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the praise and glory of their Maker. Do not have devotion toward that light in which birds and serpents, wild beasts and domesticated animals, flies and worms take pleasure.

Touch the physical light with your physical senses, but embrace with the whole inclination of your mind the true light "which enlightens everyone coming into this world,"<sup>209</sup> that light about which the Prophet says: "Approach him and be made bright. Your faces will not blush."<sup>210</sup> These are "the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in us"; what each believer has in their heart exceeds the marvels of heaven.

(2) Yet we do not thereby suggest, dearly beloved, we do not urge, that you despise the works of God or think anything contrary to your faith about those things the good God has made "good."<sup>212</sup> Only use every kind of created thing and the "whole array"<sup>213</sup> of this world with reason and moderation. "Visible things," as the Apostle says, "last only for a time, but invisible things are eternal."<sup>214</sup>

Wherefore, since we have been born for the present but re-born for the future, let us not be given over to temporal goods but inclined toward the eternal. That we might be able to look toward our home from up close, let us think about what divine grace—in this very mystery of Christ's Birth—has conferred upon our nature. Let us hear the Apostle when he says: "You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you also will appear in glory with him,"<sup>215</sup> who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

## Sermon 28

25 December 452

Though all the divine pronouncements encourage us to rejoice always in the Lord, dearly beloved, today we are doubtless roused to spiritual gladness in a much greater degree, as this

209. Jn 1.9.

211. Cf. 1 Cor 3.16.

213. Cf. Gn 2.1.

215. Col 3.3-4.

210. Ps 33(34).6.

212. Cf. Gn 1.18.

214. 2 Cor 4.18.

mystery of the Lord's Birth shines before us more brightly. Turning our attention to that ineffable condescension by which the Creator of human beings deigned to become himself a human being, may we be found in the nature of the one whom we adore in our own.

God the Son of God—only begotten of the eternal and unbegotten Father, remaining eternally in the “form of God,”<sup>216</sup> having unchangeably and beyond time no other being than that which the Father has—received the “form of a servant.”<sup>217</sup> This happened without any damage to his majesty, so that he might lift us up to his state rather than that he should decline into ours.

As a result, so strong a bond of unity has been made between the two natures that, though each retains its own proper characteristics, whatever belongs to God cannot be separated from the man, while whatever belongs to the man cannot be disjoined from the divinity.

2. As we celebrate the birthday of our Lord and Savior, dearly beloved, let us consider in detail the child-bearing of the Blessed Virgin, so we might believe that at no moment in time was the power of the Word lacking to the body and soul once conceived. No, it was not that the “temple of Christ's body”<sup>218</sup> had been fashioned and animated beforehand, and only then did he claim it for his own, coming down into it in the manner of an inhabitant. Instead, the new man took its beginning through him and in him.

In the one Son of God and of a human being, the divinity had no mother, the humanity no father. Virginité, made fertile through the Holy Spirit, brought forth without any trace of corruption, at one and the same time, both a descendant of its own race and the Maker of its stock. Wherefore, this same Lord—as the Evangelist tells us—asked the Jews whose son the Christ would be, in so far as they had learned this from the authority of the Scriptures. When they replied that it had been revealed that he would come from the seed of David, he asks:

<sup>216</sup> Cf. Phil 2.6.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Phil 2.7.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Jn 2.21.

"How then does David call him his Lord when he says in the Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies down as a footstool for your feet." '?"<sup>219</sup> No, the Jews could not answer the question that had been put to them, for they did not understand that in the one Christ both an offspring of David and a divine nature had been foretold.

3. But the majesty of the Son (equal to that of the Father), clothing itself in the humility of a servant, had no fear of being diminished, nor was there any room for it to be increased. Through the power of the divinity, this majesty alone was able to accomplish the effect of its mercy (which it was expending on the restoration of humanity), namely, to rescue from servitude under a cruel oppressor that creature which had been made "according to the image of God."<sup>220</sup>

Yet, since the devil had not dealt with the first human beings so violently as to bring them over to his side without the consent of free will, that voluntary sin, along with the enemy's plan, needed to be destroyed in such a way that the standards of justice would not be violated by the gift of grace. In the general downfall of the entire human race, there was only one remedy in the secrets of the divine plan that could help those who had been laid low, namely, if a son of Adam, with no part in and innocent of the original betrayal, would be born to profit others with both his example and his merits.

Natural generation did not allow this, however, and a branch could not come from a diseased root through seed. Scripture says about this: "Who can make clean what has been conceived from an unclean seed? Is it not you, who alone are?"<sup>221</sup> As a result, David's Lord was made the son of David. From the "fruit" of the promised "stock,"<sup>222</sup> a shoot without defect sprang up, the two natures coming together into one Person. In one and the same Conception, one and the same Birth, our Lord Jesus Christ was brought forth. In him were both true divinity (for working miracles) and true humanity (for enduring sufferings).

219. Mt 22.43-44.

221. Jb 14.4.

220. Cf. Gn 1.27.

222. Cf. Is 4.2 and Jer 23.5.

4. As a result, dearly beloved, the Catholic Faith scorns the errors of barking heretics. Deceived by the emptiness of worldly wisdom, these have withdrawn from the Gospel of truth. Not capable of understanding the Incarnation of the Word, they have turned a source of enlightenment into an occasion of blindness for themselves. In tracing the opinions of almost all those who believe falsehoods—even those which lead to a denial of the Holy Spirit—we realize that practically no one has gone astray who did not disbelieve the reality of two natures in Christ while at the same time acknowledging a single Person.

Some have ascribed to the Lord only his humanity, others only his divinity. Some have said that his divinity was real enough, but that his flesh was only an appearance. Others have declared that he took on real flesh but did not have the nature of God the Father. These, attributing to his divinity what belongs properly to the human substance, have fabricated for themselves a greater and a lesser god, though there can be no degrees in the true divinity, for whatever is less than God is not God.

Some realized that Father and Son are not separable on a natural level. Yet, because they could not understand the unity of divine nature without a unity of Person, they insisted that the Father and Son are one and the same. As a logical consequence, to be born and to be nourished, to suffer and to die, to be buried and to rise again, all this would be predicated of the same one who, through everything, occupies both the person of a human being and the person of the Word.

There are those who thought that the Lord Jesus Christ did not have a body made of our substance but one taken from higher and finer elements. Others felt that there was no human soul in the body of Christ, but that the very divinity of the Word took the place of his soul. Their nonsense has even gone so far as to say that, though there was a soul in the Lord, it lacked a mind, because the divinity sufficed for the man to carry out all the functions of reason. Finally, these same people have presumed to assert that some part of the Word was turned into flesh. Thus, in the many-faceted variations of a single doctrine, not only the nature of flesh and of the soul, but even the very essence of the Word has been wiped out.

5. There are many other prodigious falsehoods. I ought not burden your kind attention by listing them. Yet, after these various types of godlessness (which are interconnected by the fact that they are all blasphemies of one form or another), I warn you—please give close heed—to resist especially the following errors. One of them, founded by Nestorius some time ago, tried to build up momentum—and not without considerable peril. As fully execrable, the other broke out just recently with Eutyches as its proponent.

Nestorius had the temerity to preach that the Blessed Virgin Mary was mother only to the man. This led to the belief that, in his Conception and Birth, no union occurred between the Word and the flesh, for the Son of God would not himself have become the son of a human being, but would merely have associated himself to a created human being by his good pleasure alone. Catholic ears could never tolerate this, ears so imbued with the Gospel of truth that they know with the greatest firmness that there could be no hope of salvation for the human race were he not himself both the Son of the Virgin and the Creator of his Mother.

(2) Eutyches, impious proponent of the more recent sacrilege, admitted the union of two natures in Christ. Yet he asserted that—as a result of this union—only one of the two natures remained while there was nothing at all left from the other's substance. This could only be accomplished either by absorption or separation. These things are so inimical to a sound faith that they cannot be accepted without destroying the very name of Christian.

If the Incarnation of the Word is the union of the divine and human natures in such a way that—through this very combination—what had been double became single, then the divinity alone would have been born from the Virgin's womb. It alone—in a counterfeit appearance—would have undergone nourishment and bodily growth. To leave aside all else that is subject to change in the human condition, the divinity alone was crucified, the divinity alone died, the divinity alone was buried.

Accordingly, there would be no reason for hope in resurrec-

tion, nor would Christ be the "first born from the dead,"<sup>223</sup> for no one should have been raised if there was no one who could be killed.

6. Far from your hearts be those poisonous lies inspired by the devil, dearly beloved. You know that the eternal divinity of the Son did not grow with any accretion in the presence of the Father. Take careful note of how to the nature which in Adam was told, "You are earth, and into the earth will you go,"<sup>224</sup> the same nature in Christ is told, "Sit at my right hand."<sup>225</sup>

According to that nature in which Christ is equal to the Father, the Only-Begotten was never inferior to the Begetter in sublimity, nor is his glory with the Father only temporal, for he is the very right hand of the Father. Concerning him is it said in Exodus, "Your right hand, o Lord, has been glorified in power,"<sup>226</sup> and in Isaiah, "Lord, who has believed what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"<sup>227</sup>

(2) Man, taken up into the Son of God, was so received into the unity of Christ's Person from its very bodily origins, that he was not conceived without the divinity, nor born without the divinity, nor nourished without the divinity. He was the same Person in miracles as he was in dishonor. Through human weakness, he was crucified, died, and was buried. Through divine power, he rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father. In the nature of man, he received from the Father what, in the nature of his divinity, he himself gave.

7. Meditating upon these things with a reverent heart, dearly beloved, bear always in mind that precept of the Apostle, for it gives warning to us all: "See to it that no one deceive you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition and not according to Christ. For, in him dwells all the fullness of divinity according to the flesh, and you have been filled in him."<sup>228</sup> He did not say "according to the spirit," but "according to the flesh," so that we may understand the true

223. Cf. Col 1.18.

225. Ps 109(110).1.

227. Is 53.1.

224. Gn 3.19.

226. Ex 15.6.

228. Col 2.8-10.

substance of flesh to be where there is the bodily dwelling of the fullness of divinity. With it is the whole Church thereby filled. Clinging to the head, the Church is the body of Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

### Sermon 29

25 December 453

Indeed, dearly beloved, the greatness of God's work surpasses and completely transcends the powers of human eloquence. What makes it so difficult to speak, however, also forbids us to remain silent. In Jesus Christ the Son of God, that which has been said through a prophet (i.e., "Who will recount his generation?"<sup>229</sup>) pertains not only to the divine essence, but to the human one as well. Speech cannot explain how the two substances came together into a single Person. Faith simply believes it. As a result, subject matter for praise never runs out, since the talent of a praiser can never exhaust it.

Let us rejoice, therefore, in the fact that we cannot measure up to expounding a mystery that involves such great mercy. Since we are incapable of expressing the profoundness of our salvation, let us think it good for us to be overwhelmed. No one draws closer to an understanding of the truth than the one who realizes that, when it comes to divine things, even if much progress has been made, there always remains something to be sought after. Whoever presumes to have arrived at the goal has not lighted upon what was being sought. Instead, that person has given out on the searching.

(2) Let us not, however, be disturbed by the constraints of our weakness. Words from the Gospels and the prophetic writings lend us aid. By them, we are inflamed and instructed. We do not feel that we are so much reflecting back upon the Nativity of our Lord (when "the Word was made flesh"<sup>230</sup>) in the past, but we are viewing it in the present.

What the angel of the Lord announced to the shepherds as

229. Is 53.8.

230. Jn 1.14.



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5. What the false witnesses, therefore, what the blood-stained elders, what the wicked priests did to the Lord Jesus Christ by making use of a cowardly judge and employing an unknowing cohort must be both detested and embraced by all ages. As cruel for the minds of Jews was the Lord's Cross as it was marvelous in the strength of the Crucifixion. People raged against one person, but Christ had mercy on all. Savagery that was done to him he accepted willingly, that by allowing the crime he might complete the work of his eternal will.

6. The whole order of events that the Gospel narrative fully describes must be received by the faithful hearing it, so that, by a saving faith in the actions then completed during the time of our Lord's Passion, we should understand not only the forgiveness of sins to have been accomplished in Christ, but also the pattern of justice to have been set forth. So that this might be discussed in greater detail with the Lord's help, let this part of our sermon be saved for Wednesday of this week. The grace of God may be with us, as we hope, and this, with the help of your prayers, will enable us to fulfill our promises, through our Lord Jesus Christ who with the Father and the Holy Spirit reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

### Sermon 63

*19 March 452—Wednesday of Holy Week*

Our Lord's Passion, dearly beloved, about which we promised to speak again today, has an especially wonderful glory due to the mystery of his humility. That humility both redeemed us all and taught us all, so that righteousness would spring from the same one who had paid the price.

God's Son, in his omnipotence (equal to the Father through the same essence), could in fact have rescued the human race from the devil's sway by nothing more than a command from his will. It was especially in conformity with his divine work, however, that the hostility of that enemy's wickedness should be overcome by what he had conquered, and that the liberty of one nature should be restored through the same nature by which the captivity of all had been brought into effect.

When, however, the Evangelist said, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,"<sup>229</sup> and when the Apostle said, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,"<sup>230</sup> it was shown that the Only-Begotten of the Father Most High entered into such fellowship with human lowliness that one and the same Son of God remained after he had taken on himself the substance of our body and soul, our substance (to enrich it) and not his own, because weakness had to be enriched and not strength. That way, when the creature was united to its Creator, nothing divine was lacking to what was assumed, nothing human to that assuming.

2. This design of God's holiness and mercy, though draped in past ages with some kind of veil, was not so hidden that it was denied to the understanding of holy people who, from the beginning up to the coming of Christ, stood out as praiseworthy. That salvation which was to come in Christ had in fact been promised both by the words of prophets and by the signs of all that happened. Not only did those who preached it attain to it, but all those who believed the preachers as well. One faith justifies the holy people of all times. Whatever we confess as having been done by Jesus Christ, the "Mediator between God and human beings,"<sup>231</sup> or whatever our fathers worshipped as still to come, all belongs to the same hope of the faithful.

There is no distinction "between Jews and Gentiles."<sup>232</sup> Indeed, as the Apostle says, "circumcision is nothing, prepuce is nothing; but the keeping of God's commands."<sup>233</sup> These commands, if they are maintained in the integrity of faith, make true "children of Abraham,"<sup>234</sup> that is to say, perfect Christians, as the same Apostle says: "All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves in Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. All of you are one in Christ. But, if you belong to Christ, you are therefore the posterity of Abraham, heirs according to the promise."<sup>235</sup>

3. There can be no doubt, then, dearly beloved, that the hu-

229. Jn 1.14.

231. Cf. 1 Tm 2.5.

233. 1 Cor 7.19.

235. Gal 3.27-29.

230. 2 Cor 5.19.

232. Cf. Rom 10.12.

234. Cf. Gal 3.7.

man nature has been taken up into such a cohesion by the Son of God that he is one and the same Christ not only in that "firstborn of all creation,"<sup>236</sup> but in all his saints as well. Just as a head cannot be divided from its members, so the members cannot be divided from their head. It may not pertain to this life, but to eternal life, "that God is all in all."<sup>237</sup> Nevertheless, even now he is the Undivided Dweller in his own temple, which is the Church, as he himself promised, saying, "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of time."<sup>238</sup> Echoing this, the Apostle says: "He himself is the Head of the body, the Church, he who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that he himself may be in all things, holding the primacy, because it pleased God that all fullness reside in him, and through him to reconcile all things in himself."<sup>239</sup>

4. By these and many other citations, what has been instilled in our hearts if not that we should be "renewed" through them all "into the image"<sup>240</sup> of that one who, remaining "in the form of God,"<sup>241</sup> condescended to become "the form of sinful flesh?"<sup>242</sup> He assumed all those weaknesses of ours which come as a result of sin, though "without" any part in "sin."<sup>243</sup> Consequently, he lacked none of the afflictions due to hunger and thirst, sleep and weariness, sadness and tears. He endured grievous sorrows even to the point of death. No one could be released from the fetters of mortality unless he, in whom alone the nature of all people was innocent, should allow himself to be killed by the hands of wicked men.

Our Savior, the Son of God, gave both a mystery and an example to all who believe in him, so that they might attain to the one by being reborn, and arrive at the other by imitation. Blessed Peter the apostle teaches this, saying: "Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his footsteps. He did no wrong, nor was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not counter with threats, but gave himself over

236. Cf. Col 1.15.

238. Mt 28.20.

240. Cf. Col 3.10.

242. Cf. Rom 8.3 and Phil 2.7.

237. Cf. 1 Cor 15.28.

239. Col 1.18-20.

241. Cf. Phil 2.6.

243. Cf. Heb 4.15.

to the one judging him unjustly. He himself bore our sins in his own body on the cross, so that, dead to sin, we might live for holiness."<sup>244</sup>

5. No believer, dearly beloved, is to be denied the gifts of grace. Likewise, no one has not become indebted to Christian discipline. Although the rigor of that figurative law has been revoked, the benefit of voluntary observance has increased nonetheless. As John the Evangelist said, "though the law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ."<sup>245</sup> All that has come according to the law—whether in the circumcision of flesh, or in the diversity of victims, or in the Sabbath observance—all bore witness to Christ and foretold the grace of Christ.

He himself "terminates the law,"<sup>246</sup> not by emptying out its figures but by fulfilling them, for he is the author of both old and new. He has changed the mysteries of the prefigured promises by completing these promises. He put an end to expectations when he came as the Expected One. Among the moral precepts, however, no decrees of the earlier Testament were repudiated. By the Gospel teaching, however, many have been broadened, so that those granting salvation would be more perfect and more clear than those promising a Savior.<sup>247</sup>

6. Consequently, all that the Son of God "did and taught" for reconciling the world, we have not so much learned from the account of past events as we have felt in the force of present works. He it is who, born from his Virgin Mother by the Holy Spirit, enriches his untainted Church with the same inspiration—until through the birth of Baptism an innumerable throng of God's children have been born. Concerning them it is said: "Who were born not from blood, nor from the will of human beings, nor from the will of flesh, but from God."<sup>248</sup>

He it is in whom the seed of Abraham was blessed with the adoption of the whole world. Consequently, that patriarch has been made father of the nations, since children of promise are

244. 1 Pt 2.21–24.

246. Cf. Rom 10.4.

248. Jn 1.13.

245. Jn 1.17.

247. Cf. Augustine, *Enar. in Ps* 72.3.

born not of flesh but in faith.<sup>249</sup> He does not make exceptions for any nation. From every nation under heaven,<sup>250</sup> he has made one flock of holy sheep, fulfilling on a daily basis what he had promised, saying: "I also have other sheep that are not of this fold, and I must lead them. They will hear my voice, and there will be one flock and one shepherd."<sup>251</sup>

It was primarily to blessed Peter that he said, "Feed my sheep."<sup>252</sup> All shepherds, however, are directed in this duty by the same Lord. So fruitful and so well-watered are the pastures in which he nourishes those who come to the rock,<sup>253</sup> that innumerable sheep, strengthened with the abundance of his love, do not hesitate to die for the name of their Shepherd, even as the Good Shepherd was willing to "lay down his life for the sheep."<sup>254</sup> With him, not only the glorious courage of martyrs but also the faith of all who have been reborn suffer together in that same rebirth.

Even while we renounce the devil and believe in God, while we pass into new things from old, while we put aside the "image" of this "earthly" human being and take on the form of that heavenly one,<sup>255</sup> a kind of "death" and a certain "likeness of resurrection" happens.<sup>256</sup> Taken up by Christ and taking on Christ, then, we are not the same after the purification of Baptism as we were before it. Instead, the bodies of those reborn turn into the flesh of the Crucified.

7. "This transformation," dearly beloved, belongs to the "right hand of the Most High."<sup>257</sup> He "accomplishes all in all,"<sup>258</sup> so that, from the quality of "good lives" led by every single believer, we might recognize the very Author of those "good works."<sup>259</sup> We give thanks to the mercy of God for adorning the whole body of the Church with innumerable gifts of grace. Through many rays of the one light, the same splendor appears everywhere, nor can Christians merit from anything

249. Cf. Rom 4.12-18.

251. Jn 10.16.

253. Cf. 1 Cor 10.4.

255. Cf. 1 Cor 15.49.

257. Cf. Ps 76(77).11.

259. Cf. 1 Pt 2.12.

250. Acts 2.5.

252. Jn 21.17.

254. Cf. Jn 10.15.

256. Cf. Rom 6.5.

258. 1 Cor 12.6.

besides the glory of Christ. This is that "true light" which justifies and "enlightens every human being."<sup>260</sup> This is what he has "rescued from the power of darkness, bringing it into the kingdom of "God's Son."<sup>261</sup> This is what raises up the soul's desire through a "newness of life"<sup>262</sup> while extinguishing lusts of the flesh. This is how the Lord's Passover is properly celebrated "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

When the "yeast of the old evil" has been thrown out,<sup>263</sup> the "new creature"<sup>264</sup> receives food and drink from the Lord himself. This partaking in the body and blood of Christ means nothing else than that we should pass over into what we have taken in. Since we have died with him and are buried with him and are risen with him, let us bear him through all things both in spirit and in flesh, as the Apostle says: "You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, however, you too will appear with him in glory,"<sup>265</sup> who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

## Sermon 64

5 April 453—Palm Sunday

All times, indeed, dearly beloved, engage the souls of Christians in the mystery of our Lord's Passion and Resurrection. No observance in our religion fails to celebrate the reconciliation of the world and taking up of human nature in Christ. Now, however, the Universal Church ought to be instructed with greater understanding and inflamed with a more fervent hope—at a time when the dignity of these events finds direct expression in the recurrence of holy days and in the pages of Gospel truth, to such an extent that the Lord's Passover ought not so much to be remembered (to have happened in the past) as honored (to be a present reality).

In some of these things which pertain to the Cross of Jesus

260. Cf. Jn 1.9.

262. Cf. Rom 6.4.

264. Cf. Gal 6.15 and 2 Cor 5.17.

261. Cf. Col 1.13.

263. Cf. 1 Cor 5.8.

265. Col 3.3-4.



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## COMMEMORATING ALARIC'S INVASION OF ROME

After the fall of Carthage (19 October 439), the Vandals severely threatened the whole Mediterranean area, particularly Italy and Rome. They reached Sicily but did not enter Italy. In 442 Valentinian III was obliged to accept the treaty offered by Gaiseric, the Vandal leader.

Alaric had sacked Rome on 28 August 410, and a commemoration of gratitude for Rome's deliverance had been held annually ever since. During the years immediately preceding the treaty with Gaiseric (441–442), the first years of Leo's pontificate, people attended the anniversary celebration in great numbers as the Vandals were threatening. After the treaty had been concluded, however, their relief led to anniversary celebrations that were—on this particular occasion at least—very sparsely attended.

"More effort is spent on demons than on the apostles, and the wild entertainments draw greater crowds than the shrines of martyrs. Who restored this city to safety? Who snatched it from captivity? Who protected it from slaughter? Was it the games of the circus, or the watchful care of saints?" (*Serm.* 84.1) "Let us attribute our deliverance not, as the pagans think, to the effects of stars, but to the inexpressible mercy of almighty God, who willed to soften the hearts of raging barbarians" (*Serm.* 84.2).

### Sermon 84

*30 August or 6 September 442*



**T**HAT RELIGIOUS DEVOTION, dearly beloved, with which the whole body of the faithful used to come together to give thanks to God for the day of our chastisement and of our liberation, has recently been neglected by almost everyone, as the very scarcity of the few who were present has shown. It brings much sadness to my heart and produces very great anxiety. There is serious danger in being ungrateful to God and, through forgetfulness of his benefits, feeling neither remorse after his correction nor joy in his pardon.

I fear then, dearly beloved, that the voice of the prophet

seems to have reproached just such people in saying: "You have scourged them, and they have not felt pain. You have punished them, and they have refused to accept the discipline."<sup>1</sup> What correction does one see in them when such great rejection is found? It shames me to say it, but one must not keep silent. More effort is spent on demons than on the apostles, and the wild entertainments draw greater crowds than the shrines of martyrs.

Who restored this city to safety? Who snatched it from captivity? Who protected it from slaughter? Was it the games of the circus, or the watchful care of saints? Assuredly, it was by their prayers that the sentence of divine judgment was appeased, so that we who deserved wrath might be saved for forgiveness.

2. I beg, dearly beloved, that your hearts may be touched by that statement of our Savior, who, when he had cleansed the "ten lepers" by the power of his mercy, said that only "one of them returned to give thanks."<sup>2</sup> He clearly pointed out about the ungrateful ones that, even if they had attained bodily health, they did not have spiritual health because they were lacking in this duty of reciprocity. Lest this mark of the ungrateful be attributed to you, dearly beloved, return to the Lord and realize the wonderful things he has been willing to do for us. Let us attribute our deliverance not, as the pagans think, to the effects of stars, but to the inexpressible mercy of Almighty God, who willed to soften the hearts of raging barbarians.

(2) Therefore, devote yourselves to the memory of such great kindness with the whole energy of your faith. Greater penance must be used to cure a serious negligence. For our correction, let us make use of the gentleness of one who spares us, that blessed Peter and all the saints who have been with us in many difficulties may be willing to help our prayers for you to the merciful God, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

1. Jer 5.3.

2. Cf. Lk 17.15-18.