

# **An ASPECT OF THE MARIOLOGY OF St. GASPAR BERTONI**



*'I greet you, O my Mother; give me your blessing...'*

Prayer to the Virgin Mary by St. Gaspar Bertoni, and image highly esteemed by him.

## **in his PARISH SERMONS**

**Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS**

**Palm Sunday, 2017**

**[For the Private use of the Stigmatines]**

**TABLE of CONTENTS**

			Year	MssB	P.
Presentation					4
Sermon 8	The Holy House and our Hearts	The Holy House transferred into our Hearts: or, Our Hearts made a Temple of God: Preached on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent in the Church of St. Paul, of C.M., in the year 1801, on the 13 <sup>th</sup> of December, in Verona, for the solemnity celebrated for the young women of the Parish, of the Transferral of the Holy House of Loreto. It lasted 38 minutes.	1801	573 - 592	6
Sermon 11	Devotion	On Easter Tuesday, preached in the Venerable Church of St. Paul's of C.M., in Verona, 1801 [sic!??], on April 20 <sup>th</sup> .	1801	632 - 648	13
Sermon 29	Mary's Name	Preached in St. Paul's of C.M., in Verona, on the left side, in the year 1805, on the 15 <sup>th</sup> of September, on the 15 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. – It lasted about a half hour.		1069 - 1093	19
Sermon 36	External Cult	The Most Holy Rosary.	1806	1241 - 1266	27
Notes for Sermon 39	The Holy Rosary	There follow here several pages of notes, or perhaps a rough outline, that Fr. Bertoni drew up in his composition of <u>Sermon 39</u> , on the Rosary. There are over 16 typed long pages of these notes [translator's note].	1807	1323 - 1333	33

Notes for Sermon 39	The Holy Rosary	A rough sketch of the Complete draft	1807	1334 - 1364	38
Sermon 39	The Holy Rosary	On the 4th Day of October, 1807, Verona, in St. Paul's, of Campo Marzio.	1807	1365 - 1397	49
Special Cult	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 [Inserted here]. [## 1484-1546]  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.	1806	1484 - 1546	62

+

+++

+

## Presentation

[1] In devotion, we meet the Lord! For so many, ‘devotion’ seems dry, distracted and is that time when our daily heartaches come to the fore. True Devotion, however, for St. Thomas Aquinas, means the readiness to give oneself over totally to the Merciful Lord. True devotion, as is often said, provides wings to flow, and feet with which to plod our daily way of the Cross unto eternal life. One’s own personal preferences are more clearly understood as gifts of God – while at the same time, accepting those and these sentiments lead to deeper devotion. The appeal of the Devotion of the Church leads us to resolve – that no matter how much time may be left in life, one gradually comes to desire to offer all of life to God – this world is passing by [cf. 1 Co 7:22]. Devotion leads us to “put on Christ”, the authentic nuptial garment, in the initiation into His Eternal Nuptials.

[2] While the Devotion to the Holy House of Loreto may not have ever been among the most popular of the external devotions. However, it is a constant invitation to ponder on those who lived in such a House in NT times: God Himself dwelt here as the entire Trinity now dwells in the souls of those open to His grace. We are His Temple leading us toward eternal Peace with God. The appeal is to offer Him glory as we strive to carry our own daily crosses. As we delight in the Lord, He is already present to heed our requests, challenge any selfishness on our part. Eternity is an eternal espousals [Ho 2:15, ff.]. The Wedding Garment we are called to put on is found through our Devotion, Dedication, self-giving, to Jesus Christ. Put on Jesus Christ and we are in a holy espousals when we can be one with the Lord [1 Co 6:17]. Jesus Christ is at the door of hearts – wants ever so much to come in and dine with us. Let us rejoice in the wine of His Love!

[3] External worship is a manifestation of what is going on within. Religion is that virtue by which the Faithful render due and supreme worship to God. The soul of devotion is the human heart in grace. As air is illumined by the bright and warming sun, this is what faith is to the human mind – all internal spiritual acts serve as principles of future growth – leading us to join our many oblations to the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ [cf. 1 P 2:3,ff.]. In our hearts we believe, in the proclamation of our mouths expressing our prayer.

[4] Mary’s Holy Name is channeled to others through our vibrant faith. St. Gaspar wanted to be like a small channel bringing the refreshing waters of faith to those thirsting for the Lord. Wisdom’s counsels are deeper than the abyss of the sea, and that of all the oceans – yet, the God of all took up dwelling the confines of Mary’s pure heart and womb. We call out to her in our lowly obsequiousness – she is our Star of the Sea, our Mistress of vast expanses of life. As our much gifted late confrere, Fr.

Cornelio Fabro, CSS stated with St. Thomas that the Grace of Mary is a unique share in that of Jesus'!

**[5]** The Rosary is one of the traditional central Devotions in the Church was brought to us by St. Dominic – promulgated, then, by the Dominican Pope, St. Pius Vth [who as Pope kept his Dominican habit - and in our age, all Popes ever since wear white]. This devotion unites both vocal and mental prayer. Like the 'Rose' from which it is named, it offers fragrance, and provides a protective hedge for the Faithful, and brings shade to the afflicted and to the troubled. Adam and Eve brought about death through the thorns of sin, the Mary like a Rose, brings about salvation through the Lord. The Mystical Rose heals sinners, sends out its fragrance to attract souls to the Lord, brings joy and strength to the wavering, crowns the saints. Following the guidance of the rosary we are led to the most sublime mystery of all to contemplate: the life, death and eternal glory of the Son of God. As it was associated with the victory of Lepanto, it leads the soul into the life of Spiritual Combat – St. Pius Vth established this feast of encouragement to assist all in the overcoming of all Evil.

+++++

There follows here as translation of some of the early Parish sermons of St. Gaspar Bertoni which present his personal devotion to the Blessed Mother – [and there is no mention of her as Spouse of Joseph by St. Gaspar] – in order to inspire of those who listened to him might live a Devout Life.

+

+++

+

## SERMON 8

### The Holy House transferred into our Hearts: or, Our Hearts made Temples of God

[Preached on the IIIrd Sunday of Advent, in the Church of St. Paul, Campo Marzio, in the year 1801, on December 13th, for the Solemnity celebrated by the Young Ladies of the Parish at the Translation of the Holy House of Loreto. It lasted 38 minutes].

**573:** It is very hard for me to say, my listeners, whether these devout young ladies, so committed on this day to honor Mary, could better satisfy their intense fervor by nourishing in themselves this very tender devotion, or by spreading it also to us. The best way to achieve both seems to me in this, their solemnity, is to recall to our spirits the memory of that prodigious venture in which the Holy House of Mary, taken from Nazareth, out of the hands of barbarians, was seen to fly one day over large tracts of lands and seas on angel wings, until it came to our shores in Italy, and ultimately to be set up among us in a stable manner at Loreto.

**574:** And what else is this if not a sweet invitation extended to our hearts? Are we not being invited to visit in spirit those sacred walls, in order to see and kiss them, together with devout pilgrims from the most remote parts of Europe? O blessed walls! Happy custodians for a time of that beautiful lily of the heavenly gardens that grew within your enclosure. There the lily grew and diffused its most precious odor, that sufficed to fill the entire world with its fragrance. You are more splendid than sovereign royal palaces, and there received the Queen of Heaven, **the Spouse of God**. You are witnesses of that ambassador's mission of the Angel. And what is even more, you were witnesses of that august mystery of the Incarnation. O blessed walls! A House consecrated by the divine mysteries! O what sublime, and most sweet affections you inspire in us!

**575:** So, I have put it very well, my hearers, that these young women could not have presented an any more sweeter object for our devotion, nor could they better satisfy their own. Except, though, it seems to me that the Virgin Mary herself wishes to compensate on this point, with the present occasion with her own most pleasing obsequious devotion. If, then, it is true that all our sufficiency comes from God, and that we are incapable of ourselves to produce a single good thought - I do not know of any other source for what I will say. This is the origin of the holy thought that has formed in my mind and has remained there always with great constancy, in order to communicate it on this day to you, my entire devout audience.

**576:** PROPOSITION: It seems to me, my hearers, that God is asking of each one of us, on this day, our hearts. He does this so that just like the House of Loreto, so these hearts of ours, He wishes to consecrate, by making them a Temple where He resides.

I will do nothing else, then, than follow in this thought the traces of the present Gospel [Jn 1:19-28]. This will prepare the path for the Lord by disposing you **to give yourselves over to Him** with even greater willingness. This is particularly necessary should there be anyone among you with a spirit so disheartened that such an individual might refuse out of excessive timidity such a sublime coming.

**577:** FOUNDATION: And so that no one might think that I am perhaps excessive in proposing very beautiful considerations, rather than those based on what we believe, or practices that can be verified, just listen here at the beginning to how the Apostles speaks: *..Do you know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?...* [1 Co 3:16]. In fact, while it can be said that God by His immensity is everywhere, He dwells in a special manner in the hearts of the just. To these, He communicates not only grace with all gifts, but the Spirit Himself, the author of all grace and of every gift.

Now, for the sake of our leading you to love such a state even more, I beg you to consider with me for a little while, the happiness of a soul who already, must fortunately possesses Him.

**578:** 1. Supreme happiness of a soul in which God dwells, as in His Temple:

Absolutely: Here is such a soul, which is much like a most pleasant, delightful temple, or palace. He Himself, God, has chosen and prepared to reside there, and to find His happiness. We notice, by the way, that all Princes have a place of their delight and for their recreation. And here there is explained all that magnificence of a prince, in embellishing its balconies, providing it with superb and splendid halls, and most amenable gardens. And just where is the place of the delights for this King of Heaven - do you know where it is? Here it is: *... my delights were to be with the children of men...* What I want is to converse with them, in the most intimate way, in their hearts, and there speak with great peace, with My Servant. It is to here that He calls out to them, with sweet invitation, by saying: Come! Liberate yourselves from all anxious cares; empty yourselves from all impertinent affections of this world. Then you will experience how good, how sweet is your Lord, your God.

**579:** How fortunate is such a soul! She does not have to arise and go about the city in the streets and the broad ways, seeking Him alone whom she loves [Ct 3:2]. But, she has already found Him Whom she loves [v. 4] - she already has found Him in the midst of her heart. Such a soul can put it even better: *...My Beloved to Me... and I to Him...* [Ct 2:16]... *I will hold Him and not let Him go...* [Ct 3L4].

What peace, then, what serenity, do we believe, my listeners, should such a soul not enjoy? St. Paul has already predicted it, by saying: *... being justified, therefore, by faith, let us have peace with God ...* [Rm 5:1]. Not only does one enjoy

it in the present, but in an anticipated way, also that of the future, by hoping for the glory of God's own children, as the Apostle continues [v. 2]. David has put it well when he said that it would not come in drops, but in streams of great power that would bring joy into the soul that God sanctifies [Ps 45:5; 35:9].

**580:** And no matter how much the tribulations of this life seem to put up a dike to the free course of heavenly consolations, really all they do is gather them into a greater abundance. They seem to re-double their full impetuosity, so that in their superabundance they overflow. This is why we can even glory in these trials, as the Holy Doctor of all the just states: *...And not only so; but we glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulations work patience... [Rm 5:3]...and patience in trial, and hope in trial... [v. 4].... and hope confounds not: because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts... [v. 5].* O, what beautiful words these are: .... *by the Holy Spirit, who is given to us.../* The Spirit of God, in fact, making the soul a participant in His love, sanctifies the person and therefore, **approaches the soul as a most sweet spouse**, dwells within her, and finds His delight there.

**581:** What happiness, Ladies and Gentlemen, to have God within us! He is the supreme good Who can perfectly fulfill all our powers, because in Him are all the hidden perfections. All the just are at home here, as each one is satisfied in accord with the personal inclination. And this is why in one place in Scripture [Apoc 2:17] it is called hidden manna. Another passage puts it this way: *... Delight in the Lord, and He will give you the requests of your heart... [Ps 36:4].*

**582:** COMPARATIVELY: Do we love pleasurable goods? But, when could we ever have them in greater abundance than when we will possess that One Who is all good, all sweetness?

Do we delight in friendships? And what friend can be ever more dear than God? Friends love us because there is some good in us; but, it is God's love that causes this goodness. Hence, God loves us even while we are evil, in order to make us good by extending His own goodness. He loves us even in our deformity, in order to embellish us with His own glory. And who can put off such love as His? Through all your cares on the Lord, says the Prophet [Ps 54:23] and He will sustain you. He is liberal in our needs; He is light in our doubts; consolation in our travail; refuge in our sufferings; repose in our fatigue. He is our Support, our Strength and our Peace.

**583:** Do we love honors? But, what greater honor is there than being Temples of God [1 Co 3: 16], to glorify and to carry God in our mortal bodies, according to the phrase of the Apostle: [1 Co 6:20]. If so much honor is due to churches because they are the material temples of God's majesty, how much more should a living temple be honored both by the Angels and by other human beings? **Is not such a Temple all splendid, so interior, in which are conducted the most chaste espousals between**



**God and the soul? This was already predicted by His Prophets: ... *And I will espouse you to Myself forever...* [Ho 2:19, ff.]. I will espouse you in faith, in justice, in charity, as these are the three precious gems with which He adorns her.**

**584:** Surely you would like to see also the **wedding-dress of this Heavenly Spouse**. St. Paul will show you how truly wondrous it is! He tells us: ... *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ...* [Rm 13:14]. And to what beauty might there be compared to that of a soul whom God forms **to make of her His own spouse? The colors to paint this are lacking to me**. I will only say to you, full of stupor, with the Apostle himself: ...*But whoever is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him...* [1 Co 6:17].

**585:** 2. Happiness is possible even to sinners: And what do you think, my listeners? I can see that on this day I could not sound more sweet chords than in the hearts of such a pious and devout audience. However, I also see still that some souls among you hold back out of an excessive timidity from such a sweet invitation as this. Perhaps there are those who are saying to themselves: O God, these are pretty things, but they are not for me.

I understand you, I understand. You do fear perhaps your grave sins and your familiar wretchedness. But, what if despite all this, I could make you see with your very eyes Christ Himself at the door of your heart? What if you were to hear Him asking to come in? Well, open for yourselves the divine Scriptures and you will read in the Apocalypse 3:20, where it is written: just listen to Christ's own words: ... *Behold, I stand at the gate and knock...* Who could doubt this, or that faith itself would not give you greater certainty than any senses you have?

**586:** Yes, I am standing at the gate of your heart. And of what heart is He speaking if not your own, o sinner, while He is already within the just and well received as a peaceful Possessor? He is knocking at your heart's door in this very instant with so many lights, with so many impulses. He is putting before your eyes the supreme happiness to which you can arrive, with those very affections that by chance this sermon is inspiring you. Yes, I am knocking. If anyone will open the door to me, I will come in to be with him. He speaks as would a guest who comes in the night, and means that He is forgetful of all past injury and ejection. He truly wants to be with you with the great intimacy of friendship, and to receive your obsequious response.

**587:** He not only says: *I will come into him...*, but also: ... *and will sup with him, and he with Me...* [Apoc 3:20]. In other words, I will make Myself right at home and allow Myself to be entertained with utmost confidence. This will be My delight, conversing in familiar manner with such a person, just as bosom friends do, and with much happiness. And this person will deal with Me in the same manner in this delicious chamber of heavenly pleasures, in the use of My Sacraments and in the communication of My most sweet and loving secrets. I will not refuse this individual

at My Table. It is clear that here Christ is speaking always as a guest, but One Who is most wealthy and accommodating. And is entering the home of others He benefits this considerably and brings more gifts than He could ever receive.

**588:** Are you surprised at such goodness to sinners? For my part, I would be much more surprised in seeing that He is not merely content in having spoken to us of His love through His servants and prophets But, the fact is that He has descended from heaven, has vested Himself as a man to chaste after us in Person. He is much like a King St. John Chrysostom would say<sup>1</sup> - **He is like a King, Who has fallen in love with a lowly shepherd girl. He is resolved to take her from her hut, to bring her to His royal palace to make her His spouse. He does not content Himself merely in sending illustrious ambassadors to her, but comes down from His Throne and puts aside all His glory. It almost seems as though He were afraid of frightening her with His overwhelming splendor and of confusing her simplicity. For this reason, He Himself dresses in Shepherd's guise, and looks for her through the forest. He assumes lowly and simply manners, in order that He might strike up a conversation with her and speak to her about His love.**

O God, and we wonder about the transports of lovers? But, here we have a **loving King, who goes far beyond any of them being transported by His love, even to the point of leaving behind His life for us.**

**What love, what love! Our insensitivity can no longer find reason for denying entrance into our hearts to a King Who is so loving and so tender, who is asking this of us, and begs this of us, only to make us happy.**

**589:** PERORATION: That unusual jubilation that shows on your faces, beloved hearers, is even more manifest on this day. This leads me to the conviction that you have not opened up your hearts to this loving Guest. So, I could not even describe the joy that this causes me. But, at the same time - alas! - should there be even a single soul among you who has not experienced such a loving invitation, then how could my joy be perfect? Would I not be then denied the most beautiful portion of that fruit that I had already thought was the most sure?

**590:** However, I do not despair of this now. Just look, unhappy and wretched soul, the total boldness that inspires me, and I address myself to you, should there be such person here. I ask you to pay heed to these my final words. It is true-God wants you. God is following after you to ask of you your heart. What do you do? What are you thinking? Why do you still doubt? You see how sad your heart is, even to the point of moaning. Just think of how long it is that you find yourself captive of a tyrannical

---

<sup>1</sup>St. John Chrysostom, *In Ps 5:2*. t. 5, 19/1 D, ff.

affection that oppresses you. You are anguished by all kinds of wild thoughts, fed only on suffering, closed in the shadows of sadness and fears.

You have been made for God. Why do you persist in serving sin? How many times has He not asked of you that aft so many unhappy experiences, that you let yourself open up to a priest? Why do you not return to your God, whom you have cruelly denied thus far? And is not all this really true? So you see that God Himself right now is moved with compassion in your regard, He is looking for you, **He is drawing you.**

**591:** Whoever you may be, o brothers and sisters, whose hearts God might be touching so powerfully on this day, have compassion yourselves on Him. Offer solace to this poor Heart; just do what He asks you, who only seeks what is best for you. What contentment you will then experience! How new it will all seem to you to experience yourselves totally belonging to God, finding yourself surrounded by so many delights, now that so many disturbances have passed! What comfort you will experience in seeing your soul, much like a magnificent temple. You will be able to converse with God with a good conscience in peace - where earlier all was a den of demons and of evil affections that troubled and pummeled you at every hour! You will find within every consolation, and will no longer be afflicted by the past, but will know only the sweet joy of this present and the joyful hope of the future. And would you delay even a single moment in obtaining for yourself such a sublime happiness? Christ is already waiting for you. Mary calls out to you. Yes, she really yearns that you open your heart to her Son. If you should still be resisting my words, do not resist any more her loving hands.

**592:** COLLOQUY: Holy Virgin, behold us at your feet. to you, all our vision, all our confidence, and all our supplications are directed to you. Yes, to you is due the honor of this victory, as you have inspired its counsel. Look, even a few tears appear, expression of a more profound regret, and these will wash away past faults. It is toward you that the sinner now turns, is already resolved, and already makes hi offer. The triumph is complete.

Let us rejoice in this love, in the Mother of such beautiful love. Let us exult, all of us, my brothers and sisters. Let us praise God, let us praise Mary.

And you, most chaste young ladies, more than all others, the Virgin, your Lady, has so well compensated your obsequious offerings. You honor her house, and she has made your hearts the Temple of her son. And not only this: but because of you, great happiness has come to us. So, we hope that after having welcomed our loving Kin as a Guest in our hearts, He will make room for us in His Kingdom, where with Him we will live forever.

+++++

**Sources****OT**

<b>Bible quote</b>	<b>MssB #</b>
Ps 35:9	579
Ps 36:4	581
Ps 45:9	579
Ps 54:23	579
Ct 2:16	579

<b>Bible quote</b>	<b>MssB #</b>
Ct 3:2	579
Ct 3:4	579 [2 x]
Pr 8:31	578
Ho 2:19, ff.	583

**NT**

<b>Bible quote</b>	<b>MssB #</b>
Rm 5:1	579
Rm 5:2	579
Rm 5:3	580
Rm 5:4	580
Rm 5:5	580

<b>Bible quote</b>	<b>MssB #</b>
1 Co 3:16	577; 583
1 Co 6:17	584
1 Co 6:20	583
Jn 1:19-28	576
Apoc. 2:17	581
Apoc. 3:20	585; 587

**Fathers & Doctors**

St. John Chrysostom, <i>In Ps 5</i> , 2. t. 5, 19/1 D	# 588
---	-------

+

+++

+

**V632:****SERMON 11****On Devotion**

**Preached on the Tuesday after Easter, in the Venerable Church of St. Paul's, Campo Marzio, in Verona, in the year 1801 [1802 ??], on April 20th.**

The lovable Master, Christ Jesus, enters on this day among His disciples, to console them with a royal testimony of His glorious resurrection, extending peace to them: ... *Peace be to you; it is I, fear not...*! [Lk 24:36] And yet, who would believe this? At such a consoling sight, and with His words of such genuine affection, they were all terrified, as though they were seeing some horrible specter. They paled before Him and trembled as though at a mournful announcement of a said death: ... *but they, being troubled and frightened, supposed they saw a spirit...* [v. 37].

Is this surprising to you, my listeners? The scene is in truth quite unusual, but not altogether rare, even in our own days. How many Christians are there not even among modern Christians, who withdraw in fright from approaching their Lord more closely! How many express fear rather than coming to serve Him with greater perfection in their state! They do indeed at certain times, feel alive, with lights penetrating into their minds, and at the same time, experiencing strong but gentle inspirations in their hearts. But to what avail! The more evident pledges and surer offerings of peace become for them as many arguments for discouragement and consternation.

**633:** They look upon the devout life as an object of sadness, of anguish and horror. They make quite clear by their very actions, the extent of the errors and deception anyone would be subject to who would care to judge spiritual matters with an earthy eye, even carnal. What means is necessary, then, to straighten them out? Let them just briefly suspend their judgments until I have spoken. And I will do my best to have them consider devotion under such an appealing, joyful and lovable aspect that they themselves will hasten avidly to embrace it.

Come here, therefore, all of you, who have formed such a false idea of genuine devotion: come with me while I clarify your view from all deception. And so that we might proceed with some better order, I believe it best not to expose with some contrived order, I believe it is best not to expose to you the naked truth, if first you do not pierce the darkness that perhaps impedes your admiring eye, it is not cleared away.

**634:** Devotion, then, according to the image that your senses might draw of it, might seem rather to be a dreary matter, instead of a desirable part of life. It might come across as pallid and pale of visage, severe in its look, horrid in its likeness. It is seen as a reality that thins down the flesh by perpetual fasting; it lacerates the back with heavy scourging, the whip never being taken out of the right hand; it covers under a coarse garment the harsh hair-shirt. It is thought to flee discourteously sweet friendships, and is hostile to every delight, insensible to every pleasure. It is viewed as making every haste to close itself up in total solitude. It is understood as riveting one's knees immovably to the ground, seeming to nourish one solely on tears, and sighs as the only sign of life. Should it ever once in a while allow one to come out into public view, it would only beg for insults, so that it would then return satisfied with shame.

**635:** I know that some perhaps will tacitly find fault with my shrewdly having been excessive in exaggerating an objection, that might bring real harm to my theme. However, such a concern is so far from me that precisely from such a gloomy description, I am planning to draw the strongest argument possible. And what is it, then, that one would want to conclude from such formidable premises? Does this mean that devotion is indeed less attractive? My response will be precisely the contrary.

In fact, I pose this question: is there lacking to devotion, all covered over in such a severe guise, by devotees and lovers? I see rather to my wonder that every age, both sexes, of every condition in life, every walk of life - witness avid followers seeking devotion. How many have not been seen, and are still being noted among the ranks of generous young people, still in the flower of their lives, so full of hopes - still turn their backs on splendid nuptials, to offer to devotion alone their right hands? In like manner, how many gracious young women put aside all their delights and comforts, do not still make every haste to enclose themselves in solitary cloisters, to make themselves more tranquil companions to devotion?

**636:** And how many among the wealthy, who live in great abundance in their state, entirely despoil themselves of it all, and put it all aside, in order to run more freely and agilely along the desired paths, to follow Devotion. How many others declare themselves happy to have exchanged ample honors and the most sublime dignities, for the most hidden and neglected abjection. And lastly, how many have there not been who put down the much sought after scepters of power, and glorious diadems from their foreheads, in order to enroll themselves among the faithful servants of Devotion, in order to serve her laws in obedience. These facts, illustrious as they are luminous, are not rare in the world. Such deeds may be attested to in abundance in the memories of so many people, and they surpass beyond measure the stories of all the centuries.

So, it is necessary to conclude that there can be found in devotion a beauty, a sweetness, a wealth, an exultation, a glory that we do not expect to find at first sight. But, the fact is that so many have loved her, and at this beloved sign, they have shown that they prefer devotion to all the beauties, delights, treasures, and honors of this world. And it is fitting to note further that all that very frightening exterior matters nothing in arresting so many fervent lovers from such a harsh pathway in following her.

**637:** Right here, then, is the deception. The majority only look at some of the externals of Devotion. Anyone, though, who does this, does not consider the interior consolation in which the authentic servants of God abound, that is all the more sweet as it is all the more secret. This is that hidden manna: .... *which no man knows, but he that receives it...* [Apoc 2:17]. This is that perpetual banquet enjoyed by a secure mind in peace of heart [Pr 15:15]. This is that most sweet conversation with uncreated Wisdom from which is excluded all boredom, all bitterness [Ws 8:16]. O, how good is the Lord to those of upright heart, exclaims the Psalmist [Ps 72:1]. And in another text [Ps 30:20]: *...O how great is the multitude of Your sweetness, O Lord, which You have hidden for them that fear You...!*

**638:** Now if it is indeed true that, among its harsh points, devotion appears nonetheless so beautiful and lovable to anyone who looks at it attentively with a well purged eye, what will happen, then, if we rise above such horrible externals? It could not fail to draw after it most gently bound, our hearts that are still weak and infirm. The time has come, then, that I should descend to unmask the other deception that is committed in making judgments about Devotion. For one is to define it solely from externals - I would like now to show the other extreme. That would be to try to present what is particular and proper to a few, to make this common and almost necessary for all.

**639:** What a great misconception this might easily be seen if one would put in mind the more exact definition that is proposed with St. Thomas<sup>2</sup>. With him are all the more learned and illustrious masters. They hold that **true devotion essentially consists in a will ready to give oneself to God, and to be dedicated to those matters that pertain the more to His services**. Now, while it is true that God calls all to serve Him, and indeed all can, and it is fitting that all should aspire to be sanctified in their state of life. Nonetheless, it is false to think that God wishes to be served by all in the same manner. It is necessary to attend to the difference of the states in which all human beings have been constituted by the same Divine Providence.

---

<sup>2</sup>St. Thomas Aquinas, II-II, q. 82, a. 1, c.

**640:** For this reason, Devotion ought to be practiced in one way by a religious in a cloister, and by a lay person in the heart of the world - and differently by a sacred minister in the offices of his Church than by a father of a family in the government of his own home. God is served one way by a virgin who dedicates herself to God, and a married woman who is also obligated to her husband. Genuine devotion does not disrupt any kind of vocation, for indeed it would not be authentic if it should impede even in part, the duties proper to one's state in life.

True Devotion equally has wings to fly to heaven, as well as feet to walk on the earth. While it has hands that are continuously in motion, it knows how to repose its heart in God. It has eyes to maintain the vigil, to supervise and to take care of temporal matters. And at the same time, it has an even more acute vision in the human mind never to lose sight of one's last end. It knows how to enter into counsel with the divine good pleasure in its every action to direct all to His glory.

**641:** Devotion endows one with a tongue in order to speak with other human beings. And, at the same time, secretly, it opens up as many other mouths, all of one's internal potencies in order never to cease praising and blessing its God. Devotion enables one to treat with the world and, at the same time, converses in its spirit in the heavens - thus emulating, as it were, those blessed fellow citizens there. By means of love, Devotion draws God to itself and possesses Him in the abundance of peace, and rejoices already here on earth in another paradise.

**642:** Therefore, it is admirable gentleness with which it permeates all actions, giving that unchanging uniformity of spirit. The world can perceive nothing in it that makes it stand out from the ordinary, in the mannerisms, the activities, and the duties proper to the state of life of the devout person. And yet, there is no end to the wonder at being forced to love in Devotion an indescribable singularity and sense of the divine, that the world does not know. In prosperity, it does not raise itself over the less fortunate - and in adversity, it does not give in to sadness. It rejoices in the happiness of others, as though it were its own.

**It surrenders all its own personal choices,** and extends a discreet condescendence to the gifts of others, provided these are upright. It communicates in goodness its consolations to those who are prostrate in affliction of their spirits. It is most liberal with its friends, and generally beneficent towards all. Without any pretension, it awaits from its God alone the reward, and it is in His service alone that it delights.



**643:** I could just keep on going, my hearers, in speaking to you about such a lovable virtue, if time were not hurrying me on. Yet, the time allotted does not make me hurry so fast that I will miss heading into the port. What are your views now, then, regarding Devotion? And where are all those difficulties that seemed so overwhelming that you objected against my view? Where are those horrible hues with which you depicted Devotion? Does the reality not now seem altogether different from that which you had judged Devotion earlier? Is the view now not all joyfully, sweet and lovable? You see, then, that also today I have lived up to the expected promise to which I committed myself from the outset.

**644:** And now, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, now that there have been removed - as I hope it is so - those difficulties which alone distanced your spirit from the devout life, what remains? What else is there other than for you to follow with every readiness the impulse of the Holy Spirit? Is it not enough for you now for you to **offer your hearts** at this point to Jesus Christ who is asking this of you? Is it not up to you still, then, to resolve efficaciously **to serve from now on**, all the days of your life, that God who merits so well your **obsequious** service?

**645:** You have been given being and life by His creative hand and for this reason alone you were introduced into this world: to know, to love, to praise and to serve the author of every good. You have been created to promote His glory on this earth, thus to merit also yourselves a glorious recompense up in heaven, a perfect beatitude, enjoying and possessing your God forever.

**646:** You have been purchased back by the Blood of a God; you have been adopted as children of the King of Heaven. You have been made sharers in the divine nature by the habit of grace. So, you are not our own, but belong to God, to serve Him alone: ... *we are debtors, not the flesh...* [Rm 8:12]. We are not enslaved to flesh and blood in order to have pleasure in depraved desires. We are rather servants to the Spirit, to allow ourselves to be governed gently by His instincts and to follow His principles. You are no longer of this earth, as though you had to follow this world. But, you are celestial, to work and to live as saints.

**647:** ... *The time is short...* [1 Co 7:29]... *for the fashion of this world passes away...* [v. 31]. We are taking giant steps forward every day and are preparing for a stable eternity. So, all that we still have to do should be done in great haste [Jn 13:27]. Should we wait for the night, perhaps, before setting down to work [Jn 9:4]? Should we await the arrival of the spouse, in order to provide our lamps which have almost gone out [Mt 25:1-13]? Should we wait until we are invited to the **nuptials** to prepare only then the **nuptial garment** [Mt 22:12]?

**648:** ... *Behold I come quickly...* [Apoc 22:12]. I am here among you and I bring My reward with me: [ib.]. How happy is that soul who will be adorned and disposed to receive Him Come, He will say, come, My Spouse, receive the crown that your Lord has prepared for you forever<sup>3</sup>: ...*Blessed is that servant whom the Lord, when he comes, shall find watching...* [Lk 12:37]... *The Lord will say: well done, good and faithful servant, because you have been faithful over a few things, I will place you over many things...* [Mt 25:2]...*Enter into the joy of your Lord...* [v. 23].

+++++

### Sources

#### OT

Ps 30:20	# 637	Pr 15:15	# 637
72:1	# 637	Ws 8:16	# 637

#### NT

Mt 22:12 [ <u>nuptials</u> ]	# 647	Jn 9:4	# 647
25:1-13 [ <u>Spouse</u> ]	# 647	13:27	# 647
21	# 648	Rm 8:12	# 646
23	# 648	1 Co 7:29	# 647
Lk 12:37	# 648	31	# 647
24:36, f.	# 632	Apoc 2:17	# 637
37	# 632	22:12 [ <u>Spouse</u> ]	# 648

+

+++

+

---

<sup>3</sup>Liturgy of the Common of Virgins, Vespers.

**1069:****SERMON 29****Mary's Name**

**Preached in St. Paul's Church, Campo Marzio, Verona, on the left bank, in the year 1805, on the 15th of September, on the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost - It lasted one half hour.**

In proposing for our veneration today the most Holy Name of Mary, the Holy Church surely intends that we stretch our minds, in so far as we can, to enter into the mysterious senses of its sacred interpretation. But, how can one conveniently reverence that which either is not known at all, or just known in a confused sort of way? So, I think it is necessary, as well as useful to the extreme, to explain with brevity and at the same time, with clarity, the admirable secrets closed within this most august name.

**1070:** There is no reason to fear boldness, or any danger in this. The Holy Fathers, the sacred Doctors will go ahead of us always as a sure guide.

They have already treated of this eloquently and abundantly. However, their treatises are not in the hands of all. Furthermore, the more simple and those without formal education perhaps would not understand by themselves so great and marvelous a doctrine, so full of wisdom and learning that redounds in their writings. So, I will make of myself like **a small canal**, rather a poor one, it is true, but much in proportion. This is so that there may reach the most humble of minds that these opportune waters to irrigate them. In this way, each one may slake his thirst as needed, without being drowned in it, or being overwhelmed with its weight, or impetus.

**1071:** I trust that the most learned and wise among you will easily grant me this type of discourse, suitable for the instruction of the less learned, and even of those ignorant of these matters. This will be my style, sine a more sublime manner of speech to embellish and to praise, some might judge would be more fitting to the subject. They will see that this simply exceeds my weak forces.

And without any further introduction, I come now to the proposition.

**1072:** There are very many interpretations of this most Holy Name, and all are capable of showing how supremely admirable and venerable this name is. According to some learned scholars, "Mary" simply means "exalted". According to St. Jerome<sup>4</sup>, "Mary" means "illuminatrix", "Myrrh", or "bitterness of the sea", or "Star of the Sea."

---

<sup>4</sup>St. Jerome, *De Nominibus Hebraeis - de Exodo.* t. 3, p. 21; *De Matth.* ib, 92 M.

However, according to the most popular etymology, “Mary” is interpreted as “Mistress of the Sea.”

**1073:** One can consult Fr. Augustine Calmet<sup>5</sup> and Fr. Cornelius a Lapide<sup>6</sup> in several places of his Commentaries, as these give a clear demonstration regarding this. I **associate myself with this interpretation**, and also for this reason: this presupposes, or comprehends in its most vast idea, all the others, as will be made known in itself through its explanation.

**1074:** What, then, does “Mary” mean, “Mistress of the Sea”, *Domina Maris*? O God, what mysteries are included in these words! What a subject for our most profound veneration! Let us take a brief look at this sea of which Mary is the declared mistress even by her name.

It is a very full sea, immense, most deep in wisdom, perfections and graces. In the divine Scripture He is the Only-Begotten Son of God, the Eternal Word, uncreated Wisdom. In Ecclesiasticus {Sirach} [24:39] we read: *...For her thoughts are more vast than the sea, and her counsels are more deep than the great ocean...*

**1075L** Do not be surprised, dearly beloved, that the Most Blessed Virgin is the Mistress of this Sea, when she is even more, she is His Mother. Yes, with every propriety, Mary may be called the Mother of God. This is a dogma of faith defined by the IInd Council of Constantinople.<sup>7</sup> From the very first instant of His conception, His human nature was assumed by His Divine Person. Hence, it can very well be said that God is conceived and born of the Virgin Mary. This is what St. Thomas teaches.<sup>8</sup>

**1076:** It seems that the Holy Spirit had Mary in mind in Proverbs [8:29], when He said that God, in the beginning, compassed the sea with its bounds: *... When He compassed the sea with its bounds...* Mary similarly was to conceive in her womb and enclose the Word of God. He is the Sea and the Abyss of Wisdom, of power, of virtue, and of all being and goodness. And should not Mary be said to be Mistress of that Sea, that no matter how immense, she had been able to contain Him in her immaculate womb: “He Whom the heavens could not contain, was born in your womb”?<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Fr. Augustine Calmet, in c. 15 of Exodus

<sup>6</sup>Fr. Cornelius a Lapide, no specific citation

<sup>7</sup>IInd Council of Constantinople. Denz # 218.

<sup>8</sup>St. Thomas Aquinas, III, q. 35, a. 4.

<sup>9</sup>Liturgy, Common Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Respons. to the Last Reading.

**1077:** The most learned Cornelius a Lapide<sup>10</sup> offered a Commentary on these words of St. Matthew [1:16]: ... *of whom was born Jesus...* A Lapide writes: The Virgin Mother of God had a right to a maternal authority over Christ, as have all mothers over their children that they have generated. She enjoyed this over her Son even more than other mothers do over their children. In fact, Christ is born solely of His Mother; it therefore follows that the Blessed Virgin had a greater right over Christ than other mothers have over their children. The love in these others would have to be divided with father and mother. In Christ, however, all was concentrated and united in the Mother.

**1078:** What difficulty can there be in recognizing in Mary this dominion, that is so sublime? Is it not exercised over the Divine Person of Christ, when even Christ Himself had no difficulty in having Himself called and recognized as her Subject? Does not the Gospel reveal: ...*He was subject to them...* [Lk 2:51]?

Thus, the illustrious Bishop and Martyr, Methodius<sup>11</sup> stated that the Blessed Virgin alone had in her debt the One Who has given credit to all. Thus, we all owe everything to God, and to Mary alone, as He owes piety and subjection. “To the God of the universe we owe all - He owes to You, Mary, piety and subjection”

**1079:** We might choose to say that this debt in Christ was not rigorous. By reason of the divinity Christ would have been totally free by reason of His origin from all subjection. Nonetheless, we must also confess that Christ conducted Himself in His Mother’s regard as though He were always subject to her. Hence, she was always both loved as a Mother and revered as His Mistress of the household. Just listen to St. Bernard<sup>12</sup> who points out that the God to whom the Angels are subject, Whom the Princes and Powers obey, He was subject to Mary. Admire, then, both of them, and choose which of the two should be admired the more: either the most benign dignity of the Son, or the most excellent dignity of the Mother. Both are stupendous, prodigious: the fact that a God would obey a woman, this is humility beyond example; and that a woman would be responsible for a God, this is sublimity beyond comparison.

**1080:** O venerable Name of Mary! With what profound **obsequiousness** should she not from now on be named by us, such wretched sinners, and what confidence it invoked! Many consequences flow from the fact that Mary had such dominion over the Person of her Son. We need to reflect that she was able to count on with facility, with security, the heart of her Sovereign, Who was also her Son. How, then, could she

---

<sup>10</sup>Cornelius a Lapide, no specific citation in Commentary on Mt 1:16.

<sup>11</sup> Methodius, Bishop and Martyr - no citation.

<sup>12</sup> St. Bernard, *Sermo super Missus*.

not be the Mistress of all His treasures, of that immense sea of graces and mercies? I will leave this thought, as it is so ready to grasp, to your consideration. For the sake of brevity, I hasten to flash before your eyes the admirable amplitude of this mystical name.

**1081:** Rupert, the Abbot<sup>13</sup> will show us the way. Mary is the Mother of the crowned King, Whom God has constituted over all the works of His hands [Ps 8:7]. She is, therefore, constituted the Queen, and rightfully possesses the Son's entire Kingdom. And how could she not possess the Son's Kingdom, she who possesses totally this same Son? And who is it who would not know that the most universal reign of Christ is divided into three great realms: heavenly, terrestrial and below the earth, as St. Paul teaches : *...that in the Name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth...* [Ph 2:10]? And this is a second way in which Mary is the Mistress of the Sea.

**1082:** Primarily by the word "Sea", in the Apocalypse [4:6]. there is signified the immense multitude of those celestial spirits. Over all these, much like a lucid, tranquil sea, there is reflected and shining the beauty of the countenance of Mary: *... And in the sight of the throne was, as it were, a sea of glass like to crystal...*

The fact that Mary is the "Queen of the Angels" is chanted by the Church. She is the "Queen of the Angels", not only by her excellence, or principality; and not only by the eminence of her graces and virtues. She is this by her authority and jurisdiction. This is manifested by the reverence that the Angels show to her, declaring themselves subject to her.

**1084:** Really, in the most common use of Scripture, the "sea" is assumed to denote this present world: *... So is this great sea, which stretches widely its arms...* [Ps 103:25]. St. Augustine<sup>14</sup> has commented on this place in the Psalms. He brings out the similarity quite clearly that this world has with the sea. The comparison lies in the sea's natural inconstancy, its frequent storms, the bitterness of its waters, and for many other outstanding comparisons. Now, Mary is the Mistress of the world. Her jurisdiction is singularly manifested by acts proper to this, such as commanding, dictating laws, punishing, and other similar functions.

---

<sup>13</sup> Rupert, the Abbot. *In Cant.*, l. 3.

<sup>14</sup> St. Augustine, Commentary on Psalm 103: 25/

**1085:** Would you doubt that she commands, when she says of herself: through me, Princes reign, legislators decree justice, as these are precisely the words that the Doctors and the Church appropriates to her? - ... *By Me, kings reign, and lawmakers decree just things...* [Pr 8:15]. Should someone wish to insist on the literal sense of this text taken from Proverbs, and hold that her Uncreated Wisdom should be understood, I would ask: And Who is this Uncreated Wisdom, if not the Son of God, the Son of Mary?

**1086:** Regarding her domination, Arnold Carnotense<sup>15</sup> concludes for me. Regarding the power of the Son, this cannot be separated in any way from that of the Mother. One is the flesh of Mary and that of Christ, one the spirit and one the charity. From the very instant it was said to her: ... *the Lord is with you...* [*Dominus tecum...*] [Lk 1:28], she inseparably preserved both the promise and the gift. And thus, the matter is resolved: I maintain that the glory of the Son is not just in common with the Mother, it is the very same: ***Et Filii gloriam cum matre non tam communem judico, quam eandem....***

**1087:** As far as punishing, I would go too long if I were to choose to cite all the authentic fact from history., I will touch upon only two, one that is ancient, and the other that is quite recent, and only in the area of blasphemers. Nestorius in the fifth century was bold enough with his heresy to blaspheme the Name of this great Lady. Did he not die with his sacrilegious tongue devoured by worms? And then, just a few years ago, here in Italy, and not very far from here, there was a blasphemer of the most Holy Name of Mary. He was seen by a very large number of people punished precisely in his blaspheming tongue. Did it not happen that as he was vomiting forth sacrilegious words, his tongue fell right out of his mouth, all grossly deformed? This fact is as certain as it is well known. Let us all learn to respect the Name of our Patron and Sovereign Mistress.

**1088:** Now, though, I will show you still another sense, one that is no less admirable, according to which it is said that she is the Mistress of the Seas of this world. According to the customs in vogue among the Hebrews and the Syrians, "Mistress" means teacher, directress, guide or star of the sea, very well is adapted to Mary. She saves from the sea of this world, and accompanies us to the Premised Land, which is heaven.

---

<sup>15</sup>Arnalda Carnotense, no citation.

**1089:** In this connection, St. Ambrose<sup>16</sup> comments. He holds that the Blessed Virgin was well figured by that the Mary, Moses' sister, of whom the Hebrews relate this tradition<sup>17</sup>. When she was born, there began the bitter tyranny of the Pharaoh, who had all the male children of the Hebrews drowned. And thus, the infant girl was called "Mary", meaning, "the bitterness of the sea". [*amareza del mare*]. But this name was changed afterwards by greater blessings, and by divine counsel. It was given a much more sublime signification when, having passed over the Red Sea, and the Pharaoh was submerged, she was called "Mary", meaning "Mistress and Directress of the Sea". For just as Moses was at the head of the men, so his sister was at the head of the women in the crossing of the sea. Thus, they intone the Canticle of Praises to God.

**1090:** O, what a beautiful field opens up here before me to point out to you the will, the love of Mary, to save our souls! While the brevity of time does not permit me to go much more with my words, I have the great pleasure of having indicated this for your affectionate reflections. It is not necessary to pave the way for you by means of arguments. The way is clear to all, it is open. While I rest briefly, on your own, enter into this consideration, and discover its amplitude, enjoy its agreeableness, and feed on its precious and salutary fruits.

**1091:** There remains still to be seen how this Name of Mary, or the Mistress of the Sea, shows the dominion and sovereign power that she has over hell, as I proposed above. St. Hilary<sup>18</sup> offers an explanation of Psalm 64:8: ... *who troubles the depths of the sea, the noise of its waves...* By the "Depths of the Sea" Hilary understands the devil. By the tempestuous waves of this sea he understands perverse men who follow the devil, as into malice, thus into damnation. So, one can truly understand the most Holy Name of Mary is the Mistress also of this turbulent and threatening sea. And it can be said that whenever the faithful servants of Mary devoutly invoke this admirable Name, the depths of the sea are troubled, with all the upheaval of the waves: .... *who troubles the depths of the sea, the noise of its waves...*

**1092:** The fittingness of the aptness of this exposition increases all the more, as she says of herself, in the interpretation of the Holy Doctors accommodating these words: ... *I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven, and have penetrated into the bottom of the deep...* [Si 24:8]. I have penetrated with my power the depths of the abyss, and have crossed over the waves of this sea. This denotes that she dominates with great power and virtue over the darkened kingdom of hell. This is a gloss in one

---

<sup>16</sup>St. Ambrose, *Exhortatio Virginitati*. 5, 28. t. 2, p. 284 F

<sup>17</sup>Cornelius a Lapide, *In Luke*, 1, 22.

<sup>18</sup>St. Hilary, *Tractatus in Ps 60: 10*. t. 1, pp. 188 E, ff.



of St. Bernardine of Siena's sermons<sup>19</sup>. Do you wish, then, to frighten all of hell? Then, just mention Mary confidently.

**1093:** O terrible Name to all demons, o admirable Name to all Angels, o venerable Name to all the servants and children of such a great and most powerful Mistress! Mistress of heaven, Mistress of earth, Mistress of hell. She is, therefore, the Mistress of the Sea, ***Domina Maris***. The foundation and the reason for this dominion that she enjoys over the very deep sea is that it is her blessed Son, to Whom be honor for all ages.

+++++

### Sources

#### OT

Ex 15:21	# 1073	Pr: 15	# 1085
Ps 8:7	# 1081	29	# 1076
64:8	# 1091	Si 24:8	# 1092
103: 25	# 1084		

#### NT

Mt 1:16	# 1077	Ph 2:10	# 1081
Lk 1:28	# 1086	Apoc 4:6	# 1082
2:51	# 1078		

### Magisterium

II <sup>nd</sup> Constantinople, in 553. Anathemas on 3 Chapters. Can. 6	# 1075
--	--------

+

+++

+

---

<sup>19</sup>St. Bernardine of Siena, *Op. Omn*, t. 4. Sermon 31.

**Liturgy**

Common of the Feast of the BVM [resp. to 1st Reading]	# 1076
---	--------

**Fathers and Doctors**

St. Ambrose, <i>Exhortatio Virginitatis</i> . 5, 28. t. 2, p. 284 F	# 1089
St. Augustine, <i>In Ps 103:25</i> [no citation]	# 1084
St. Bernard, <i>Sermo super Missus</i> ,	# 1079
St. Bernardine of Siena, <i>Serm. 3. On Si 24:8</i> , t. 4	# 1092
Fulbert Carnotense, <i>Sermo 4. De Nativitate B.V.</i>	# 1083
St. Hilary, <i>Tractatus i Ps 60:10</i> . t. 1, pp. 188 E, ff.	# 1091
St. Jeome, <i>De Nominibus Hebraeis de Exodo</i> . t. 3, p. 21 M	# 1072
<i>De Nominibus Hebraeis in Mt.</i> t. 3, p. 92 M	# 1072
Rupert, Abbot, <i>In Cant.</i> 1. 3	# 1081

**Saints**

Methodius, Bishop & Martyr [Mary and Jesus]	# 1078
---	--------

**Other Writers**

Calmet, Fr. Augustine, <i>Exodus 15:21</i>	# 1077
Cornelius a Lapide [On Mary's Name]	# 1073
Commentary on Mt 1:16	# 1077
Commentary on Lk 1:27	# 1089

+

+++

+

**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 untied 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.<sup>20</sup>

**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

---

<sup>20</sup> II-II, q. 81, a. 7.

**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 ashamed 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 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.

+++++

#### 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-II, q. 81, a. 7	# 1253
---	--------

+

+++

+



**[NB: Translator's Note:** there follow here several pages of notes, or perhaps a rough outline, that Fr. Bertoni drew up in his composition of Sermon 39, on the Rosary. There are over 16 typed long pages of these notes].

**1323:** **[NOTES FOR SERMON 39: THE ROSARY]**

... *as the flower of roses in the days of spring...* [Si 50:8] ....*as a rose planted in Jericho* ... [Si 24:18]: full of grace. *By the odor*; the King desired your beauty.<sup>21</sup> - *We will run after you to the odor of your ointments...* [Ct 1:3].

In Tribulation: in the shadow of the rose bed - joyful the rose.<sup>22</sup>

A devotion common to all. *Come over to me, all you that desire Me* [Si 24:26]. The *Our Father* and the *Hail, Mary* belong to all: the wise, the ignorant, the nobles, the masses, beginners, the proficient. 'All other (prayers) are not for all ages, nor for everyone; this prayer, however, fondles the infant, and does not offend the elderly; it exercises the lazy, and does not impede those who are busy; it attracts the powerful and the rich, it does not exclude the poor and the weak, and does not lead the tepid to boredom..'

**1324:** (The Rosary) is like a garrison for the Church. 'They surround her with the flowers of the roses.'<sup>23</sup> *Stay me up with flowers.* [Ct 2:5].

Its excellence: may be derived) from its origin, nature, authority. Institution (by) Mary. Promulgated by St. Dominic, propagated by a religious Order. Its Purpose: to oppose it to heresies. Occasion: the most terrible heresy. Its result was the most fortuitous.

Its nature, various parts. The most excellent prayer is the *Our Father*, (taught) by Christ; the *Hail, Mary*, (taught) by the Spirit; the Mysteries (which are the) motive of being graciously heard, and the means.

**1325:** Extension: (the Rosary is a prayer) that is both vocal and mental, (useful) for sinners, for the proficient, for the perfect; for every circumstance of persons, of place, of time, etc.

(It enjoys a) heavenly authority, demonstrated) by miracles: The Tables, the war at Lepanto, in Hungary (and with a) human (authority): the Pontiffs who approved it, who formed societies with it, who enriched it with indulgences, who preached it, who made a feast of it, and who extended it to the whole Church.

---

<sup>21</sup> *In Annunt. B.M.V.*, Grad.; cf. Ps 44:2.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. # 6945.

<sup>23</sup> In the Feast, Annunt., response. 2.

Excellent origin. (The Rosary comes from) Mary (through tradition); (St. Dominic) was admonished to preach it, 'as a singular garrison against heresies and vices.' (We know this) through the approved tradition of the Church; (besides), because Mary was invoked by Dominic, and because he was impeded by those heretics, and because 'she alone has abolished the rest of the heresies', there being no means to destroy it.

Promulgated (by) St. Dominic, great saint of vast doctrine, head of a most glorious Order. Benedict XV.<sup>24</sup>

**1326:** Propagated (by) a religious Order of Preachers, learned men, holy men, the flower of the Church, because of their constant practice: 'illustrious seminary of Saints'.<sup>25</sup>

Its purpose: to oppose heresies with this, 'to be against all heresies, vices, etc.' Mary was invoked by St. Dominic for this purpose, with much prayer, fasting, penance.

Occasion: the most terrible heresy: kind of a sewer in which were dumped all the feces of other heresies (which) infected not only the simple crowd, but priests, and bishops and princes.<sup>26</sup> The Churches (were) uprooted or destroyed: Baptism was denied, the Eucharist was abominated, penance was annulled, along with all the sacraments: the resurrection was denied, and two principles were admitted.

**1327:** Christ was cursed impurely; the Blessed Virgin was slandered. In the 13th century, they corrupted the people, in the 14th, at the beginning, assisted by the Count of Toulouse, they began to wage war against the Churches, (to) despoil the temples, to burn down houses, to violate sacred virgins, to slaughter the innocent, with excruciating tortures and deaths, to kill priests, and to put to the sword and flames many of the most flourishing provinces of France. There was carried about in pomp the armed arrow in furor, satiated with the blood of the citizens. Parents with their children, the rich with all their means, and the ordinary citizens paid with their heads, an army of ten thousand was arrayed...

The result: the armies were conquered, the heresy was soundly destroyed, the temples were restored, and on the Church were heaped advantages that were not of a passing nature, but enduring, and they last until our own times.

---

<sup>24</sup> *De Festis*, Bk 2, 12, 5, ff.. Rtom. Ed., 1751, t. 10, 523. St. Agatha's, Rome.

<sup>25</sup> Baronius.

<sup>26</sup> Gervas. In Chron.]

**1328:** (This Devotion) is excellent in itself, because of the perfection of its parts.

It is made up of decades of the *Hail, Mary*, and *Our Father*, and the Mysteries that are meditated. The *Our Father* comes from Christ, and the *Hail, Mary* from the Holy Spirit; the Mysteries of Jesus; life (are) the sublime object of the meditation. The purpose of it is to imitate the content of the Mysteries, to achieve the promises. The Means: are the most efficacious prayer, the most potent meditation, the most powerful motives.

Extension: (it is a prayer) that is both vocal and mental: ... *and my tongue shall meditate Your justice...* [Ps 34:28]. (It is adapted) to all Christians, both the vocal, as well as the mental prayer.

**1329:** (The Rosary, like) the *rose*, brings joy to the just, offers fragrance to the proficient, heals the beginners, it is the hedge of the Church, it is a rose-garden that gives shade to the troubled. The rose is a common flower, (suitable) for the nobles and the rich, to children, etc. *Rose* (seems to be from the Latin word *rugiadosa*), full of grace.

It is so diffused that the Rosary is a sign of Catholicism, (and the source) of so much anger on the part of the Church's enemies, and of the devil.<sup>27</sup>

Human authority: (the following give authority to this Devotion): the Catholic Church by practicing it; princes; the Roman Pontiffs, who approve it, and they establish societies to it, they give their names to it, they enrich it with indulgences; they preach it, and they have established its feast and office, and they extend it to the whole Church.

Antiquity: from 1200 up to 1716.

Heavenly (authority): the Victory at Lepanto in Hungary.

Excellence: deduced from its source.

**1330:** The Origin of the Rosary - Origin of the Feast.

October 7, 1571, the First Sunday of the month. St. PIUS V ordered that the victory at Naupactum should be celebrated every year, by the commemoration of Holy Mary of Victory. GREGORY XIII set up the day of the Feast of the Most Holy rosary.

On the day of St. Mary of the Snows, in the year 1716, Charles VI, at Temisvaria, defeated the Turks in Pannonia. At this time, the Rosary was recited in a solemn procession. In the following days, it was continued by the order of the Roman

---

<sup>27</sup> St. Francis Xavier

Pontiff, this devotion of the Rosary. The siege of Corcyra was lifted on the Octave Day of the Assumption.

CLEMENT XI extended the Feast to the whole Church.<sup>28</sup>

Common: there are employed both the tongue and the heart: internal and external cult.

A prayer that is common to all.

*... and my tongue shall meditate Your justice: they shall praise all the daylong... [Ps 34:27]. ... the mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom... [Ps 36:30]. ...take a harp... [Is 23:16]... sing well - ...the voice I heard was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps... [Apoc 14:2]. (The harps are the heart, its works). - ... I cried with my whole heart... [Ps 118:145] - ...this people honors Me with their lips: but their heart is far from Me... [Is 29:13; Mt 15:8].*

**1331:** It is an antidote against sin: it brings joy to the just, fragrance to the proficient, heals the beginners. - *... in me is all hope of life and virtue ... [Si 24:25].*

St. BERNARD<sup>29</sup> : Eve with the thorn inflicted death on all: Mary, with the rose, brought salvation. Pep: Just like a rose, by its own power, brings joy, gives off a fragrance, and heals, so the Virgin Mary, by the most sublime power of her Rosary, brings joy to the perfect, gives off a fragrance for the proficient, heals beginners.

(An Antidote): through the meditation of the mysteries.

St. BONAVENTURE: The contemplation of the life and death of our savior is the most perfect antidote against the poisons of the flesh and the senses. - Like Moses' serpent [Nb 21:9]: A certain remedy followed upon the accompanying contemplation, because a mystery was hidden in that serpent.<sup>30</sup>

Through prayer: If prayer takes hold of us given over to sins, it renders us quickly purged. (Because) when Lazarus, already dead for four days was raised up, Martha is sent to Mary, because without Mary, death could not be avoided, nor could life be restored.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> cf. Graveson, t. 5, p. 523.

<sup>29</sup> Sermon 1, De B.V.

<sup>30</sup> Caes. Arles, Hom 4 - [143].

<sup>31</sup> St. Pet. Chrysologus. *Serm 54*, before the middle. PL 52, 380 B.

**1332:** Dispositions: Faith. ... *Go forth, you daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem, wherewith his mother crowned him...* [Ct 3:11].

CARDINAL UGO: This voice is the voice of the Church inviting all to faith. Of the Nativity: crowned with the lowly spoils; Of the Passion: crowned with thorns; **resurrection: crown of glory.**

Form the facts: St. Dominic converted one hundred thousand heretics, preaching the Rosary. The greatest sinners (B. ALAN.) from brutes, they were transformed into Angels.<sup>32</sup>

**1333:** Pray the Rosary, and you will be cleansed from the leprosy of your crimes...: *...if the prophet had bid you to do some great thing... surely you should have done it... From Eliseus to Naaman...* [4 K (2 K) 5:13].

It is excellent in itself because of the perfection of its parts: vocal and mental; (also for the perfection) in its parts: the *Our Father*, the *Hail, Mary*: the most noble prayers; the Mysteries (of the) Life of Jesus; the most sublime object of meditation; the Meditation of the Virgin: the most powerful. Its purpose: the Imitation of Christ. The most religious. In its totality: for its extension: vocal and mental prayer.

(It is adapted) to the capacity of every one: ... *and the book shall be given to one that knows not letters...* [Is 29:12]. - ... *And I saw a book written within and without, sealed with the seven seals...* [Apoc 5:1], that it might contain in itself all the plenitude of the Mysteries of Christ. They should be opened up in Meditation....

+++++

**NB: translator's Note: this is the end of the first fragment of Sermon 39.]**

+

+++

+

---

<sup>32</sup> Carthagen.

**1334:****[A rough sketch of the Complete draft]****SERMON 39****[The Holy Rosary]**

The humble piety of the faithful, that looks to this practice of cult with devout **obsequiousness**, perhaps awaits from me a panegyric of praise. The sublime wisdom of the world, which in an inseparable air of pride disdains it and makes fun of it. This forces me to a just and necessary defense. The pious custom of many that cultivate this both in themselves and in others, to the great fruit for their own souls and likewise for their families, merits to be approved, sustained and confirmed. On the other hand, the negligence of some who do not take care of this. Either because they have interrupted it, or they make use of it only in a tepid manner, needs to be addressed. This is not without detriment and danger, and needs to be reproved, and encouragement given, and they need to be spurred on.

**1335:** this variety of circumstances imposes different purposes for my sermon, and leaves me indecisive regarding the various choices of means. Nonetheless, if you will be as courteous as you are, might dispense me from decorating with vague and delicate flowers my preaching style, to which I feel that my ability is unequal anyway - and if you do not ask of me to sharpen my talk with strong and vibrant words of contention. As for this, my nature is not made, nor is it in harmony with it, I can respond. I think that I have already found a way to satisfy the devotion of the former, and to close the mouths of the latter. I think I can comfort those who are already fervent, and to warm up those who might be cold, in a manner that will be no less appealing to your intelligence, and also effective for the various needs. I will do this by demonstrating the excellence of this practice, from the nobility of its origin that illustrates it, and from the intrinsic perfection that distinguishes it. I can also present my thoughts from the authority that proves this devotion and forms it, with the most solemn testimonies that establish the devotion.

**1336:** I do not know what other Devotion can claim any more noble traits of excellence even from the very instant of its institution. The Queen of Heaven, herself, proposes it from her own mouth, she teaches it, she prescribes it. One of the most celebrated heroes of Christianity - no less great and outstanding for the nobility of his background as well as for his sanctity, is the great Patriarch, St. Dominic. The responsibility for preaching this was committed to him. An entire order of the sons of St. Dominic, flower of ecclesiastical erudition, an illustrious seed-bed of saints, I will say with Baronius, received this devotion as their patrimony and their inheritance to promulgate it. Instituted, introduced, promoted by the most interesting object for Christianity, which is to employ it in opposition to heresy and to vice, and in the most urgent needs, as well as in the most powerful struggles of the Catholic Church. Lastly,

the result has been so fortunate that has come, the Church has intervened with indescribable promptness, and placed the devotion in security with a valid and perpetual protection from the most powerful enemies. Let us now prove these facts, if that is pleasing to you, in the light of history.

**1337:** From the XIIth Century, the Albigensians, a terrible descendent of the Waldesians, opened up with their errors in the Church of God something like an impure sewer, in which there came to be deposited all the refuse of heresies. And it was not only the simple crowd that was attracted. But even priests, Bishops and Princes were also seen to have fallen wretchedly into this pit by its subtleties, and everything became filthy by contact with that swamp. Babies were denied Baptism, the Eucharist was abominated in the faithful, penance was derided, the sacraments were annulled, the hope in the Resurrection was taken away. The true faith of the one God was destroyed, He who is Creator of all. And in His place there were admitted two principles, as the old Manichaeans had taught. There went up abundantly everywhere, and arose to high heaven the intolerable stench of the most execrable blasphemies against the Saints, Christ, Mary most Holy, whose purity was defamed in a most villainous and singular way.

**1338:** In order to extinguish and arrest this plague, in vain was the vigilance of the Pastors brought into the fray. Their vest efforts were left empty, as was the sweat of the illustrious and copious missionaries. All these were promoted by the zeal of the Supreme Vicar of Christ, INNOCENT III. Their numbers increased, they fanned out, they were strengthened, and at the appearance of the new century, there arose even more of them, sustained by the strong right arm of the Count of Toulouse. And the heretics from their fetid base, tore down temples, demolished altars, burned houses, violated sacred virgins, shed the blood of the innocent, and sought the death of priests through terrible tortures. There was thus placed under the iron and fire many of the flourishing provinces. The error was paraded around in pomp. Armed with fury, inebriated with blood, parents were forced to sacrifice their children, nobles had to surrender their riches, and the ordinary people, their heads. And what more? Arrayed against the weak forces of not more than a thousand foot-soldiers, and eight hundred horses which were all that could be assembled in those harsh circumstances by the state in its defense, and that of religion - there was opposed a terrible army. This was made up of one hundred thousand armed men, all arranged according to their ranks, inspired by the same spirit of anger and fanaticism. At their head was the King of Aragon himself, a powerful ally of the count. The enemy was already in sight: and a battle could not be avoided, and there was imminent decisive action.

**1339:** With circumstances, what danger, what consternation! A torrent that was so impetuous, that it rushed on toward such a meager dyke. It threatened, after having flooded everywhere in the vast land where it flowed. It threatened to overthrow everything on the beautiful terrain, the seat of religion and faith, where there had already been introduced underground and filtering through many troubled waters. They seemed to be waiting for their right moment to all come together, for a universal deluge.

To whom, then, could one turn for help in such need? To Mary, to Mary.

- Precisely, my beloved, to Mary; to her who is the most powerful support and aid for Christianity in its necessities. 'Help of Christians', to the one about whom the Church chants her singular praises: *Rejoice, o Mary, all the heresies you alone have conquered in the universal world*<sup>33</sup>!

**1340:** Then, in fact, St. Dominic alone, and with an insignificant squad of his sons remained in their fortification to comfort the Catholics. He presented himself to Mary, as a strong soldier in an entrenched camp of his solitude, took up the arms of prayer, of fasting. He awaited with lively confidence, to go out on the fateful day, with help from heaven beyond measure. With his own strength waning, and almost overwhelmed by fear, he administered to this earth. Nor was help at the opportune moment lacking.

**1341:** The heavens opened, smiling, to the prayers of the Saint, and the Queen of heaven herself descends to receive him in person.

- Go, Dominic, preach my Rosary; and know that this form of praying that I give to you, will be most pleasing to My Son and to me. Furthermore, it will be a powerful and singular defense in the Church to weaken heresies, to extinguish vices and to promote virtues, and to implore divine mercy: 'Like a singular garrison against heresies and vices.' To this effect, I want you and your sons to be forever the promulgators of this heavenly ritual instituted by me, from which will spring extraordinary usefulness in the spirits of the faithful: 'Innumerable fruits from this most salutary institution within the Christian Republic.'

**1342:** Go out, Dominic, from the entrenchment of your retreat, comforted with the heavenly promises, furnished with new support. And what was the outcome of all this? Of this huge army that covered the whole earth, there was but a mountain of cadavers, among whom, the General himself, Peter of Aragon, lay stretched out: the rest of the army was totally broken and in flight, was dispersed and evaporated. The Count of Toulouse shortly thereafter had to capitulate, and to lay down all arms. He

---

<sup>33</sup> Common of the Feast of the BVM, tract.



had to make restitution for all that the enemies of religion and of Mary had done, under the shadow of his protection. All that had been ravished and destroyed, he had to make up for, and to give back all the treasures that had been taken from the Church. All those that he had previously protected, he was called now to exterminate totally with that same right arm with which he had first unjustly received and defended.

**1343:** But there is still another aspect to be esteemed even more. The one hundred thousand of those most obstinate heretics were ravished to the point of freely bending their necks to the sweet yoke of Christ. They were not so much overcome by the force of arms, or by any authority, but by the gentle power of the Rosary preached by St. Dominic. Along with these armed men, there was even a greater number of sinners, and these were the most corrupt in the very tragic depravation of that unhappy age. They were raised up to grace within the bosom of the Catholic Church.

These results were wondrous, and were like the first-fruits of the Rosary. However, it simply could not have been otherwise, because of its intrinsic excellence, that brings such realities about.

These are authentic prodigies that surpass all the others. These were accomplished in such abundance, with such readiness, and with such stability, that are perpetuated in the Church. They showed in this most fortunate event, the most excellent character of such a devotion, even from its very inception. However, it simply could not have been otherwise, once one grasps its intrinsic excellence. This is the result of the perfection of its parts, as well as from the extension in its practice.

**1344:** The Rosary is made up of 15 decades of the *Hail, Mary*, the Angelic salutation. These are then distinguished one from the other by the *Our Father*, the Lord's own prayer that intervenes between these. These set aside the same number of mysteries of our reparation, that is commemorated by a pious meditation. Now, I ask: Find me a more excellent prayer than the Lord's Prayer - and after this, one that is more noble than the angelic salutation! Then, as far as the Mysteries of the life, death and glory of Christ, what more sublime object could there be for meditation? Then, the essential scope of all this, which is to imitate that which the Mysteries contain and to achieve that which they promise, what could possibly be more holy, more interesting, more sublime? The Meditation of Mary, is there anything more powerful?

**1345:** Now, just take care to make use of this prayer, what fullness, what extension! For in this, there are committed in like manner both your tongue to praise, your mind to meditate, your heart to love, and with what happiness! So it is that this is the prayer that is common to all. The Lord's Prayer is for all Christians; for all is the *Hail, Mary*, a prayer of salutary power; for all is extended the possibility of calling to mind

the very sacred mysteries of salvation. Sinners find in the Rosary the most efficacious means for their conversion. Mary makes her own the very words of Wisdom” ....*In me... in me, is all hope of life and virtue... [Si 24:25]*. The just find the rosary a sweet pasturage for their devotion: ... *I am the mother of fair love... and of knowledge and of holy hope... [v. 24]*. All these have in the meditation of the life and death of the savior a powerful antidote against the poisons of the flesh and the senses. They have all this in the Meditation of Christ’s glory as well as a gentle invitation to aspire to the eternal sweetness.

**1346:** Yes, Mary is that Mystical Rose who brings joy to the just, heals sinners, she sends out a sweet fragrance to beginners, adorns the proficient, crowns the perfect, spreads the most sweet shade for those in tribulations. She sets up a powerful hedge against temptations. From this cultivated garden there spring forth equally great souls, and also the poor ones in this little garden. All flourishes equally in the humble valleys, as well as on the proud summits of the hills. She never indignantly withdraws, whether it is a gentle or rough hand that reaches out for her. She attracts the youth, she does not offend the aged, she moves the lazy to acting, she does not get in the way of the already busy, she recreates the fervent, and is not annoying to the tepid.

Finally, the Rosary of the Virgin is a devotion common to all the faithful in the universal Church. By means of it, you are able to know the Christian from the Turk, or from the Hebrew; but also the Catholic from the heretic; the most pious faithful from the incredulous libertine. And thus, one sees the wrath that the devil, their father, inspires in all heretics against the Rosary. There is in this a sign of the great reverses that the Catholic practice heaps n hell.

**1347:** In this regard, St. Francis Xavier has written the following account. With eight of his companions, he was passing through France, by way of Germany, into Italy. They were dressed in the garb of poor pilgrims, with a staff in their hands, and a pack on their backs, and the Rosary of our Lady around their necks. They were most courteously received by Catholics, and with tender tears, as they saw nine men coldly wearing the Rosary around their necks. This was in public protestation of the Roman faith, in neighborhoods full of heretics. They also had many times to experience the insolence and the wrath of the enemies of the faith, and not without an evident danger to their lives.

**1348:** One day, when they had passed by Constance, and about a mile distant from a castle, they saw an elderly woman coming forward to meet them. Crossing her arms, and raising her tearful eyes to heaven, she manifested toward them supreme demonstrations of reverence. As then she was close by, she began to kiss the rosaries that they had around their necks. She was saying something in her own language,

with vivid expressions of joy and devotion in the Catholic faith. She recognized that they, too, professed this faith at the sign of their rosaries. Then, she begged them to wait for her, ran to the hospital, and returned with a great quantity of rosaries and images of the Crucifix and Mary, that had been broken into pieces by the Lutherans, but which she had collected and saved. She begged the Fathers in tears to look at these sacred things torn to shreds by those heretical dogs, and kneeling down they revered these and tenderly kissed them.

**1349:** And then, the woman entered into the castle, and the Fathers followed her, and she pointed them out to all whom she met. Strongly crying out, she said: 'Just look and find out for yourselves if it is really as you say it is, that there is no longer any man in this world who follows the Roman faith. It is good for me that I never believed you. You have called me crazy because I never let myself be deceived by you. You are the crazy ones.' Thus, this Catholic woman remained most constant. This is all so true, beloved listeners, that the Rosary is a devotion adopted by the whole Catholic Church, to the point of its becoming a sign of Catholicism, as the glorious standards of the orthodox faith.

**1350:** And notice here what force of authority forms the consent of the entire universal Church, with which to judge the excellence of this devotion. For the confrontation with this judgment that is both authoritative and infallible in its decisions, I see clearly their weight. I note that the statements are formulated that are still the most famous of the most learned and illuminated authors that I could hear recite. They all exalt the Rosary, and praise it in an unbelievable manner in their writings. The weight of such authority could indeed confirm you in the esteem, the use and the profit that the many and great saints derived from it. This was for their own personal benefit, as well as for that of others. Throughout all of Christianity, the glorious concern for this devotion was had among princes [168], Bishops, important prelates, all of whom were ascribed in the devout exercise of this practice. You could add to this by listing the long series of Roman Pontiffs, as the Supreme Shepherd, BENEDICT XIV notes. Through an unbroken succession of Pontiffs stretches out of six whole centuries, and they approved it with very serious praise. They promoted this devotion with supreme zeal for all of Christianity the exercise of this devotion. And they enriched it with a profuse liberality of indulgence for the practice of it among its devotees.

**1351:** But now, from this supreme human authority, as this is by now sufficiently well known, I pass now to the supreme divine authority. In the most solemn and luminous signs this has been made manifest in behalf of the Rosary. I just relate one of these, not because there are only a few of them, or that the others are less outstanding, but simply that because from one you could conjecture the light of the other motives.

Come with me on the agile wings of your thoughts, flying over the sea that separates Italy from Greece, toward Lepanto, to be spectators. Here with your own eyes you might see the prodigious benefit that the immortal preaching of all the centuries since have recalled. You could see that there the sea was groaning under the weight of the formidable Turkish fleet.

**1352:** Go back in memory to that epoch: in the year 1571, the Turks were threatening with extreme ruin of the Christian name. Proud by nature, they were terrible beyond nature in their power at that time. Then, supremely swollen in their hope and boldness because of their recent conquests, they easily presumed on the total destruction, following infinite losses by Christians, who were exhausted and their forces divided. The Turks were about to send out their fleet with the backing of a slight breeze. They saw open to them all the ports, and the islands and the maritime beaches of the Catholic world. They already had on the sea the best armed armada, the most furnished inhuman memory. There were well provided with food stuffs, convoys, arms, sailors, soldiers, well backed with artillery, weaponry and munitions.

**1353:** In the year 1571, the Turks were a haughty and proud nation, terrible for their bold war-like undertakings. They were much strengthened by the very rapid subjugation of two empires. To this would be added the recent and infinite losses among the Christians. They were exhausted and their forces hopelessly divided. Thus, the Turks swelled with hope and boldness in that they presumed that their total destruction would now be easy. They believed that they could send out their fleet with but a slight breeze behind them. They saw opened up to them all the ports and the islands and the maritime beaches. They were facing Lepanto, in the strength of three hundred sails, with their fleet well armed. In human memory, this was the most grandiose, well supplied and directed by powerful generals and valiant officials. They were well supplied with good-stuffs, convoys, arms, sailors, soldiers, all furnished with artillery, weaponry, equipment, munitions, that seemed already to bring with them the ultimate desolation, total defeat, fire and the slaughter of all the Christians.

**1354:** And there, one general commanded all. Insolent in his happiness, almost too sure of victory, with impudent confidence even to offering insults and threats, he presented himself. Italy trembled as did Europe, at seeing the exultant boldness of these barbarians, about to bring the ultimate ruin to the Christian name. Within the bosom of the attacking force, there could be seen the flames, the steel, the slaughter, the plunder. The enemy would wreak their licentiousness on the lives of the faithful, in their homes, with their fortunes, with their bodies. There were threatened sacrilege in the temples, the sacking of the country-side, and the desolation to the fields.

**1355:** In opposition to this terrible horde were the Christians, in their fleet of Confederates, assembled only with great difficulties. Almost all were gathered together by the extreme efforts of the nations who found themselves offering some resistance behind their defenses. But, all seemed languid, because of the many different individual interests and their own ends. There was not a good grasp of the situation by the generals, who were just about to separate among themselves in the very act of leaving Messina. The troops were very inexperienced, and the greater part of the recent draftees had no training in the use of firearms. There was also dissension among the soldiers themselves, for the reason why they had taken up arms in the first place, and the generals themselves were about to quit the field. For all these reasons, the thought was disseminated by the more cautious that it would be better just to observe the enemy, or make some treaty with him, rather than attack.

But as the battle was about to get underway, there intervened an endeavor by Divine Providence. As the various ships from both sides took up position, in order to have reconnaissance in mutual fashion, they failed. And they did not make contact until the dawn of the new day that both entered into the sight of the other. This happened in such a way that it seemed that now the battle was inevitable. The Turks advanced in good order, all organized in the shape of the crescent. The Christians, as they passed through the shoals had seemed all dismembered and disorganized.

**1356:** It was a Sunday, the 7th day of October, the sky was placid and serene, and the sea was calm. The scene was a place of destiny, where other times the victory of Octavian Augustus decided the empire of the world, except that the apparatus of the Ottoman forces was more awesome, and it seemed that the sea groaned under the weight of such a formidable armada. The vivid apprehension of the danger kept the deliberations among the Christians paralyzed. The more cautious were still offering their advice against engaging in battle. However, the time for counsels and words had passed, and the hour for deeds and execution had dawned. The flag was raised, and the generals were mounted on the frigates. They went through their armada, and placed the glory under the eyes of the soldiers, and held up the fatherland. They held high the cause of religion, and they gave every assurance that they were fighting for the cause of Christianity.

**1357:** Meanwhile their armada left the shoals, and it was stretched straight away on high. A general who commanded the left wing, because of the misunderstanding of the one who commanded, and moved more by private interests, delayed in coming out to battle, in order to keep himself disengaged. The Turks chose precisely that point as one of the most favorable to them, and they gave the sound with the drums, the cymbals, and with fearsome cries. They attacked with all their force the six galleasses that were in the fore, and it all happened in an instant. And it was precisely

at that moment [167], on that 7th day of October that in that year fell on a Sunday, that throughout the whole Christian world the Rosary was being recited, with solemn and devout supplications to beg for help from Mary. And she was not lacking evidently in the opportune moment.

**1358:** In fact, the six galleasses, as they were surrounded by the enemy armada, having abandoned the right wing that was almost totally disjointed, accomplished prodigies of valor. Firing away fore and after, and on the sides, as if they were all alone, vomited forth bolts of canon-shot, a hail of bullets from their muskets, and clouds of smoke from their artificial fire. They caught the Turkish masses in a cross-fire, and truncated limbs, pierced breasts literally piled up, with a slaughter and butchery of human flesh that would remain famous and memorable. At this point, the Turks began to retreat, to become disunited, and then disorder set in. The wind that was needed for them to carry the battle, abandoned the Mussulman armada, and so they could not flee. Smoke was in their eyes, and they were unable to see their own disarray. The wind turned and favored the Christians and moved them, even those unwilling on the right side, to be dashed right into the enemy lines.

**1359:** Then Ali, finding himself confronted by light galleries, and being pounded from the rear by heavy guns, reinforced the rowers to get out from underneath the cannonade. But the Christian generals bravely took up the attack in harmony, uniting to them all their captains. And they engaged in a truly ferocious combat, with their captains being supplied with select troops, and they were alleviated by receiving refreshments from those nearby. By now, the battle had reached a high pitch, with equal ardor, equal damage being inflicted. While slaughter was inevitable, the outcome was still uncertain. The soldiers on both sides were inflamed with a kind of connatural hatred, and they exposed themselves with all courage to every danger. And those who were not incinerated by the fire fell into the sea, enveloped by the waters.

**1360:** The roar of the canon, the whistle of the muskets, the cries of the defeated Turks, the thick clouds of smoke that hid the sun, the screams of the oppressed, the groans of those who were drowning, all together composed a hellish music, between the fire, the smoke, the laments. The outcome was still in doubt, but all the while the furor increased, but finally the scales were tipped and the Turkish leadership was overwhelmed. The Christians then took over. The desperation was redoubled, soldiers slugged it foot to foot on the ships, as if they were on land. And when the galleys of Ali seemed to be right down to the wood, nonetheless, because of their obstinate resistance and successive reinforcements, the battle still hung in the balance. Just then, the Christians who were in the back, with a miracle of valor, they put their strength where the greatest danger was. They met a certain risk head on, and

fought back the continuous reinforcements of the enemy. At long last, the flag with the crescent was exchanged for that one with the Cross.

**1361:** With the center in total rout, the stubborn conflict continued along the flanks. On one flank, the Christians were engaged by the courage of a Turkish general who all recognized as a great commander, without in any way forgetting the great courage of the ordinary foot-soldier. On the other flank, the Christians were surrounded and had reached the extremes. But, the victorious reinforcements that came from the center, the high shouts claiming victory, and finally, the head of Ali was seen, held high on a pike. Then both flanks collapsed, and the day ended with a total rout of the enemy.

The battle lasted for five continuous hours. Such as the obstinacy and the wrath of the nations on both sides, that they battled even all entwined together even in the water. This was by now full of the half dead, cadavers, beheaded bodies, and truncated members. The sea was so cluttered with broken wood, sails, oars, masts and rudders, that the waves could hardly be seen. Only 30 Turkish ships survived and not a single one would have returned had not the poor strategy of one of the generals allowed it. At first, he seemed to dismember and disjoint the entire armada, by spreading the right flank out too thin in the sea. He is the one who left open the passage. On that same side, and because of the same reason, the Christian suffered the greatest damage, with about 5,000 who perished.

**1362:** 180 were the ships put to the task, 90 were sunk. Many fortifications and convoys were taken, as well as a prodigious train of artillery. 30,000 Turks were killed; 10,000 prisoners entered into those very chains from which were liberated 15,000 Christian slaves. 180 galleries were taken, etc. etc. It took fifteen days to divide the spoils. The advantage of this victory might have been just the conquest of a number of Turkish Provinces. But, even Constantinople itself could be now taken, even without arms, just by presenting oneself in the city. There were ports and places just empty of all ships and garrisons, and the spirits that were struck with terror, already shook the entire empire.

**1363:** Thus God had matured also the fruit of this victory, that just because of the fault of the delay of human beings brought such harassment. In human memory, no other victory was ever accomplished in which the hand of god was more clearly demonstrated. Selimus himself, the Emperor of the Turks, in his defeat, recognized this, confessing that prayer had hurt him more than the weapons did. The victorious Christians even more clearly recognized this, by ascribing it all to a prodigy. St. PIUS V, to whom there was revealed at the very moment of the victory, all that had happened, and had predicted it, ordered that there be celebrated each year, on the First Sunday of October, the commemoration of St. Mary of Victory. Also, his successor, GREGORY XIII ascribed that victory to the prayers of the Rosary. And he

wished that Mary be venerated under this title, and he instituted the Office in all the Churches where there had been an altar of this name. CLEMENT XI, finally, after another victory, by means of the Rosary against the Turks obtained in Hungary, no less great than the earlier one, spread to the whole Church this solemnity in perpetual manner.

**1364:** This is why, my most distinguished hearers, that in the Rosary there was a devotion that is the most noble in its origin, most perfect in its nature, the most confirmed by the authority of its witnesses and prodigies. This is the sublime excellence of the Mystical Roses, with which today the veneration of the faithful eaves the trailing and joyful crowns of the Virgin. These are those roses from the heavenly gardens that have been transplanted into the fertile field of the Church: the pious faithful admire their glory. The form, the structure, the fruit of these flowers exceeds the limited ideas and the rules of all art, of all science even that the most elevated among human beings. There is confounded the vain pride of the world, the vain wise people of the world, and the foolish and most vain wisdom of this world, in the splendor of so much perfection.

Just as the use of flowers is so ample, the culture is as universal. As you, devoted cultivators, in your private and domestic garden: diligently guard these from all excessive heat and cold. High is the price that both heaven and earth esteem this; your negligence is condemned, as are you who are tepid, who allow these flowers to dry up and become all arid...

+++++

**[NB: Translators' Note: From ## 1323-1333, there is a rough draft characteristic for its citations; and a different draft that runs from ## 1334-1364, that is more historical in content. Now follows the final rendition of this Sermon 39, on the Holy Rosary, for October 1807].**

+

+++

+



**1365:****SERMON 39****The Holy Rosary****On the 4th day of October, 1807, Verona, in St. Paul's, of Campo Marzio.**

The Feast of this day, the solemn Feast of the Most Holy rosary of Mary, determines, my most distinguished hearers, the object of my sermon. It is only that as far as the manner of this sermon that I have not yet decided.

The humble piety of the faithful that regards this practice of cult with very partial devout **obsequiousness**, expects from me perhaps a panegyric of praise. The haughty wisdom of the world, with disdainful air, insults it and derides it, forces me to a just and necessary defense of it. The pious custom of many who cultivate it, both in themselves and in others, to the great benefit of their own souls, no less than that of their families, merits to be approved, sustained and confirmed. The negligence on the other hand, of some who do not take much care of this, or who only make use of it in a cold manner, or have already discontinued it, but not without detriment and danger, need to be reproved, inspired, encouraged. This coming together of such a variety of circumstances that imposes different purposes to my sermon, leaves me undecided in the different choice of means.

**1366:** Nonetheless, if you will dispense me, courteous as you are, from embellishing with rare and delicate flowers my ordinary style, to which I feel that my capacity is unequal to the challenge, and from sharpening my presentation with a strong and vivid contention of words, and to this my nature is neither made nor adapted, I think I have found a way. I believe that I can satisfy the sense of religion of the former, and also close the mouths of the latter. I may be able to comfort the fervent, to enkindle those who have grown cold, by proceeding in the demonstration in a manner that is no less easy to grasp, by your intelligence, and no less efficacious for your real needs.

I will establish the excellence of this practice from the nobility of its origin that illustrates it, and from the intrinsic perfection which distinguishes it, and from the solid authority that with the most solemn testimonies distinguish it, promote it, confirm it.

**1367:** I do not know what other devotion can boast of more noble traits of excellence from its very inception. The Queen of heaven herself proposes this from her own mouth, teaches it, prescribes it. To one of the most celebrated heroes in the history of Christianity, no less outstanding for the nobility of his birth, for his doctrine as for his holiness, the great Patriarch, Dominic, was committed the responsibility of preaching this. An entire Order that was so accomplished, the sons of St. Dominic, the

flower of Christian erudition, an illustrious seed bed of Saints, as BARONIUS referred to them, received this as the patrimony an inheritance to promulgate it.

Instituted, introduced, promoted as the most interesting object of Christianity, which is to oppose this to heresy and vice, it proves valid in the most urgent necessities, and the most trying concerns of the Catholic Church. This devotion had such a fortunate result, that is available to the Church with indescribable promptness. Hence, it has been placed in security with a valid, perpetual, universal protection from the most powerful enemies and from their most formidable attacks. Let us prove, if you are agreeable, these facts in the light of history.

**1368:** From the 12th century, the Albigensians, a most terrible descendent of the Waldesians, opened with their errors in the Church a kind of unclean sewer in which all come together to through the feces of heresies. This did not affect only the uncultured masses, but priests, Bishops, princes were also seen to fall miserably by the subtleties into that pit, and everything became soiled by that swamp. Baptism was denied to babies, the Eucharist was abominated, Penance was derided, the sacraments were annulled, all hope was removed in any future resurrection. There was destroyed the true faith in the one God, Creator of all, and there were admitted in His place, with the Manichaeans, two principles.

**1369:** There rose up around and about, and went high into the heavens, the intolerable stench of the most terrible blasphemies against the saints, Christ, Mary most Holy, whose purity was singularly and most villainously defamed.

In vain proved to be the vigilance of the Holy Shepherds to extinguish, or to attest the plague that opposed them. The sweat, the fatigue of illustrious and copious missions, provided by the zeal of the Vicar of Christ, Innocent III.

The hostilities increased, spread, were strengthened, and at the opening of the century, the heresy was renewed. The heretics arose, sustained by the strong right arm of the Count of Toulouse [103], up out of their stench-laden depths.

**1370:** They violated temples, demolished altars, burnt houses, ravished sacred virgins, shed the blood of the innocent, sought the death of priests with excruciating tortures. They put to the flame and sword many and flourishing provinces. Error preceded ahead in pomp, armed with the fury, inebriated with blood. In some instances, fathers of families sacrificed their own children, nobles were robbed of their wealth, and the lowly people many were forced to sacrifice their own heads.

And what else! Against the weak forces of not more than a thousand foot-soldiers and 800calvary, which was all that the forces of the state could enlist for its own defense and that of religion - there was arrayed a terrible army. It was comprised of 100,000 armed men, at the head of which was the King of Aragon

himself, powerful ally of the Count. The enemy was already in sight: battle could not be avoided, and a decisive action proved imminent.

**1371:** What a set of circumstances, what danger, what consternation! Such a swollen torrent and impetuous flood that was mounted up against such a weak dyke. After having been able to inundate the broad land that it dominated, it also threatened to overthrow on this beautiful land, the seat of religion and the faith. There had already been infiltrated underground, as it were, many turbid waters that were gathering in force for the moment of a total deluge.

- To whom could one turn for help, for comfort, in such trying circumstances?
- to Mary, to Mary<sup>1</sup>

This is precisely true, my brothers and sisters, to Mary, to the very one who is the most powerful support for Christianity in its necessities; “Help of Christians”. To the one to whom the Church chants her singular praises<sup>34</sup>: ‘Rejoice, o Mary, all the heresies you alone have conquered for the universal world.’

**1372:** Thus, indeed, St. Dominic, all alone, with a small squadron of his sons, remained in the ordeal to comfort the Catholics who presented themselves to Mary. And that brave soldier awaited in his entrenched cap of solitude, and armed himself with prayer, with fasting, and with full confidence. He waited for the opportune moment, and for support from heaven that this earth cannot offer, once its own resources have been exhausted and it has been beaten down by fear.

Nor was the help lacking at the opportune time. The heavens were opened smiling on the Saint’s prayers, and the Queen of heaven herself descended to assist him in person And she said to him:

- Go, my son, go and preach my Rosary; and know that his form of praying that I teach you will be most pleasing to my Son and to me. Furthermore, it will be of great and singular assistance to the Church in weakening heresies, in extinguishing vices, in promoting virtues, in imploring divine mercy: ‘A singular protection against heresies and vices.’ For this purpose, I want you and your sons to be forever the promulgators of this heavenly rite instituted by me, from which will spring very great helpfulness in the souls of the faithful: ‘...innumerable fruits from such a salutary institution in the Christian republic.’

---

<sup>34</sup> Common of the Feast of the BVM, tract.

**1373:** Dominic went out from the trenches of his retreat, comforted by the heavenly promises, endowed with additional helps. And what took place? Of that numerous armada, that covered the whole earth, there was nothing left but a mountain of cadavers, on which the King of Aragon himself lay stretched out, all the rest were in full rout, in flight, dispersed and diluted. The besieged Count was reduced to capitulation, and to make restitution by putting all back up that was destroyed. He himself had to make payment for all that the enemies of the faith had destroyed and wasted, under the shadow of his protection. He had to give back to the Church all that was taken and kept under his tutelage. All else, he had to exterminate entirely, with that same powerful arm with which he had first received them and defended them.

**1374:** But what has to be esteemed even more is that one hundred thousand of those most obstinate heretics were taken, not so much by power or by arms, or by authority, but by the sweet voice of the power of the Rosary, preached by St. Dominic. These most obstinate enemies had to bend their necks freely to the gentle yoke of Christ. And an even greater number of most corrupt sinners were raised up to grace, and returned to the very bosom of the Catholic Church, taken from that tragic depravation of that unhappy age.

These are those special prodigies that cover all the others, and which were accomplished in such abundance, with such promptness, with such stability, even to be perpetuated. These were shown in the most fortunate of outcomes, and established the character of a devotion that was so excellent even from its very beginning.

**1375:** These are the wondrous results and first-fruits of the Rosary. However, it could not have been in any other way, once admitting the intrinsic excellence of the devotion, that results thus from the perfection of its parts, as from its extension and practice.

For the Rosary is made of 15 decades of the Angelic Salutation, distinguished one from the other by the Lord's Prayer. This separates the same number of the Mysteries of our reparation, that for each decade there is recalled to mind for pious meditation.

Now, I ask you: Find me a more excellent prayer than the Lord's own Prayer; and after this, one more noble than the Angelic Salutation. As for the Mysteries of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, what object would be more suitable to meditate? The essential purpose, then, of all this is to imitate what the Mysteries contain and obtain what they promise - could anything be more holy, more sublime? The meditation of Mary, could anything be more fitting, more powerful? In this

prayer, there is committed equally your tongue to praise, your mind to meditate, and your heart to love: and with what ease!

**1376:** Furthermore, this is a prayer common to all. The Lord's Prayer is for all Christians: for all is the Salutation of the Virgin through the *Hail, Mary*. For everyone is intended to recall to mind with affectionate devotion the sacred and holy mysteries of our salvation. Sinners may find in the Rosary the most efficacious means for their conversion: *...In me is all hope of life and virtue... [Si 24:25]*. The just can find in the Rosary the sweet pasturage for their devotion: *... I am the mother of faith love ...and of knowledge... [v. 24]*. Sinners have in the meditation of Christ's life and death a powerful antidote against the poisons of the flesh and of the senses. The just have in the contemplation of the glory of Christ a sweet invitation to aspire to eternal sweetness.

**1377:** Yes, Mary is that Mystical Rose who brings joy to the just, heals sinners, gives fragrance to beginners, adorns the proficient, crowns the perfect. She spreads her sweet joy in tribulations, and she makes valid the defense against temptations. This grows equally in the cultivated gardens of the great as in the simple little gardens of the poor. It flowers equally in the humble valleys, as well as on the proud summits of hills. And she does not disdain or withdraw at all, whether it is a gentle or coarse hand that cultivates her. She attracts the youth, she does not offend the elderly, motivates the lazy, but does not get in the way of the busy, recreates the fervent and does not annoy the tepid.

Thus, finally, the Rosary is a devotion that is common to all the faithful in the Church universal. In this sign you can usually and with security and ease not only distinguish the Christian from the Turk, or from the Hebrew, but also the Catholic from the heretic, and the pious believer from the incredulous libertine. And this also contrasts the wrath of all the heretics which the demon, their father, inspires against the Rosary. All this, then, is a sign that is not equivocal of the great harm that is heaped on hell by this Catholic practice.

**1378:** In this regard, there comes to mind St. FRANCIS XAVIER. He relates that once with eight other companions he passed through France by way of Germany, into Italy. They were dressed as poor pilgrims, with staff in hand and a pack on their shoulders. They had rosaries around their necks. As such, they were courteously received with tender tears. They were seen as nine men who boldly wore their rosaries on their necks, in a public protestation of the roman faith, in neighborhoods that were full of heretics. On many occasions they had to experience the insolence and the wrath of the faith, and not without an evident danger to their lives.

**1379:** One day, the story goes, they had passed through Constance and were about a mile distant from a certain castle, that was given over totally to the heretics. They saw an elderly woman making her way toward them. Crossing her arms, and raising her tearful eyes heavenwards, she made toward them demonstrations of reverence. As she was by then close to them, she began to kiss the rosaries that they had around their necks. She was saying something in her own language, with vivid expressions of joy and devotion for the Catholic faith, which at the sign of the rosaries she saw was professed by them. Then, she beseeched them to wait for her, and she ran and returned with a great quantity of rosaries and images of the Crucifix and of Mary. These had all been broken into pieces by the Lutherans, and had been collected and saved by her. The Fathers wept at seeing these sacred objects torn apart by these heretical dogs, and having knelt down, they revered them and devoutly kissed them.

**1350:** Just as soon as the woman had entered into the castle, with the fathers following her, she pointed out to all whom she met, crying out with a loud voice: - 'Look again, o wretched ones, if it is indeed as you say, that there are no longer any men in the world who follow the Roman faith. It is good for me that I did not believe you. But you called me crazy, because I did not let myself be deceived: you are the crazy ones.' So spoke the most constant Catholic woman. So it is, my beloved brothers and sisters, that the Rosary is a devotion adopted by the entire Catholic Church. And once adopted and become her own, it has even become a sign of Catholicism, and almost the glorious standard of the orthodox faith.

**1351:** And here note what force of authority there is rendered in the consent of the entire Church universal, that you might have some idea of the excellence of this devotion. Along with such an authoritative and infallible judgment as has been made regarding it by its judges, I see well that there will appear also the most serious declarations of the most learned and illumined authors. By these, they exalt the Rosary and praise it above all belief in their writings.

To confirm the weight of this authority, I could well add for you here not so much the glory that many kings and emperors, and Bishops and sublime Prelates seek for their names, in enrolling all in the devout exercises of this practice. Even more the esteem, the use, and the profit that many and great saints made of this, for their own usefulness and the particular help of others. This is no less true for the religious communities they founded, and for all of Christianity, from the examples and from their preaching, that so extended sanctification.

**1352:** I could here add above all the long series of roman Pontiffs, described already by the great BENEDICT XIV. Through an uninterrupted succession for six entire centuries, they offered their approbation with the most sublime praises in their Briefs. They consistently promoted with supreme zeal its use in Christianity, and they

enriched with devotion with a profuse liberality of indulgences, for both the private and public practice of it in its devotees. But, from the supreme human authority, as this is already well known, I pass now to that supreme divine authority. In the most solemn and luminous signs it has sown itself to be in favor of the Rosary. I only relate one of these, not because there are only a few, or that the others are less outstanding. My reason is that from the one example you might conjecture the light of many others.

**1383:** In the year 1571, the Turks were a haughty and proud nation, terrible for their bold war-like undertakings. They were much strengthened by the rapid subjugation of two empires. To this would be added the recent victories over the Christian forces which were exhausted and divided, and this just increased their authority. It was thus presumed that their total destruction would be an easy matter. Making use of a slight breeze that would dispatch them over the sea, they saw opened to them the ports, islands and beaches.

**1384:** They were facing Lepanto, a force of three hundred sails. In the memory of human beings, their armada was the greatest ever assembled. It was the most flourishing, and so well directed by capable and valiant captains. They were so well supplied with food-stuffs, convoys, arms, sailors, soldiers, and so furnished with artillery, weaponry, equipment, and munitions that it seemed that they already had brought about the ultimate desolation, total waste, fire and slaughter to all Christians. Ali 'Bascia' was the commander-in-chief. He was insolent in his good fortune, and almost cock-sure of victory, with impudent confidence. With haughty insults, he threatened the extreme ruin to the Christian name.

All Italy trembled and it seemed to her that she could already see exulting the barbaric audacity bringing within her very bosom the flames, the steel, the destruction, the rapes. There could be imagined the licentiousness in the homes, in the streets, in the lives, in the fortunes and on the persons of the land. There was imagined the sacrilege of the temples, the sacking in the squares, the destruction of the fields.

**1385:** There was opposed to all this a fleet of Confederates. This was assembled only after much difficulty, and was found already behind the Curzolari. All was put together with extreme effort and resistance. The force was languid because of the difference in the interests and the purposes of the nations, and for the lack of good intelligence among the generals, who more than once were on the verge of separating themselves from one another. Added to all this was the lack of experience among the troops, the greater part of whom were new draftees. Much dissension arose among the troops, and frequently weapons were drawn in their ranks, one against the other and much tumult. For all these reasons, from the more cautious the advice was to observe the enemy rather than attack him.

**1386:** But, as the battle got underway, an intervention of Providence took over. As they were watching one another in their ships, on both sides of the armada, in order to take reconnaissance of the formation of the ships, they fell in upon one another. But they did not actually engage until dawn of the following day that both were in sight. This made it by now inevitable that a conflict would ensue.

The Turkish fleet proceeded in good order, all formed as in the shape of a crescent. The Christian fleet, on the contrary, in passing through the shoals, seemed all dismembered and disorganized.

It was Sunday, that 7th day of October: the sky was placid and serene, and the sea was calm. The scene and location was a place of destiny, in that, on another occasion, the victory of Octavian Augustus had there decided the empire of the world.

The apparatus of the Ottoman forces was the most awesome, and it seemed as though the sea itself groaned under the weight of such a formidable armada. The vivid apprehension of the danger held the Christians still in doubt and uncertain in their deliberations. But, there was no more for counsels or words, but only of deeds and the execution of plans.

**1387:** The flags were raised, and the general mounted on their frigates, looked across the armada, and placed under the eyes of their soldiers their glory, their fatherland, religion: this was so that each one would be animated to fight well for the defense and the honor of the Christian faith. And it was also so that they could assure all of god's protection, the most powerful Father of His faithful, and the great Remunerator for anyone who would put down his life for the cause of His holy religion. All of the soldiers were deeply moved at these words, and moved to tears out of joy, they responded: Victory! Victory!

**1388:** Meanwhile, the armada was making its way through the shoals and in a straight formation, extended itself forward. However, the right flank did not advance, held back by the mistaken purposes of the one who led them. His idea was to disengage himself from the battle, and so he remained detached from the rest of the body. Then the Turks stood at attention watching every movement of the Christians, avidly took advantage of this situation. And they gave the sign for the drums to beat, for the cymbals to clang, and fearsome cries. And they struck with all their force the six galleasses that were in front, all took place in an instant. And that was also the precise moment in which all of Christianity with its solemn and devout supplications recited the rosary of Mary, in order to ask her for her help. And her help came promptly, abundantly, manifestly.



**1389:** In fact, the six galleasses, although surrounded by the enemy armada, and abandoned on the right wing which had separated itself, showed prodigies of courage. They fired away, fore and aft, on both sides, and it seemed as if they were all ablaze, vomiting out bolts of cannonade, hails [125] of musket fire, and clouds of artificial fire. Taking in the Turkish dreams, they piled up instead truncated members, pierced corpses, with a famous slaughter and memorable butchery of human flesh.

The Turks began to give way, to withdraw, then were in disarray, and finally, total confusion. The wind that was needed for their battle plan, abandoned the Mussulman armada. Thus, it could not get away, and brought them rather right into the eye of the smoke. Hence, they were unable to see the dimensions of the havoc wreaked upon them. The wind seemed to pick up in the Christians' favor, and pushed them even unwillingly, those on the right wing, directly into a clash with the enemy.

**1390:** Then Ali 'Bascia', finding himself before the lighter ships in front, and being pounded in the back by the larger ships, gave word to begin rowing: at this point, the Christian generals charged him as one person. There ensued a ferocious battle. The captains were furnished with select troops, and received from the nearby ranks, reinforcements. Then, the battle raged with equal ardor on both sides, equal damage with a certain slaughter in the offing, with the outcome still uncertain. The soldiers of both nations, charged up by their connatural hatred, exposed themselves courageously to every danger. And those who were not incinerated by fire fell into the sea, absorbed by water.

**1391:** The roar of the canons, the whistle of the muskets, the cries of the beaten Turks, the thick clouds that hid the sun, the screams of the oppressed, the groans of those who were drowning, all together resulted in a tragic, hellish music, between the smoke, the fire and the lamentations. All the while the fury increased. The captains stormed the enemy ships. The Christians leapt on the enemy ships and a hand-to-hand combat ensued. Foot-to-foot, they slugged it out, as though they were on land. The besieged Turks contested the battle with fierce desperation, every step forward the Christians took. And as the imperial galley of Ali' was won over even to the last timber, yet for the successive reinforcements, the battle remained in the balance.

**1392:** At this point, a few small Christian ships, holding up the rear, with a superhuman effort of courage, pounced upon the spot where there was the greatest danger [105] with their assistance. Others crossed over entire squadrons with sure risk to themselves that were coming to the help of the enemy. Finally, the Turkish leadership surrendered, and the flag with the crescent was exchanged for that with the Cross.

Thus, the center caved in, even though on the flanks the battle went on furiously. As one, the Christians were committed to a very dangerous struggle, due to the valor of the Turkish general, who was the commander of all their forces. And this is said without overlooking the ordinary soldier. They were surrounded on the one side by superior numbers, and were at the extremes. But, with the help of that part of the combatants who were already victorious, the head of Ali' suddenly appeared on a pike, the tide turned. Up went the shout of the conquerors. The wings collapsed and the day was won with a complete rout of the enemy.

**1393:** The battle lasted over five continuous hours. Such was the mutual obstinacy and wrath of the nations involved that they even fought all entwined with one another, even in the water. This by now was covered over by the half-dead, and was full of cadavers, truncated members and remnants. The sea was so encumbered with broken pieces of wood, sails, oars, masts, and rudders, that the waves would hardly be seen. The Turks had committed one hundred and eight galleys to the encounter, ninety were sunk. Many armaments were taken, and convoys, as well as a prodigious train of artillery. 40,000 Turks perished, then thousands entered into the very chains that were taken from the liberated 15,000 Christian slaves.

**1394:** It took 15 days to make inventory and to divide the spoils. The advantage of this victory could be estimated not only in the conquest of various provinces, but included even Constantinople itself. This was now defenseless, and could be taken by just walking in. the ports and the laces were devoid of ships and garrisons, and the spirits shook by fear, and the empire itself wavered. In this way God had matured the fruit of victory which only because of the fault of human delay was decided.

Inhuman memory, no other victory was ever achieved in which the hand of God had been so clearly demonstrated. Selimus himself, the emperor of the Turks, in defeat, recognized this. He confessed that he had been hurt much more by prayer than by force of arms. The victorious Christians saw this more clearly by ascribing the entire prosperous outcome of that action to Mary's powerful intercession.

**1395:** St. PIUS V, to whom was revealed in that hour that all this had happened, and had predicted it, ordered that every year on the First Sunday of October, there should be celebrated the commemoration of St. Mary of Victory. GREGORY XIII, his successor, testified that that victory had been obtained through the prayers of the Rosary. He wished that under this title Mary be venerated on that day. And he instituted the Office of the Feast in all the Churches where there might be an altar dedicated under this title, Finally, CLEMENT XI, after another victory that was won by means of the Rosary, also by Christians against the Turks in Hungary, that was in no way inferior to the former one, spread to the whole Church and perpetually, this solemnity.

**1396:** And this is why, most distinguished listeners, that in the Rosary we have a devotion that is most noble because of its origin, most perfect in its nature, the most confirmed by the authority of its witnesses and prodigies. This is the sublime excellence of the Mystical Roses, of which today the devotion of the faithful still weaves trailing and joyful crowns for the Virgin. These are the roses of the heavenly gardens transplanted in the fertile field of the Church. Let the pious faithful admire its glory. The form, the structure, the fruit of these flowers, exceeds the limited ideas and the rules of every art, of all science, even the most sophisticated among human beings. The foolish and most vain wisdom of this world is confounded in the splendor of such perfection.

**1397:** As the use of these flowers is so wide-spread, so universal is its cultivation. For you, my devout cultivators of this devotion, it is fitting for you to keep these flowers in your private and home gardens, with the diligence of all ardor, with all yearning. The price in which the both heaven and earth hold this devotion is most exalted. Your negligence is condemned to tepid devotees, that allows these gardens to shrivel by lack of cultivation, and when allowed to dry up. Come, now, all of you, plant these roses, irrigate them, nourish them, propagate them! Let them always smile for you, in a perpetual spring-time. This devotion is in the defense of your piety, the protection of your purity, for your sons, o fathers, for your daughters, o mothers! Let these flowers be in your hands, in your bosoms, on your temples.

May their fragrance permeate both your private rooms, and public offices, your proud halls and your humble hovels. May every station be signed with these variously colored flowers, and may every path be covered with them. May the temple be adorned with this, your prayer-wishes be crowned, and may the tombs of the faithful be sprinkled with this devotion. May the trophies of our heroes be decorated with these, and may the altars of the saints be surrounded by them. May the august throne be garlanded with these, and may the cloud of these roses be placed at the illustrious feet of our Mother and Queen.

+

+++

+

**SOURCES****OT**

Nb 21:9	# 1331	Si 24:18	# 1323
4 K [2 K] 5:13	# 1333	24	## 1345; 1376
Ps 34:28	## 1328; 1330	25	## 1331; 1345; 1376
36:30	# 1330	26	# 1323
44:12	# 1323	50: 8	# 1323
118:145	# 1330	Is 23:16	# 1330
Ct 1:3	# 1323	29:12	# 1333
2:5	# 1324	13	# 1330
3:11	# 1332		

**NT**

Mt 15:8	# 1330	Rv 5:1	# 1333
		14:2	# 1330

**MAGISTERIUM**

BENEDICT XIV, *De Festis*, Bk 2, 12, 5, ff.

Rom. Ed., t. 10, 523 (St. Agatha's - Rome) ## 1325; 1350; 1382

CLEMENTXI, Feast of Rosary extended

to whole Church ## 1330; 1363; 1395

GREGORY XIII, Feast of Rosary [successor to Pius V]

## 1330; 1363; 1395

INNOCENT XIII, opposed Albigensianism

## 1338; 1363

St. PIUS V - Feast of Rosary

## 1330; 1363; 1395

**LITURGY**

Common of the BVM, Tract

## 1339; 1371

Annunciation of BVM, Gradual [Ps 44:12]

# 1323

On the Feast of the Rosary. Respons. 2

# 1324

**FATHERS**

St. Peter Chrysologus, Sermon 54

(before middle) [PL 52, 380 B]

# 1331

**EARLY CHURCH**

Caes, Arles, Hom 4 [143]

# 1331

**DOCTORS**

St. Bernard, Serm. 1 de BV

# 1331

St. Bonaventure, contemplation of the

Mysteries of the Rosary [antidote]

# 1331

**SAINTS**

St. Francis XAVIER

## 1329; 1347-1349; 1378

**MIDDLE AGES**

St. Alan., St. Dominic's Conversions

# 1332

**OTHER WRITERS**Baronius [calls the OP's, *illustre**sanctorum seminarium*]

## 1326; 1336; 1367

GERVAS., *In Chron.*

# 1326

GRAVESON, *History*: feast of Rosary [t. 5, p. 523]

# 1332

UGO, Card., Church in CT

# 1332

+

+++

+

**[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.<sup>35</sup>**

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...<sup>36</sup>

**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.

**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

---

<sup>35</sup> Denz. 1570.

<sup>36</sup> 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*.

Canons of the IInd Council of Nicea<sup>37</sup>, and those of the Council of Trent<sup>38</sup>. 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 Prototypes [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<sup>39</sup>], 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 Mussulman 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.

---

<sup>37</sup> Denz. 302, ff.

<sup>38</sup> Denz. 986, ff.

<sup>39</sup> 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 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 Aspricolle. And then from the lower to the upper Germany, passing through, without stopping in Baviera at the famous chapel of Götingen, 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 Mezzogiorno [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 VIIth 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 25<sup>th</sup> Session<sup>40</sup>, 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*.<sup>41</sup> 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 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.

---

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Denz. 984, ff.

<sup>41</sup> cf. n. 305.

**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,<sup>42</sup> 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.

**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

---

<sup>42</sup> St. Basil., *Hom 17 in Barlaam, mart.*, near the end [t. 2, p. 141, B, ff.].

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*<sup>43</sup> 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 images.<sup>44</sup> 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 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

---

<sup>43</sup> *Spirate* is a word developed in theology: as Jesus '*ex-spired*' on the Cross, breathed out his last breath, the word means when some people simply '*exude*' goodness, knowledge, etc. - as to *in-spire*.

<sup>44</sup> Denz. 988.

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**.<sup>45</sup> Thus, I could once again cite for you the witness of PENEADE<sup>46</sup>, that of EDESSA,<sup>47</sup> that of BERITHUS.<sup>47</sup>

**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 everyday 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.

**1533:** St. AUGUSTINE will conclude the persuasion In his *Letter* 78 to the Clergy<sup>48</sup>, 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

---

<sup>45</sup> Cf. above # 1501.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. above # 1504.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. above # 1505.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. t. 2, pp. 183/G, ff.



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] 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*<sup>49</sup>, 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

---

<sup>49</sup> cf. 22, 8, a. t. 7, p. 663 C.

God, but also to His 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!

+++++

### 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

### MAGISTERIUM

Gregory II, Pope [Letter to Leo Isaurus]	# 1505
Gregory III [Iconoclasts]	# 1544
NICEA, II <sup>nd</sup> Council of [Against the Iconoclasts]	# 1487
VII <sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council [Image of BERITHUS]	# 1505
PIUSVI, Pope, <i>Auctorem Fidei</i> , Aug. 28, 1794 –	
Errors of Synod of Pistoia [Denz. # 1570]	# 1484
TRENT, Council of, session 24 [Dec. 3 & 4, 1563.	
On sacred Images, abuses [Denz. # 988]	# 1525
TRENT, Catechism of, n. 305 [Images]	# 1510

### FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

ST. AUGUSTINE, <i>Epistle 78, To the Clergy,</i>	
<i>Elders and People of the Church of Hippo.</i>	
Near the end [t.2, p. 184 C]	## 1484; 1533
St. BASIL, <i>Hom. 17, in Barlaam, Martyr.</i>	
Near the end. [t. 2, pp. 141/B, ff.	# 1516
St. GREGORY of NYSSA [one of his <i>Orations</i> ] [51]	## 1516; 1520

**EARLY CHURCH WRITERS**

EUSEBIUS, 4th century. <i>Church History</i>	# 1501
EVAGRIUS, 6th century. Noble Greek writer [32]	# 1504
LEO ISAUROS [On Sacred Images]	## 1491; 1505
NICEPHORUS, narrates about Christ's Status [26; 29]	## 1502; 1503
PHILOSTORGIUS [5th century writer] [27]	# 1502
PHOTIUS, <i>Library</i>	# 1530
PRUDENTIUS, <i>Peri-Stefanon</i> [58]	
moved by portrait of St. Cassian]	# 1523
SIGISBERT, <i>History of the Image of Berithus</i>	# 1505
SOZIMENUS, <i>History</i> 5th Book [25]	# 1502
THEODORUS, Lector [30], <i>Collections, Book I</i>	# 1520

**DOCTORS & DOCTORESSES**

St. JOHN OF THE CROSS [against poor art]	# 1522
St. ROBERT BELLARMINE [22].	
<i>Controversialist Defends Images</i>	# 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, Patriarch 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

**OTHER WRITERS**

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
GUMPPEMBERG, P, <i>Marian Atlantis</i> . Inglostadt	# 1497
LIPSIUS, Justus, of Louvain, writer	# 1497
LOPEZ, Huan Antonio, Spanish Mariologist	# 1495
MACRI [59], <i>Notices about Words: ICON</i>	# 1524
MARCANZIO, against poor art	# 1522
MURILLO, Diego, Spanish Mariologist	# 1495
NATALE, ALEXANDER [refutes Dalleus, Pycenius]	# 1506
PETAVIUS, <i>Dogma</i>	# 1508
POUGET, <i>Catholic Institutions</i>	# 1537
PYCENIUS, <i>Gossip</i>	#1506
RUILLARD, Sr., French author - <i>Parthene: Shrines of Mary</i>	# 1496
SAMPERIO, Fr. <i>Iconology</i>	# 1495
SPONDANO [36]. <i>Menologio</i>	# 1505
TURSELLINI, Fr. Horace, <i>Story of the Sanctuary of Loreto</i>	# 1406

+

+++

+