturam, kata physin*), but by an identity of person (*kath hypostasin; secundum personam*). In other words, the Council of Ephesus declared as a matter of revealed doctrine that there is only *one person* in Christ—the Divine Word, the Son of the Father, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity—and a duality of natures that always remain distinct, except by reason of the Divine Person (Denz. 250-264).

One of the monks denounced by Nestorius in his sermons was the archimandrite Eutyches, who taught that in Christ there is an intimate fusion of natures, so that after the Incarnation there was in Jesus only one person and one nature. The Council of Chalcedon was convoked in 541 by the Emperor Marcion under the presidency of St. Flavian to consider the orthodoxy of the extreme view proposed by Eutyches. The Monophysite (one-nature) position held by Eutyches and his followers was condemned outright as contrary to orthodox belief, and the Council declared that Jesus Christ has two distinct natures, in no way "fused or changed into one."

This historical background is necessary in order to understand St. Thomas' commentary on John because he refers to these heresies, and their condemnations over and over again. Thomas, in fact, was one of the first scholastics to utilize the Latin translations of the Greek acts, decrees, and canons.

St. Thomas' most important contribution to Christology is his insight into the *manner of the union* between the divine and the human in Christ (see *Friar Thomas d'Aquino*, pp. 307-313). The crux of his profound insight into the fact that the union must be *hypostatic* is most clearly expounded in the two articles on the unity of Christ's *esse* (q. 17). To this problem we must now turn briefly.

VI

ST. THOMAS' DOCTRINE OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

The Council of Ephesus (431) declared against Nestorius that there is only one *hypostasis* in Jesus, and that that *hypostasis* is the eternal Son of the Father, consubstantial with him in nature (that is, *physis*), or substance (*ousia*). The Council of Chalcedon (451) declared against Eutyches that there are two distinct *natures* in Christ in no way "fused or changed into one," but are united *kath' hypostasin*, that is, by reason of one person. Since the union cannot be between the two natures, divine and human, for the two would become one nature, and since the union cannot be between the divine Person and the human person, for this could only be a union *secundum quid* and *per accidens*, the union can only be in the unique Person, that is, *secundum hypostasin*. Since, as we have already seen, what the Greeks called *hypostasis*, the Latins called *persona*, the union of the divine and human in Christ is called "personal" or "hypostatic" (see Boethius, *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*).

But the philosophical clarification and possibility of a theological understanding of

the mystery did not come to Thomas until he returned to Naples in 1272 and resumed dictating the *Tertia Pars*. By the time Thomas came to compose question 17 concerning the kind and number of existences (*esse*) in Christ, he saw clearly the mysterious reality of the Incarnation.

We have already explained that for Aristotle *nature* is only a *quo*, that by which a thing is *what* it is. An individual, specific nature is "had by" a concrete *suppositum* or *ousia* (substance) in the primary sense of the term. We also said that existence (*esse*) belongs only to things, substances in the primary sense of *ousia*, that is *esse* belongs to a concrete, individual substance (*ousia*) having a specific kind of nature, by means of which the thing exists as a specific *kind* of thing. A thing is *one* because it has one *esse*.

Regarding the Incarnation the inevitable question arises as to whether Christ is one or many (a. 1), and whether in Christ there is only one *esse* or more (a. 2). Prior to q. 17 in the *Tertia Pars*, for example in the Disputed Question *De unione verbi incarnati*, debated in Paris earlier that year (1272), Thomas thought that the individual human nature begotten of Mary must have some kind of *esse* of its own, even if only "in a certain sense" (*secundum quid*) "as human." But this would mean that in the strict sense (*simpliciter*) Christ is one" because he has only one person, namely, the divine; but in another sense Christ is "two" (*secundum quid*), because he has two natures. In the *Summa* (III, q.17, a.2) Thomas in no way allows the human nature of Christ to have an *esse* proper to it. If the concrete, individual human nature that Christ received from Mary had its own *esse* in any way, then the union between it and the Divine Person would be accidental, and Christ would not be absolutely and indivisibly one being, one person. Even if the new manner or mode of God's existence, namely, "as human," had its own *esse secundum quid*, as Thomas earlier thought, then the union would not be absolutely and in every way one, but *secundum quid* many. From this it would follow that the union between the Divine Person and the human nature would be "accidental" an accident in a substance. But the union between Christ's human nature and his Divine Person cannot be accidental, no more than our human nature can be accidental to our personality. Therefore, St. Thomas concluded, the human nature of Christ and all his natural characteristics and his activities exist by the one *esse* of the Godhead. Thus the special kind of union that exists between the person of Jesus Christ and his human nature is "personal" or "hypostatic," that is, *secundum personam* or *kath' hypostasin*.

Thomas' understanding of the hypostatic union rests squarely on his basic principle that in all creatures *esse* is other than *essence*. Only in God are *esse* and his *essence* identical (see *Sum. theol.* I, q.3, a.4, and all parallel places). Fr. Norbert Del Prado, O.P., has called this so-called real distinction between essence and existence in creatures "The Fundamental Truth of Christian

Philosophy" (1911). It is only because human nature does not include *esse* in its definition (nature, or essence) that Christ's human nature cannot have an *esse* proper to it as human. It is the real distinction between essence and existence (*esse*) in creatures that underlies Thomas' teaching in III, q. 17.

It is clear, therefore, that all other medieval positions that identify essence and *esse* in creatures—such as the Scotists, Nominalists, Suarezians—must face the question of the hypostatic union in another way. This is not the place to discuss those other views.

This then is our faith, that Jesus Christ, born of Mary at a specific time in human history, is in reality God himself; he is the Only Begotten Son of the eternal Father, identical with him in nature and being (*esse*), but distinct from the Father as a Son who *receives* all that he has *from the Father*. As this Only Begotten Son is *identical with his divine nature* and as he was truly begotten of Mary by the Holy Spirit, Jesus—the historical Jesus has two distinct natures, one divine by which he is equal to the Father (Jn 17:11), the other human by which he is the Son of Mary, less than the Father (Qn 14:28), a man like us in all things except sin—in short, our brother in the flesh. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God and our brother in the flesh, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit, brought life into the world by his death and resurrection. By his death on the cross he destroyed our death of damnation. By his resurrection he restored our life of grace and glory. And we believe that he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

The only point that still needs to be mentioned here is that *only the Son*, the Word, "became flesh" (Jn 1:14). In the Nicene Creed we profess our belief in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father ... one in being (that is, *homoousion*) with the Father. Then we profess our belief in his Incarnation when we bow our heads as we say: "By the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man." That is to say, only the Son of God became man, not the Father, nor the Holy Spirit. We cannot say that the Father suffered and died for us; nor can we say that the Holy Spirit became man, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried. Only in the heresy of Sabellius (3rd cent.) where the word *person* is taken to be a "mask" (*persona*, or *prosopon*) through which the one God speaks to us with different masks could one say, "the Father suffered and died." This heresy in the West has also been known as Patripassionism, meaning that the "passion of Christ" can be attributed to the Father. This heresy, also known as "Modalism," was condemned in 447 by Pope Leo I in a letter to Turribius, bishop of Asurias (Denz. 284). It had long been battled in the East by St. Basil the Great (c. 330-379).

Thus Christ alone is the mediator between God and man. "There is no other

name, under heaven, given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). St. Paul expresses the simple truth in the most direct way when he said (1 Tim 2:5-6):

There is one God,
and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,
who gave himself as a ransom for all.

APPENDICES OF NOTES HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL

James A. Weisheipl, O.P., S.T.M.

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I

BRIEF NOTE ON THE TEXT OF ISAIAH (6:1) USED FOR THE PROLOGUE

It was customary for medieval sermons to be based on a special text of Scripture, which would be developed phrase by phrase in the course of the sermon. Naturally, every text was adapted to the ultimate purpose the preacher had in mind. Similarly, every book or important treatise in the Middle Ages would be introduced by a Prologue, which was likewise a development of a text chosen by the author from Scripture. The development of this text was not necessarily an explanation of the literal sense of the passage. It was rather an explanation adapted by the author to prepare the reader for the book about to follow. Usually the text chosen was adapted to cover the special range of material to be discussed, and thus served as a division of the matter about to be treated. There

is nothing unusual about this.

Since, as St. Augustine says, St. John's purpose in writing his gospel was "to inform us about the *contemplative life*," St. Thomas chose the text from Isaiah (6:1) to show the reader something about John's own contemplation in that the Lord Jesus is contemplated therein in a threefold fullness: sublime (*alta*), expansive (*ampla*), and perfect (*perfecta*). (See Prologue, n. 1). Hence, St. Thomas adapts the text of Isaiah (6:1) to fit this threefold fullness of John's contemplation revealed in his Gospel. This is a very normal and ordinary procedure. Indeed almost any text is flexible and adaptable in many ways according to the purpose of the preacher or writer.

St. Thomas, in fact, uses the text chosen for two purposes: first, to explain the threefold fullness of John's contemplation; second, to divide the following exposition of John's Prologue into three parts: namely 1 (1-2) concerning the sublimity of the Word, 1 (3- 13) concerning the totality of the universe through the Word, and 1 (14a) concerning the Incarnation of the Word. The first division corresponds to Lecture 1, the second to Lectures 2 to 6, and the third to Lecture 7. Consequently, the tripartite reading of the text of Isaiah (6:1) is essential to Thomas' development in the Prologue of his explanation of the Gospel.

The Latin Vulgate that Thomas used had this threefold division of the text of Isaiah (6:1): *Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum, et plena erat domus a maiestate eius, et ea quae sub ipso erant replebant templum*. In the commentary we have translated this literally as, "I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the whole house was full of his majesty, and the things that were under him filled the temple," as required by the exposition of Thomas. Moreover, it is clear from Thomas' running gloss, which he gave in class some time between 1248 and 1252 as a young *cursor biblicus* at Cologne under St. Albert the Great, that this was the actual reading of his personal Bible. (See *Expositio super Isaiam ad Litteram*, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Leon. 28 [Rome 1974], 6:1, lines 96-103). What is more, St. Albert the Great himself used this full text from Isaiah (6:1), as above, and adapted it for his own purposes for the Prologue to his *Commentary on the Second Book of the Sentences* (ed. Borgnet 27:1-3), which he wrote when he was already a Master in Sacred Theology at Paris toward the end of 1245 or the beginning of 1246. (See my *Friar Thomas d'Aquino*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1974, p. 45). He too needed all three parts of the text to show the division of Book Two into three parts or three "Treatises."

The historical and textual problem with all of this is that the Latin phrase, *et plena erat domus a maiestate eius*, the second phrase, is not found in the ordinary editions of the Latin Vulgate, neither in the old Clementine version nor in

the critical edition prepared by Dom Robert Weber in 1975 (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 2 vols.). Nor is this second phrase to be found in the Greek Septuagint nor in the Hebrew Massoretic text of Isaiah. The historical and textual problem is to locate the vulgate tradition to which the Bible of Thomas and Albert belonged; this has not yet been done. The text of Isaiah (6:1) in the critical edition simply reads: *Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum, et ea quae sub eo erant implebant templum.*

The text in Thomas' Bible was somehow a conflation from Isaiah (6:4), *et domus repleta est fumo*, "and the house was filled with smoke," while the reading in the Piana edition of Thomas' works and all subsequent editions, including the Marietti, is a conflation from Isaiah (6:3), *plena est omnis terra gloria eius*, "the whole earth is full of his glory."

The Hebrew author of Isaiah 6 (1-4) wished to say that he saw the splendor of the All High God fill the *temple* (6:1), the whole *earth* (6:3), and the *house* (6:4). This kind of Hebraic development is completely missed in the version Albert and Thomas had before them. But, then, this particular text would not have been suitable for the kind of development Thomas wished to present in his Prologue. Nor would it have been suitable for Albert's purposes either when he commented on Book II of the *Sentences*.

Nothing I have said here makes the slightest difference to our understanding or appreciation of St. Thomas' Prologue. Isaiah 6 (1-4) as St. Thomas had it helps to explicate John's Gospel in a way that the passage as established by biblical criticism does not. Nevertheless, for the study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, the study of medieval exegesis, and a fuller understanding of St. Thomas and his sources, it would be helpful if we could discover St. Thomas' Bible or at least the manuscript tradition to which it belonged. (See the editors of *Expositio super Isaiam*, ed. cit., Preface, pp. 43-47).

II

PROOFS FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE

Despite the constant teaching of the Catholic Church, many Catholics are surprised to learn that it is reasonable and also a matter of divine revelation that the human mind *can* arrive at a clear and unshakable conviction of the existence of one God as creator of the universe. Many non-Catholics insist that the question of God's existence is strictly a personal matter, and one of faith, not reason.

Usually what is meant by "strictly a personal matter" is HANDS OFF! It is a religious question, and of concern only to me! This attitude, however, is not only an insult to God, but also to human reason. Man has an intellect by which he can discover truth, all truth, and even the cause of all truth. By his intellect man knows very few things intuitively and easily; his normal path is one of arduous learning, reasoning, discovering, and problem-solving. This winding path by which he comes to see *why* things are so and not otherwise than they are, is called "proof" or "evidence." On the basis of the proof or evidence the human mind can readily see the truth or falsity of the claim. "Proof" is always our reason for making the claim; that is, the "proof" contains the *cause* of the conclusion we have just drawn. As long as the area of investigation is co-natural to man, i.e., within the ambit of his experience, the "evidence" or "proof" he digs up will very often coincide with the real cause in nature which brought the situation about. That is to say, in all the natural sciences (involving sensible bodies and activities), in the numerous branches of mathematics (involving imagination and consistency), as well as in most human affairs (dealing with right and wrong, responsibility, guilty or not guilty), we can very often amass our evidence from the very causes that produced the situation in question. In that case, the cause of our knowing a truth conclusively coincides with the causes that brought the real situation about. But when, on the other hand, our investigation carries us beyond the realm of human experience, then the only evidence we have is the effects we have in front of us. That is to say, when we raise such basic questions as the efficient designer and creator of our whole being and the totality of the universe, or ask why we ourselves are on this earth, we are asking about causes that transcend all our experience and imagination. But we do have the evidence in front of us all the time that there must *exist* some cause because of the nature of the effects we behold. That is, the totality of the evidence within ourselves and around ourselves is contained *in the effects*. Human footprints in the sand indicate that a man has walked this way before, the evidence is the footprint, an effect. *That* there is a creative God is the most important truth the human mind can reach, because it makes all the difference in our response, our daily lives, our total attitude. To deny human reason the possibility of proving with certitude *that* there is a First Cause of all within range of human experience is to deny our intelligence.

Modern academicians and politicians are all too ready to leave God out of the picture. Rather than say, "He does not exist," as atheists, Marxists, and materialists do say, they would prefer to be skeptical, agnostic, or say it is a matter of religion, not of reason and debate. Because of the prevailing agnosticism, or better, indifference, toward the real existence of a creating God, who is the total efficient, exemplar, and final cause of every single reality outside himself, the First Vatican Council (1870) explicitly declared what was always taught: the human mind can prove with absolute certainty that only one creating

God exists, from the evidence of his handiwork, his effects within us and around us. This declaration of the First Vatican Council was not a new truth, but the constant teaching of the Scriptures and the living Church. Time and again the Scriptures declare that the glory and love of the Lord are manifest in his handiwork; and St. Paul insists that even the pagans and irreligious men have no excuse for ignoring God, for "whatever can be known about God is clear to them, as he himself made it so. Since the creation of the world, invisible realities, God's eternal power and divinity, have become visible, *recognized through the things he has made*" (Rom 1:19-20). St. Thomas did not need the First Vatican Council to tell him that the human mind *can* arrive at a firm conviction of the existence (*an sit*) of a First Cause from his *effects* (*Sum. theol.* I, q.2, a. 1-2). As to *what* God is or *who* he is, we can know very little indeed, because his nature has got to be radically different from anything we experience humanly. Even the most sublime terms in the human vocabulary when applied to God pale utterly: terms such as "love," "forgiving," "generous," "all knowing," "all powerful," and the like. It is more honest to say with St. Thomas that we know much more what God is not than what he is (*Sum. theol.* I, q.3, prol.). Imagination gives an utterly distorted picture of God, this is inevitable. The capacity of the human mind, however, is such that it can not only know *that* God exists, but also it great deal about what he *is not*, and a little bit about what we must say he is, even though human words and experience cannot do justice to the reality, as the prophet Isaiah well understood (Is 64:3; 1 Cor 2:9).

It is particularly important today that all Christians acknowledge the fundamental ability of the human mind *to know* with certitude that God exists. God made man in "his own image and likeness" (Gn 1:26) for this very purpose: that he might know him, love him and serve him on this earth and be happy with him forever in heaven. St. Thomas credits the human mind with far greater potential than would the sceptic and agnostic. What is more, the human mind has every *right to know* about the existence of God, since our whole manner of life depends upon that knowledge. To deny man the right to know God's existence, that is, to prevent him from knowing that God exists, is a far greater crime than a simple denial of man's capacity, for the latter is only an insult, the former adds the perversion of justice. No one today can be complacent about this contemporary insult and injustice presented in the societal game of "important things do not count."

Despite the fact that man can know by reason that God exists, God still chose to reveal his own existence through the Scriptures. For reason is pushed to her greatest efforts when she seeks the highest truth, Truth Itself. Indeed, to Thomas it seemed remarkable that some philosophers, i.e., those gentiles without the Christian revelation, did in fact arrive at the inevitable conclusion that God exists. That is his actual starting point: a few philosophers, highly gifted, using human reason unaided by revelation did, in fact, arrive at the most

important issues concerning man: the first of these being that he has a Creator. Thomas, however, was not only a fighting optimist, but also a factual realist. He knew that only a *few* men arrived at the really important truths in human life, and only after a *long time* of persistent struggling against error, and even then, arriving at a few gems of *truth mixed with much dross of falsehood*. These are the three reasons St. Thomas gives (*Sum. theol.* I, q.1, a.1) why God in his infinite mercy felt obliged to reveal even these: so that *all men*, no matter how ungifted, no matter how busy, might know at least the essential truths without any error. In other words, considering the actual condition in this hectic world, God in his infinite goodness revealed even those truths that the human mind can in fact know with its native powers, so that the most important truths of human life "could be known by all men easily, with absolute certitude, and with no admixture of error" (Vat. Council 1: sess. 3, cap. 2, Denz 3005). At the same time, that Council condemned as contrary to the true Catholic faith the outright denial that "the one and true God, our Creator and Lord, can be known with certitude from the things he has made, by the natural light of human reason" (Chap. 2, can. 1, Denz. 3026).

In other words, there are two kinds of truths that God has chosen to reveal to mankind: (1) those that we could never know by any amount of human reason, such as man's destiny to eternal beatitude, the Word made flesh for our salvation, the triune nature of God, and the final resurrection of the human body; (2) those that "the human mind" can know, and in fact, that some gifted few have discovered, after a long struggle, and even then with a great admixture of error, such as the existence of one Creator of the universe, his providence over all things, and the immortality of the human soul. The first kind God alone could tell us, and he had to tell us, granting that he freely chose to predestine man to a supernatural end: if God decided to give man a home beyond his nature, then he had to tell us how to get there, namely, by following his Son to Calvary. The second kind, however, God had no need to reveal at all, but he did so that *all men* could come to the essential truths of human life more easily, with absolute certitude, and without any admixture of error. The most important truth in human life is that there is but one God, the Creator and Lord of all.

Thomas always maintained that many philosophers of the past have *in fact* come to know God's existence through his created effects. At the same time, he was well aware how few these highly gifted "philosophers" were compared to the totality of mankind, the length of time they devoted to the search, and the great number of erroneous notions these philosophers had about "God," as they understood him. Nevertheless, Thomas never failed to point out the many different paths philosophers found to God. (See J. A. Baisnée, "St. Thomas Aquinas' Proofs of the Existence of God Presented in Their Chronological Order," *Philosophical Studies in Honor of the Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, O.P.*, ed. J.

K. Ryan, Westminster: Newman, 1952, pp. 29-64). In Thomas' own presentation of the various paths the philosophers took, he often simplified, clarified, and strengthened the tortuous paths actually marked out by various philosophers. He often saw more clearly what Plato, Aristotle, Avicenna, or John Damascene wanted to say, and said it with greater precision and less admixture of error. In the *Summa theologiae* I, 2, 3, Thomas gives only five of the simplest and most convincing ways various philosophers actually used. These "five ways," of course, were not the only ways in which philosophers have come to know the one, true God. Thomas himself enumerated other ways, and in one's own personal experience one can find many other ways to God. So there is nothing exclusive, sacrosanct, or all-inclusive in the "five ways" (*quinque viae*) presented to beginners in the *Summa theologiae*. (See Joseph Owens, "Aquinas and the Five Ways," *The Monist*, 58, 1974, 16-35).

In his Prologue to St. John, Thomas indicates "four" especially selected ways, suitable to his purpose in the commentary, that have brought philosophers to the contemplation of God's existence, and which are most appropriate to point out to the reader of St. John's Gospel. The contemplative is most easily brought to a knowledge of God's creative existence by perceiving his authority, eternity, and incomprehensibility.

(i) Here St. Thomas points out that the "most efficacious way" (*via efficacissima*) for philosophers to know God is through his *authority* over all things.: We see things in nature that act for an end they do not and cannot know; such is true of the entire universe with all its stars and galaxies. Since such things lack intelligence, they cannot direct themselves to an end, but must be directed and moved by some Intelligence. Since the whole course of nature is most fittingly ordered to a complexity of ends, there must be something beyond nature with intelligence to direct all things as Lord and Master. In the Prologue, Thomas sees all this expressed by Isaiah in the use of the word "Lord," when he says, "I saw the Lord." And Thomas notes that John reflects the authority of the Incarnate Word when he says, "He came unto his own," that is, into the world that belonged to him. This philosophical argument corresponds to the "fifth" of the famous "five ways" in the *Summa theologiae*. In the *Summa contra gentiles* (I, c. 13, n. 115), written in Paris early in 1259, this argument is attributed to St. John Damascene (*De fide orthodoxa*, I, c. 3) and also associated with Averroes' *In II Phys.*, com. 75. Altogether, St. Thomas uses this argument from "the governance of all things in the world" eight times, and here he calls it the "most efficacious way." (See Baisnée, *loc. cit.*, p. 63). Surely, this way strikes most scientists and those who contemplate the stars and the world of nature. By way of contrast, it might be noted here also, that in the *Summa theologiae* Thomas called the "first" way, the argument from change throughout the universe, the "more manifest"—and so it was for Aristotle.

(ii) Thomas goes on to say that some philosophers come to the knowledge of God through his *eternity*. Many are struck by the constant fluidity, flow, and mutability of everything in our human experience: "Time and tide wait for no man." But some are struck by the fact that certain things are subject to more change than others. The higher a thing is in nature, the less subject to change it seems to be. Thus terrestrial bodies change in every way, and different living things have longer or shorter life-spans, while celestial bodies seem to us only to change their position in the heavens. Nevertheless, all things in the heavens and on the earth are in the constant flow of time. This "historicity" of all things in time and place would lead us to think that the cause of things in time and place must itself be beyond all time. Thus the contemplation of the temporality of every thing we experience has led some philosophers to a God who is eternal and unchanging.

This argument, it would seem, was never used elsewhere by St. Thomas. It suggests, however, Plato's famous argument that from contemplating "that which is Becoming always and never is Existent" one is led to "that which is Existent always and has no Becoming" (*Timaeus* 27D6-28C4)—an idea Thomas could have read in the translation and commentary by Calcidius (early 4th century). A similar argument from the mutability of all creatures to the absolute immutability of God is also suggested in Malachi (3:6): "I, the Lord, do not change"; while the whole universe constantly changes. The theme of the absolute contingency and temporality of creatures in contrast to the constancy and eternity of God runs throughout all the writings of St. Augustine; it is one of his fundamental themes.

In the Prologue to John, Thomas suggests that Isaiah implies this view when he uses the word "seated," that is, without change and forever. John the Evangelist suggests the same when he says, "In the beginning was the Word." Some contemporary commentators, however, have reduced this argument to the "first" given in the *Summa Q. A. Baisnée, op. cit.*, p. 63). But this view does not seem tenable, since the argument in the Prologue is cast entirely in terms of temporality and eternity, which is not at all the same as Aristotle's argument from motion (the first way in the *Summa*). For Aristotle, both God and the universe are eternal, yet God is its First Cause and Mover.

(iii) Other philosophers, Thomas continues, come to the knowledge of God from his *dignity*. "And these," he says, "were the Platonists." They saw that everything that *shares* "being" depends on one who has it *essentially*. That is to say, since everything that exists, diverse as things are, shares in the common act of existing (*esse*), there must be a first Being, whose very nature must be *esse* itself *ipsun esse subsistens*. This same argument is used by Thomas also in *De potentia*, q.3, a.5, and is there attributed to Avicenna (*Metaph.* VIII, c.7, IX, c.4). The

underlying principle, however, is fundamental to the whole of Thomas' metaphysics: "Whatever is possessed by participation (*per participationem*) is reduced to one that has it by essence (*per essentiam*)." (Cf. Peter of Berganlo, *Tahula aurea*, s.v. "Participare"). This is the argument Thomas uses to establish the fundamental principle of his existentialist metaphysics: in God alone are *esse* and *quod est* (essence, or nature) identical; in all creatures, even angels, they are truly distinct (cf. *Sum. theol.* I, q.3, a.4). In the Prologue to John, Thomas sees this unique *dignity* of God as expressed in the phrase of Isaiah when he says, "on a high ... throne." John implies the same when he says, "The Word was God," which brings us back to the very name of God as "I am who am" (Ex 3:14), the source of the name *Yahweh*.

(iv) Finally, there were other philosophers who came to the knowledge of God from the basic *incomprehensibility* of truth. It is obvious to most people that the human mind is limited in its ability to know the truth. Only the most arrogant "rationalist"—usually the very ones who deny the human mind's ability to prove God's existence—would say, "Given time, man will know and be able to explain everything." The reasonable philosopher, as opposed to the "rationalist," is fully aware of the mind's limitations in every sphere of human activity, especially the most important ones. Therefore, those realists have argued there must be some Intellect that not only knows all truth, but is Truth Itself (*ipsa veritas*) and the ultimate cause of all truth. That is to say, if truth exists in the mind, and human minds come and go in the course of human generation and death, and the foundation of our knowledge is a passing world, then there must be some ultimate ground for all truth, even the truth that "two and two are four." In the Prologue, Thomas seems to attribute this way of reasoning to St. Augustine, who is quoted at this point (Prol. n.6). In his careful study, J. A. Baisnée found no other use of this argument by St. Thomas (See *op. cit.*, p. 64). Cornelio Fabro, moreover, sees this, as a "refreshing novelty" in Aquinas, carrying expressly the signature of St. Augustine (see C. Fabro, "Sviluppo, Significato, e Valore della Quarta Via," *Doctor Communis*, 7, 1954, 82). In any case, Thomas sees this incomprehensibility of God's ways in Isaiah's use of the word "lofty" (*elevatum*), meaning beyond the understanding of every creature. St. John himself intimates this when he says in 1:18: "No one has ever seen God." This reminds one very much of St. Augustine's favorite quotation from St. Paul, "How deep are the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!" (Rom 11:33). Almost anyone who considers even briefly the unfathomable ways of human life and experience comes to one of two conclusions: either there is a God great enough to draw good out of evil or life is "absurd." But even the "absurdity" of life should be enough to lead men to the Lord of the absurd!

These are only four of the many ways Thomas could have chosen to show how

serious, contemplative philosophers have come to a knowledge of God's existence and his ways. In the Prologue, St. Thomas uses these four paths by which contemplative philosophers have come in order to expand on only one point: the *sublimity* of St. John's contemplation (*alta*). This, for Thomas, was the first aspect of John's contemplation of the Word that he wished to convey to us in the Gospel. The other aspects of this contemplation—its expansiveness and perfection—are explained and exemplified in the subsequent paragraphs of this Prologue by Thomas.

III

THE CONCEPTS OF "NATURE" AND "PERSON"

The eternal salvation to which God has freely ordained mankind is a blessed, consummate happiness that cannot be attained by the powers of sheer created nature itself—much less by fallen human nature—even though in creating human nature "in his image and likeness" God intended, that this nature should partake of the intimate life of his own dynamic being, Life Itself. That such a sublime happiness is in store for those who freely choose to serve the one true God, and him alone, has been *revealed* to mankind by God himself; man could not otherwise conceive even the possibility of such eternal bliss beyond the grave. "No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him 15 (Is 64:3, cf. *Sum. theol.* I, q. 1, a. 1). In order to know that such eternal happiness exists for and can be attained by each individual human being, every person needs the special grace (*gratia*) of God, a purely unmerited "gift" (the meaning of the word *gratia*). Only by grace can man know the wonders of that goal, and the way to the goal, as well as obtain the help (*auxilium*), the actual, daily grace necessary to achieve that goal.

Man receives the message, the "Good News" (*Evangelium*), about this. salvation through faith (*fides*) in the God-Man Christ Jesus, "the one mediator between God and men, who gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim 2:5-6). Each person works out his salvation with "fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12), having confidence and hope (*spes*) in God's abundant mercy and power. We achieve this salvation, however, through a total, unconditional affirming love of God and neighbor (*caritas*) exercised daily through all the other virtues required to live a full Christian life as a "pilgrim" passing this way but once to our true home, heaven, "the holy city, the new Jerusalem" (Rv 21:2). "For we do not have here a lasting city; but we are seeking one that is to come" (Heb 13:14). Thus the whole focus of our pilgrim life is the Word-made-flesh, Christ Jesus, who not only merited

redemption for us, but is also the true example of the way we must live. He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6), and only through him can we go to the Father. So, Christian life consists in accepting Jesus as our Lord and Master, and in imitating him, especially in obedience to the will of the Father.

Since God himself freely chose the ultimate goal for man, he alone is free to determine the means to that goal, the road by which we must travel to attain the destined happiness beyond our dreams. God could have chosen any number of ways, but in fact he chose only one. That one way is the person of Jesus Christ, who within himself unites our human nature with his divine nature. For this reason Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6). That just happens to be the one and only means set for us before we were born, not by nature, but by the grace of God.

In order that man be saved, he must accept as absolutely certain—through the gift of "faith"—two fundamental mysteries of revelation that defy human language and human comprehension. They are the mysteries of the *Incarnation*.—or "the Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14) and of the *Trinity*: or the ultimate mystery of God as three Persons in one nature. These are the two basic mysteries, enigmas, puzzles, incomprehensibles, that every person must take on faith, with love, in order to follow the way of Christ to the Father, by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The fundamental teaching in this matter is expressed quite simply by St. Thomas:

The way for men to arrive at eternal happiness is the mystery of the Incarnation and passion of Christ, for it says. "There is no salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given to men, by which we can be saved" (Acts 4:12). And therefore belief in some way, in the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ was necessary at all times and for all people; but this belief is different according to the different times and persons. (*Sum. theol.* II-II, q.2, a. 7)

But Thomas goes one step farther:

One cannot believe explicitly in the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ without belief in the Trinity.- because the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ includes that the Son of God [the Father] became man; that he renewed the world through the grace of the Holy Spirit; and that he was conceived [in the womb of Mary] by the Holy Spirit. (*Sum. theol.* II-11, q. 2, a. 8,- see also Nicene Creed, Denz. 125, among others)

Although neither the mystery itself nor anything affirmative and unpuzzling about the mysteries can be proved by human reason, it is a *human intellect* that tries to understand the meaning of the terms used by God in revealing himself to us, and tries also to show what the mystery is *not*, at least by showing that the mystery is not absurd or impossible (See *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 1, a.8). The English word "mystery" comes from the Greek *mysterion*, meaning what is "secret or hidden from comprehension"; it usually has to do with divine truths, or secrets hidden behind sacred signs and symbols (*sacramenta*). We sometimes speak of the many natural "mysteries" that are around us, in actual fact, the whole of human life is one big "mystery" beyond our comprehension. But there is one big difference: natural mysteries may some day come to be understood, but supernatural mysteries, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and God's love, can never be understood, much less comprehended by any created mind. The best the human mind can do is recognize that it is rational for a man to believe in the truth of the mystery.

The special role of theology, as St. Anselm and all the scholastics following Augustine knew, comes from the dynamism of *faith seeking to understand*, insofar as is humanly possible, the revealed word of God: *Fides quaerens intellectum* (Anselm, *Proslogion*, prooem. Opera Omnia, ed. F. S. Schmitt, I, 1938, p. 94. See M.-D. Chenu, *La théologie comme science au XIII siècle*, 2nd ed., Paris: Vrin, 1943 or any of Chenu's works on theology as a science). For St. Augustine, it was not so much a matter of understanding in order to believe, but a matter of believing in order to understand: *Credo ut intelligam*. Quoting the Latin wording from the Septuagint, Augustine based his view on Isaiah (7:9): "Unless you believe, you will not understand" (Aug., *Sermo* 53.7, PL 38:257; *Ennar. in A.* 118, serm. 18. 3-4, PL 37:1552-53). What little understanding we are capable of having in this life presupposes two things: a lively faith, and a humble inquisitive mind. To understand as well as possible what faith holds, we must employ every bit of learning, especially philosophical learning, which sheds light on what has been revealed. The words "nature" and "person," each of which has a precise meaning in philosophy, are essential to our understanding of what we believe. For in our Christian faith we assert that Jesus Christ is one *person*, the Son of the eternal Father, and that he has two *natures*, the truly human and the truly divine. The Holy Trinity is three *persons*, and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in being or *nature*. Our task then throughout the rest of these notes will be to explain as carefully as we can in "the words of men" what we believe, so that through them we might catch some glimmer of the great mystery that is God himself. To accomplish this task we must first examine the words "nature" and "person." In this particular note we shall explain the various meanings these terms have in everyday use, the way they must be understood at the crucial juncture where reason meets faith, where reason surrenders to the mystery of revelation.

"Nature" as a Philosophical Concept

"Nature" is a wider and more comprehensive term than "person," being used of many more things. Thus every person has a nature, but not every nature has or is a person. The various meanings the word "nature" has in common speech and in its philosophical refinements are what concern us here.

The word *nature* in English today is used in all sorts of loose ways. "Nature lovers" think of the great outdoors; "naturalists" usually think of plants and animals, or else of the great variety of "health foods" that help to make one strong physically. Literary people often use the term "nature" in the sense of "the *universe* out there," a meaning more or less synonymous with that of the Greek word *kosmos* (from which we get our English word "cosmetics"). Intellectuals with a deeper understanding of medicine, sociology, or even law, think of nature as a "normal course of events," or "behavior that is found among many," or "laws of behavior" acceptable in civilized society and codifiable. While all these meanings (and many others) can be traced back to ancient usage, none of them focuses fully on the precise philosophical meaning the word had for the ancient Greeks and Latins and on through the Middle Ages as well. Renaissance humanists often distinguished between Nature with a capital N, meaning God acting in the universe (*Natura naturans*), and nature with a small *n*, meaning the created universe as an instrument of God (*natura naturata*). This distinction was also utilized by St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and many philosophers of the thirteenth century. Even in that context, a certain dynamic character was thought to belong to the universe as God created it. That is to say, in most of these usages the implication is that there is some innate source *within things* for their "normal," "usual," "codifiable" behavior. In all of these usages derived from antiquity, there is implied an inner dynamism that defies our every attempt to turn them into machines.

Our own thoughts about "nature" have to a large extent been molded and influenced by the mechanistic philosophy dominant in academia since the seventeenth century. Today it is hard for us *to avoid* thinking in clear and distinct- mechanical terms. We tend to imagine the universe as a big machine, something like a watch, made up of ever smaller and smaller particles that operate according to determined or determinable mathematical laws. All mathematical formulations, even statistical laws of "random probability," are necessarily mechanical, as Leibniz (1646-1716) saw so clearly; but he ended by acknowledging two parallel worlds—the mechanical and mathematical (the phenomenological), and the "real," ontological, and metaphysical (the monodological and non-mechanical) world. For Leibniz, the phenomenological world appears to be mechanical and mathematically determinable, but the real

world behind the phenomena consists of monads, each of which is self-contained and non-causal. In order that such a parallelism exist at all and make any sense, Leibniz had to postulate a pre-established harmony determined by God, the Lord of both worlds. It was inevitable that Leibniz's metaphysics, and even Newton's, passed into oblivion, while their mechanical and mathematically determinable world became the dominant philosophy of modern science.

If we wish, however, to appreciate what the word *nature* meant to the Greek pagans and Christians, to the Middle Ages and the whole history of Christian thought, we must put aside for the moment any mechanistic notions we may have about the universe in which we live, and try to appreciate a philosophical language that expresses what really lies at the foundation of our human experience, a language that describes a world made up of such principles as potency and act; the four radically different kinds of causality (formal, material, efficient and final); real substances that are things (*res*); accidental characteristics (nine of them, not counting the post-predicaments and modes), matter and form; essence and actuality of being, or *quod est* and *esse*. This philosophical language is difficult for us moderns to grasp precisely because it is non-mechanistic and apparently foreign to our "scientific" minds and "analytic" philosophy. But in fact, the older, philosophical vocabulary is much less difficult to grasp than are modern "scientific" and "analytic" concepts, contrary to what might have been expected. Therefore it is intelligible to more people and is grounded more securely in human experience. Whatever may be said about the Semitic mind and the picturesque language of the Old Testament, the Christian experience in both East and West, in both Greek and Latin, is more deeply rooted in history and in personal experience than any of the fleeting modern systems of thought. There is indeed a chasm of sorts between the modern "scientific" and "analytic" vocabulary on the one hand and the traditional personalist vocabulary of the ancients. But it is not a chasm between East and West. The clash between the Eastern and Western theologies is not a clash between Greek and Latin mentalities, but a clash between Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies—both of which are Greek.

As to the word "nature," there is an important history of Greek and Latin Philosophical usage (see my "Concept of Nature," *The New Scholasticism*, 38, 1954, 377-408; and "Aristotle's Concept of Nature: Avicenna and Aquinas," in press. See also, G. S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments*, Cambridge, 1954, index).

For our purposes here it is sufficient to note three historical points briefly before zeroing in on the analogical use of the term in Aristotelian and Scholastic philosophy. 1) The Greek seekers of wisdom before Socrates (d. 399 B.C.), the pre-Socratics, are frequently called *physiologoi* because their whole enterprise

was a search for the underlying active "source" (*arche*) of all natural processes in the world, including the origin and nature of man. This underlying active source they called *physis* (nature), from which we derive our English words *physics*, *physical*, *physician*, and the like. For most of these pre-Socratics, one or other of the basic elements were sought out as the ultimate, active *nature* of things, as though the whole universe had to have been made from one single element; they are commonly called philosophical Monists, from the Greek word *monos*, "single." 2) Socrates and his disciple Plato (427-347 B.C.) gave up the enterprise of the *physiologoi* as hopeless, Socrates establishing a moral or ethical philosophy, and Plato turning from the world of *nature* to the world of separated, subsistent Ideas that defined each thing in itself, and establishing the primacy of *art* over *nature*, and of *mind* or *spirit* over *matter* (See, *Laws* X, 884A913D). Plato, responding to Parmenides, established a dualism that enticed a host of eminent Fathers of the Church, mystics, separatists, and modern dualists. This is not the Pauline warfare between the "spirit" and the "flesh," but the Cartesian separation of mind and body that overflowed into the pseudo-conflict of faith and reason, Church and science, *sacerdotium* and *regnum*, Church and State. 3) Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), a disciple of Plato, tried to reinstate the quest of the ancient *physiologoi* in order to establish a realist foundation for his metaphysics of being. That Aristotle would have wished to re-establish the investigation of *nature* is not at all surprising, for his father was court physician to Philip of Macedonia and was himself a born naturalist in the pay of Alexander the Great. What is surprising, however, is that he should have found such a simple truth whereby to succeed in his quest. The simple truth was that the word "is" can be used in many different ways, the fundamental distinction being between *actually* and *potentially*. While the *physiologoi* and the Platonists were rightly busy looking for the actual, Aristotle discovered the potential, that is, primary matter (*materia prima*), which was capable of becoming actual. For this simple discovery, the Thomistic commentator Cardinal Thomas de Vio Cajetan called him Divus *Aristoteles*, *quia invenit materiam* (Divine Aristotle, because he discovered matter).

To *physis* (nature) in the sense of an *active* principle, Aristotle gave the name "form", but to *physis* (nature) in the sense of a *passive* or *potential* principle, he gave the name "matter." Thus Aristotle could say that the word *nature* is analogical, i.e., "equivocal by intent" (*equivocatio a consilio*). For the word *nature* is used in at least two different senses: primarily as "form," and secondarily as "matter" (*Phys.* II, 1). Form as the actual principle is defined as the active "source or cause of being moved and of being at rest in those things to which it belongs primarily (*per se*) and not incidentally" (192b21- 23). Matter as the potential principle is defined as the passive "source of being moved and of being at rest in those things to which it belongs primarily and not incidentally" (*ibid.*). In either case, nature, strictly speaking, is a principle (*arche*, *principium*) or a "source" relative to observable and manifest behavior or properties, whether they

be movements such as growing or healing, or characteristics more or less static and proper to different kinds of natures, such as size, color, weight, habitat, and anatomy. St. Thomas is very explicit on this very difficult point: "In the definition of *nature*, the term "source" (*principium*) is used as a kind of generic classification rather than a term like "thing" (or any other *quid absolutum*), because the term *nature* bespeaks of a relationship of origin" (St. Thomas, *In II Phys.*, lect.1, n.5). Thomas rejects every attempt to make absolute Aristotle's concept by suggesting that it might be "an innate power within things" (*vis insita rebus*), as some of Aristotle's commentators have attempted to do. In scholastic terms, the noun "nature" is a *nomen relativum*, not a *nomen absolutum*. Thus *nature* is not really a thing, but an origin or "source" from which (*a quo*) other things proceed.

One further, somewhat epistemological or psychological observation ought to be made at this point. To understand the "nature" of anything living or non-living in this universe we must study the *manifestations* or phenomena that are observable to the senses or to the intellect, both static and dynamic. Some manifestations are sensibly observed, as in minerals, plants, and animals; others are only intellectually observed, such as thinking, willing, hating, loving, and other psycho-physical phenomena. In either case, it is the scientific mind that *projects* the notion of "source" as the root and origin of specific or typical diversities. The more a scientist knows about the observed phenomena, the better he understands the *nature* of the thing studied. One should not be misled by the logical or the lexicographical simplification of some definitions. The logical definition of "man" as "a rational animal," while quite good and complete in its way, should not lead us to think we know all there is to know about human nature. The truth is that this marvelous definition of "man" which includes both animality and rationality, is quite elementary and simplistic. It is not likely to carry one very far in understanding "human nature" with all its complexities. While such a definition clearly sets "man" off from "non-thinking animals" and "non-animal thinkers," it has minimal content. This content can come only from patient study, observation, and experience. An understanding of—let us say—"human nature" is directly proportional to the extent and analysis of one's experience, personal or vicarious. While it is easier to understand human nature, mainly because we are *human* and can reflect on ourselves and our inner states with an analytic mind, the same holds true of our understanding of all natures other than man: only through the phenomena can we claim some understanding of the "nature" of anything.

Simply put, therefore, *nature* is that which makes a thing to be *what* it is. It is the response to the question, "What is it?" In other words, the *nature* of a thing is the same as *its definition* (its *quod quid est*, or *ratio*). Aristotle explains that because of this wider meaning of the term, the word *nature* can be applied to

things that have no principle of motion, like the "nature" of a triangle, an idea, ideals, and even spiritual things. Thus, "by an extension of meaning from the original sense of *physis*, every essence in general has come to be called a nature" (*Metaph.* V, 4, 1015a1 1-12). St. Thomas adds that this latter usage is "by way of metaphor" (*In V Metaph.*, lect. 5, n. 823). In this extended sense, the term is understood in a somewhat static fashion as "whatever a thing is." In this sense it is identical with the term *essence*.

Finally, it should be noted that in the technical language of Latin and Greek, nature is not a thing, a *quod est*, but that *by which* a thing is what it is (*quo est*). For this reason, Aristotle can say that "Things 'have a nature' which have a principle of this kind" (*Phys.* II, 1 92b2-3). It is always an *it* that has a nature, and that *it* must be substantial, an *ousia*.

"Person " as a Philosophical Concept

Since nature is not an *it*, an existing thing, or supposit, it cannot properly be said to exist. Existence (*esse*) belongs to things that have a nature, not to nature itself. Aristotle uses two ways to speak of the concrete, existing thing that has a nature. 1) In the *Categories* 5, Aristotle speaks of substance (*ousia*) in the primary and truest sense as "that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject, whereas substance (*ousia*) in a secondary sense is the apprehended substantial nature or essence of a thing, which, in order to exist, must exist in a subject. This subject necessarily is the concrete, uniquely existing individual, "for instance, the individual man or horse" (2a3). Since the Greek word *ousia* played such an important part in the Christian theology of the fourth century, it is important to remember that for Aristotle, and for all the Greek thinkers, *ousia* in the primary sense is that alone which has existence. It is the ultimate given *suppositum* that has existence, but the kind of existence it has depends upon its *nature (physis)*. The Latins simply called it a *suppositum*, or first *substantia*, which possessed existence by reason of the "form" making the substance to have the *kind* of nature and existence it has. The scholastic axiom, "Form gives existence" (*Forma dat esse*) simply means that the *kind* of existence a thing has depends on its form, or nature. But ultimately, only the supposit itself can be said "to exist."

2) Frequently Aristotle speaks of this first *ousia* as an *hypostasis*, meaning "that which stands under" all properties and characteristics. Literally, the Greek word was translated as *subsistentia*, but it always had the sense of *substantia* in Latin. The Greeks, however, made a very important distinction between *ousia*, which, in the primary sense, alone had existence (*esse*), and *hypostasis*, which, in Christian thought, played the same role as (*persona*) "person" in Latin. The meaning of these terms must be carefully kept in mind when reading the early Greek and

Latin Fathers, as St. Thomas is careful to point out (*Contra errores Graecorum*, prol. *Opera Omnia* ed. Leon. XIL A 71, 1-72).

The English word *person* comes from two Latin words, *personare*, "to sound through," as through the mask used in an ancient dramatic performance. Thus we still list the "Dramatis personae" on the program of a play. Because of the influence of the Latin etymology of this word *persona*, some early Roman theologians, such as Sabellius, thought of God as one substance which spoke through three different masks: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. More will be said on this subject later.

An important point to establish here is that in Latin philosophy the term *person* was applied only to substances that had a particular kind of *nature*, namely, intellectual. Boethius gave the Latin scholastics the classical definition when he defined a person as "the individual substance of a rational nature" (*Contra Eutychem*, c. 3). Then he goes on immediately to say, "Now by this definition we Latins have described what the Greeks call *hypostasis*." The linguistic difficulty, however, was that the Greeks too had a word they used for the masks placed over the face of the actor playing different roles. As Boethius noted, their word for mask was *prosopon*, which never lost its original meaning. To convey the Greek reality signified by *hypostasis*, the Latins had to adapt their word *persona* to embrace substantial individuals of an intellectual nature. While there is a technical difference between "rational" and "intellectual," the latter being wider in extension, that difference is not the issue here. Only intellectual substances can be *persons*, and these intellectual substances must be individual and unique (See *Sum. theol.*, I, q.29, aa. 1-2).

When philosophy demonstrates the existence of a unique First Being, the First Cause of all that exists, it shows him necessarily to be pure spirit, intellect and free volition, the first beginning and last end of all that are created by himself alone. That is to say, philosophy, reasoning from all the effects in the universe, demonstrates that God is a *person*. When philosophers argue about the existence of a "personal" God, they are really asking whether he is an intellectual being, having knowledge and free will. The question has nothing to do with whether or not God has any personal meaning for me as a person, although this question, too, inevitably follows.

Philosophers, Christian or not, also have grounds for acknowledging the existence of pure spirits, both good and evil. Each such spirit, being an individual intellectual substance, is truly a *person*. These are not personifications of subsistent forces of good and evil, but subsistent intelligences, each one unique without the individuality and limitations of material substances. They are spiritual intelligences, created by God, that have certain powers over material things, but

belong to a vast world altogether different from our own material universe. Some of these personal spirits are irreparably evil because of a free choice made by each one, and hence are the cause of fiendish evil beyond the comprehension of man. Other personal spirits are pure, having made a free choice by the grace of God, and are now messengers of divine governance in the universe. From a Christian point of view, the world of human beings can be considered a kind of battle ground, a plaything or booty to be won over by the good angels in the name of God, or by evil spirits in the name of Satan, Lucifer (see Is 14:12), or Beelzebub, "the Prince of demons" (Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22). The important point here is that each individual spirit is an intelligence having a will that is either perverted or good. Therefore each "individual substance of an intellectual nature" is to be called a *person*. Each is unique and each has a name, whether we know it or not.

A consequence of what has been said is that each individual substance of, an intellectual nature is a *person* even though that nature exists only in an embryonic stage and needs a natural course of development to reach its full potential, which for a Christian is eternal happiness with God. Once an individual substance has been constituted by matter and by a form, namely, the "human soul," it is a true *person* in the strictest sense of the term. It therefore has certain natural "rights" that belong to it not by any human decree, but by the nature of a person being exactly that, a *person*. Any violation of those rights is a crime against humanity, not animality.

From this it also follows that no individual substance of a nonintellectual, non-human nature can possibly be a *person*. Thus a companionate dog, no matter how "loyal" or "intelligent" it may be, is in no way a *person*. Even if that dog responds to a name or its master's presence or absence, it is not a *person*. To use the word *person* of any individual substance of a non-intellectual nature is a misuse of the term, which cannot be tolerated in philosophy. On the other hand, a group of persons may constitute a legal entity known as a corporation or "moral person," which may be the subject of legal rights and obligations before the law. But this is merely a legitimate extension of a basically sound definition of *person*.

Briefly, *nature* is a reply to the question, "What is it?" It is the ultimate specific "source" of definite, characteristic phenomena, both static and dynamic. The active, automatic "origin" of these characteristics is the *form* or *species* of the thing, making it to be what it is, the passive, potential "abilities" of such an individual thing are the *matter*. The spiritual forms or species are immaterial natures: these may exist solely in the mind (such as "triangles" and "the square root of two"), or they may exist in physical reality, in which case they are necessarily intellectual substances. *Person*, on the other hand, is a reply to the question, "Who is it?" The *person* or "who" is an individual substance (material or immaterial) of an intellectual nature. In all creatures there is a distinction

between *person* (as a supposit or *quod*) and *nature*, as that by which (*id quo*) a thing is what it is. That is to say, in all creatures, every person “has” a nature by which he has existence. Thus existence and all actions belong to the *person* or supposit, but *nature* is the means by which the person or supposit has existence and its specific actions.

The importance of all of this will become evident when we consider the two great mysteries of our faith: the Trinity and the Incarnation.

IV

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRIUNE GOD

According to the Creed attributed to St. Athanasius, whoever wishes to be saved must hold to the Catholic faith whole and entire. “The Catholic faith, however, is this: that we adore one God in trinity and trinity in unity, neither mixing the persons nor separating the substance” (Denz. 75). The Athanasian Creed, dating at least to the fourth century, goes on in great detail to profess that “the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, but there are not three Gods, but one God.” All are equal in immensity, eternity, omnipotence, lordship, and creation. They are all one God. But each Person is really and truly distinct from the other two, and these Persons are only three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the incomprehensible mystery that God has revealed to us about his inner dynamic life.

When philosophers prove the existence of one God (cf. Note 11 above), they prove that in him his very *nature* or essence is to be (*esse*). St. Thomas proves this fundamental truth of his philosophy in many ways (See *Sum. theol.*, I, q.3, a.4 and all parallel places). Simply, in everything that exists, whatever is over and above the essence (*praeter essentiam*) must be caused either by the essence itself (or *nature*), as proper characteristics naturally springing forth from it, like risibility in man, or it must be caused by some extrinsic source, like heat in water being caused by fire. But since the very existence of a thing (*ipsum esse rei*) within our experience is other than its essence, then the thing’s existence must be caused either by its essential principles or by some exterior cause. Its own existence cannot in any way be produced by the essential principles of the thing, for then the essence could not but necessarily exist, since whatever is essential necessarily belongs to it. Therefore, the thing whose *esse* is other than its essence must have its existence caused by another—and ultimately by one whose very essence is *to be*. Therefore in God essence and existence (*esse*) are

identical. Thus God is *his nature* or essence, and he is his *esse* or existence. Expressed in more Platonic terms, *esse* is a reality in which different things share or participate in varying degrees, but whatever is had by participation (*per participationem*) presupposes one who has it essentially (*per essentiam*).

For St. Thomas the splendor of God's reality is expressed most fully in the identity of his essence and existence. The very *nature* of God is to be *ipsum esse subsistens*, "subsistent being itself." In human history, God, having chosen a special race of people among all those whom he had created, revealed to the Jews his own name, Yahweh, "I AM WHO AM" (Ex 3:14). This truth, as Gilson has constantly emphasized, is the basic principle of the whole of St. Thomas' philosophy. He has also noted that St. Thomas himself referred to this insight as *haec sublimis veritas* (*Sum. c. Gent.*, I, c.32; see E Gilson *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. K. Shook, New York: Random House, 1956, pp.84-95; *Le Thomisme*, 6th ed.,: Paris. Vrin, 1965, pp.99-112). It belongs to the *nature* of God necessarily to exist. That is, he cannot not exist.

From this basic truth it follows, first, that God is in every way uniquely and absolutely indivisible, or "simple," as St. Thomas puts it, having no distinctions within his nature whatever (*Sum. theol.*, I, q.3). Thus in God there is no distinction or difference between his intellect and will, truth and love, justice and mercy, and so forth, even though for us each of these words has a real and distinct meaning (*ratio*) that must be retained in our talking about God. In our talking about God, human language does not lose its meaning, but it takes on a subtlety and expansion in which we realize that words are being used differently of God and creatures. The difference is radical and absolute (*per se*), but there is a human reasonableness in using certain words of both God and creatures. This "equivocation by intent," as Aristotle calls it, is more properly called *analogy*, which is quite different from simple metaphorical language, such as God's "walking," or his "coming down" (*Sum. theol.*, I, q. 13, etc.). Words such as "good" and "love" can be used properly both of God and man, but in two radically different ways; the reality as it is found in God infinitely transcends our conception of "good" and "love" realizable in man. Thus such statements as "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8), God is truth, God is good, and so forth, are more true and significant than we can possibly realize. The meaning such terms have for us is quite real and proper, but our understanding of those terms is but a shadow of the reality that is in God. Similarly, God's *nature* is *esse* in a way that surpasses our understanding of all the things of our human experience.

The second point is that God has revealed to us through the Law and the Prophets, through Jesus Christ, and through his Church, that he, the Father, "so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). The Son of God-made-

man himself stated time and again that he “was sent by the Father” to do the will of him who sent him, and that all he has is “from the Father.” But he also said that he would “ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth” (Jn 14:16-17), “the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your mind whatever I have said to you” (Jn 14:26). The Son-made-man also said: “When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will give testimony to me” (Jn 15:26). The last injunction of Jesus to his apostles was “go, therefore, and teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19). This baptismal formula reflects the Church’s gradual understanding of God as three Persons (See Acts 2:38; 2 Cor 13:13).

The only words God used in revealing himself to us are those of “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” (“Spirit” or “Paraclete,” meaning advocate or comforter). And it is only within this context that the theologian must try to understand the inner life of the Godhead. St. John also uses the word *logos*, *Verbum*, or Word, as synonymous for the Son. St. Paul speaks of Christ as “the image of God” (2 Cor 4:4- Col 1:15). There simply are no other words given to us for theological understanding. These are common enough terms, but how they are to be understood of the one God, whose *nature* is his *esse* is a difficult problem, where “faith seeks understanding” with the help of philosophy, the age-long “handmaid of theology” (the *ancilla theologiae*) as understood by the Alexandrine theologians, particularly St. Athanasius, and by the Cappadocian Fathers (St. Basil of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. Gregory of Nyssa) in the East, and by St. Augustine in the West.

In this note there are two major points that need clarifying. First, the doctrine of consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, which was the first really crucial development in Christian doctrine. Although the debate over this doctrine reached a climax in the fourth century, still there was the subsequent problem of *Filioque*, which came to a head in the ninth century. The second baffling mystery was how each of the three Persons is identical with the one nature, yet truly distinct from each other.

A. Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father

Frequently in the New Testament Scriptures, Jesus Christ seems to be presented as somehow less than Yahweh, the one true God of the chosen people, he speaks of himself as “sent by the Father” to do not his own will, but “the will of him who sent me.” He always speaks of himself as having only that teaching, that knowledge, that mission, that will, that judgment which has been committed to him by the Father. Throughout the Gospel of St. John, Jesus seems to

acknowledge a subservient position to the Father, depending upon the Father's acceptance and glorification of him as a loyal Son. In the Gospel according to St. John, Jesus even declares explicitly that "the Father is greater than I" (Jn 14:28). In the end he commends his spirit to the Father.

One of the prevalent assumptions of such ecclesiastical writers as Origen and Clement of Alexandria was that the Son, Jesus Christ, was *subordinate* to the Father. One form of "subordinationism" insisted that Jesus was no more than a mere man who was "adopted" by God. Other forms, like that held by Arius (c.250-c.336), maintained that the Person of Jesus was created by the Father from nothing in order to be the instrument of the divine plan; and thus that the Person of Jesus had a substance (*ousia*) different from God's. This was the extreme form of Arianism that developed from the "subordinationism" of the third century. A second party that developed in the early fourth century, called "Homoeans" (from *homoios*, "similar"), tried to avoid the very basic commitment of "What think you of Christ?" by saying that there was much similarity between Father and Son "according to the Scriptures." But the most influential group to emerge was the Semi-Arians, who claimed that the Father and Son were "similar in substance" (*homoiousios*), but not identical. Although the question of the *ousia* of Jesus was the central issue that directly occasioned the synod of Alexandria (c.320) in which St. Alexander condemned the teaching of Arius, the Catholic teaching was not universally proclaimed until the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, convoked by the Emperor Constantine at his summer palace in 325.

At the Council of Nicaea, under the presidency of Hosius of Spain and under the prosecution mainly by Saint Alexander of Alexandria, whose secretary was the deacon St. Athanasius, approximately 235 bishops (318 according to Athanasius) gathered to consider this crucial dogmatic problem and legislate a number of disciplinary decrees. Basing themselves on the texts "In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1), "The Father and I are one" (Jn 10:30), "That they may be one, even as we are one" (Jn 17:11), "That all may be one, as you Father, in me, and I in you" (Jn 17:21) and similar texts, the conciliar Fathers at Nicaea professed the ancient belief that the "Son is of one substance (that is, *homoousion*) with the Father." The Latin rendering is "consubstantial (*consubstantialis*) with the Father." This doctrine was directly opposed by the Semi-Arians under the leadership of Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia. Eusebius and his many followers insisted on the term *homoiousion*, "of *similar* substance with the Father," in place of the orthodox *homoousion*. Some so-called historians of this controversy of the fourth century have been so insensible and obtuse as to describe it as "a quibble about an *iota*." That *iota* made all the difference in the world between orthodoxy and heresy. As late as 359, St. Jerome could write: "The whole world groaned one day and marvelled to find itself Arian" (*Dial. adv. Lucif* 19, PL 23, 172C).

The significant point is that the word *homoousion* is nowhere to be found in the Canonical Scriptures, no more than is *homoiousion*. But *homoousion* was a soundly based philosophical term used in response to a Greek philosophical question. Consequently, the crucial question for modern man seeking the Christian truth is not so much "what think you of Christ? Whose Son is he?" (Mt 22:42), but rather, "What think you of *homoousion*? By what authority do you profess it?" In the earliest ages of Christianity, many thought highly of Jesus as the "adopted son of God," and accepted him as the "Christus" of faith giving us hope. But, as we shall see, the fundamental question is about the historical Jesus as "consubstantial with the Father," just as the bishops assembled at Nicaea openly declared to be the true teaching of the Church.

This is one of the earliest examples of the development of Christian doctrine which Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-90) helped us to understand (See especially his *Arians of the Fourth Century* (1833), *St. Athanasius*, 2 vols. (1843), *Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845)). The real meaning of the text "The Father and I are one" (Jn 10:30) is that the Son is "consubstantial with the Father" (*homoousion toi patri*). In theological terms, the *ousia* (substance) of the Son is identical to the *ousia* of the Father. From this it is only a short step to the recognition of the Holy Spirit as consubstantial to the Father and Son; that is, the *ousia* of the Holy Spirit is identical to that of the Father and the Son. Moreover, that unique *ousia* is "an individual substance of an intellectual nature"; that is, God is a "person" or "personal."

B. Three distinct Persons in one Nature

Nevertheless, there are three distinct persons (*hypostases*) identical with the one divine *nature* (*ousia*). Because the divine nature is identical with its existence (*esse*), as explained above, there can be only one God. Thus the *person* of the Father cannot be distinct in any way from the divine nature which is *esse*, or *ipsum esse subsistens* (*Sum. theol.* I, q.28, a.2). Although none of the three Persons is distinct from the one identical nature or *ousia*, each is really and truly distinct from the other two, as Father is from Son (*Sum. theol.* I, q.28, a.3). The only meaning open to our appreciation of the mystery is to be found in the terms God himself used to reveal himself, namely, the relative terms of "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" (*Sum. theol.* I, q.29, a.4).

The role of a father is "to beget," just as the meaning of sonship is "to be begotten." The Father, therefore, is unbegotten, but is origin and progenitor of the Son, who himself does not beget, for there is no "Son" in the Godhead other than himself. That is to say, the whole reality of the Father is to beget, to generate, to give all that he has, namely, his whole divine nature, to the Son.

And the whole reality of the Son is to be begotten, to be generated, to receive all that he has, namely, his whole divine nature, from the Father. This relation of Father and Son within the Trinity is clearly expressed throughout the Gospel of John: "All that the Father has are mine" (Jn 16:15). "Father, glorify your Son, since you have given him authority over all men" (Jn 17:1-2); "The teaching you gave me, I have given to them" (Jn 17:8); and again, "My teaching is not my own, but of him who sent me" (Jn 7:16). Both St. Augustine and St. Thomas were eloquent on the precision of this expression. Jesus' doctrine does not belong to himself as originating with him. Rather it belongs to, it is the possession of, the Father (in the genitive case); it is the Father's doctrine precisely *as received from* him by the Son. The life of the Father is an eternal *giving* of himself whole and entire to the Son. The life of the Son is an eternal *receiving* of the Father whole and entire. The life of the Father and the Son together is an eternal *breathing* of the Spirit, while the life of the Spirit is an eternal breath, or gift, whole and entire from the Father and the Son together.

It is obvious that the Spirit must proceed from the Father and the Son (*Patre Filioque*), and not from the Father alone, for in the latter case another "son" would be generated and there would be no distinction between the Son and the Spirit, as Catholic faith teaches (*Sum. theol.*, I, q.36, a.4; see *Sum. contra Gent.*, IV, cc.126, *Contra errores Graecorum*, etc.). The Holy Spirit thus possesses the identical nature of the Father and of the Son precisely *as breathed (spirata)* by Father and Son. He is the "gift" (*donum*) sent to the Church and into the hearts of all baptized in the Spirit. He is the "uncreated grace" (*gratia increata*) by whom all those with "created grace" (*gratia creata*) live the intimate life of the Godhead. He is the Spirit that Jesus *breathed* on the disciples that they might have his Spirit. In other words, the Spirit belongs to the Father and the Son, just as the Son belongs to the Father. Just as the Son *was sent* into the world at a particular period in human history "when the fullness of time had come" (Gal 4:4), so the Holy Spirit *was sent* in a visible way to men at a special time in human history (*Sum. theol.*, I, q.43, a.2 and a.7).

The precise problem where human understanding must give way to belief in a mystery is how can one personal God, who is *ipsum esse subsistens* and a *person*, be in fact three distinct Persons and not three gods. If there are three Persons, each "an individual substance of an intellectual nature," as Boethius and sound philosophy define "person," then why is not each Person a distinct substance with its own *esse*? That is to say, why are there not three gods, if there are three distinct Persons? Or rather still, why are there not four persons, a quaternity, as Peter of Poitiers seems to have implied, according to Geoffrey of Auxerre, St. Bernard's secretary, in his *Libellus* against the so-called *capitula* (PL 185, 598; cf. *Sum. theol.*, I, q.28, a.2; N. Haring, *The Commentaries on Boethius by Gilbert of Poitiers*, Toronto: PIMS, 1966, 3-13). To put the question in a less

philosophical context, how can *one* God be *three* Persons? Or conversely, how can *three* distinct Persons be only *one* subsistent *esse* and not three? At this point no amount of philosophical analysis and explanation can dissolve the real mystery, something transcending mere human intelligence. All we must insist upon is the absolute identity of *person* and *nature* in God and we must not think of the "person" as "an adjunct, or something extrinsically attached," as Gilbert seems to have suggested (*Sum. theol.*, I, q.28, a.2). Not even when we see God "face to face" and know him as he really is will the mystery dissolve. Only God can comprehend himself. Not even the angels and demons, whose spiritual intelligences far transcend every human intelligence, can understand the mystery.

The importance and sublimity of this mystery of the Trinity becomes more apparent when we prayerfully consider the mystery of the Incarnation: the fact that the Son of God (and only the Son) became true man for our sake, suffered, died, and triumphed over death, that we might have his life. This will be discussed in Note V below.

By way of summary, we can say that the one true God has only one *nature*, which, of itself, is the total actuality of being (*esse*), containing no distinctions, potentiality, temporality, or need, having no beginning or end or mutability. This *ousia* is subsistent truth and love, knowing all things, even what is "future and contingent" to us, and loving all those whom he has freely chosen to love and share in his eternal, dynamic bliss. By faith (and faith alone) we are given a glimpse of the dynamic nature of the Godhead in three distinct Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each Person, though identical with the divine nature, is distinct from the other two by the way in which that nature is possessed. The Father is the divine nature precisely as *giving it* whole and entire from all eternity to the Son. The Son is that same divine nature precisely as *being given* it whole and entire from all eternity, himself begotten, but in no way "created." The Holy Spirit is that same divine nature precisely as *breathed* by the Father and the Son, himself unbegotten and ungenerated, but simply the Father's breath of love for the Son and the Son's breath of love for the Father.

In human history the "Only Begotten Son of the Father" *was sent* into the world to become man, suffer under Pontius Pilate, die and be raised up again on the third day. Also in human history the Spirit of God, the gift of love, *was sent* by the Father and the Son into this temporal world to sanctify and to animate the "people of God" in their pilgrimage to their true home, which is eternal bliss with all the saints in seeing God face to face. "Then I shall know even as I am known" (1 Cor 13:12).

In the prologue to his *Contra errores Graecorum* St. Thomas manifests a fine sense of history, as well as the demands of a good translator. He notes that the

writings of our ancient holy Fathers must be seen in their historical context. That is, before the Arian heresy concerning the precise relationship between the person of Jesus and the person of God, ecclesiastical teachers were not as precise in speaking about the unity of the divine essence as were teachers after Arius. Similarly, even St. Augustine, one of the great doctors of the Church, was not as precise about grace and free will when he was writing against the Manicheans in his youth as he was in the face of the heresy of Pelagianism. Thus in his later writings, particularly in his anti-Pelagian works, Augustine speaks most cautiously about man's free will and the primacy of God's free gift of grace and final perseverance. And so, St. Thomas says, it is not surprising if modern doctors of the faith, coming after so many new errors, speak more cautiously and more elaborately concerning the doctrine of faith, so as to avoid all heresies. Hence if some things are found in the writings of the ancient doctors that are not as cautiously expressed as the moderns would like, those writings are not for that reason to be disdained or cast aside. Nor should those statements be expanded but reverently explained.

Coming to the main point in his prologue, St. Thomas notes with sympathy the problems of the translator. What might sound good in Greek may not always sound correct in Latin. For this reason the Latins and Greeks profess the same truth of faith in different words. An important example is the mystery of the Trinity itself. For among the Greeks it is correct and orthodox to say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three *hypostases*. But among the Latins it would not be correct to say that they are three *substances*, even though *hypostasis* for the Greeks is the same as *substantia* for the Latins in literal translation. For among the Latins the term *substantia* is more commonly taken to mean the essence, which both the Greeks and the Latins admit to be only one in God. For this reason, just as the Greeks say there are three *hypostases*, we say there are three *persons*, as even St. Augustine acknowledges in his *De trinitate* (VII, n.7, PL 42, 939).

Therefore, the question of precise language is extremely important for the preservation and development of the true Catholic faith. One of the most important functions of the Catholic theologian is to know exactly what can and what cannot be said consistent with the revealed Christian doctrine. The history of Christian belief or dogma may seem more like a history of heresies. But it is often the case that an outrageous statement or a view that is "offensive to pious ears," *male sonans*, or contrary to the living faith of the Church, occasions a clarification and more exact formulation of the true faith, thus contributing indirectly to the development of Christian doctrine in the history of the Church. Therefore each new formulation, like *homoousion*, must be understood in the historical context of the speculative problem; in this case it was a Greek philosophical problem that needed a Greek theological solution consistent with

divine revelation. The true development of Christian doctrine is never a case of abrogating or denying an earlier profession of faith, but always a more explicit profession of the one true faith in the face of given historical obsessions or preoccupations of a certain time in human history. It is only God himself who has no history. Everything created by God and governed by his immutable providence has a very definite history, one that is irreversibly unique and destined to manifest the glory of God.

V

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

The Catholic faith professes a firm belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, in the literal sense of the word “divine,” meaning God himself. That is:

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God (*Deum de Deo*), Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten (*genitum*), not made (*non factum*), one in Being (*consubstantialem*) with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation (*propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem*) he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man (*et homo factus sit*).

This is the ancient profession of faith approved by the Council of Nicaea (325), more fully formulated by the First Council of Constantinople (381), and recited weekly by the faithful in their Sunday liturgy. It is a belief that Jesus of Nazareth, “born of a woman, under the law” (Gal 4:4), is in his unique personality the Only Begotten Son of the Father, one in nature with him, truly God and at the same time truly man, and born as we are of a woman, “one tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). Quite simply, it is a belief that the historical Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, is one divine Person in two natures, one divine, the other human.

For St. Thomas, John the Evangelist proclaims for us in a special way the “mysteries of Christ’s divinity.” For him, St. John’s Prologue is a canticle of the Word become flesh, “full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14). The reality of *who* he is, therefore, is announced in the first strophe of the Prologue:

In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,

And the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.

To Thomas' Aristotelian mind, the first two phrases declare the existence (*an est*) of the Word and the other two declare the reality of who he is (*quid est*). The first phrase declares "when" he was, namely, *in the beginning*. The second declares "where" he was, namely, *with the Father*. The third phrase declares *who* he was, namely, *God*. The fourth declares the "manner" so as to exclude the two basic errors concerning the Word: (1) the error of gentiles, such as pagan Greeks and Romans, who thought there were many gods, and the Manichaeans, who thought there were two gods, one good, the other evil; and (2) that of the Arians, who thought that the Word was less than the Father, different in substance, and created by the Father. Both of these errors are excluded by the fourth phrase, that the unique Word *was with the Father from the beginning* and identical with him in nature.

In typical scholastic fashion Thomas sees in these four lines of the first strophe a refutation of *all the errors* of both heretics and philosophers. As for the heretics, there were (1) some like the Ebionites and Cerinthus, who denied the existence of Jesus Christ before his conception in the womb of Mary; that is, they thought Christ to be no more than "a mere man" who later deserved to be called "divine" being "adopted" by the Father and "accepted as the Christ" by his disciples. To this group belong Paul of Samosata (3rd cent.), Photius (9th cent.), Rudolf Bultmann and Hans Kung (20th cent.), and in a certain sense, Nestorius, about whom more will be said later. To all of these the Evangelist says, *In the beginning was the Word*. (2) Then there were those like Sabellius (3rd cent.) who denied the real distinction of Persons, thinking that "Father" and "Word" are two masks for the one true God (see Note 111). To these the Evangelist says, *And the Word was with God*, insisting on their distinction in Person. (3) Then there were the heretics like Eunomius (d. 394) and the other extreme Arians, who insisted that Jesus, though pre-existent to his incarnation, was very much unlike (*anomos*) the Father. To them the Evangelist says, *And the Word was God*. (4) Finally, there was Arius himself and all the semi-Arians, who said that the Word was less than the Father and created by him. To all these the Evangelist says, *He was in the beginning with God*.

As to the philosophers, there were (1) the pre-Socratics, who all, except Anaxagoras, were pure materialists, whether they acknowledged one or many elements as "nature," or only atoms in space, for them the universe came about not by Intelligence, but by chance. Against these the Evangelist says, *In the beginning was the Word*; all things come by his agency, not by pure chance. (2) Plato, however, admitted the reality of things immaterial, but for him these were subsistent, immaterial Forms, or Ideas, separate from God as well as from

matter. Against this the Evangelist says, *And the Word was with God*. (3) The later Platonists, especially Plotinus (c. 205-270 B.C.). acknowledged the existence of 'the One, from which proceeded Mind (*Nous*) containing all the Ideas, but who was less than the One. Lest anyone think that the Word was "with God" in this sense of being less than him, the Evangelist says, *And the Word was God*. (4) Finally, Aristotle placed the ideas of all things in God, and acknowledged the identity of intellect, act of intellection, and reality intellected (or known) in God, but he thought that the world was co-eternal with him, that is, created from all eternity by God. For St. Thomas, the word *he* in St. John (*hoc* in Latin; *houtos* in Greek) implies that he "alone" was *in the beginning with God*, excluding not other Persons, but any other co-eternal nature.

This is a typical example of how much a scholastic theologian like St. Thomas could see in a single strophe of John. Everything St. Thomas says in his commentary on the first strophe is entirely true and correct, but he does not mean to imply in any way that St. John had these ideas in his mind when he or his scribe wrote these opening lines of the Prologue. Here is an excellent example of St. Anselm's "Faith seeking understanding," or "an example of meditating on the rationale of the faith."

The climax of the entire Prologue for Thomas is the direct statement, *And the Word was made flesh* (Jn 1:14), because taken literally and strictly it excludes all errors concerning the one *person* and the two distinct *natures* in Christ, one fully divine, the other as fully human as we are. In this profession of faith lies the mystery of the Incarnation. Everything else in our Christian belief, that God became man "for us and for our salvation," that "by dying he destroyed our death," that "by rising he restored our life," and that "he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead," depends upon the basic mystery of the Incarnation, namely, that Jesus of Nazareth, born at a definite time in history of the Jewish Virgin Mary, is *one unique person*, "the Son of the living God," who united in his person *two* wholly complete and distinct *natures*: human and divine.

In this note we will restrict our analysis to the mystery of the union of the human and the divine in the one person of Jesus Christ. Among the many so-called Christological heresies concerning this central mystery of Christianity, we will restrict ourselves to the three most common ones: (a) Christ was not really "divine" either in his person or in nature; (b) Christ was not really "human" like all the rest of mankind, and not "one tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15); (c) there were two persons in Christ, one human, the other divine. But first we must begin with a preliminary note to focus the real problem.

Today it is common among historians of Christianity and Scripture scholars, at least since the time of H. S. Reimarus (1694-1768) to distinguish between the

Jesus of history and the Christ of faith (see Sebastian Bullough, O.P., "Scripture Survey: From Wrede to the New Quest," *Blackfriars*, 44, 1963, 79-82). Perhaps Rudolf Bultmann more than anyone else today has sharpened the distinction between *Geschichte* (the existential significance of history) and *Historie* (the empirical study of historical facts as objectively real). Although there are no two words in English to convey the difference between *geschichtlich* and *historisch*, the whole of Bultmann's work manifests the distinction which is fundamental to modern Christian studies and beliefs (see especially the article of Claude Geffré, "Bultmann on Kerygma and History," *Rudolf Bultmann in Catholic Thought*, ed. T. F. O'Meara, O.P., and D.M. Weissner, O.P., New York: Herder and Herder, 1968, pp. 167-95). Although the bibliography on this important modern distinction is vast, and although there are many ways to exemplify the distinction between "historical science" (*Historie*) and "existential history" (*Geschichte*), we will limit our brief and simple observations to the mystery of the Incarnation.

Simply put, *Historie* deals with what little we can know of the historical Jesus precisely as a human being said to have been born in Bethlehem of Jewish heritage, whose mother's name was Mary, and who was put to death. Many Protestant theologians have given up the quest for the "historical Jesus," claiming that all our knowledge is colored by a *later reaction*, expressed in a kerygmatic manner, by the so-called evangelists and preachers long after the factual historical events, which had by then ceased to be important. *Geschichte*, on the other hand, is the Christ event, the impact on a human being of the eschatological challenge put to each individual today as it was at the end of the first century through the basic kerygma. In other words, many Protestant theologians (and some Catholic ones) do not think that much, if anything, really certain can be known of the historical man known as Jesus of Nazareth. For most of them, the historical Jesus was an ordinary, idealistic Jewish man little different from other Jews at the beginning of the present era; perhaps in his idealism he was a "great man" who came to a tragic death and was buried.

The main thing is that *much was said about him* after his death and burial. And *what was said* is the reaction of living men accepting an eschatological challenge. Today the challenge made to the early Christians is made to each of us, the challenge of the existential acceptance of Jesus as "the Christ of faith." Inevitably the *acceptance* of the Christ event by the early Christians expressed itself in a multitude of "myths" that sprang from the believer. The most important of these "myths" was the "deification" or "divinization" of Jesus by the believer. For Bultmann it is the myths alone that are really important. When Christ is "demythologized" there is nothing left but a tragic life of a man called Jesus. Thus the quest for "the historical Jesus" is not only vain and futile, it is also un-Christian and of no salvific value whatever. It is empty *Historie*, having no contemporary existential significance.

Bultmann puts the matter simply when he says: "The saving efficacy of the cross is not derived from the fact that it is the cross of Christ: it is the cross of Christ because it has this saving efficacy. Without that efficacy it is the tragic end of a great man" (quoted by C. Geffré, *op. cit.*, p. 181).

This whole approach to the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith seems to be at the root of Hans Kung's best seller, *On Being a Christian* (trans. E. Quinn, Garden City: Doubleday, 1976, from *Christ Sein*, Munchen: R. Piper, 1974).

This preliminary note on the contemporary, mainly Protestant, approach to Christology has been introduced here solely to show how radically different is St. Thomas' approach to the mystery of the Incarnation. For St. Thomas (and all those before him in the Catholic faith) it is the historical Jesus who is one divine Person, the Only Begotten Son of the Father, who became man by being conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, thereby uniting to himself a truly complete human nature, subject to all the natural ills and pleasures that man is heir to, including suffering and death (but not sin).

(a) The most common error concerning Jesus Christ is the one we have just been talking about, namely, that he was not truly divine in his *Person* as the Only Begotten Son of the Father or in his *nature*, which is consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This heresy has assailed the Catholic faith from its very inception, and, as we have seen, some Protestant theologians embrace it today. The mystery of the Incarnation (or "coming in the flesh," *in carne*) does indeed baffle human credulity, and it cannot be accepted without the gift of faith that comes from the Holy Spirit in baptism.

At first, not even the apostles and the immediate disciples of Jesus knew what to make of the Son of Man, the miracles he worked, the doctrine of salvation he preached. Nor did they know what to make of his constant references to God as his Father, to his doing the will of his Father, to the close presence of the Kingdom, to the Father's Kingdom being already at hand, and to the death he was to suffer and to his ultimate victory over death. It was only with the coming of the Holy Spirit that the disciples began to understand the reality of the historical Jesus they had come to know and love. Even after his death and resurrection, Cerinthus and a large Jewish sect called the Ebionites refused to accept Christ as anything more than "a mere man" (*purus homo*). Various theories of "adoptionism" were common throughout the second and third centuries. This was the view that Jesus was born a mere man, but later (some put it at the baptism by John) he deserved to be "adopted" by God, much as parents might adopt an attractive boy as their son. Every form of "adoptionism" implies a "subordinationism" of Jesus, at least as a creature. It was inevitable that

Arianism of one kind or another should erupt in the fourth century. Every form of "Arianism" from the extreme "anomeanism" of Eunomius to the semi-Arianism of Eusebius of Caesarea (who baptized Constantine as he lay dying on the battlefield) denied the *identity of nature* in the Father and in the Word, who in the fullness of time became flesh.

It was inevitable that a subdued question raised since the first century should come to a head in the Arians of the fourth century. The question was: What is the relation between Jesus, the Son of Man, and the Father, who is Yahweh? How are Jesus, born of Mary, and the Father "One"? The only possible answer consistent with the biblical writings was the unbiblical term (*homoousion*) "consubstantial." The neo-Platonism of Plotinus unmistakably influenced Origen and many other Greek Christians. For Plotinus the *Logos* or *nous* emanates from the One and is less than the One, just as the Spirit emanates from the Logos and is less than it. Neo-Platonism together with the natural inability to accept any "man" as "God" inevitably resulted in the widespread Arianism of the fourth century. To appreciate even inadequately the threat Arianism posed for the Church even after the Council of Nicaea (325), one might recall how at one time the great St. Athanasius seemed to stand alone (*Athanasius contra mundum*), and how even St. Jerome in the West could say that the whole world woke up one day to find itself Arian. The fourth century, beset as it was by various forms of Arianism and the dubious "freedom" of the Church, was the greatest age of the Fathers, both Greek and Latin, in the history of the Church. It was the "golden age of the Fathers." Through them the Holy Spirit preserved orthodoxy through a development of doctrine and a flowering of heroic sanctity unparalleled since the age of the martyrs.

Possibly the climax of the fourth century came with the Council of Rome in 382 under Pope St. Damasus I, in which the whole development of Christian doctrine up to that date was summarized in the *Tomus Damasi*, and the canonical books of Sacred Scripture were fixed as we have them today (see Denz. 152-180).

The relation of Nestorianism to Arianism will be discussed under heading (c).

(b) The second most common heresy concerning the Incarnation is, in fact, the direct opposite of the first. Just as the first cannot accept a man who is God, so the second cannot accept a God who became man. Just as Arianism (and all forms of adoptionism, subordinationism, and the like) is a kind of *naturalism* that sees Jesus as a creature, so this second heresy (in its many forms) is a kind of *spiritualism* that disdains matter as something unworthy of being a creature of God at all. Basically it is a denial that Jesus had a real human body, and that he really suffered and died. In its earliest form it is called Docetism (from the Greek, *dokeo*, "I seem") and existed as a tendency rather than a formulated and unified

doctrine, which considered the humanity and sufferings of the earthly Christ as apparent rather than real. Evidence of its existence in the early Church is to be found in 1 John (4:1-3) and 2 John (v 7); see also Colossians (2:8-9). But it reached its zenith among the Gnostics of the second and third centuries (see G. Bareille, DTC, IV, cols. 14841501, s.v. "Docetisme"). Besides Gnostics like Serapion, Bishop of Antioch (190-203), there was Marcion (d. c. 160), who claimed that Christ, who was an "emissary" of the Father, suddenly appeared preaching and teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum, and was not born of woman at all, but whose passion and death were the work of the evil Creator God of the Old Testament.

The most complete formulation of this heresy seems to be that of Manichaeism, promulgated by a certain Manes (c. 216-276) from Persian Gnostic sources. Its basic principle is that matter is evil and the creature of an Evil God, or Demiurge. Thus the true God could not have assumed a real human body made up of flesh and bones and been born in the manner of men. For them, the body of Jesus was an "apparent body," a "glorified" body. Manichaeism was established in Egypt before the end of the third century, but here its roots were deeply imbedded in the Egyptian Gnosticism of the second century. Early in the fourth century there were sects in Rome, and by the end of that century, Manichaeism spread through out North Africa. Even St. Augustine himself was a Manichee for nine years before his conversion. Although the details of Manichaeism are complex, as are its subsequent forms as adopted by the Albigensians, Cathari, and Puritans, its basic principle is clear: Jesus Christ could not have been a true man like us. He gave only the "appearance" of joy and tears, suffering and death, since such physical things are unworthy of God. It is fundamentally a dualism unable to reconcile spirit and matter, God and man, divinity and humanity (or even flesh and spirit in man). Together with an irreconcilable dualism in Manichaeian Christology, there is an irreconcilability in its puritanical spirituality, as well as a fundamental inability to accept the human body as a work of God's art, or man as the "image of God." St. Thomas combines all the various sects that deny the full reality of Christ's human body under the heading of "Manichaeian."

The basic point Thomas insists on is the absolute reality of the concrete, individual human nature of Christ that was begotten of the Virgin Mary (*Sum. theol.* III, q.5, a.1). In the words of the *De ecclesiasticis dogmatibus* (c. 2; sometimes attributed to Augustine, but in reality the work of Gennadius), St. Thomas stressed that the "body" (*corpus*) assumed by the Word "was not putative, as though it were something imaginary" (PL 58, 981). For him, the whole significance and purpose of the Incarnation and Redemption of man would have been frustrated unless the "flesh" (Jn 1:14) assumed by the Word were a true physical and organic human body, made of flesh and blood as we are, possessing *all* that is needed to constitute a complete *human nature* without

original sin. Apart from Scriptural texts, Thomas relies most heavily on the Council of Ephesus (431), which declared the Virgin Mary to be in truth the "Mother of God, from whom that perfect, holy body, informed with an intellectual soul, was taken, to which the Word of God is united in his person (*secundum hypostasim*) and said to be born in the flesh" (Denz. 251; cf. *Sum. theol.* III, q.4, a.3, *Sed contra*, etc.).

Historically there were opinions, later condemned, that denied that Christ had a human soul; such was the position of certain Arians and later of Apollinaris (cf. St. Aug. *De haeres.*, 49. PL 42, 40; St. Athanasius, *Contra Apollinarium*, Lib. II, n. 3. PG 26, 1136; St. Thomas, *Sum. theol.* III, q.5, a.3). For them the place of the human soul was taken by Christ's divinity. Historically there were some, like the Monothelites, who denied that Christ had a human will, its place being taken by the divine will (on this point consult ODCC, 2nd ed. Oxford 1974, 932-33). But most extensive was the view of the Monophysites, whom we shall discuss later, who held that Christ has only *one nature* both divine and human. Such a union, according to St. Thomas, would result in a *tertium quid* that would be less than divine and more than human, which would in effect be a denial of the reality of both Christ's humanity and his divinity (*Sum. theol.* III, q.2, a. 1). An extreme form of Monophysitism was condemned in the person of Eutyches (d. 454) at the Council of Chalcedon (451), to which the Monophysites of today have remained implacably opposed (cf. ODCC, 931-32).

The basic view of St. Thomas is that the whole of human nature, past, present, and to come, was united to the divinity in the one, indivisible person of Jesus Christ. In this indivisible unity the eternity of God, which knows no beginning, middle, or end, was joined to the temporality and historicity of man, with all its yesterdays and tomorrows, all its aches and pains, all its grandeur and ignominy. How the eternal instant of God felt, thought, willed, grew, and matured, suffered and died in his human nature is a mystery that is too much for our all-to-temporal being to understand. But we must take consolation in the fact that Jesus fully experienced all the human loves, compassion, loneliness, joys and desires, affection and aspirations that we experience too often in an inhuman and incomplete way. And he endured incredible suffering and death. The same Jesus who could pour out his heart in love for his disciples (Jn 14-17) is the same Jesus who could say, "I am thirsty" (Jn 19:28), and "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46).

The less we appreciate the true humanity of the historical Jesus, the less we involve ourselves in the divinity that Christ came to give us. One constant theme of all the great Fathers of the Church, especially St. Athanasius and St. Augustine, is that God became a partaker of our humanity that we might become partakers of his divinity. There is only one point in which divinity and humanity

meet for all eternity, and that is in the person of the historical Jesus.

(c) The main theological and philosophical difficulty that arises from what has already been said is "Why is the historical Jesus not a human person?" If a *person* is "an individual substance of an intellectual nature," as Boethius had said (see above, Note III), then why is not the individual human nature born of the Virgin Mary not a human person, that is, a "man"? Could a divine Person, the Son of God, assume a human person, in which case there would be *two persons* in Jesus, just as there are *two natures*? As the Greeks put the question, "Why are there not two *hypostases* in Jesus?" We do not say that the Word assumed "a man," but a human nature. Technically, this is a real philosophical problem that has its roots in Aristotelian philosophy. Normally what Mary would have given birth to should have been a human person having an individual human existence (*esse*). But, in fact, she gave birth to a divine Person, the Only Begotten Son of the eternal Father, in human flesh.

Historically, Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (428-31), condemned the teaching of some monks concerning the divine maternity of Mary. These monks even went so far as to call Mary, the "Mother of God," *Theotokos* (*deipara*, or *Dei genetrix*), meaning "God-bearer." For Nestorius, God could have no mother, for he existed from all eternity; Nestorius therefore insisted that Mary could only be called *Christotokos*, the mother of Christ, or "Christbearer," thus teaching that the hypostasis or person of Christ, born of Mary, was *other than* the divine person begotten of the Father. Thus, while emphasizing the infinite gap between the human nature of Christ and his divine nature as God, Nestorius and his numerous followers (even to this day) also taught that an infinite gap exists between the hypostasis begotten of Mary and the Second Person (*hypostasis*) of the Holy Trinity. In other words, Nestorius taught not only a duality of nature (*physeis*) in Christ, but also a duality of substances (*hypostases*), that is, of persons. We have already touched upon the difficulties of the Greek and Latin terminology in this matter (Notes III and IV above).

The Council of Ephesus was convoked in 431 by Theodosius II at the instigation of St. Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria and representative of Pope Leo I at the Council. Much to the surprise of Nestorius, his views were condemned and the Council declared that the human nature of Christ is united to the divine, not by a fusion of natures (*secundum naturam, kata physin*), but by an identity of person (*kath hypostasin; secundum personam*). In other words, the Council of Ephesus declared as a matter of revealed doctrine that there is only *one person* in Christ—the Divine Word, the Son of the Father, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity—and a duality of natures that always remain distinct, except by reason of the Divine Person (Denz. 250-264).

One of the monks denounced by Nestorius in his sermons was the archimandrite Eutyches, who taught that in Christ there is an intimate fusion of natures, so that after the Incarnation there was in Jesus only one person and one nature. The Council of Chalcedon was convoked in 541 by the Emperor Marcion under the presidency of St. Flavian to consider the orthodoxy of the extreme view proposed by Eutyches. The Monophysite (one-nature) position held by Eutyches and his followers was condemned outright as contrary to orthodox belief, and the Council declared that Jesus Christ has two distinct natures, in no way "fused or changed into one."

This historical background is necessary in order to understand St. Thomas' commentary on John because he refers to these heresies, and their condemnations over and over again. Thomas, in fact, was one of the first scholastics to utilize the Latin translations of the Greek acts, decrees, and canons.

St. Thomas' most important contribution to Christology is his insight into the *manner of the union* between the divine and the human in Christ (see *Friar Thomas d'Aquino*, pp. 307-313). The crux of his profound insight into the fact that the union must be *hypostatic* is most clearly expounded in the two articles on the unity of Christ's *esse* (q. 17). To this problem we must now turn briefly.

VI

ST. THOMAS' DOCTRINE OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

The Council of Ephesus (431) declared against Nestorius that there is only one *hypostasis* in Jesus, and that that *hypostasis* is the eternal Son of the Father, consubstantial with him in nature (that is, *physis*), or substance (*ousia*). The Council of Chalcedon (451) declared against Eutyches that there are two distinct *natures* in Christ in no way "fused or changed into one," but are united *kath' hypostasin*, that is, by reason of one person. Since the union cannot be between the two natures, divine and human, for the two would become one nature, and since the union cannot be between the divine Person and the human person, for this could only be a union *secundum quid* and *per accidens*, the union can only be in the unique Person, that is, *secundum hypostasin*. Since, as we have already seen, what the Greeks called *hypostasis*, the Latins called *persona*, the union of the divine and human in Christ is called "personal" or "hypostatic" (see Boethius, *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*).

But the philosophical clarification and possibility of a theological understanding of

the mystery did not come to Thomas until he returned to Naples in 1272 and resumed dictating the *Tertia Pars*. By the time Thomas came to compose question 17 concerning the kind and number of existences (*esse*) in Christ, he saw clearly the mysterious reality of the Incarnation.

We have already explained that for Aristotle *nature* is only a *quo*, that by which a thing is *what* it is. An individual, specific nature is "had by" a concrete *suppositum* or *ousia* (substance) in the primary sense of the term. We also said that existence (*esse*) belongs only to things, substances in the primary sense of *ousia*, that is *esse* belongs to a concrete, individual substance (*ousia*) having a specific kind of nature, by means of which the thing exists as a specific *kind* of thing. A thing is *one* because it has one *esse*.

Regarding the Incarnation the inevitable question arises as to whether Christ is one or many (a. 1), and whether in Christ there is only one *esse* or more (a. 2). Prior to q. 17 in the *Tertia Pars*, for example in the Disputed Question *De unione verbi incarnati*, debated in Paris earlier that year (1272), Thomas thought that the individual human nature begotten of Mary must have some kind of *esse* of its own, even if only "in a certain sense" (*secundum quid*) "as human." But this would mean that in the strict sense (*simpliciter*) Christ is one" because he has only one person, namely, the divine; but in another sense Christ is "two" (*secundum quid*), because he has two natures. In the *Summa* (III, q.17, a.2) Thomas in no way allows the human nature of Christ to have an *esse* proper to it. If the concrete, individual human nature that Christ received from Mary had its own *esse* in any way, then the union between it and the Divine Person would be accidental, and Christ would not be absolutely and indivisibly one being, one person. Even if the new manner or mode of God's existence, namely, "as human," had its own *esse secundum quid*, as Thomas earlier thought, then the union would not be absolutely and in every way one, but *secundum quid* many. From this it would follow that the union between the Divine Person and the human nature would be "accidental" an accident in a substance. But the union between Christ's human nature and his Divine Person cannot be accidental, no more than our human nature can be accidental to our personality. Therefore, St. Thomas concluded, the human nature of Christ and all his natural characteristics and his activities exist by the one *esse* of the Godhead. Thus the special kind of union that exists between the person of Jesus Christ and his human nature is "personal" or "hypostatic," that is, *secundum personam* or *kath' hypostasin*.

Thomas' understanding of the hypostatic union rests squarely on his basic principle that in all creatures *esse* is other than *essence*. Only in God are *esse* and his *essence* identical (see *Sum. theol.* I, q.3, a.4, and all parallel places). Fr. Norbert Del Prado, O.P., has called this so-called real distinction between essence and existence in creatures "The Fundamental Truth of Christian

Philosophy" (1911). It is only because human nature does not include *esse* in its definition (nature, or essence) that Christ's human nature cannot have an *esse* proper to it as human. It is the real distinction between essence and existence (*esse*) in creatures that underlies Thomas' teaching in III, q. 17.

It is clear, therefore, that all other medieval positions that identify essence and *esse* in creatures—such as the Scotists, Nominalists, Suarezians—must face the question of the hypostatic union in another way. This is not the place to discuss those other views.

This then is our faith, that Jesus Christ, born of Mary at a specific time in human history, is in reality God himself; he is the Only Begotten Son of the eternal Father, identical with him in nature and being (*esse*), but distinct from the Father as a Son who *receives* all that he has *from the Father*. As this Only Begotten Son is *identical with his divine nature* and as he was truly begotten of Mary by the Holy Spirit, Jesus—the historical Jesus has two distinct natures, one divine by which he is equal to the Father (Jn 17:11), the other human by which he is the Son of Mary, less than the Father (Qn 14:28), a man like us in all things except sin—in short, our brother in the flesh. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God and our brother in the flesh, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit, brought life into the world by his death and resurrection. By his death on the cross he destroyed our death of damnation. By his resurrection he restored our life of grace and glory. And we believe that he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

The only point that still needs to be mentioned here is that *only the Son*, the Word, "became flesh" (Jn 1:14). In the Nicene Creed we profess our belief in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father ... one in being (that is, *homoousion*) with the Father. Then we profess our belief in his Incarnation when we bow our heads as we say: "By the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man." That is to say, only the Son of God became man, not the Father, nor the Holy Spirit. We cannot say that the Father suffered and died for us; nor can we say that the Holy Spirit became man, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried. Only in the heresy of Sabellius (3rd cent.) where the word *person* is taken to be a "mask" (*persona*, or *prosopon*) through which the one God speaks to us with different masks could one say, "the Father suffered and died." This heresy in the West has also been known as Patripassionism, meaning that the "passion of Christ" can be attributed to the Father. This heresy, also known as "Modalism," was condemned in 447 by Pope Leo I in a letter to Turribius, bishop of Asurias (Denz. 284). It had long been battled in the East by St. Basil the Great (c. 330-379).

Thus Christ alone is the mediator between God and man. "There is no other

name, under heaven, given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). St. Paul expresses the simple truth in the most direct way when he said (1 Tim 2:5-6):

There is one God,
and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,
who gave himself as a ransom for all.