

St. GASPAR BERTONI



Some paintings at Saint Paul of Campo Marzio Church, in Verona, Italy,
where St. Gaspar Bertoni preached most of the parish sermons.

Early Spiritual Writings

PARISH SERMONS

1806

[Manoscritti Bertoni ## 1211 – 1296]

Translation into English
Rev. Joseph Charles Henchey, CSS
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1806

1211:**SERMON 35****The Rule for our Thoughts and Actions****For the Feast of the Epiphany, on January 6th, of the Year 1806, in St. Paul's, Verona, on the left bank.**

You have, my brothers and sisters, suffered one intrusion of mine: today, you have to suffer still another, but one that is not just for your best interests, but one that is also necessary. The circumstances of the times in which we live demand this.

1212: The Feast that recurs today offers us both the material and the occasion. The Magi tend toward Christ, they seek Christ in Jerusalem, the seat of Herod, a powerful politician. But, Christ is born outside Jerusalem. The star that surely guides to Christ appears only outside of Jerusalem, far from the court.

What does this mean, my brothers and sisters, if not that we, too, tend toward Christ, i.e., toward the Truth, the Life: ... *I am... the truth and the life...* [cf. Jn 14::6]. But, this Truth, this Life, that is the ultimate end of our desires is beyond, i.e., above every human intellect: ... *the eye has not seen, O God, besides You what things you have prepared for them that wait for You...* [Is 64:4].

1213: It is only fitting, then, to go beyond all the opinions, above the judgments of earthly wisdom, if we wish to find this blessed goal, indeed if we wish to find the star, i.e., an infallible rule that conducts to this blessed goal. This star, in fact, is Christ Himself Who, as the Truth and the Life, He is also the Way in order to reach both the Eternal Truth and the Blessed Life toward which we aspire: ... *I am the way, the truth and the life...* [Jn 14:6]. In another place, this evangelist says [ib 1:9] that Christ is the true Light that illumines every person who comes into this world. He is Uncreated Wisdom, the Word of God, and therefore, He has the words of eternal life: ...*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life...* [Jn 6:69].

1214: However, this word of the Word is hard for human reason: ...*This saying is hard, and who can hear it...?* [Jn 6:61]. This is because it cannot be understood, comprehended. It is necessary to go beyond dallying human reasoning in order to believe it. The star appears only outside of Jerusalem, and far from the courts of worldly, earthly politics. And so it is clear that it is not human reason, nor the opinions of human beings, it is not the maxims of this present world, and it is not the dogmas of modern wisdom - but, it is the Word of God that is the unique and infallible rule of our thinking, of our acting, in order to reach the supernatural and divine end to which we have been called.

1215: No faculty can in its own operations surpass the limits of its own nature. If reason, however, is a directing faculty in human beings, it will be able to direct each one to a natural happiness. This is provided, of course, that it be cleansed of errors

and ignorance, not burdened by vices, not weighed down by passions. And it will never be able, on its own, to serve as the guide to the Christian for a supernatural happiness, to which it is destined by its vocation.

1216: In fact, says St. Thomas ¹, each human being is ordered to God as to an end that surpasses the comprehension of reason. However, this end has to be foreknown by human beings if they are to direct their intentions toward Him and their operations. God alone, however, can instruct a person concerning these truths that surpass and exceed all human reason. Yet, these truths are so necessary that in them, all salvation resides for human beings. Salvation consists in God and in Christ: *...How this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent..* [cf. Jn 17:3].

1217: Whenever it is a matter of the soul, of the salvation of the soul, Tertullian ² wrote in this regard, a human being must turn to God, and be directed according to the rules of God: When anything regarding the soul is to be examined, let each be directed in accord with the rules of God. One could not find a better teacher of salvation than the very Author of salvation: surely no more powerful demonstrator will you ever find than the Author. Who could teach or reveal that which God has held hidden and concealed? The most wise in the world, the most prudent, are precisely those from whom God has held His truth so hidden: *... I confess to You, o Father... because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent and You have revealed them to the little ones...* [Mt 11:25].

1218: This is the way it is, my brothers and sisters. The little ones, the poor in spirit, the humble, who only know what God teaches them, Whose Spirit reposes on them. By the voice of God we are taught the knowledge of the truth. This is the view of St. Clement of Alexandria ³ He teaches that if human beings say something without proving it, faith cannot be given to them, for human beings can also tell falsehoods. And if there is need of a proof, we do not await the testimony of human beings as witness, but through the Word of God we prove that which is sought. Since the Word of God is more worthy of faith than any demonstration whatsoever - rather, in this matter, it is the sole demonstration.

1219: Now God has spoken: *...God has spoken once...* [Ps 61:12]. He has also spoken in many ways: in the Prophets to the ancient Patriarchs, and ultimately in His Son, He has spoken to the Apostles [Heb 1:1, ff.]. And to these last, He has spoken even more plainly and more fully, the Holy Spirit instructing them regarding every truth pertaining to salvation: *... I have many things yet to say to you, but you cannot bear them now...* [Jn 16:12]. *...But when He, the Spirit of Truth comes, He will teach you all truth...* [v. 13].

¹ St. Thomas, I, q. 1, a. 1.

² Tertullian, *De Anima*, 1, near the end, p. 163/2.

³ St. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 7, 15, p. 757 C.

1220: We have the books of the Prophets, we have the Evangelical books of the Apostles: this is the Word of God revealed in the Scriptures. Furthermore, the Apostles communicated by voice many of these truths revealed to them, and left them to their disciples in Deposit for the Church. These are contained in the common consensus of the Holy Fathers, in the authentic definitions of the sacred General Councils and the Supreme Pontiffs, in the universal sense and custom of the entire Church. This is the Word of God revealed in Tradition.

1221: God has spoken: what more are we looking for? God has taught the truth, salvation from His own mouth: why do we look for other teachers? Why would we ever make ourselves disciples of other human beings, if we have God Himself for our Teacher? Why should we be bothered about the doctrines of earth, if we have the teachings of heaven? We have the eternal truth that directs us, and would we allow ourselves to be swayed by the fallacious opinions of other human beings?

1222: We have the Scriptures in which God speaks: what do the books of this world have to do with us? In the Sacred Scriptures, we have all that is necessary, and not only this - but further, all that is useful to know, to discern what is evil, to correct our habits, and to justify our spirit. What more should we need? In order to make us saints and instructed in every good work: ... *All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct to justice ...* [2 Tm 3:16]. ...*that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work...* [cv. 17].. This is what the Apostle teaches.

1223: The Word of God in the Scriptures, my brothers and sisters, ought to be the rule of our thinking, of our acting, if we wish to know the truth, and to arrive at salvation. The foreign systems of thought, which always vary, as they are dispersed through the books of our century, cannot do this. Do not let yourselves be carried away, my brothers and sisters, by various and novel doctrines, as the Apostle himself advises us: ... *Be not led away with various and strange doctrines...* [Heb 13:9].

1224: That God does speak in the Scriptures, He speaks also in Tradition. This is found in the books of the ancient and venerated Fathers, so esteemed for their doctrine and their holiness. These we should follow, much more than the modern wise people. These most Holy Fathers of the Church, who are at the same time most learned, God Himself has given them to us as Pastors and Doctors. They have been given to perfect the elect of the Church. They have been granted to carry on the grand work of salvation to build up the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. This is so that we will not be like children, carried this way and that, and that we be not swept away and blown by every kind of doctrine that might be introduced by the malice of human beings and by their astuteness, to tumble us into error. Paul tells us again: ... *and he gave other some pastors and doctors...* [Ep 4:11] ...*for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of their ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ...* [v. 12]...*that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro and carried by the wickedness of men, by cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive...* [v. 14].

1225: Whoever is truly wise, or would like to become wise, will seek the wisdom of the all the ancients, says the Holy Spirit ...*The wise man will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients...* [Sl 39:1]. Of the ancients, and not of the moderns, is the authentic wisdom. In the ancients and not the moderns is the genuine prudence: ... *In the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days, prudence...* [Jn 12:12]. The speech of the moderns does not penetrate, but rather delights very much those who read them, or hear them. This is not the style of the wise. According to the Holy Spirit, the words of the wise person and pungent: ...*the words of the wise are goads...* [Qo 12:11]. They provoke the sinner to conversion: ...*they are as nails, deeply fastened in, which by the counsel of masters are given from one Shepherd...* [ib].

1226: They are firm, and deeply piercing, as nails driven in deeply [92]. Such are the doctrines that come from the counsel of the saints, and in the unanimous consensus of all the masters and doctors, they all originate from one single Shepherd, which is Christ, who is God. Thus, no matter how many there may be who teach, the Author, however, of the doctrine is only one, that is, the Lord: ...*more than these, my son, require not...* [ib. v. 12]. So, my children seek nothing other than these - do not try anything else, do not presume anything. Follow along in the footsteps of your Elders, and do not distance yourself from their authority: ... *of making many books, there is no end...* [ib.]. If you look for many things, there will come into your hands an infinite number of all kinds of books that will lead you into error.

Up to this point, it has been the Holy Spirit speaking to you, along with the Commentary of Jerome ⁴.

1227: It is confirmed, then, that God's Word, revealed in the Scriptures and in Tradition, is the sole infallible rule of our believing, hoping and operating, if indeed we wish to find the truth, and achieve salvation.

- What will, then, happen to us, poor ignorant people, who do not know how to read the Scriptures?
- It is not necessary for the ignorant to read the Scriptures.
- Will it suffice for us, then, that the learned read the Scriptures?
- It is not enough for the learned to read the Scriptures. For both the learned as well as for the ignorant there is necessary the Magisterium of the Church.

The Church has the authority to propose the Word of God, to explain it, to determine it in its legitimate sense. The ignorant should not despair: he has a visible, universal teacher: the Catholic Church. The learned should not presume: for he has over him a judge that is still alive, infallible, supreme: the Roman Catholic Church.

1228: Would any perhaps believe that he is sufficiently learned, that for him there suffices the acuteness of his own power or reasoning? No says St. Augustine ⁵: we believe in order to know, and not that we believe because we do not know: *We believe*

⁴ St. Jerome, *In Ecclesiasten*, *ib.*, t. 3, pp. 494, B, ff..

⁵ St. Augustine, *In Io.. Ev.*, tr. 40, p [t. 3/1, p. 568 f].

in order that we might know: we do not know, so that we must believe. And what else is faith than to believe that which one does not see?

1229: Would any think that he is already sufficiently holy, that to him are sufficient only his own private lights? Let us be very careful, says the same Father ⁶ : let us guard ourselves from such temptations of such pride, and rather let us think that Paul, the Apostle himself, even though instructed by the voice of God and by the Spirit of God, was sent to someone else to find out what he should do: *...what will you have me to do?... [Ac 9:6]* And let us think that Cornelius, even though he had been assured by the Angel that his prayers had been heard, and had accepted the alms, was nonetheless committed to have instructions from St. Peter. From his mouth he could have learned that he had to believe, to hope and to love.

1270: But no, my brothers and sisters. God's Word is the rule of our believing, hoping and operating: but it is necessary to hear the Word of God from the Church. Whoever does not listen to the Church, is declared by Christ Himself [Mt 18:17] no longer one of the faithful, but a gentile: *...And if he will not hear the Church, let him be to you as the heathen and the publican...* [Mt 18:17]. The Holy Spirit also says in Malachi [2:7] quite clearly: *...the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge...* It is certain that the Church has been made the depositary and guardian by God Himself of His Word:

1231: *...O Timothy, keep what is committed to your trust...* [1 Tm 2:20]. So it is that the lips of the Priest of the Church guard its knowledge: *...they shall seek the law at his mouth...* [Mt 2:7]. Note well, my brothers and sisters: And the people will seek the law, i.e., the rule, not from the law, nor from the rule itself, but from the lips of the priest, from the mouth of the Church that possesses it: *from his mouth.*

1232: In fact, in the controversy between Paul and those of Antioch [Ac 15:1, ff.], regarding the matter of faith, they did not appeal directly to the Scriptures to define the matter. The appeal was made rather to the Apostles and the Elders of Jerusalem. The Apostles did not, neither did the Elders, make the Scriptures the judge, but themselves and the Holy Spirit: *...it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...* [Ac 15:28]. The Holy Spirit does not dwell in the letter, but in the spirit; not in the syllables, but in hearts. There is a most sublime reflection on the part of that noble theologian, Melchior Cano ⁷. The Church is the column and the firmament of the truth: *...the pillar and the ground of the truth...* [1 Tm 3:15].

1233: And by the word *Church* here, there are not to be understood the lowest members of the Mystical Body of Christ, but the Bishops and the Supreme Shepherds of Christ's flock. In fact, the Bishops in the Church are the sole judges authorized by God. The custom of the Church confirms this. And besides, not all are doctors, according to St. Paul [1 Co 12:29]. Furthermore, to feed with the knowledge and the doctrine is proper to the Shepherds, that is, the Bishops [Ac 20:28]. Finally, a certain

⁶ St. Augustine, *De Doctr. Chris.* in Prol. 6 [t. 3/1, 3 F].

⁷ cf. *De locis theol.*, 2, 7 [93].

doctrine, contrary to this one, one cannot and should not in these times be ignorant of it. Such has already been condemned with an authentic censure ⁸.

1234: From these Shepherds, therefore, that the Holy Spirit has placed to rule the Church of God, that He purchased with His Blood [Ac 20:28] - from these Shepherds, who are legitimate, we must depend. We need to await from them that there be proposed and explained, and in its true sense, declared God's Word revealed in the Scriptures and in Tradition, as the unique and infallible rule of our thinking and operating. And we must follow this faithfully, constantly if we wish to arrive at the knowledge of the truth, and at the possession of supernatural beatitude, eternal happiness, that we hope in God and with God. *...And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them...* [Ga 6:16].

1235: This is the rule, this is the star that we must follow. Let us walk, then, let us walk worthily toward the goal to which we have been called. St. Paul tells us: *... / ... beseech you* [by the very chains with which he was held bound in his apostolate] *... / beseech you, a prisoner in the Lord; that you walk worthily of the vocation in which you are called...* [Ep 4:1]. *... with all simplicity and mildness, with patience, supporting one another...* [v. 2].

1236: It is necessary to work worthily in this vocation, submitting our intellects with humble **obsequiousness** to believe the divine Word: *with all simplicity* [ib., v. 2]. We are not to resist with obstinate contradiction the authoritative judgments of those legitimate Shepherds, who have the right from God Himself to propose this and to explain this. *With mildness* [ib.]. this is done by overcoming with invincible patience calumnies, derision, opposition, that come from the enemies of the faith and of peace and of the Church. *With patience* [ib.]. We must support with reciprocal love, to walk together, bearing the burdens of one another, all of us who have the same vocation together: *supporting one another with charity...*

1237: *...careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...* [Ep 4:3]. By the grace of God, this unity of spirit, or faith, we do possess it. It is enough for us to conserve it: *to keep*. For this, though, there is necessary vigilance, concern, diligence to keep it: *careful* [ib.]. One is kept in the bond of peace, charity, if we are well united and bonded among us with love, and all are thus joined together and united. When this is so, we will have a great attachment to the Shepherds of the Church, whom we must follow. This is especially due to the supreme Shepherd, the Center of unity: *...careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...* [v. 3].

1238: *One body* [v. 4]. We are one sole Body, of which Christ is the Head, and all of us are its members. Among the members of this Body, some have the office of presiding and guiding, like the eyes and the tongue. Others have only the office to obey, to follow, as the hands and the feet: *One Body and One Spirit* [v. 4]. There should not be among us diversity of sentences, division of parties: but one sole spirit of

⁸ Pius VI, Errors of the Synod of Pistoia. Errors about the Church, *Auctorem Fidei*, n. 10, August 28, 1794 - Denz. 1510.

faith should animate all, as we are one sole body. One sole supernatural end to that to which we all tend: ... *as you are called to one hope of your calling...* [ib.].

1239: One sole is the Author of this end and the Director toward this end. If many Shepherds do indeed rule over us, they rule only in His authority, in His Name: *One Lord* [v. 5]. One only is the rule, only one is the star that points out the way: the divine Word, object of our faith: *one faith* [ib.]. Only one is the Orient in which our star appears, and from whom we all equally take our movement, which is our Baptism. This is called the Sacrament of Illumination and of Faith ⁹: *one Baptism*.

1240: One sole God, object of our Beatitude: *One God* [v. 6] and the Father of all, who invites us to this Beatitude: ... *and Father of all* [v. 6]. He is above all with His truth, to illumine all to come to know it: ...*who is above all...* [ib.], and He is through all things with His Providence to direct all to find this: ...*and through all...* [ib.]. And finally, He is indwelling all with His Grace, as the Intimate Principle, to move all to seek this: ...*and in us all...* [ib.].

To Whom be glory forever!

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SOURCES

OT

Jb 12:12	## 1225; 1226	Si 39:1	# 1225
Ps 61:12	# 1219	Is 64:4	# 1212
Qo 12:11	# 1225	MI 2:7	## 1230; 1231

NT

Mt 11:25	# 1217	Ep 4:1	# 1235
18:17	# 1210	2	## 1235;1236
Jn 1:9	# 1230	3	# 1237
6:61	# 1214	4	# 1238
69	# 1213	5	# 1239
14:6	##1212;1213	6	# 1240
16:12	# 1219	11	# 1224
13	# 1219	12	# 1224
Ac 9:6	# 1229	14	# 1224
15:1, ff.	# 1232	1 Tm 2:20	# 1231
28	# 1232	3:15	# 1232
20:28 [Bishops]	##1233, 1234	2 Tm 3:16	# 1222

⁹ Translator's Note: cf. # 244, of St. Gaspar Bertoni's Catechetical Instructions on Baptism.

1 Co 12:29	# 1233	17	# 1222
Ga 6:16	# 1234	Heb 1:1, ff. 13:9	# 1219 # 1223

Magisterium

Pius VI, <i>Auctorem Fidei</i> , August 28, 1794 - Denz. 1510	# 1233
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Fathers & Doctors

St. Augustine, <i>De Docgtr. Christ.</i> , In Prol. I 6 [t. 3/1, p. 3, f]	# 1229
<i>In Io. Ev.</i> , tr. 40, 9. [t. 3/2, p. 568 F]	# 1228
St. Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata</i> 7 15 [p, 757 C]	# 1218
St. Jerome, <i>In Eccles.</i> 12:11, ff. [t. 3, pp. 494 B, ff.]	# 1226
St. Thomas Aquinas, I, q. 1, a. 1	# 1216

Other Writers

Melchior Cano, <i>De locis theol.</i> , 2, 7	# 1232
Tertullian, <i>De Anima</i> 1 [near the end - p. 163.2]	# 1217

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[NB: Translator's Note: Chronologically there will be added here St. Gaspar Bertoni's Sermon, entitled, *Special Cult*, dated April 18, 1806, MssB ## 1484-1546]

**1484: PARISH SERMON
The Special Cult**

Which is tended to the Images of Mary and St. Ann, in the Venerable Parish Church of St. Paul's in Verona, defended from Calumnies

On the Anniversary of the Solemn translation of the above-mentioned Images, April 18, 1806.

Academic Oration - Polemic.

From the Propositions condemned by Pius VI, in the year 1794 ¹⁰.

Likewise, the doctrine and the prescription condemning in general every special cult which the faithful are accustomed to attach specifically to some image, and to have recourse to, rather than to another - rash, dangerous, injurious to the pious custom prevalent throughout the Church, and also to that order of Providence by which 'God who apportions as He wishes to each one his own proper characteristics, did not want them to be common in every commemoration of the Saints... ¹¹.

1485: The memorial anniversary, solemnly recalled, of the Translation of these sacred images with religious magnificence, we have celebrated on this date now for three years. The fervor in recourse of an adoring people, the outstanding zeal of those who first and uniquely constituted this Feast in honor of Mary and St. Ann. They have now rendered it even more perpetual in their proposal, and they manifest quite well, most devoted and distinguished listeners, not only a cult that is most singular in every way. This is not only a cult of veneration and a recourse of confidence, but it manifests an indeed special recourse.

1486: Even if your piety has no need of being enkindled, it will not be without purpose to confirm it, and it might even be necessary. A devotion that is so distinguished, only with great difficulty will not be an object of evil gossip, in the very act that it is meriting even greater praises.

¹⁰ Denz. 1570.

¹¹ From St. Augustine, *Epistle 78* to the Clergy Elders and People of the Church at Hipp. N. 3, in fine. [t. 2, p. 184 C]. - From the Brief, *Auctorem Fidei*.

1487: Cult for sacred images was attacked in the 8th century by the Iconoclasts, and in the 16th century by the Innovators. The singularity, the special nature of this cult, was calumniated by the very ones who professed the most vivid attachment to the Canons of the IInd Council of Nicea ¹², and those of the Council of Trent ¹³. There must be given, these documents state, to sacred images, a relative cult, but, therefore also a distinct cult, according to the special dignity of their Protoypes [5]. This devotion is distinguished from the species of the Images themselves. All deference of cult to all images themselves is superstitious.

1488: This consequence under which at first sight there is not well clarified the veiled doctrine. It was the view, the understanding of the minds [6] of their centuries. However, this doctrine, the proscription that generally reproves every special cult that to some images especially, the faithful are accustomed to render, and the fact that they tend toward this one object of piety, rather than to some other one [as was noted above ¹⁴], this doctrine of theirs, I said, introduced by the spirit of novelty, has been condemned with the most solemn censures of the Church.

1489: Already two lustres have passed that the whole Catholic Church venerates obsequiously, and follows constantly, as a living and infallible oracle of faith, the authentic definitions of the Supreme Shepherd of glorious and recent memory, Pius VI [7]. The fact, then, that it is right, fitting, legitimate to render special cult to some images particularly, and to have recourse more to the one than to another, this proposition in its generality is an orthodox dogma. That this should take place in particular with regard to our images right here, this is my present theme.

1490: Rather, I will treat of an individual cause, so that the common maxim might remain illustrated in its certainty for your greater comfort. I propose, then, that the special cult and recourse which is tended by us to our images is an ordered good. The **first reason** is that this is in conformity to the custom of the entire universal Church. **Secondly**, because it is in harmony with the purpose for the sacred images by the Church. The **third reason** is because our practice is in conformity to that order of Providence, with which God Himself in His Church both approves it and confirms it.

The state, the importance, and the necessity of the controversy is manifest. Please give me your attention [8].

1491: Leo Isaurus, much imbibed with the principles of the Musulman religion, contested the Church's right and tried to take possession of the sacred images. He also opposed the Church herself, as did others, the Church's right for these, and for any special devotion to be shown to them. First, though, we might deal with the universal possession, which is the fact on which our first judgment is particularly aimed.

¹² Denz. 302, ff.

¹³ Denz. 986, ff.

¹⁴ cf. # 1494.

1492: In the proofs, to remain closer to our case and for the sake of brevity, I limit myself to the images of Our Lady. I will consider only the devotion that has the most fame among individuals, in the great provinces and nations. I will consider only the writers of wider reputation, who have written a particular history or treatise in this regard. Rather, with people of learning, such as you are, very kind brothers and sisters, there is really no need of descriptions. Here just a few indications will suffice.

1493: There is nothing more diffused in our age throughout the entire Catholic Church than images of Mary and devotion to these images. We will see that no matter how many images of Mary that there are, they are all of the same species, or, as some say [143], they are all *Madonnas*. However, to some of these in particular there is rendered a totally distinct veneration over others, and to this one image more than to some other one, recourse is made in every nation of the Catholic Church.

1494: Going all through Italy without stopping, where is there a city, or a castle, or a villa, in which some particular image of Mary is not honored, and invoked with particular devotion? I just make mention of the most celebrated Sanctuary of Loreto. The reputation of the devotion and very special recourse is so widespread that there is no need for me to point out the history of this by Fr. Horace Tursellini [9], that is so well known. This book will afford with more exact testimony and confirm what we know of this.

1495: Let us pass now to Sicily. Where in his *Iconology*, Fr. Samperio describes that image that is so venerated in Messina. And again, flying over the sea, we are now in Spain. From Monserrat, in Catalonia, one of the principal pilgrimages in Europe, we come to Aragon, we will find in Saragossa the famous Temple called St. Mary Major of the Column, or, according to the Spaniards, Our Lady of the Pillar. Concerning this, along-side their supreme devotion in addition to that of Mary [11], Diego Murillo and Juan Antonio Lopez in their theological treatises, printed in Cologne, where they have described this in a number of tomes and fascicles.

1496: I leave Cordova, in Andalusia, and across the peaks of the Pyrenees, I come willingly into Gaul, to that beautiful realm. Louis XIII placed the land under the protection of the Assumed Blessed Virgin. Every year on this Feast one sees in the Cathedral of Paris, dedicated under this same title, processions with the people and important personalities of the state, including the kings themselves, to venerate her. Montpellier in Languedoc, the Diocese of Frejus in Provence, those most celebrated and devout sanctuaries call out to us to visit them. But, above all, the august Basilica of Chartres, one of the most beautiful and most ancient and most frequented of all of France. Sir RUIILLARD, in his *Parthene*, is the author of its history.

1497: I follow the swift route towards the Low Countries and in Brabant, I encounter the faithful escort of the learned Justus Lipsius [15]. This is found not many leagues from Louvain, and from Brussels; this image is much celebrated in Aspicolle. And then from the lower to the upper Germany, passing through, without stopping in Bavaria at the famous chapel of Getingen, we will come to the devout Sanctuary of

the Archdukes of Austria and of the Emperors. We come to the illustrious image of Cellense. Fr. Gumpemgerg, in his *Marian Atlantis*, has described its devotion, as well as the prodigies worked there. This was printed in Inglostadt.

1498: We can also see in Poland the most celebrated image of Czestechova. But, now having already passed through the primary Catholic churches of Europe, it is time to fly across for a moment to **America**. A brief, but precise history was printed in Rome in 1792, inviting us to Mexico, to admire the most celebrated sanctuary of Guadalupe. The memory of Juandiego of Quauhtitlan is there in a monument of perpetual witness of a great prodigy of that image of Mary. This forms the object of much veneration in those peoples.

1499: Let us come back once again over the broad, ponderous waves of the sea of Mexogiorno [21]. With the agile wings of our thoughts, we soar above that was that shows the rising sun, to see again our own hemisphere. Passing through to Asia, and before setting foot once more in the west, let us stop for a few moments, just to take stock of the most ancient memories. If up until now there has been proven the possession of a special cult within the Catholic Church of such special devotion, there is even greater confirmation that I wish to show you from the antiquity of this possession.

1500: In the first three centuries, when the Church was persecuted by idolatry, there were rather places of prayer than temples. And very rare in these, but not unknown, were the use and the worship of sacred images. But very soon these were used, once peace had been given to her by Constantine. This offered the freedom to build public temples and altars. Thus, the use and veneration given to sacred images, were rendered more free and solemn. It was already diffused and common in every part of Christianity. St. ROBERT BELLARMINE [22] and so many other noble controversialists, have already with solid erudition shown this fact with all evidence.

1501: Having established the extension of the common cult, it is up to me now to prove from the same epoch the existence of a special cult. The first we have firm in this is Phoenicia, where among all the cities, there was one that was outstanding because of a miraculous statue of Christ. It was said to have been erected by the woman with the hemorrhage of the Gospel story. Eusebius [24], author of the fourth century, offers an eye-witness proof of this, as well as of its common and ancient fame.

1502: The wicked Julian, envious perhaps of the honor of that religion in his realm, after having the statue removed, erected one of himself in its place. But, quite soon a fire came down from on high =with terrible violence, struck its chest, and the other parts of the statue. It was thrown to the ground, the head with the neck, and the pieces were thrust to the earth with violence. It is still found this way today. And SOZOMENUS speaks of this in the Fifth Book of his *History* [25]. He adds that the gentiles dragged the statue of Christ through the city and broke it in pieces. However, after the Christians had gathered them together, they reposed it in the Church where even today it is still conserved.

1503: NICEPHORUS [26] narrates a similar story. PHILSTORGIUS [27], who wrote at the beginning of the 5th century, authenticates its cult and veneration. This worship and cult, it seems, that heaven itself wished to render special in those times with so many, and such continuous and such solemn prodigies.

1504: Another point of reference is that of Antioch [28], also known as EPIDAPHNES. In the 5th century, PULCHERIA AUGUSTA, the wife of MARCIAN, the Emperor, founded a temple called *Odegarus*, in honor of an image of the Virgin Mary. This has been sent to her from Jerusalem by EUDOCIA AUGUSTA, the wife of THEODOSIUS, the Young, as NICEPHORUS recounts [29]. This is in agreement with what THEODORUS, the Lector, had written in the first book of his collections [30]. This image was then transferred to Constantinople to the sanctuary of Chora. DuCANGE speaks of this in his *Christian Constantinople*. From the time of the taking of that city by the Turks, He attests that this image was held in the greatest veneration.

1504: In Mesopotamia, the Edessens had great cult and recourse to their famous image of Christ, as EVAGRIUS assures us. He was a noble Greek writer of the 6th century, and he relates about a miracle that occurred. I will not contend with the better modern critics whether this image was sent to King ABGARUS by Christ Himself, as even two famous Protestant writers maintain: ERNEST GAVIO in his *Spicilegio*, and WILLIAM CAVE [34] in his *Literary History*. I will not give much attention to their opinions: it suffices for me the fact of their cult.

1505: And this is undeniable, and it is also special that GREGORY II in his Letter to LEO ISAURUS [35] attests to the fact that continuously there gathered at Edessa a great multitude of people to venerate it. Indeed, throughout the entire East the fact of the cult extended toward this image was so solemn, that the day of its Translation, the Greeks in August, celebrate the anniversary each year with a solemnity. This is evident from their *Menologues*, as found in BARONIUS [132] and SPONDANUS [36]. And since this circumstance touches our present case more closely [37], as well as that other famous image of BERITHUS [38], or which the VIth Ecumenical Council [39] relates the history, SIGISBERT narrates that DIODATUS, Bishop of that City, wished that a festive memory be made of this each November 9th. This is found in USUARDO and BOLLAND, in the volume of June 7th.

1506: The SOPHISMUS of DALLEO [43], the gossip of PYCENIUS were written against these facts. However, they have been sufficiently refuted by NATALE ALEXANDER in a particular dissertation in his History [44], and by CARDINAL GOOTI in his work against the second of these heretics [45]. And these facts, also in the new point of view which were exposed by me, also stand up to the most critical examination of our times. Every good erudite person can, even without scruple, be convinced of these things even from the proofs brought forward.

1507: Who would dare, then, reprehend the special cult that we offer to our images, if it is shown that this is in conformity with the universal and perpetual custody of the whole Church? Who would dare to rise up in opposition to such an extended,

continuous and ancient possession of hers? We should not, and I draw to my particular arguments the grave sentiments of St. GERMANUS, Patriarch of Constantinople, directed to THOMAS, Bishop of Claudianopoli [46]. We should not take up any novelties. But, especially this is our obligation to avoid those that can be a scandal to the faithful, and those that tend to raise up against a custom of great antiquity already introduced into the Church. In the Ecumenical Synods that have been celebrated in the Church, there have been established a number of Canons on this matter that may be of less importance. It was never considered by the Bishops to whom the divine Master promised His assistance, to prohibit the cult and special recourse to some sacred images. That which surely would not have been omitted by them if indeed it had been true that a superfluity was being brought forward, or a superstition. All the more so that this usage was only limited to some cities of secondary consideration, but almost this cult is in all the lands and in the most illustrious Churches.

1508: Therefore, the possession of the practice has been proven. There remains to explain now its rightness: and **now I am at the second part of my proposal.** In this, it is stated from the beginning that our special cult is in harmony with the end for which sacred images are assumed by the Church. The most learned PETAVIUS, in his *Dogmatics* [47], and with him almost all the Theologians observe that the images are in the number of those realities that do not enter by their very nature, into the substance of the religion. The making use of them depends totally on the judgment of the Church.

1509: This use, however, has to be reasonable: therefore, it must be directed to a fitting scope. So, the manner of using them is ordered by their very purpose. It is, then, in harmony with this end that in the multitude of these means, the more useful are to be preferred over the others, as those more distinct from the others, and so with greater fervor and frequency they are to be employed.

1510: THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, in its 25th Session ¹⁵, in speaking of the cult to be given to the sacred images, adduces several purposes for them, that are then clearly explained in its *Catechism* ¹⁶. St. ROBERT BELLARMINE also included it in his book, *On the Glory of the saints*, listing it among his 'controversies.' We understand them under these two headings: to instruct and to motivate. To instruct the mind on these realities that lead to salvation; and to move the heart to imitation, to devotion, to the Prototypes [5]. Now, some images serve better for this end over many others, even those within the same species.

1511: This is **the first point of my argument,** a knot that is undone by showing the Law of the Church for special cult. But, for the greater usefulness, the matter of the means is found precisely in our images. This is **the other knot of the present question,** from the solution of which immediately depends the proof of my particular

¹⁵ Cf. Denz. 984, ff.

¹⁶ cf. n. 305.

theme. But it is my duty to go back again to the matter of facts, and then, even more to the way of explanations, and to develop them

1512: As far as instructing goes, St. NILE, the Abbot, was a disciple of St. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM. His Letters were published by LEO ALLAZIO [48]. In one of these, addressed to OLIMPIODORUS, the Prefect - the Saint had sought him out for those paintings with which to decorate a magnificent temple that he had constructed. His answer was that in addition to the image of the Cross, there was going to be depicted the history of both the Old and the New testaments. The idea was that the contemplation of the painting might supply for the defect of those who were unable to read the sacred pages. And this is what was done also elsewhere, and for the same purpose, by St. PAULINUS of Nola. In his Basilica of St. Felix, as he refers to himself in the IXth Christmas of this Saint [50].

1513: Some images, therefore, serve more than others for the erudition of the piety of the faithful. Those are the ones that represent the more useful matters, or better, still, those that are more necessary. And among these besides, those that with greater propriety and character expose these matters, and, at the same time, with precision, with greater abundance they communicate the more necessary ideas.

1514: What is more important, that is even of necessity for salvation, before any other that a believer must accept, and not only to believe, but also to know, and to know clearly, and to commemorate more often: this is Jesus Christ. Do you seek Jesus Christ? Take a look at our images. You see Him, as true man, a small child playing on His Mother's lap. St. Ann who adores Him, sees Him as her God. As a man, He is born of a Virgin, solely by the intervention of the Holy Spirit. This is depicted by that divine symbol of the Dove that is depicted above.

1515: The manner of His divine generation is not shown, because it is indescribable [Is 53:8; Ac 8:33]. By not having the Father shown, there is denoted that God is invisible, incircumscribed, incomprehensible, in His nature. This is the key to open up all the treasures of His Divinity. This is how the way is opened up, how every difficulty is made low, and light is introduced to believe, to know the whole most hidden economy of the copious redemption which is Jesus Christ.

1516: As far as moving is concerned, and to move primarily to the imitation of the Prototypes, placing under our eyes their virtues, there is no doubt that some images do not have here anything singular about them. St. GREGORY OF NYSSA, in one of his Orations [51], attests that he was many times moved even to tears, at seeing Abraham's sacrifice depicted. He attributed the cause of this to the particular evidence that a picture brought to him. St. BASIL ¹⁷, in describing the heroic virtues of St. Barlaam, confesses that he was not able with his pen alone to arrive at the height to which a gifted brush could reach. He states that he enjoyed seeing his eloquence surpassed.

¹⁷ St. Basil., *Hom 17 in Barlaam, mart.*, near the end [t. 2, p. 141, B, ff.].

1517: Since it is, as the above praised St. Germanus, wrote to the Bishop of Claudianapolis [52], teaching that images serve to excite virtue. They do this in the same way as do the reasoning of persons of piety, if one reason might persuade more than another one. They bring to the faithful more fruit than the preaching of an orator, even though all deal with the word of God. If this is so regarding the spoken word, why cannot it not be the same for the sacred images and for the same reasons? The reason is that some of these images present not only most excellent virtues, but they present them under the greater light. They show them as more attractive, and more necessary, to the capacity, to nature, and to one's dispositions, all the more fitting for people who might be looking for them.

1518: But, who could ever describe the grandeur, the multiplicity, the suitability of the virtues that these images present to us? And what about the mute, but efficacious fecundity with which they persuade, and almost insinuate for the eyes to the heart? Here is the school of every kind of virtue, for all ages, for all conditions, for every state, in every need, in every circumstance, for every time. There is no lovable quality that virtue does not give vent to there. Here all that is useful appears, here what is upright is explained, here what is delightful is proposed. There is no grace, nourishment or comfort that one might desire to follow virtue, and that in art it would not be found.

1519: I appeal to the eyes of anyone who would look at these images. I appeal to the common sense of both the learned, as well as the uncultured. I appeal to the hearts, not only to those that are upright, as among the just and innocent, but even to sinners themselves, who might feel the most robust and gentle stimuli to repudiate their faults, to restrain their passions, to love virtue. I will say only that just as there are not, perhaps, at least among us, images that are drawn from what is more natural. These are also the most vivid, that present the Prototypes in such a way that there are no images more lively, more close to life. This is how they present their virtues and persuade with greater efficacy. And this is also the reason why our images move to such singular devotion.

1520: In this matter of moving to devotion, very few images indeed can be distinguished from the great number of all the others. Let us examine this fact more closely and its reason. The holy Bishop of Nyssa, cited above [53], St. GREGORY, after having, with supreme gracefulness, gathered in one of his Orations, the flowers and the graces the chisel of the artist and the brush of the learned painters had used on certain images, that in his Church in Cappadoccia, were venerated, describes these. He states that as the effect of these, there came the greatest fruit of devotion that the people had every gathered on seeing them.

1521: Similarly, St. ASTERIUS, as we have in the addition to the Library of the Fathers of Combefis [54], confesses that he was much moved by the beautiful image of St. Euphemia. He describes with supreme delicacy the very fine labor in this work of art. In it, the painter who was both learned as well as pious, was able to mix the colors and the customs, tempering in the most vivid and gracious impression and the affections with the colors on the canvas.

1522: To move on, then, to devotion, there are required beauty and expression, sweetness of affection. Indeed certain images are so awkwardly depicted and with such harshness that in the place of devotion, they provoke laughter or disdain. With good reason, MARCANZIO, St. JOHN OF THE CROSS, and GERSON rail out against the lack of talent of these artists and the deformity of these works. Indeed, in a century, like our own is, in which there are many learned talents, the good taste that flourishes is very easily noticed, and it escapes from the more minor errors. This is no acquiescence unless in the authentic absolute perfection of the work.

1523: For the beauty, though, in the sacred images it is very necessary that it be joined to the majesty and the sweetness of expression, also a certain gravity. PRUDENTIUS [58] points out these contrasts that are quite distinct in the image of St. Cassian, that he saw in Rome. There was impressed on his heart such a devout veneration that he has left a description of it in his *Peri-Stefanon*.

1524: The sacred images should spirate devout horror and divine majesty, as precisely do those works of art that have come down to us from antiquity, and which we ponder with admiration. Thus, the erudite MACRI [59], in his *Notices about Words*, comes to the word, *ICON*. He states that all is to be condemned regarding certain images that have a too worldly comeliness. Some are depicted with excessive license, if not to say shameful nudity. Such works are depicted and sculptured in our times. Such works are far from moving one to devotion. They excite rather than distraction, foment vanity, and also often produce authentic scandal in the Christian churches, even on their altars.

1526: And in this manner, there are profaned so many images that by now surely cannot be adored, and not even be admired with the eye of the faithful.

Surely, the COUNCIL OF TRENT [60] prohibits all lasciviousness and all bold beauty, or vain ornamentation in sacred images¹⁸. And God Himself has shown how much He detests the sacrilegious abuse, castigating even by public example, the impudent artist.

1526: So it is that GENNADIUS, Prelate of Constantinople [61] had to heal the hand of a painter, that had become paralyzed, for having painted the image of Christ under a profane manner.

The Greeks, though, should make us blush. In the matter of paintings, as the above praised author has noted, they observe a rigorous modesty and extraordinary devotion, that inspire veneration and superhuman majesty.

1527: I have said all these truths in a round about way. I have done this to bring out how rarely do these qualities come together in modern images. At the same time, these do accentuate how singularly they are present in our images. They do possess these qualities in such an eminent manner, as common judgment attests, and so much

¹⁸ Denz. 988.

so that the proof of it would be superfluous. And thus I wanted to demonstrate the cause of the fact, also undeniable and evident to daily experience, and also known to all, of the singular devotion to which their venerated and most lovable aspect inspires.

1528: Furthermore, for such a most special fruit, I have in mind still another cause. But, this is supernatural, and opens to me the path that our worship and special recourse to these images is not only in harmony with the custom of the whole Church. For it is for this purpose that the Church does assume sacred images, as has been shown up until now. However, additionally from the very order of Providence with which God in His Church both approves this and confirms it, this is the third point that I have in mind.

1529: This is the order, my most worthy brothers and sisters of Divine Providence. This often operates by means of a particular image and favors which it does not bring about by all the images of this same species. Let us restrict ourselves in this fact solely to that venerated antiquity of which I have already given some indications in the first part of my talk. Thus, I could once again cite for you the witness of PENEADE¹⁹, that of EDESSA²⁰, that of BERITHUS²¹.

1530: But, in order that I may not repeat for your hearing the same names, and to let you see how the proofs of this are simply superabundant, I call you to Constantinople. There you would see the solemn prodigy of a complete victory that the Roman army obtained through that image that PHILIPPICUS, MAURIZIUS' brother-in-law, carried occasionally around the camp. He then sent it with supreme devotion to SIMEON, Bishop of Armida, as THEOPHILACTUS SIMOCATTA relates in the Second Book of his *History*. This was praised also by PHOTIUS in his *Library* [63].

1531: And there is the account of an image that stood in the vestibule of the imperial palace, believed to have been erected by Constantine, as DuCANGE writes in his *Christian Constantinople*. There is the story of many miracles, and among these the most celebrated, acquired the name of ANTIPHONATES. This may be read in the addition to the Book, *The Library of the Fathers*, of Fr. CCOMBEFIS. St. GERMANUS is often praised in this writing: we know, he is quoted as having said, we know for sure that the image of the Virgin which was at SOZOPOLI in Pisidia, from its hand there was spread a sweet-smelling liquid.

1532: Now I ask: are these prodigies not singular, or are they every day occurrences? Has God Himself worked these prodigies through all the images of the same species? If God, with the gift of His miracles, honors one image more than another, this is His doing. It is God Himself, in His Church, Who both promotes a distinct cult to some particular image, and confirms this through special recourse.

¹⁹ Cf. above # 1501.

²⁰ Cf. above # 1504.

²¹ Cf. above # 1505.

1533: St. AUGUSTINE will conclude the persuasion In his *Letter* 78 to the Clergy ²², he writes also to the Elders and to all the People of the Church of Hippo. He narrates how a certain young man of his family, and BONIFACE, priest, were involved in a serious matter that touched the reputation of both of them. However, it was necessary to clarify the matter without it being possible for them to find any human means to verify their judgment. I have chosen, says the Saint, I chose a given means. And so it was that the both of them had drawn up- a pact jointly, to make a pilgrimage to a holy place. [They decided to go to a Martyr's tomb], where the most terrible works of God might be placed in clear light the more easily. And there, the not clear consciences of the both of them, moved them, as they were inspired to the confession of the truth, either by penalty, or by fear.

1534: God truly is everywhere, and the Creator of all reality is not constrained, nor circumscribed by any place. And He must be adored by true worshippers in spirit and in truth. And He also hears prayers in secret that have been offered in a hidden manner, for which He also justifies and crowns the petitioners. Nevertheless, in these matters that are visibly made manifest to human beings, who can investigate His counsel, because in some places these wonders happen, while in other localities, they do not?

1535: To many, the holiness of the place where the body of the Blessed FELIX of Nola reposes, is very well known. Many choose to go there, and it is indeed very easy for us to do so. The faithful hope to encounter there all that never before had ever been manifest to them by divine operation on any given day. Also in Milan, at the Sepulcher of the saints wondrously and terribly the demons themselves are heard to confess. We know that a certain thief went there to deceive by swearing to what was false, and he was forced to confess his theft and give back what was stolen.

1536: And is not Africa still full of the bodies of holy martyrs? And yet we know that such prodigies never happen there [!]. Yet, as the Apostle says [1 Co 12:8, ff.], not all the Saints have the gift of healing, nor do all have the discretion of spirits. In like manner, nor does it happen that God wills that all their memorials [or, churches, or tombs of the Martyrs], that these wonders should happen. For He divides to everyone according as He will [v. 11].

1537: Up to this point, the thoughts of the Holy Doctor. The most illustrious, POUGET, in his *Catholic Illustrations*, is convinced by authority by the evidence of this testimony, to be decided entirely in favor of the cult, or special recourse, that without any trace of superstition, the Christian people can tender their cult in some particular places before some particular images. And indeed, can one not see, as I have said, from these facts, that God Himself promotes this and confirms it with the most solemn prodigies?

1538: It may be questioned whether there might be given some explanation for this order of Providence, to the smallness of our minds. A great saint and Theologian [67]

²² Cf. t. 2, pp. 183/G, ff.

has responded that by such novelties, the sleeping devotion and the affection of the faithful may come to life again. And just as by means of this image, devotion may be enkindled, and prayers are continued, these are two causes that move God to listen. Through these, He comes to grant that which is asked, and so then also and by means of these images and in virtue of the prayer and of the affections, God continues His favors and miracles.

1539: In addition to the individual circumstances of the particular place, the soul can easily be reminded to be grateful to God, for that which has been received. With this memory, the devotion can also be all the more enkindled. Thus, we read in Genesis 12:8 that Abraham built an altar in the very place where God had appeared, and there he invoked His Name. And after much time, returning from Egypt, He passed by the same way, and once again on the same altar that he had built, he called upon the Lord [Gn 13:4]. Also Jacob [Gen 28:18] signed the place where God had appeared to him, and set up the ladder. He erected there a stone, and anointed it with oil. And Hagar, finally, put a name on the place of the apparition of the angel. She held this place in high esteem, by saying:*Verily here I have seen the hinder parts of Him that sees me...* [Gn 16:13].

1540: Coming now to our own images here, there is no doubt that God would not work by means of them most singular graces. This is so precisely in these times in which our eyes have been somewhat slack in looking heavenward. It is just by ever so little that they do not have to lament a heaven closed to their prayers. It is not totally new that the most grand favors of God are often received without recognizing them. St. AUGUSTINE himself in his books of the *City of God* ²³, in that curious and erudite century, wrote how much God had worked at the Martyrs' tombs. He says that in the same city of Carthage there took place that which Carthage was ignorant of: *in the City of Carthage, there happened that which Carthage knew not...!*

1541: It is this way in our times. And we give easy pardon to a human piety that is more easily interested and moved with greater force at the sight and in experiencing present goods, that do not exceed the periphery of its natural judgment and desires. Now, so sublime is the height of the knowledge and wisdom of God, that He often permits in the world, some evils so that He might draw from them many and even greater goods. Even the heresies, St. Paul will say, in 1 Co 11:19, as these serve to make the elect manifest.

1542: But it is also something of a prodigy that even in the midst of the most thick darkness, there should shine out so clearly, purely, and in an uncontaminated manner, the light of our faith. And it is also prodigious, indeed it is a very great prodigy that rather than diminishing, our devotion increases and is enkindled all the more. And it is likewise prodigious, a very great prodigy, a prodigy that is totally singular, that God is not only honored by us in our hearts, but also with an external cult, and not only external, but also public. And we not only render a public cult to God, but also to His

²³ cf. 22, 8, a. t. 7, p. 663 C.

saints, and also to the prototypes, to their images. And to these images, our cult is not merely common, but it is particular, it is extraordinary, it is most special.

1543: Most distinguished brothers and sisters, there is not needed among you proofs for a fact that your very zeal concurs daily even more, with outstanding examples to give witness. And I would wish to expound on this with some eloquence to your merited praise, in the years past as two outstanding speakers made known to me, there was reserved just to explain the cause. With this accomplished, I do not seek other facts. Let this alone suffice for me to conclude that the cult and special recourse which is given by us to these sacred images to be venerated, is legitimate. It is also fitting, and well ordered, while at the same time, it is in conformity to the custom of the Catholic Church. It is in harmony with the purpose for which images are assumed by the Church. Our devotion is also in accord with the order of Providence, with which God, in His Church, promotes it, arouses it, confirms it: this is what I had to demonstrate.

1544: I only add here but two examples, one modern, and the other ancient, as the most efficacious motive to reconfirm your devotion GREGORY III, in the year 731, after he had excommunicated the Iconoclasts, was not content in striking down this movement only with his writings, and with his words. In addition to removing this new heresy, he wanted to confirm further the peoples in the orthodox faith. Thus, he chose to increase their devotion to the sacred images. The expense that he went to is unbelievable. He wanted to enrich the different Churches of Rome with precious ornaments. Only those that the Library has given some idea of the weight, would amount to seventy-six Libra of gold, and three hundred and eighty of Silver. In addition, there was a great number of precious stones and other oblations, of which the value is not known.

1545: In the Churches of St. Peter, St. Mary Major and St. Andrew, he ordered that there be collected different sacred images, that were beyond price, because of their precious materials. And especially for the Basilica of St. Peter, he made an oratory in which he placed as many relics as he could find. And he further ordered that Masses be celebrated, and even more than there be added into the Canon of the Mass, a special mention of these. This is a beautiful way, in fact, the best way to respond to errors.

1546: In times less remote, that is, about the middle of the 16th century [124], when the Protestants waged war against the sacred images, it seemed one day to Saint Teresa that there was greater mortification and poverty in not having images, other than those of paper, and without ornamentation. And she had from the Lord this revelation that she herself related and in certain memories that serve as additions to her life [70], to this effect: that was not a good mortification, for which is better: poverty or charity? Without doubt, it is charity, and all that will incite me to charity does not allow that it should ever be taken from me. That which the Devil accomplished with the Lutherans was to take from them all the means that would incite them to love and devotion, and they were thus lost. -

My beloved, faithful children, they have now more than sufficient reason to respond differently from what they are now doing.

I have spoken!

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SOURCES

OT

Gn 12:8	# 1539	Gn 28:18	# 1539
13:4	# 1539	Is 53:8	# 1515
16:13	# 1539		

NT

Ac 8:33	# 1515	1 Co 12:8, ff.	# 1536
1 Co 11:19	# 1541	11	# 1536

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DOCTORS & DOCTORESSES

St. JOHN OF THE CROSS [against poor art]	# 1522
St. ROBERT BELLARMINE [22]. <i>Controversialist</i> Defends Images	# 1500
<i>On the Glory of the Saints</i>	# 1510
St. TERESA of AVILA [on images]	# 1546

SAINTS

St. ASTERIUS [moved by statue of St. Euphemia]	# 1521
St. GERMANUS, Paatriarch of Constantinople, Letter to Thomas, Bishop of Claudianopoli [46]	## 1507;1517
St. NILE, Abbot [disciple of st. John Chrysostom - Letters]	# 1512
St. PAULINUS of Nola [Basilica of St. Felix]	# 1512

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BARONIUS [132], <i>Menologues</i>	# 1505
CAVE, William, Protestant Writer - <i>Literary History</i>	# 1504
COMBEFIS, P. <i>Library of the Fathers</i>	## 1521;1531
DALLEO, <i>Sophisms</i>	# 1506
DuCANGE, author, <i>Christian Constantinople</i>	## 1503;1531
GERSON [against poor art]	# 1522
GOTTI, Cardinal [against heretic, PYCENIUS]	# 1506
GRAVIO, Ernest [Protestant writer] <i>Spicilegius</i>	# 1504
GUMPPENBERG, P, <i>Marian Atlantis</i> . Ingolostadt	# 1497
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LOPEZ, Huan Antonio, Spanish Mariologist	# 1495
MACRI [59], <i>Notices about Words: ICON</i>	# 1524
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MURILLO, Diego, Spanish Mariologist	# 1495
NATALE, ALEXANDER [refutes Dalleus, Pycenius]	# 1506
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PYCENIUS, <i>Gossip</i>	# 1506
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SAMPERIO, Fr. <i>Iconology</i>	# 1495
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TURSELLINI, Fr. Horace, <i>Story of the Sanctuary of Loreto</i>	# 1406

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1241:**SERMON 36****External Cult**

Preached on the First Sunday of October, on the 5th day of this month, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Rosary, in St. Paul's of Campo Marzio, Verona, 1806. - It lasted about one half hour.

If I were to be celebrating on this day, as indeed the Solemn Feast of itself warrants, I would speak to you of the praises of the Most Holy Rosary of Mary. And I notice, most distinguished listeners, what a pleasing reception your humble and tender devotion would extend, on the one hand, to my rather lowly ability to speak. However, on the other hand, I fear the derision and mockery of a knowledge of false pretensions, that might be aroused out of time. By this I mean, these might be aroused before your spirit could be steeled against them, and such reactions might easily destroy all that I would like to offer in instruction, that would be very useful for your edification.

1242: And surely, all these external practices of religion, as seen by certain spirits educated in the darkness of this century, have become like stumbling blocks and scandals. In falling over these, these spirits are the first ones to be crushed by them, in their impotent boldness, to dislodge them from that most solid edifice that Christ founded. But no one can put to the Church of God any other foundation than the one that its Divine Founder placed for it.

1243: These are the most firm foundations on which the true religion is planted: an internal spiritual cult - and an external sensible cult. The worldly spirits would reprove external cult. There can be seen clearly the stupid pretension of their proud minds. I say stupid and proud, because they pretend to overthrow a building against which the gates of hell can never prevail. They deny to us every reason for external cult, they deny what is useful for us. And both of these aspects we now take on to prove to them, with evidence and with brevity.

Religion is a virtue through which one renders a due and supreme cult to God as Sovereign, Master and principle of all things. This cult is a witness of His divine excellence, and is an expression of submission of all of us to God.

1244: We are not pure spirits: we are composed of body and soul. If, therefore, my spirit recognizes its Creator, should not my senses give witness to His greatness? If my soul experiences its dependence on the very first reason for its being, why, then, should not my body bend low to adore its Maker? If my mind is fascinated in discovering so many perfections in that blessed incomprehensible nature, who could hold back my tongue from singing His praises, from recounting His glories, from blessing His Name?

1245: The mind rises on high, the spirit ascends to its God: my eyes are lifted up to those blessed heights from whence my help is to come, and without which I notice that I find my supplicating hands in prayer. My heart abounds in consolation in offering

itself to God, as a sacrifice of sweet odor: my flesh exults in holy pleasure, in showing its members as a living host to serve its God: ...*My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God...* [Ps 83:3].

1246: It might be objected: but, God is pure spirit, and therefore, a merely internal cult, one of the spirit is more suitable for Him. This is what the adversaries of external cult sustain, abusing the very words of Christ to the Samaritan woman: God is spirit... and He seeks adorers that will adore Him in spirit and in truth [Jn 4:23, ff.]. But, this does not mean anything else than what is interior has the reason of principle, and it is precisely what should be understood of itself in all cult of religion. An external devotion, abandoned by the heart, is a cadaver of devotion. The soul of devotion is the heart.

1247: This does not mean anything else than that God principally and of itself, seeks from us the **obsequiousness** of our hearts. If this is lacking, he rejects our extrinsic praises and adoration. This people, the Lord says with truly some regret through a Prophet: ...*this people... with their lips glorify Me, but their heart is far from Me...* [Is 29:13].

1248: This simply means that God hold hypocrisy in abomination: to feign devotion on the outside, and to love sin internally; to frequent the practices of piety and to keep alive some sinful friendship; to pour out large sums as alms to the poor, and in rich offerings to the temple, without ever sending away from the heart those profane idols that are adored in the place of God; to strike one's breast, to weaken oneself though fasts, to get calluses on one's knees, to keep one's head downcast, and to prostrate oneself even to the ground - without ever making the resolution to combat, and without ever overcoming that passion that predominates - and all the while being scrupulously careful from even the slightest defects in public, and yet to incur without any disgust, the most enormous sins in private.

1249: God loves us even before we rectify and order to Him our hearts. God seeks that the heart correspond to its external actions, and that in all, it be in harmony. This is what Christ understood, and nothing less, when He said: God is spirit and He seeks such adorers that adore Him in spirit and in truth [Jn 4:23, f.].

1250: Let us proceed now to the intrinsic reason behind this matter. If we tender to God reverence and honor, it is not that God actually needs our **obsequiousness**, or that our adoration results in some utility for Himself: ...*You are my God, for You have no need of my goods...* [Ps 15:2]. Yes, o my Lord, o my God. You are most perfect in Yourself, You are all good, the supreme good, and you have absolutely no need of my goods, of my virtues, of my homage. You are essentially blessed in Yourself and full of glory, to whom no creature in this world could do anything of itself, nor even take from You.

1251: And we can rejoice in Him forever, for this immutable felicity of the Most High and most lovable Creator of ours. And again, let it be said, that we must rejoice in this,

if we truly love Him. Let us also be happy that if we do honor Him and love Him, then all of this is more for our usefulness and for that need which we have of Him.

1252: Our **obsequiousness**, our adoration, tend toward this: to subject our spirits to God. It is in this subjection that we find our every good, and in which our every perfection consists. Therefore, indeed, every reality is perfected that is subjected to its superior. Thus, the disciple, because he is instructed by his teacher; thus the body, because it is vivified by the soul; thus the air, because it is illumined by the sun. Now, the human mind in order to be united for this purpose to God, needs the employment of sensible realities. From these, it is led and gradually raised up, as it were, through so many steps, and ascends to being united to God. This is in harmony to what the Apostle has said:...*For this invisible things of him...* [Rm 1:20]. - considered in creatures, lead to Him.

1253: Therefore, it is a necessity that divine cult should make use of external realities, sensible and material expressions. This is so that from these, as from certain signs, the human mind might be excited to spiritual acts that are proper to the soul, with which one is joined to God. And so, these internal and spiritual acts, in the cult of religion, hold the place as principles, and of themselves pertain to divine cult. The external acts, then, are secondary and only means ordered to the interior actions. This kind of reasoning, this conclusion, is that of the Angelic Doctor, St Thomas Aquinas 24.

1254: This is the reason why God Himself in Christ, coming down on earth, in order to reconcile the world with Himself, chose to appear visible in human flesh. This was to win over, with the favor of the senses, our hearts more easily to Himself. He instituted the sacraments, in which under material and sensible signs, He diffuses grace and charity into our spirits, and what was lost, He regains - what was once possessed. He increases it and confirms it. Having abrogated the ancient sacrifices, He constitutes a new and perpetual sacrifice, and this is evident to the senses through the sacramental species. While these, on the one hand, cover the great mystery, on the other hand this most conveniently adapts to human beings.

1255: This forms a law that is totally of the spirit and of love, which essentially consists in the grace of the Holy Spirit, Nonetheless, this commands that the external **obsequiousness** of the tongue, and even the more solemn actions of the hand, be matched to the internal affections and motions of the heart. In fact, the great herald of the Gospel, the Apostle Paul, cries out: ...*For with the heart, we believe unto justice; but, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation...* [Rm 10:10].

1256: And the legislator says Himself in Person: ...*For he that shall be shamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His majesty...* [Lk 9:26] - ...*For every one that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father, Who is in heaven...* [Mt 10:12]. What could be more

²⁴ II-II, q. 81, a. 7.

clear than this Law and this mind of the Legislator, in establishing the necessity of uniting the external to the internal in the cult of religion?

1257: I go on now briefly to investigate the usefulness of this. Primarily, it is for the glory of God. Bringing to the exterior and in public my adoration, I manifest to the whole world that only God merits the **obsequiousness** and the homage of our dependence and servitude. This is what is commanded to us in the Gospel with this end in view: ... *So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven...* [Mt 5:16].

1258: I have been benefited in secret by my God; but I should not cover over this with an ungrateful silence His secret favors. Rather, I will bless in all times the Lord, and His praise shall always be on my lips [Ps 33:2]. And since my praises could never be adequate to His merit, I will at least strive to multiply these for Him, in so far as I am able to do. And I will also invite my neighbors to exalt Him with me and to thank him: ...*O magnify the Lord with me, and let us extol His name together...* [v. 4]. And because I do believe, this is why I also speak [Ps 115:10]. I do not hold truth as a prisoner, as this is known by me in an unjust dissimulation, in a timid and shameful silence, so unworthy of the most High Master Whom I serve [Rm 1:9]. For to serve Him is to reign [cf. Apoc 5:10]. To follow Him is glory [Si 23:28]. This is true glory, great glory: ... *I will pay my vows to the Lord before all His people...* [Ps 115:14].

1259: Secondly, the usefulness to our brothers and sisters is matched to the glory of God. To each one of us, the Lord has committed the care of our neighbor [Si 17:12]. We, then, who have listened to the most gentle voice of Eternal Wisdom, this assures us to seek in her our authentic and perfect beatitude [Pr 4:1, ff.]. How, then, can we keep from crying out in every street [Pr 1:20, ff.], in every square? Can we keep from calling together and congratulating our fellow human beings from their errors, from their fatigue, from the very empty dispersion of their hearts? Must we not call them to the place fortified with peace, joy, life, true life, eternal life?

1260: We have, in fact, a very precise commandment to do just that: ...*And he that hears, let him say: Come...!* [Apoc 22:17]. The weak will find courage in the voice of our example that precedes them, if we wish to say with Paul: ...*my brothers and sisters, be imitators of me as I am also of Christ...* [1 Co 4:16]. They will be sustained, confirmed by our constancy against the ridicule and the contumelies which are leveled against piety by the world. For this purpose, Christ Himself endured villainy and shame.

1261: But the just, the perfect, the saints, find in the exterior expression of our virtues and of our conversations, a sweet spectacle of joy and happiness. This leads them to bless and thank the Lord. We have been made, said St. Paul, first a persecutor, first a blasphemer, and then an Apostle, then a trumpet of the Gospel [1 Co 4:9]. We have been made a spectacle to the world, to the Angels and to men. And David also sang: ...*they that fear You shall see Me, and shall be glad...* [Ps 118:74].

1262: And finally, there should be added to this theme, our own interest, in procuring with eternal life, the glory of God, and the well-being of our neighbors. The Lord says: *...whoever shall glorify Me, him will I glorify...* [1 K(S) 2:10]. - *...he who causes a sinner to be converted from error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins...* [Jas 5:20].

1263: If we might have, with our depraved customs of our past life, scandalized another, would it not then be necessary that we, who have been the odor of death, should now become the odor of life [2 Co 2:16]. Should we not be this, in order to draw Christ, behind the fragrance of our examples from which we have unjustly deviated? And should we not likewise make up both for their loss and for our sin?

This is certainly so. And so you see, brothers and sisters, how fitting it is to unite in religion, also the exterior cult to that which is interior.

1264: The external practices of cult, then, are not only suitable for religion, but they are intrinsic to its very nature, and they are commanded by the Gospel itself. If this is so, who would dare any more to criticize them as useless, as vain, as superstitious? Surely no one, who would not at the same time declare himself an enemy to religion, and to the Gospel. And indeed, in these unhappy days, there are not lacking bold people who do declare themselves against them. Does this mean that we should be still timid in declaring ourselves in their favor? St. Paul says [1 Co 11:19] that it is necessary that there be heresies, so that those among you who have been proven, will be made manifest.

1265: Yes, my brothers and sisters, let us manifest our religion, let us confess our faith, let us make our devotion also external. This is the time. The glory of the Lord of us all requires it, the utility of our neighbors demands it, and our own self-interest commits us to it. It is a matter of defending the honor of our Father; it is a question of sustaining the weakness of our brothers and sisters; it implies the increase within us of a great treasure of graces, and of covering with additional merits of glory the stains perhaps of our past mistakes.

1266: Let all vain human respect give way to just duties. Let us not fear other human beings, let us not fear ridicule. Let us fear, rather, that one who could destroy both body and soul in hell [Mt 210:28]. Let us sustain on earth the cause of Him Who from on high in heaven, is to come to judge our cause. Let us serve Him Who for so many reasons is our Master, and Who has well paid the purchase price for our slavery. He Himself, before us, made us of so much fatigue, so many humiliations, so many sufferings. Finally He has promised us to remunerate our slavery by making us sit with Him on the very throne of His glory [Mt 129:28]. The wicked shall be confounded, seeing that under their very eyes religion increases within us. They will be forced to confess, at least in secret, that every machination is important to remove this religion that God Himself has founded.

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SOURCES**OT**

1 K(S) 2:30	# 1262	Ps 118:74	# 1268
Ps 15:2	# 1250	Pr 1:20, f.	# 1259
33:2	# 1258	4:1, ff.	# 1259
4	# 1258	Si 17:12	# 1259
Ps 115:10	# 1258	23:38	# 1258
14	# 12158	Is 29:13	# 1247

NT

Mt 5:17	# 1257	Rm 10:10	# 1255
10:28	# 1266	1 Co 4:9	# 1261
32	# 1256	16	# 1260
19:28	# 1266	11:19	# 1264
Lk 9:26	# 1256	2 Co 2:16	# 1263
Jn 4:23, ff.	## 1246; 1249	Apoc 5:10	# 1258
Rm 1:9	# 1258	22:17	# 1260
20	# 1232		

DOCTORS

St. Thomas Aquinas I-II, q. 81, a. 7	# 1253
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1267:**SERMON 37****The Beatitudes**

For the Solemn Day of All Saints. Preached in St. Paul's of Campo Marzio, in the year 1806, in Verona

The Feast of All Saints excites the most vivid desires for beatitude in our hearts. The Gospel of this Feast [Mt 5:1-12], teaches us the most certain path and short-cut to arrive there, in but seven or eight very serious verses, from the very lips of Christ.

1268: It is my responsibility today to propose these to you, my beloved brothers and sisters, and for the sincere interest that I take for your better good [94]. Furthermore, for the solicitude that stimulates me to come to the assistance of your most just desires and to satisfy the debt that I have of entering with my reflections into the spirit of the Church, in such a grand festival: all this is what moves me.

1269: If I set myself to the task of explaining these, sublime as they are, and even divine, no one should accuse me of audacity, or temerity. I follow in all this the teachings of the most holy and illustrious teachers. In a special way, I follow the Angel of the Schools, St. THOMAS²⁵. I am striving for nothing other than a solid and fitting instruction for each one of you, to make saints of you, and consequently, to make you truly happy. This means only to be blessed through hope here on earth, and blessed perfectly in heaven.

1270: These Gospel sentences, each one of which is divided into two parts, in the first part contains the most excellent works of virtues. More properly, these are gifts of the Holy Spirit, as merits and the proximate causes of genuine beatitude. In the second part of each are the rewards and beatitudes corresponding to these merits and to these causes. It is from these that these sentences are called *beatitudes*.

1271: God Himself opens His mouth to pronounce them. Let the souls of my brothers and sisters, children of God that they are, hear these. May all reflect on them with the most acute vision of your spirits, and may all lend the docile ear of your hearts:

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of God [v. 3].

Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land [v. 4].

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted [v. 5].

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their full [v. 6].

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy [v. 7].

Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God [v. 8].

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God [v. 9].

²⁵ I-II, q. 69.

Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. [v. 10].

1272: This last one, however, is not so much a new level of perfection, as it is a confirmation, and a sign of the preceding seven. These form a kind of ladder to reach beatitude, the just reward for authentic merits. We will explain now in brief the nature of these rewards, then the order of the merits that are their cause, and finally the correspondence in which there are these rewards with these merits.

1273: As far as the rewards are concerned, St. AUGUSTINE makes it known ²⁶ that they not only pertain to the future life, where they will constitute the perfect beatitude but they can also pertain to this present life. For here there is begun in some way, by the just, a participation in beatitude.

In fact, *the kingdom of heaven, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven [v. 3]* - this can signify likewise a principle of wisdom, in perfection, in accord with which there begins in the just the reign of the Spirit.

To possess the earth: they will possess the land [v. 4] signifies the good affections of a soul that reposes in desire in the stability of perpetual inheritance, understood by the *land*.

1274: Furthermore, the just are consoled: *they shall be comforted [v. 5]* - this is so also in this life, by participating in the Holy Spirit, who is also called the *Paraclete*, i.e., the *Consoler*.

They shall also be satisfied in this life, *they will have their fill [v. 6]* - with that food of which the Lord speaks: *...My meat is to do the will of Him Who sent Me... [Jn 4:34]*.

In this life, too, they may obtain mercy: *they shall obtain mercy... [v. 7]*. Also in this life, with one's eye purged by the Gift of Understanding, in some way, one can see God: *they shall see God [v. 8]*.

1275: Similarly, in this life, those whose motions pacify their souls, approach the likeness of God all the more. And so, they are called *the children of God [v. 9]*. And this is the genuine, the most solid, the most perfect felicity, or beatitude, to which a rational person might aspire as a Christian on this earth.

If all naturally love to be happy, who will not be content to hear the order of the causes and the merits of genuine beatitude?

1276: First, however, it is necessary to know with St. Thomas, that beatitude has been sought for in three areas principally, by various people: by many, in pleasure; by others, in activity; and lastly, by certain ones, in contemplating. These three

²⁶ *De Serm. Dom. In Monte*, 1, 4. [t. 3/2, p. 170 A].

beatitudes have a very different relationship to future beatitude, in the hope of which we may be said to be *blessed* even now. The felicity of pleasures, since it is false and contrary to reason, is an impediment to future beatitude, that which is genuine, substantial felicity. The beatitude which is found in activity serves only as a disposition to that future beatitude. The felicity of the contemplative life, if it is perfect, is substantially a future beatitude. If it is imperfect, it is a certain initiation, or principle of that which is yet to come.

1277: And Christ the Lord has placed before hand, some beatitudes that would remove the impediment from false beatitude, that of pleasures. The pleasurable life results from two realities: first, from the affluence of external goods, whether these be riches, or honors. Hence, the first beatitude that is placed by St. Matthew is poverty of spirit, *blessed are the poor in spirit* [v. 3]: what can be understood by this is the disdain of every richness, such as the disdain of honors, which springs from humility.

1288: The pleasurable life consists in the second place in following one's passions, whether those of the irascible appetite, or those of the [95] concupiscible appetite. From following the irascible appetite, Christ wishes to draw us away, through meekness: *blessed are the meek* [v. 4], wishing by this to render a person not only moderate in his irascible appetite according to the rules of reason, but even more, to be according to the divine will, totally tranquil with regard to the passions.

1279: From following, then, the passions of the concupiscible appetite, Christ withdraws all not only by tempering these through virtue, and through rejecting them even through force. He does so also even more, by taking on, whenever this may be necessary a voluntary struggle in order to extinguish entirely their very sweet attraction: *blessed are they that mourn* [v. 5], which is the third beatitude.

1280: The active life stands principally in those realities that under the reason of debt, or spontaneous benefit, we give to our neighbor. Regarding the debt of justice is the concern of the fourth beatitude, which persuades one not only never to refuse giving to one's neighbor what we owe him, but even more with greater affection. The beatitude induces us to do this in this way, that with such desire and fervor we seek to fulfill all the works of justice, as expressed in fervent yearnings that a hungry, or thirsty person would seek food and drink: *blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice* [v. 6].

1281: Regarding, then, the spontaneous benefits of charity, the fifth beatitude instructs us not only to be liberal, which means to give to those to whom reason inclines us to give, as to friends and relatives. This beatitude, though, inspires us to go further, to be merciful. In the sight of God this is to consider the sole necessity in those whom we would benefit. This is in harmony with what St. Luke [14:12, ff.] says: *...when you make a dinner, or supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren... [v. 12]... call the poor ... [v. 13]*. This is what is meant by *blessed are the merciful... [v. 8]*.

1282: Those matters, then, that pertain to the contemplative life are either the final beatitude itself, or a beginning of it. However, in the beatitudes that follow, there is no longer place for merits, but for rewards [96]. They are well placed as merits the effects

of the active life, with which a human being disposes himself for the contemplative life. These effects, then, as far as the virtues and gifts that perfect human beings in themselves, are cleanliness of heart, so that one would not be made impure by the passions. And this is the sixth beatitude: *blessed are the clean of heart...* [v. 8].

1283: As far as the virtues and gifts that perfect a person in regard to one's neighbor are concerned, the effect of the active life is peace, in accord with that line from Isaiah [32:17]: *...and the work of justice shall be peace...* And so, in the seventh beatitude, there is placed: *blessed are the peacemakers...* [v. 9].

Admirable indeed, is the order of these merits. No less, however, is the correspondence in which the rewards may be found with these merits.

1284: There has been seen how the merits of the first three beatitudes have been placed [97] by Christ in contradiction to that false beatitude, in order to draw human beings from those attractions in which the voluptuous life consists. This is what human beings desire seeking one's natural whims, and look for beatitude where one should not, namely in temporal and corrupt things, rather than in god. And so, the rewards of the first three beatitudes are placed according to what human beings look for in earthly happiness.

1285: They look for delight in exterior realities, as in riches and in honors, seeking a certain excellence and abundance. Now both of these would be what the kingdom of heaven means, for which humans seek out the excellence and abundance of such benefits in God. And thus, the kingdom of heaven is promised to the poor in spirit: *blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God...* [v. 3].

1286: Ferocious, immoderate people seek through ire, through battles and in wars, to acquire security and repose for themselves, by destroying their enemies. Thus, the Lord has promised to the meek a secure and quiet possession of the land of the living, by which is signified the solidity of eternal goods: *... blessed are the meek- for they shall possess the land...* [v. 4].

1287: In addition, human beings seek in concupiscence and in the delights of this world a consolation against the fatigue and the boredom of the present life. However, the Lord promises this consolation to those who weep: *blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be consoled...* [v. 5].

1288: The other two beatitudes pertain to the works of the active life. These are works of virtue, born to orient a person toward his neighbor. By such works, however, some may become disordered out of love for their own personal good. Therefore, the Lord attributes as rewards for these beatitudes those benefits for which human beings draw away from in practice. They stay away from works of justice, by denying to give what is owed, and even by taking this away from others, for the sake of being suffeited with temporal benefits: *blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill..* [v. 6].

1289: Others leave off the works of mercy to avoid being concerned with the miseries of others. And so the Lord promises mercy precisely to the merciful, so that others might be liberated from all misery: *blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy...* [v. 7].

1290: The last two beatitudes are of the contemplative life. And therefore, according to the suitability of the dispositions that have been placed for the merit, the rewards are also granted. Clarity of the eye enables one to see clearly. And thus, the clean of heart are promised the vision of god: *blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God...* [v. 8].

1291: To constitute peace in oneself, or in others, manifests a person who is an imitator of God, Who is a God of unity and peace. And thus He renders to such an individual the reward of the glory of divine filiation. This consists in the perfect union with God, through consummate wisdom: *blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God...* [v. 9].

So, dearly beloved, this is the beatitude toward which you are aspiring. This is the ladder to ascend to it. All that remains is that we go up.

1292: No, my brothers and sisters. It is not enough to love beatitude in order to possess it. All do love it, and very few arrive to take possession of it. It is unnecessary to climb this ladder that I have shown you, which Christ has promised to you, through which all the saints have ascended. Do not allow yourselves to be frightened by what is hard. The great rewards, the grandiose honors, are not handed out other than for grandiose undertakings, and only to the children of a generous and magnanimous spirit. Once the ladder has been put up against the wall, the courageous soldier climbs up, even under the hail of hostile blows, and all this solely to obtain a crown of honor which soon withers on his head. And for such a reward the soldier confronts intrepidly, even death and all dangers. What should we do, then, for an eternal beatitude?

1293: Onward, soldiers of Christ: with your eyes raised on high. See there on the blessed walls of the happy Jerusalem those triumphant ranks of the saints, with their golden crowns on their heads. They stand out with their whitened, or red stoles, and the brilliant lilies and palms in their hands, is not this so? They are your friends, they are your brothers and sisters, and they will help you, either with the eloquence of their examples, and with the assistance of their prayers, and aid your access to their realm. O how they desire you to be with them! O how they wait for you, o how they call out for you!

1294: Among them is the most glorious Captain, your Jesus. How impatient He is to share with you the spoils of His own triumph and to have you participate in the glory of His Kingdom. He wants to divide with you the inestimable riches and the most happy possession of His perpetual inheritance! He Himself has set up the ladder for you, and He is exhorting you to climb it. He promises you all the power of His grace, that will comfort you on the ascent. He extends to you His right hand.. Come on, now, what is the delay? One giant step at the beginning of an undertaking, easily decides all.

1295: Let us willingly despoil our hearts from all attachment to this earth: at least, in spirit, let us renounce it. Let us hold back our wrath; let us learn from Him to be meek and humble of heart. Let us abandon the empty joys of this world: our role is to weep for our sins, for the pains of our exile. We are assured that soon our grief will be changed over into a joy that no one could ever take away from us. In the meanwhile, let us thirst only for justice, and let us be inclined only to mercy.

1296: When our spirits are thus purified, He will very shortly make the first rays of His nascent felicity be seen by us. These will shed peace into our hearts. And while the eyes will say: Paradise is indeed beautiful! - the courageous heart will respond: Paradise is mine!

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SOURCES**OT**

Is 32:17 # 1283

NT

Mt 5:1-12	# 1267
3	## 1271; 1273;1277; 1285
4	## 1271; 1273; 1278;1286
5	## 1271; 1274; 1279;1287
6	## 1271;1274;1280;1288
7	##1271; 1274; 1281; 1289
8	## 1271; 1274; 1282; 1290
9	##1271; 1275; 1283; 1291
10	# 1271
Lk 14:12	# 1281
13	# 1281
Jn 4:34	# 1274

DOCTORS

St. Thomas Aquinas - I-II, q. 69 # 1269

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[NB: Translator's Note: With this Sermon 37, we come to the end of Fr. Bertoni's Parish Preaching materials that have come down to us, for the year 1806. The next Sermon we have, was delivered on ("Low") Sunday, *in Albis*, the IInd Sunday of Easter, April 5, 1807].

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