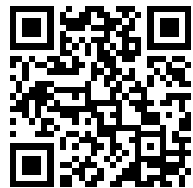

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>



THE WORKS OF
SAINT AUGUSTINE

*A Translation
for the 21st Century*

SERMONS

Digitized by Google



SERMONS

AUGUSTINIAN HERITAGE INSTITUTE

Board of Advisors:

Gerald Bonner, Maria Boulding, O.S.B.
Gervase Corcoran, O.S.A., Robert Dodaro, O.S.A.
Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., Edmund Hill, O.P.
John Page, Joseph McGowan
John Oldfield, O.A.R., Boniface Ramsey, O.P.,
Director: John E. Rotelle, O.S.A.

THE WORKS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

A Translation for the 21st Century

Part III — Sermons

Volume 9: Sermons 306-340A

The English translation of the works of Saint Augustine has been made possible with contributions from the following:

Order of Saint Augustine

Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova (East)
Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel (Midwest)
Province of Saint Augustine (California)
Province of Saint Joseph (Canada)
Vice Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel
Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel (Ireland)
Province of Saint John Stone (England and Scotland)
Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel (Australia)
The Augustinians of the Assumption (North America)
The Sisters of Saint Thomas of Villanova

Order of Augustinian Recollects

Province of Saint Augustine

Mr. and Mrs. James C. Crouse
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Henkels
Mr. and Mrs. Francis E. McGill, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Mariano J. Rotelle

THE WORKS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE
A Translation for the 21st Century

SERMONS

III/9
(306-340A)
on the Saints

translation and notes
Edmund Hill, O.P.

editor
John E. Rotelle, O.S.A.

New City Press
Hyde Park, New York

grad
BR
65
.A92
E5
1990
pt. 3
v. 9

Published in the United States by New City Press
202 Cardinal Rd., Hyde Park, New York 12538
©1994 Augustinian Heritage Institute

Cover design by Ben D'Angio

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo.
The works of Saint Augustine.

"Augustinian Heritage Institute"

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

Contents: — pt. 3., v. 1. Sermons on the Old Testament, 1-19.
— pt. 3, v. 2. Sermons on the Old Testament, 20-50 — [et al.] — pt. 3,
v. 9 Sermons on the saints, 306-340A.

1. Theology — Early church, ca. 30-600. I. Hill,
Edmund. II. Rotelle, John E. III. Augustinian
Heritage Institute. IV. Title.
BR65.A5E53 1990 270.2
ISBN 1-56548-055-4 (series)
ISBN 1-56548-068-6 (pt. 3, v. 9)

89-28878

Nihil Obstat: John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., S.T.L.

Censor Deputatus

Imprimatur: + Patrick Sheridan, D.D.

Vicar General

Archdiocese of New York, June 20, 1994

The *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur* are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free of doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur* agree with the contents, opinions or statements expressed.

Printed in the United States

96
1943030
C. E. L.
6.13.96
C. E. L. vol

CONTENTS

Sermon 306 — On the Birthday of the Martyrs known as the White Mass . 17

The death of the saints is precious in the eyes of the Lord, but not in the eyes of fools — 17; If we suffer for a just cause, no punishment will do us any harm — 17; Everybody, though in a great many different ways, wishes to live a happy life — 18; An attempt to define the happy, or blessed life — 18; To live in pain is not really to live at all — 19; What must I do to obtain eternal life? — 20; To be really happy, the blessed life must be not merely eternal, but certainly and assuredly eternal — 21; No deceit, no disappointment in that kingdom — 22; An essential element of the truly happy life would be genuine knowledge of one another's hearts, without the possibility of false suspicions — 22; Christ is the way, which so many martyrs have made smooth for us by passing along it before us — 23

Sermon 306A — On The Birthday of the White Mass 26

It's the cause, not the punishment, that makes anyone a martyr of Christ — 26

Sermon 306B — Sermon Preached on 21 August on the Birthday of the Martyr Quadratus 28

Christ, our way, is looking for people to walk along this way by loving — 28; The example given by the apostle — 29; The perfection of the traveler is to know that one has not yet arrived at where one is aiming — 30; The apostle's words, Rom 6:19, are held up as a mirror for each of us to look into and examine ourselves — 31; Observe all that uncleanness, and see how much more is required of you by piety and charity, by the beauty of justice and the sweetness of sanctification — 32; Don't hide your good works for fear of being mocked — 33; Whoever is ashamed of Christ before men, Christ will be ashamed of him before his Father in heaven — 34

Sermon 306C — Sermon of Saint Augustine the Bishop at the table of Cyprian on Saint Quadratus 36

Quadratus was the bishop, whose flock was the Massa Candida; he sent them ahead, and followed them himself four days later — 36; The significance of Quadratus' name, which means "square" — 37; Comment on the text, "The just man falls seven times, and rises again" — 37; The souls of the just and the godless are equally pastured on the word of God, but with different results — 38; It is God alone who will free us from the snare of the hunters and from the harsh word — 38; In this life we don't know what's best for us — 39; God in his graciousness does not listen to the prayers of some, and in his anger he does listen to the prayers of others — 40; In all our troubles, all our fears, all our joys, we should beg God to grant us those temporal benefits, which he knows are for the best for us — 41

Sermon 306D — Sermon on the Birthday of Saint Quadratus 43

By believing the martyrs laid hold on life, and by speaking they discovered a death, in which the body would be sown as perishable, and imperishability would be reaped — 43; There is a salvation common to man and beast, and a salvation proper to the faithful, proper to Christians — 43; The distinction between men and the sons of men — 44; The salvation, or health, common to men and beasts, which the martyrs made light of, is something good, all the same — 45; The martyrs have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb — 45

Sermon 307 — On the beheading of the Blessed John The Baptist 47

The murder of John the Baptist occasioned by a rash oath — 47; The reading calls for a sermon on swearing — 48; God, however, has sworn oaths — 48; But we are very sensibly forbidden to do so — 48; Augustine managed to rid himself of the habit of swearing, so you can do it too — 49

Sermon 308 — On the same feast 51

Herod is faced with the choice between offending God by breaking his oath, and offending him by an act of savagery — 51; The example of David, who broke a rash oath, rather than commit murder — 51; About swearing when challenged to do so — 52; Forcing someone to swear when you think he will swear falsely is worse than murder — 52; The story of Tutuslymeni — 53

Sermon 308A — Preached in Carthage at the Basilica of the Mappalia, that is, of the Blessed Martyr Cyprian, on the eve of his birthday 55

We must inquire who said, *I have prepared a lamp for my Christ, etc.*; and about whom he said it, because this psalm we have heard (Ps 132) requires this of us — 55; How Christ's enemies were clothed with confusion through John — 56; How to understand the purpose of John's being sent before Christ — 56; The Holy Spirit is the sanctification that flowers upon the Son — 57; How the Trinity was revealed at Christ's baptism — 58; The enemies of Christ were the Jews at that time, bad Christians at this time — 59; How Christ's open enemies, the Jews, were put to confusion by the witness borne by the lamp — 60; Head and body are the one Christ — 61

Sermon 309 — Sermon preached in Carthage at the table of the Blessed Martyr Cyprian on his birthday, 14 September 63

The Church's sadness at the time of Cyprian's martyrdom has changed now to unalloyed gladness — 63; Cyprian's exile and return from exile — 63; Cyprian brought to the proconsul by two officers—like Christ crucified between two thieves — 64; Cyprian, while thinking of the martyr he was to become, did not forget the pastor and bishop he still was — 64; How Cyprian truly took counsel for himself, and consulted his own best interests — 65; Cyprian's final exchange with the proconsul — 65

Sermon 310 — On the Birthday of the Martyr Cyprian 68

What is meant by the birthdays of the martyrs — 68; Why the table, or altar, set up in the place of his martyrdom is called the table of Cyprian — 68; The glory of Cyprian's martyrdom has spread far beyond Carthage, to the whole Church — 69; Cyprian famous throughout the world for both his sufferings and his writings — 69

Sermon 311 — On the Birthday of the Martyr Cyprian 71

The right way to celebrate the feasts of the martyrs is by imitating their virtues — 71;

Would the apostles have been prepared to suffer what they did, except out of a conviction of the truth and a love of Christ, the truth? — 71; So despise the world, Christians — 72; Love of earthly things is the birdlime of the soul — 72; We have sung for you, and you have not danced — 73; The song to which we should harmonize our lives and our habits — 73; One dances in time to this song by charity, not by cupidity — 74; Bad times are only made by bad men — 74; Like time, gold is good in itself; it's put to good use by good people, to bad use by the bad — 74; There is really quite a large number of good people among the Church's members, if you care to look for them — 75; There is nothing wrong with things; it's the way they are used that is good or bad — 75; Objections against the ways of God's providence — 76; Good things of this world are given to bad people, in order to teach good people not to prize them highly — 77; The world still loved, in spite of the bitterness in it; how much more would it be, if it were all sweetness! — 78; There is another life, much more worthwhile, which we should be preparing for — 78

Sermon 312 — On the Birthday of the Martyr Cyprian 81

The martyr, being essentially mild and meek, is praised not in himself but in the Lord — 81; What Cyprian was like before his conversion — 81; Being converted by the grace of God, Cyprian became truly Cyprian, or cypress-like — 82; Cyprian, from being a pleader in the courts, was made into a preacher of Christ — 83; That the martyrs conquered the demons is now obvious — 83; How Cyprian stands out among the martyrs by both his teaching and his example — 83

Sermon 313 — On the Birthday of the Martyr Cyprian 86

The congregation is asked to acknowledge the preacher's devotion, if his speech does not manage to be worthy of the occasion — 86; God is being praised when the martyrs are praised — 86; The weapons the martyrs fought with, and the weapons God helped them with — 87; How God's weapons are to be understood — 87; Cyprian's soul was a great claymore in the hand of God — 88

Sermon 313A — Preached in Carthage, at the table of the Blessed Martyr Cyprian, on his birthday, 14 September 90

Two things which make the straight and narrow way for Christians: the rejection of pleasure and the endurance of suffering — 90; The doors of greed and of fear have to be shut, if we would enter through the narrow gate — 90; The effects of the vice of curiosity, the lust of the eyes — 92; The evil consequences of worldly ambition — 93; Cyprian truly to be praised in the Lord — 94

Sermon 313B — Preached in the same place on the same day on the birthday of the aforesaid Martyr 96

When Cyprian's blood was shed, there was probably not as big a crowd of his raging enemies as there is now, in the same place, of his admiring friends — 96; How hunters use nets, and chase their prey into the nets by frightening them — 97; The Church of Christ also has teeth, to rival those of its enemies — 98; Many of Cyprian's persecutors must later have come to believe. In any case, their descendants are here now in the Church, as faithful believers — 99

Sermon 313C — Discourse on the Birthday of Saint Cyprian 101

The common advice of all the martyrs, to trade in this life for the sake of the next life — 101; Cyprian gets his name from the cypress, which is identified with Christ in the Song of Songs — 102

Sermon 313D — Discourse on the Birthday of Cyprian 104

On the necessity of denying oneself in order to attain to immortal life — 104; How we should lose our lives in order to gain them illustrated from Cyprian's answer to the judge — 105; Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy — 106; The example of Cyprian in this respect — 106

Sermon 313E — Discourse on the Birthday of Saint Cyprian 109

The Word made flesh taught those who believe in him how to live and how to die — 109; The greatness of Cyprian's faith — 110; By tolerating Judas to the bitter end, the Lord showed how absolutely we must avoid breaking away from the Church — 110; The Donatist fanatics are listening to the devil, not to Christ, when they throw themselves over precipices — 111; Unlike the Donatists, who followed the suggestions of the devil, Cyprian preferred to follow the example of Christ — 112; Cyprian the vine branch that has been pruned; the Donatists the branches that have been cut off — 113; Further comparisons between Cyprian and the Donatist fanatics, the Circumcellions — 114; The value of the prayers of the saints — 115

Sermon 313F — Preached in the Basilica of the Blessed Martyr Cyprian in the Mappalia, on his birthday 118

Having preached in the morning on charity, and said it should be restless, Augustine is now preaching at the evening service on hope, in response to a request from the local bishop — 118; The things people hope for in this life, and never stop hoping for — 119; Let God be your hope in the land of the dying, and he will be your portion in the land of the living — 120

Appendix on the dating of the sermons preached on the solemnity of Saint Cyprian 121

Sermon 313G — On the Feast Day of Saint Eulalia 123

Christ, never having been of this world, chose the martyrs out of this world — 123; What's left of the world still hates us — 123; Eulalia and other martyrs, though, were not put to death by people who thought that they were thereby offering a service to God — 124

Introduction to the Sermons on Saint Stephen 125

Sermon 314 — On the Birthday of the Martyr Stephen 126

Comparison between Christ's birthday on 25 December, and Stephen's on 26 December — 126; Exhortation to follow in Stephen's footsteps, by praying for and forgiving our enemies — 127

Sermon 315 — On the Feast of the Martyr Stephen 129

The Acts of this martyr, unlike those of others, are to be found in canonical scripture, the Acts of the Apostles, which are read every year during Easter time — 129; Similarities between the passion of Stephen and the passion of Christ — 129; A difference between Christ and Stephen: Christ remained silent before the council, Stephen spoke at length — 130; The nation of the Jews will be liberated by Christ — 130; Stephen savage against the Jews with his tongue, gentle with them in his heart — 131; Why Stephen remained standing while praying for himself — 131; Saul's conversion into Paul — 132; Stephen followed Christ's example; we should follow the example of them both — 133; Be lenient with your enemies; anger is the really dangerous enemy — 133; The damage our enemy, anger, can do to us — 134

Sermon 316 — On the Feast of the Martyr Stephen 137

The miracles worked by Stephen were performed, not in his own name, but in the name of Christ — 137; How Stephen provoked the Jews — 138; Stephen, dying, imitates his Lord in two respects — 138; Saul the wolf changed into a sheep by Stephen's prayer — 139; The beauty of the picture which shows the stoning of Stephen and the conversion of Saul together — 140

Sermon 317 — On the Martyr Stephen 142

What God must be keeping for us in the land of the living, if he grants us such favors through the dust of the dead — 142; Besides the example of God the Father, we have the example of Christ and of Stephen — 143; If the example of the Son of God is too much for us, we have the example of our fellow servant, Stephen — 143; The cross is the lampstand, from which both Stephen and Paul shine as lamps for the world — 144; Both the Lord and Stephen had very hard things to say to those whom they loved — 144; How effectively Stephen loved his enemies — 145

Sermon 318 — On the Martyr Stephen 147

The relics of Saint Stephen placed in his shrine, or memorial chapel — 147; The martyrs not only scorned the world's delights, but also trampled on its terrors — 148; An example of a corresponding temptation to be overcome, now that persecution no longer rages — 149

Sermon 319 — On the Martyr Stephen 151

Stephen lived and died and performed miracles, all for the honor of Christ and in the name of Christ — 151; How Stephen commended his spirit to Christ — 151; Where his spirit was received by Christ — 152; How Stephen prayed for those who were stoning him — 152; How Stephen imitated Christ in his sufferings — 153; The discovery of his body, the power of his prayers — 153; Stephen is our fellow servant; not to be worshiped in place of God — 153

Sermon 319A — On the Martyr Stephen 155

Those who make progress in Christ are our joy and our crown — 155

Sermon 320 — On the Martyr Stephen, Preached on Easter Sunday . . . 157

The actual sight of the man cured by the prayers of Saint Stephen is better than any leaflet describing the cure — 157

Sermon 321 — On Easter Monday 158

Augustine promises a leaflet about the miracle observed on the previous day — 158

Sermon 322 — On Easter Tuesday: The promised leaflet 159

Augustine's introduction — 159

Sermon 323 — Preached after the reading of the leaflet about Saint Stephen's Miracle 162

A serious warning to both children and parents — 162; About the shrine of Saint Stephen at Ancona, and why this brother and sister were not cured there — 162; Augustine begins to tell about a miracle performed at Uzalis, when he is interrupted — 163; Augustine interrupted by the shouting which proclaimed that the young woman Palladia had also just been cured — 163

- Sermon 324 — In which Augustine completes the sermon about a miracle, which was interrupted the day before 165**
 The miracle at Uzalis of an infant restored to life just long enough for it to be baptized — 165
- Sermon 325 — On the Birthday of the Twenty Martyrs 167**
 The feasts of the martyrs are celebrated in order to encourage us to imitate their example — 167; It's the cause, not the punishment, that makes the martyr; an implicit attack on the Donatist martyrs — 168
- Sermon 326 — On the Birthday of the Twenty Martyrs 170**
 The young martyrs hastened with joy to their reward, while their parents grieved — 170; How these martyrs answered their judge — 171
- Sermon 327 — On the Birthday of some martyrs 173**
 It is the cause, not the punishment, that distinguishes the martyrs from other sufferers — 173; The difference between Christ and the two robbers crucified with him is discerned by one of them — 173
- Sermon 328 — On the Birthday of some martyrs 176**
 Christ made the rough way smooth by his endurance of his passion, so that the martyrs could follow — 176; The problem of the psalm text, Every man is a liar, can it be true of the martyrs? — 176; The martyrs were truthful, because the Spirit of God was speaking in them — 177; It is the cause, not the punishment, that makes the martyr — 177; The certainty of the judgment to come; we shall rise again, each with our cause, good or bad — 178; The glory enjoyed by the martyrs will be infinitely greater after the resurrection — 179; The greatness of the bandit crucified with Christ — 179; To love the martyrs means to imitate their endurance — 180
- Sermon 329 — On the Birthday of some martyrs 182**
 The price paid to make the death of the saints precious in the sight of the Lord was the death of Christ — 182; The martyrs paid back what God had paid back to them in the first place — 182
- Sermon 330 — On the Birthday of some martyrs 185**
 If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me — 185; How to deny yourself when you love yourself — 185; The difference between the right and the wrong love of self — 186; How Peter learned eventually to deny himself — 188
- Sermon 331 — On the Birthday of some martyrs 190**
 Two ways of interpreting, "Whoever loves his soul will lose it" — 190; By dying for Christ the martyrs were not benefiting Christ, but themselves — 191; God's gifts that are common to good and bad alike, and those that are proper to the good alone — 191; God himself is the reward of the good — 192; A comparison between martyrs and misers — 192
- Sermon 332 — On the Birthday of some martyrs 194**
 The martyrs are the friends of Christ — 194; The extent to which we are commanded to

love one another — 194; How to be poor, in order to be rich — 195; What we receive from heaven is the heavenly city, into which evildoers of all sorts, especially fornicators, are not going to enter — 195

Sermon 333 — On the Birthday of some martyrs 198

All the assurances given by Christ to the martyrs — 198; How God gives what enables us to claim a reward from him, illustrated by the case of Paul — 199; The case of Paul continued; the change in him prophesied in Jacob's blessing on Benjamin — 199; Later on Paul paid back good works by the grace of God — 200; Paul's good works are God's gifts — 201; More about the grace of God — 201; Let us thank God for everything — 202

Sermon 334 — On the Birthday of some martyrs 204

If God is for us, who is against us? — 204; The various assurances we have that God is for us — 205; Christ himself is going to be our possession — 206

Sermon 335 — On the Birthday of some martyrs 208

The martyrs could not have overcome the world's assaults, unless they had first overcome its seductions — 208; Comparison between the martyr and the miser — 209

Sermon 335A — On the Feast Day of some martyrs, of whom one was called Primus, two others Victoria and Perpetua 211

The passion of the martyrs just read shows the difference between the witnesses of Christ and of the devil — 211; The martyrs conquered the love of life by their love of life — 212; The martyrs have made a very good investment — 212

Sermon 335B — On the Birthday of some holy martyrs 215

Christ teaches us to have an attitude to death which is the opposite of Adam's — 215; God said at the beginning, "Don't sin, in order not to die"; now he says, "Die, in order not to sin." Then, it was, "By sinning you encounter death"; now, "By dying, you arrive at life" — 216; A conversation between the persecutor and the martyr — 217; The difference between making light of death for the love of God, and for worldly greed — 218; God's helping us with his grace does not mean that we ourselves do not do what he is helping us to do — 218

Sermon 335C — A sermon of Blessed Augustine the bishop on one martyr 221

The glory of the martyrs was ignored by the world, their patience was tested and proved — 221; Two kinds of love, the greedy and the dear — 221; The courage of true charity — 222; It's the cause, not the punishment, that makes the martyr — 222; The cause of sensual lovers — 223; The cause of avarice — 223; God's advice about money — 223; A prayer to God to heal the deaf ears the preacher's words are falling on — 224; No earthly glory can compare with the glory the martyrs won — 225; The three crosses on Calvary — 225; The right order of love — 226

Sermon 335D — On the martyrs 229

The martyrs made drunk on the plenty of God's house — 229; Though persecutions have ceased, temptations have not; you can be a martyr even on your sickbed — 229; The struggle against principalities and powers — 232; So imitate the martyrs on your sickbed — 232

- Sermon 335E — On some martyrs 234**
 The martyrs are like the squared timbers of which the ark was made — 234; The blood of the martyrs the seed of the Church — 234; The problem of “every man a liar” — 235; Paul re-establishes the truth of the statement, “every man a liar” — 236; Further, more convincing solutions to the problem called for — 237; All good things come to us from the supreme good — 237
- Sermon 335F — Fragment of a sermon on the martyrs 240**
 The great assurance given to the martyrs — 240; The martyrs did not rely on themselves, but sought relief from Christ — 240
- Sermon 335G — A fragment on the martyrs 243**
 The perfect charity of the martyrs cast out all fear — 243; It’s not the punishment but the cause that makes martyrs; the schismatics do not have a good cause — 244
- Sermon 335H — On the Birthday of some martyrs 246**
 How much the future life is to be desired, and this life to be held in little regard — 246; Exhortation to imitate the martyrs, to become God’s friends by opening ourselves to his grace — 247; A repetition of the exhortation to the catechumens to enroll for baptism — 247
- Sermon 335I — On the Birthday of some martyrs 249**
 The price paid for sinners made them precious — 249; It certainly wasn’t by loving sinners that Christ died for sinners — 249; Comparison between the one blood sacrifice of Christ, and the many blood sacrifices of the old law — 250; Christ came to the sick to make them well — 251
- Sermon 335J — On the Birthday of some martyrs 252**
 The martyrs fight a battle inside them, and win it outside — 252; The same sort of fight against sin still has to be fought by all Christians — 252; If you consent, you are taken prisoner; if you fight the desire, you can win and remain free — 253; Whatever bad things we do come from ourselves; whatever good things we do come from God — 253
- Sermon 335K — On the anniversary of the burial of a bishop 255**
 Death, in itself, neither good nor bad, but good for the good and bad for the bad — 255; Paul’s attitude — 255; This life a ring, with God the spectator of the fight; the example of David matched against Goliath — 256; The law powerless without grace — 256; Back to David, going out to battle armed with grace, signified by the milk can — 257; In this fight we must be neither careless and negligent nor too self-confident — 258
- Sermon 335L — In memory of a just man 260**
 The Church celebrates the anniversaries of the deaths of just and holy persons, not to increase their honor, but to set their example before us for imitation — 260; The truth of the resurrection; Christians should not be troubled by the question of the Sadducees — 260; The evil hearing: Go into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels — 261
- Sermon 335M — On a just man, Saint Domitian 263**
 If we wish to be at rest when death overtakes us, let us be just — 263; Christ is a man, and

not a liar, and he died for us — 263; Relief and reassurance from the very same psalm — 264; We shall arrive there, if we live by faith — 264

Sermon 336 — At the dedication of a church 266

God's Church is really built and dedicated in us — 266; God is to be loved for his own sake, others in God and for God's sake — 267; Psalm 30 on the dedication of the temple is a prophecy of Christ's passion — 267; Christ's humanity the sacking from which, when it was torn up, the price of our redemption was spilled out — 268; The psalm adapted to Christ the head and to us his members — 269

Sermon 337 — At the dedication of a church 271

The Lord will repay the faithful who have so devoutly and generously contributed to the building of this church — 271; Constructing a building involves hard labor, dedicating it means joy — 272; Those who dwell in the house of God are themselves also the house of God — 272; Christ our foundation is up above, so that we may let ourselves be built upward to him — 273; We are made into a dwelling place for God by good works — 273

Sermon 338 — At the dedication of a church 276

It is right to perform good works openly, in order to set a good example; but not in order to be admired for them — 276; The lamp on the lampstand — 276; Two apparently contradictory injunctions of the Lord's — 277; It's one thing in your good works to seek praise for yourself, another to seek praise for God — 277

Sermon 339 — On the anniversary of his ordination 279

The burden and the dangers of being a bishop — 279; The bishop is meant to be a watchman or lookout, to warn his people of dangers to their salvation — 280; Besides those who perish by despairing, there are others who perish by presuming — 281; To preach, to rebuke, to refute, to build up, to manage for everyone, is a labor he would gladly run away from; but the gospel terrifies him — 282; The servant's business is to lay out the money, the master's to require an account — 283; The reward God has prepared for our doing good here is nothing less than his own Son — 284; Wait patiently — 286; Be afraid with me, in order to rejoice with me — 288; Pray for the fulfillment of justice and the hallowing of God's name — 288

Sermon 340 — On the anniversary of his ordination 292

For you I am a bishop, with you I am a Christian; the first means danger, the second salvation — 292; How he can love freely, and still look for a reward — 293; The faithful asked to help him in his duties by prayer and obedience — 293; The bishop and the faithful should be praying for each other — 294

Sermon 340A — At the ordination of a bishop 295

A bishop should be the servant of his people, and ought above all to shun the sin of pride — 295; The reading from 1 Timothy: "Not a new convert, in case being lifted up in pride he should fall into the judgment of the devil" — 296; In what ways the bishop, being set over the people, is their servant — 296; A bishop only in name is not really a bishop — 298; Can you drink the cup of humiliation which I am going to drink? — 298; What desiring the good work of being a bishop really means — 299; Better for a bishop to have neither wife nor children — 300; Those who fawn on the bishop are a greater menace than those who curse him and speak ill of him — 301; Do what they say; do not do what they do — 302; Explanation of the text, "Do they gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?" — 303; The error of the Donatists arose from precisely this sort of situation — 304; An

incident at the conference between Catholic and Donatist bishops in Carthage in June, 411
— 306

Chronological Table	309
Index of Scripture	313
Index	319

Sermons

SERMON 306

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE MARTYRS KNOWN AS THE WHITE MASS

Date: unknown¹

*The death of the saints is precious in the eyes of the Lord,
but not in the eyes of fools*

1. As we heard, and sang in making the response, *Precious is the death of the saints of the Lord, but in his sight* (Ps 116:15), not in the sight of the foolish. *In the eyes of the foolish, you see, they seemed to die, and their departure was reckoned as malice* (Wis 3:2). “Malice” in the Latin idiom doesn’t usually have the same meaning as it does in the language which Scripture spoke.² “Malice” in the Latin language, after all, usually means the evil by which people are bad; but in that language even the evil which people suffer is called “malice.” So “malice” in this place is to be understood as meaning “punishment” or “pain.” This then is what it said: *In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to die, and their departure was reckoned as a punishment; they, however, are at peace. And if in the view of men they suffered torments —that’s the “malice”—their hope, he says, is full of immortality; and having been misused in a few ways, they will be treated well in many* (Wis 3:2-5).

For the sufferings of this time are not fit to be compared with the future glory that will be revealed in us (Rom 8:18). But until it is revealed, it remains hidden away. And since it’s hidden away, that’s why *in the eyes of the foolish they seemed to die*. But just because it’s hidden away, does that mean it’s also hidden from God, with whom it is precious? That’s why *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*. Therefore it is to this hidden mystery that we owe the eyes of faith, so that we may believe what we do not see, and bravely endure the evils we have had unjustly to suffer.

If we suffer for a just cause, no punishment will do us any harm

2. Let us have a well chosen cause, so that the pain and the punishment may do us no harm. Because a bad cause earns no reward, but only justly deserved torment. Thus it is not in your power as a human being to decide with what kind of end you will depart this life; but it is in your power to decide how you will

live, so that you may depart this life without anxiety. Nor would even this have been in your power, unless the Lord had given *power to become children of God*; to whom, though? *To those who believe in his name* (Jn 1:12). That is the primary cause of the martyrs, that's what makes this mass of martyrs white.³ They are called the mass, after all, from their large numbers; called white from the splendor of their cause. Such a great band of companions were in no fear of robbers. But even if they had been traveling the road one by one, they would have been well defended against highway robbery; because the road itself was their defense. *It is beside the path*, it says, *that they have set snares for me* (Ps 140:5). That's why the one who does not turn aside from the way doesn't fall into the snare. Now we have the final and faithful promise of our Lord Jesus Christ, telling us, *I am the way, and the truth, and the life* (Jn 14:6).

*Everybody, though in a great many different ways,
wishes to live a happy life*

3. Every human being, though, of whatever kind or quality, wishes to be happy. There isn't anybody who doesn't want that, and want it in such a way as to want it above everything else; or rather, in such a way, that whoever wants other things wants them for the sake of this one thing. People are carried away by the most diverse longings, and one longs for this, another for that. There are different modes of life in the human race; and in the great variety of modes of life, one has chosen and taken to one way, another to another. There is nobody, however, whatever mode of life may have been chosen, who does not long for a happy life. So a happy life is the common aim of all;⁴ but how one gets to it, how one makes one's way to it, what route one follows in order to arrive at it, that's what the argument is about. And thus if we were to look for the happy or blessed life on earth, I don't know whether we could find it; not because what we are looking for is bad, but because we are not looking for it in its own place.

One man says, "Happy are those who join the army." Another denies this, and says, "Happy, yes, but those who have a plot of land to cultivate."⁵ This too is contradicted by another, who says, "Happy are those who spend their time in the public eye in the courts, and defend cases, and control the life and death of people with their tongues." This too is contradicted by another, who says, "Happy, yes, but those who are the judges, who have the authority to try cases and decide them." Someone else denies this, and says, "Happy are those who sail the seas, learn about many countries, make big profits." You can see, dearly beloved, how in this great variety of modes of life there isn't one thing that pleases everybody; and yet the happy life pleases everybody. How can this be, that while no one form of life is pleasing to all, the happy life is pleasing to all?

An attempt to define the happy, or blessed life

4. So let us define, if we can, the happy or blessed life about which everyone answers, "This is what I want." So because none, if asked whether they want a

happy life, would say, "No, I don't," and we are inquiring what this happy life may be, we must give a definition with which every mind would agree, and of which none would say, "That's not what I want." So what, my brothers and sisters, what is the happy life, which everybody wants and not everybody has? So let's inquire.

If someone's asked, "Do you want to go on living?" the question is hardly heard, is it, in the same way as if it were, "Do you want to join the army?" I mean, with that question, "Do you want to join the army?" some would answer me, "I do," and rather more people, in all probability, "I don't." But if I asked, "Do you want to go on living?" I don't think there's anyone who would say, "No, I don't"; after all, it's ingrained in everybody by nature to wish to live, and to be most unwilling to die. Again, if I were to ask, "Do you want to be healthy?" I don't think there's anyone who would say, "No, I don't"; nobody, after all, wants to be in pain. Good health is even precious for the rich; it's certainly the only thing of value possessed by the poor. But what use is his affluence to a rich man, if he doesn't also enjoy the good health, which is the poor man's patrimony? He would be only too eager to exchange his silver bed for the poor man's sacking, if he could get rid of the sickness with the bed.

There you are then, there are these two things on which all minds agree with me, life and health. All minds aren't agreed, are they, about joining the army? Aren't agreed, are they, about having a plot to cultivate? Aren't agreed, are they, about sailing the seas? All are, though, about life and health. So when people are alive and healthy, is there nothing else they look for? If they were wise, perhaps they ought not to look for anything else. After all, where there is perfect life and perfect health, if anything else is sought, what will that be but vicious greed?

To live in pain is not really to live at all

5. The wicked will have life in torment. *The hour is coming, you see, as the gospel puts it, when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice; and those who have done good will come forth to the resurrection of life; those, however, who have done evil, to the resurrection of the judgment* (Jn 5:28-29). So the first ones to a reward, the others to torment; and both sorts are alive, nor can any of them die. Those who live with the reward embrace the most delightful possible life; those who live in torment desire, if it could so be, to be done with such a life; and nobody grants them annihilation, so that nobody may eliminate their punishment.

But notice how scripture talks and distinguishes; it wasn't prepared to give the name of life to such a life as that. It refused to call an existence, spent in punishments, in torments, in eternal fires, life, so that the name "life" might be one of praise, not of grief, and whenever you hear about life, you shouldn't think of torments. Because to be always in torment is eternal death, not any sort of life. The scriptures call it *the second death* (Rv 2:11; 20:6), after this first one which we all owe to our human condition. And the second death is both called

death, and nobody in it dies. It would have been better and more satisfactory for me to say that nobody in it lives. To live in pain and grief, after all, is not to live.

And how can we prove that that is how scripture spoke? Here's how; from this same text I have just quoted: *They will hear his voice, it says, and those who have done good will come forth to the resurrection of life* (Jn 5:28-29); it didn't say, "of the happy or blessed life," but *to the resurrection of life*. Just the name "life" by itself implies happiness. After all, unless the name life implied happiness as a consequence, they wouldn't say to God, *Since with you is the fountain of life* (Ps 36:9). I mean, it doesn't say there either, "Since with you is the fountain of the happy life"; it didn't add "happy," it just said "life," and left it to you to understand "happy." Why? Because if it's miserable, it isn't any longer even life.

What must I do to obtain eternal life?

6. Here's another proof. We've already mentioned two; I mean, it says, *Those who have done good . . . to the resurrection of life* (Jn 5:29); again it says, *With you is the fountain of life* (Ps 36:9). Nowhere does it add "happy"; but only when it's happy is it to be understood as life; while when it isn't happy, it isn't life either. Take another proof, again from the gospel. That rich man who didn't want to give up what he had, and couldn't take the loss of his possessions, which he would be forced to give up anyway by dying; I rather think that when he was rejoicing in that constant and abundant supply of great, but still earthly, possessions, he was badgered by the fear of death, and it's as though his heart said to him, "Look, you're rejoicing in your wealth, and you don't know when a single fever may come along. You amass, you acquire, you buy, you save, and you rejoice; then *your soul is required of you; these things that you have prepared, whose will they be?* (Lk 12:20).

With this thought in mind, as far as we can see, after he had frequently been prodded by fear as by a sort of goad, he went to the Lord and said to him, *Good master, what shall I do in order to obtain eternal life?* (Mk 10:17). He was afraid of dying, and he was obliged to die. There was nowhere he could go, to avoid perishing. Beset by the necessity of dying, and the longing to live, he approached the Lord, and said, *Good master, what shall I do in order to obtain eternal life?*

Among other things he heard, to mention only what concerns us at the moment, *If you wish to attain to life, keep the commandments* (Mt 19:17). That's what I said I was going to prove. The one who asked the question didn't say either, "What shall I do in order to obtain the happy life"; but all he said was, *eternal life*. Being unwilling to die, he sought a life which has no end. And isn't it the case, as I said, that even amid the torments of the wicked life has no end? But that's not what he was calling life. He knew that an existence in pain and punishment is not life; he was aware it should rather be termed death. That's why he was looking for eternal life, so that where the word "life" is heard, there should be no doubt about its happiness, its blessedness. And the Lord didn't say to him, "If you wish to attain to the happy life, keep the commandments"; but

he too mentioned life alone, and said, *If you wish to attain to life, keep the commandments.*

So that life spent in torments is not life; and that life alone is such, which is happy or blessed; nor can it be blessed or happy, unless it's eternal. That's why that rich man, knowing that he was being badgered every day by the fear of death, was seeking eternal life. Because, as it seemed to him, he was already enjoying a happy life. After all, he was rich, and in good health,⁶ and I suppose he was saying to himself, "There's nothing more I want, if only it could last forever." He was enjoying pleasures, after all, that were like lovers, and were satisfying his foolish desires. Accordingly the Lord, by using the single word "life," corrected him, if he was capable of understanding. He didn't say, "If you wish to attain to eternal life," which is what he was asking about, as though he already enjoyed a happy life. Nor did he say, "If you wish to attain to a happy life," knowing that if it was miserable it didn't even deserve to be called life. But he said, *If you wish to attain to life, where it's eternal, where it's happy; if you wish to attain to life, keep the commandments.* So that's life, which is eternal and happy; because if it's not eternal, it isn't happy either; while if it's eternal in pains and punishment, it isn't even life.

*To be really happy, the blessed life must be not merely eternal,
but certainly and assuredly eternal*

7. So what's the situation, brothers and sisters? When I was inquiring whether you wanted to stay alive, you all answered that you did; whether you wanted to enjoy good health, you all answered that you did. But if there's a fear that health and life may come to an end, it's no longer life. I mean, it doesn't amount to always being alive, but to always being afraid. If it's always being afraid, it's always being tormented. If the torment is everlasting, where is eternal life? We certainly hold that only if life is eternal is it happy; or rather, only if it's life is it happy, because if it's not eternal, and not perpetually satisfying, then without a shadow of doubt it's neither happy nor life. We've found the solution, we are all agreed.⁸

We've found it, clearly, in thought, not yet in actual reality, to possess it. This is the possession everyone's after; there can't be any who are not on the lookout for it. Good or bad, they are all looking for it; the good, though, with confidence, the bad with impudence. Why are you seeking the good, bad man? Doesn't your very request tell you in reply how shameless you are, when being bad you seek the good? Aren't you thereby seeking what belongs to someone else? So if you are seeking the supreme good, that is to say, life, be good, in order to reach the good. *If you wish to attain to life, keep the commandments* (Mt 19:17).

So when we reach life, why should I add that it's eternal? Why should I add that it's happy? Just life by itself, because this is the life which is both eternal and happy. When we reach life, we shall be absolutely certain that we are going to be there always. After all, if we are there, and uncertain whether we shall be

there always, it means there will also be fear there. And if there's fear, there will be torment, not of the flesh, but what's worse, of the heart. And where there's torment, where's the happiness? So we shall be absolutely certain that we shall continue in that life always, and never be able to get to the end of it; because we shall be in the kingdom of the one about whom it was said, *And his kingdom will have no end* (Lk 1:33). And when Wisdom was pointing out the glory of God's holy ones, whose death is precious in his sight,⁹ she said, as you heard at the end of the reading, *And their Lord will reign for ever* (Wis 3:8). So we shall be in a great and everlasting kingdom, and it will be great and everlasting, precisely because it will be a kingdom of justice.

No deceit, no disappointment in that kingdom

8. Nobody deceives there, or disappoints; nobody is deceived or disappointed. There is no reason there for you ever to suspect anything bad about your brother. A very great many of the ills of the human race, after all, have no other source but false and unfounded suspicions. You imagine someone hates you when perhaps he's fond of you; and that crooked suspicion makes you extremely hostile to someone who is extremely friendly. What's he to do, since you don't believe him or trust him, and he isn't able to show you his heart? He speaks to you and says, "I'm very fond of you." But because he could still say this and be lying—one uses the same words, after all, when lying as when telling the truth—you don't believe him, and still go on hating him. It was precisely because he wished to keep you safe from that sin, that someone said to you, *Love your enemies* (Mt 5:44). Christian, love your enemies too, in order to avoid rashly hating even your friends. So we can't see one another's hearts in this life, *until the Lord comes, and lights up the hidden things of darkness, and he will show up the thoughts of the heart; and then there will be praise for each one from God* (1 Cor 4:5).

An essential element of the truly happy life would be genuine knowledge of one another's hearts, without the possibility of false suspicions

9. So if anyone we could trust without a shadow of doubt were to say to us now, if a prophet were to say, if God were to say by any means he liked and through anyone he liked, "Live without anxiety, you will have plenty of everything, none of you will die, none of you get sick, none be in pain. I've removed death from the human race, I don't wish anyone to die"; if he were to say that, we would be entirely reassured, I suppose, and leap for joy, and not look for anything else. That's certainly how it seems to us, isn't it? But if we were told that, we would straightaway want this to be added, that we should be able to look directly into each other's hearts, without looking askance at them;¹⁰ that we should be able to see them in the light of divine truth, not in the murk of human suspicion; so that I wouldn't need to wonder anxiously about my friend, about my neighbor, whether he hated me, whether he wished me ill, and as a

result of that very anxiety I should first do wrong before suffering it. There can be no doubt we would require this too, we would require certainty in life, and the knowledge of each other's hearts.

You now understand, of course, what life I'm talking about; in case by reminding you about it too often I should be blunting rather than sharpening your appreciation of the point. So then, we would want truth to be added to life, so that we might know one another's hearts, and not be deceived by our suspicions; so that we might be assured about this perpetual life that we would never fall away from it. Add truth to life, and you find the happy life. Nobody, after all, wants to be deceived, just as nobody wants to die. Give me a person who wants to be deceived. Many enough can be found who want to deceive. Who wants to be deceived? None. Strike a bargain with yourself; you don't want to be deceived; then don't deceive. What you don't want to suffer, don't do. You wish to get to a life in which you are not deceived; lead a life now in which you don't deceive. Do you wish to get to a life in which you are not deceived? Who doesn't? The reward attracts you; don't disdain the work it's the reward of. Lead a life now in which you don't deceive, and you will come to a life in which you are not deceived. Truth will be paid as the reward of truthfulness, and eternity will be paid as the reward of a life lived well in time.

*Christ is the way, which so many martyrs
have made smooth for us by passing along it before us*

10. So this is what we all want, brothers, and sisters, life and truth. But how are we going to get there, what way shall we go by? Because where we are to get to, even though we haven't yet got hold of it, we can already believe and see by thought and reason; we are making our way to life and truth. That's Christ himself. You're asking the way to get there? *I, he says, am the way.* You're asking about where you're going? *And the truth and the life* (Jn 14:6).

There you have what the martyrs were in love with, that's why they scorned the passing things of the present life. Don't be surprised at their courage; love conquered pain. So let us celebrate the festival of the Shining White Mass with shining white consciences. And as we follow in the footsteps of the martyrs, and keep our eyes fixed on the head both of the martyrs and of ourselves, if we are really eager to attain to such a great good, let us not be afraid of a hard journey. The one who made us the promise is truthful, the one who made us the promise is faithful, the one who made us the promise cannot deceive us. So let us say to him with a clear white conscience, *Because of the words of your lips I have kept to hard ways* (Ps 17:4).

Why are you afraid of the hard ways of suffering and tribulation? He traveled them himself.

You reply, no doubt, "But that was himself."

The apostles traveled them.

You still reply, "But that was the apostles."

I accept that. Answer this one; later on many men traveled those ways. Blush

for shame: many women traveled them too. Have you come as an old man to the point of martyrdom? Don't be afraid of death, if only because you are in its neighborhood already. Are you a young man? Young men too traveled that way, who still had the hopes of life before them; even boys passed along it, even girls passed along it. How can the way still be rough, when it has been smoothed by the feet of so many walking along it?

So this, brothers and sisters, this is my solemn and persistent warning to you, that we should celebrate the solemnities of the martyrs with no idle, superficial solemnity; but just as we show our love for them by celebrating them, so we must not shrink from also imitating them with a faith like theirs.

NOTES

1. The White Mass, *Massa Candida*, were martyrs of Utica who suffered in the year 258 on 18 August in the persecution of the Emperor Valerian, encouraged by their bishop Quadratus, who was himself put to death four days later. They were clearly a considerable number. It's possible that they were called the *Massa Candida* because they were all recently baptized. Another explanation is that they were so called because their bodies were buried together in a pit of quicklime. F.L. Cross, in his *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, (1958) under *Utica, Martyrs of*, says that *Massa Candida* literally means White Farm, and it was the name of the place of their martyrdom. But *massa* doesn't mean farm, and cannot possibly do so. However, it was a Roman surname, and so it could be the name of an estate, named after a lady called Candida Massa. Cross also says (that is, the author of this entry in his Dictionary) that according to Augustine (Sermon 306, preached on their anniversary), there were 153 of them. As the reader will discover, this is simply not the case. What is the case is that the Maurists have a note on section 2, referring the reader to Augustine's *Expositions of the Psalms* 49 (50), section 9, where he says, "Observe the great number of martyrs; just nearby what is called the White Mass alone has more than one hundred and fifty-three martyrs." He was clearly explaining that the number of 153 great fish in Jn 21:11 didn't give us the literal number of the elect. The same mistake is made by F.G. Holweck's *Biographical Dictionary of the Saints*, (1924), from where, I presume, it was copied into Cross' *Dictionary*.

Nobody volunteers a date for the sermon, though Perler thinks it must have been preached in the first half of Augustine's ministry, largely because of the long discussion of what the happy or blessed life really is, which is reminiscent of his very early treatise on that subject, composed shortly after his conversion. But it was always a favorite theme of his, and he devoted a large part of book XIII of *The Trinity* to the subject, which cannot have been written before 416. So the argument is not very convincing. Some scholars think the sermon was preached in Carthage, others in Utica itself.

2. In fact the *malitia* of his version was simply a bad translation of the Greek *kakosis*, which means the infliction of evil, or affliction.

3. The text just says, *haec est Candida martyrum Massa*. But the martyrs were not the cause. I have translated as though *haec est* were *hac est*; by this the mass is white. I am prepared to suggest it as an emendation.

4. He actually says, "is a common possession," *est communis possessio*—a very curious use of the word *possessio*.

5. The way it is put, I think the reference must be to veterans, given a plot of land at their discharge; the implication being that they aren't happy until then.

6. In Sermon 301A, 3 he seemed to be suggesting that the rich young man was suffering from a terminal illness, like tuberculosis; *contabescebat*, he said about him. See note 6 to that sermon.

7. Reading *ubi* twice, instead of the text's *ibi*; there it's eternal, there it's happy.
8. It's highly unlikely that they all were!
9. See Ps 116:15.
10. A play on words: *ut corda invicem videremus, nec invideremus*.

SERMON 306A

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE WHITE MASS

Date: 405¹

It's the cause, not the punishment, that makes anyone a martyr of Christ

We are celebrating the feast day of the blessed and numerous martyrs, that is, of the White Mass. Blessed, because *poor in spirit*; blessed, because *gentle*; blessed, because *mourning*; blessed, because *hungering and thirsting for justice*; blessed, because *merciful*; blessed, because *pure in heart*; blessed, because *they suffered persecution*, not in vain, not having a bad cause, but *on account of justice* (Mt 5:3-10). It's the cause, you see, not the punishment, that makes anyone a martyr of Christ. You can suffer the punishment with your mind at rest, if you are careful about choosing the cause, so that what you suffer is on account of justice; otherwise, you may not only suffer here, but also be carried on from one set of afflictions to others of the most grievous kind.

Their soul was patient for the Lord, it *waited for the Lord* (Ps 33:20); it wasn't in a hurry to receive the reward. That's what waiting for the Lord means, that you are willing to receive when he wishes to give. He will give, after all; Truth, after all, does not deceive, nor will the Almighty lack the means of giving what he has promised, nor the Eternal be in dread of some successor.² So he certainly will give it; only let our soul wait for the Lord. So that's how the soul of the martyrs waited, one soul of many people;³ not whitewashed outwardly, but shining white inwardly.⁴ So their soul waited for the Lord; and the Lord is *their helper and their protector* (Ps 40:17). In their sufferings they were hoping and enduring; hoping for things that last forever, enduring things that pass and are soon over.

And when they get there, what will they receive? *They shall be made drunk on the richness of your house, and from the torrent of your pleasure you will give them to drink*. None of you should think here of bodily pleasure; there is another sort of invisible pleasure, coming from an invisible fountain. Anyhow, notice what follows. As though you were to ask where this pleasure is going to come from, he went on to say, *Since with you is the fountain of life* (Ps 36:8-9). There you have the life which doesn't die, there you have the health which never becomes ill. *For vain is the health of man* (Ps 60:11). Certainly, there is nothing

in human affairs more precious, more important than this health;⁵ and yet it's vain. So how are all the other things here to be regarded here and now? What are man's riches, what are man's delights, what are man's powers, if the health of man is vain?

So, brothers and sisters, let us long for that other health, let us beg for it with all earnestness, let us make our way toward it with our behavior. Let us seek it by believing in it, by hoping for it, by loving it. If he gives us this health here, though, let us be duly thankful for it. Because of course what was granted to the ten lepers was a matter of this health here; it was a matter of this health that those ten lepers were cleansed by the Lord Christ; and yet the one who was grateful was praised, the ungrateful ones were censured.⁶ So when we even receive this kind of health from him, let us thank him; and if it should be necessary for his sake, let us also make light of what he has given us here, so that we may come to greater things there. May whatever you hear that is true remain with you, dwell in your hearts, work away in your thoughts, flourish in your behavior.

NOTES

1. So Perler, with some hesitation. In 405 the Catholic campaign against the Donatists was at its height; and it was above all at the Donatist martyrs, especially those fanatics who "martyred" themselves, that the point was directed that it's the cause, not the punishment, which makes the martyr. The sermon was preached on 18 August in Carthage, not Utica, the town these martyrs came from.

2. The unspoken comparison is with a man who has promised an inheritance to his son, and is reluctant to "give" it, because he can only do so by dying, and being succeeded by his heir.

3. See Acts 4:32, a favorite text of Augustine's, which he placed at the beginning of his *Rule*.

4. Perhaps he is here alluding to the explanation of the name *Massa Candida*, which said it was given because the bodies of the martyrs had been thrown into a pit of quicklime—and even, perhaps, tacitly rejecting it.

5. One would normally translate *salus* here as "salvation."

6. See Lk 17:11-19.

SERMON 306B

SERMON PREACHED ON 21 AUGUST ON THE BIRTHDAY
OF THE MARTYR QUADRATUS

Date: 399¹

Christ, our way, is looking for people to walk along this way by loving

1. The Lord our God has granted me the favor of seeing you and being seen by you, and we can all give him thanks together. And if this is the reason that *our mouth is filled with joy, and our tongue with exultation* (Ps 126:2), that we have seen each other in the mortal flesh, imagine what our joy will be when we see each other in that place, where we will have nothing at all to fear from each other. The apostle says, *Rejoicing in hope* (Rom 12:12). So our present joy is in hope, not yet in the thing itself. *But hope which is seen, he says, is not hope; for why does anyone hope for what he can see? But if we are hoping for what we cannot see, we wait for it with patience* (Rom 8:24-25). But if travelers rejoice in each other's company on the way, what joy they will obtain in their home country!

It was on this highway that the martyrs entered the contest, and it was by competing in the contest that they walked along it, and by walking that they didn't stick in one place. You walk, you see, if you love; I mean, it isn't by steps, but by the affections that we run toward God. So our highway is looking for people to walk along it. There are three kinds of people which it dislikes: those who stick, those who turn and go back, those who stray off it. May our progress be delivered and defended with the help of the Lord from these three kinds of evil.

Now, however, while we are walking, one walks more slowly, another more quickly; still, both are walking. So the ones who are sticking are to be rallied, those who are turning and going back to be called back, those who go astray to be led back to the road; the slow walkers to be urged on, the fast walkers to be imitated. Those who make no progress have stuck on the way; those who go back from a better purpose to a worse one they had given up have turned and gone backward; those who abandon the faith have strayed from the way altogether. Let us be counted with the slow ones, a long way behind the faster walkers, but still with those who are walking.²

The example given by the apostle

2. Who's the one who makes no progress? Whoever has thought he was wise, whoever has said, "What I am is sufficient for me"; whoever has paid no attention to the one who said, *Forgetting what lies behind, stretching out to what lies ahead, according to intention I follow to the palm of God's calling from above in Christ Jesus* (Phil 3:13-14). He said he was running, he said he was following; he didn't stand still, he didn't cast a backward glance; perish the thought that he should have gone astray, seeing that he was teaching about the very highway, which he was keeping to and demonstrating. But so that we might imitate his rapid progress, he said, *Be imitators of me, as I myself am of Christ* (1 Cor 4:16).

So we consider, dearest brothers and sisters, that we are walking along the way with you.³ If we are slow, go on ahead of us; we won't be jealous, we are looking for people to follow. But if you reckon we are setting a fast pace, run along with us. It's just one thing, what we are all hurrying along toward, both those of us who are walking more slowly and those going more quickly. That's what the apostle says himself: *One thing, though, forgetting what lies behind, stretching out to what lies ahead, according to intention I follow to the palm of God's calling from above in Christ Jesus*. The order of the words is, *One thing I follow*.⁴ But in order to say this, what had he said earlier on? *Brothers, I, certainly, do not reckon that I have attained the goal* (Phil 3:13). There indeed you have somebody who doesn't stand still, who doesn't consider he has attained the goal; there you have somebody who doesn't want to go on being a wandering exile,⁵ somebody who doesn't get stuck on the way, somebody who will rejoice when he gets home.

I, he says. Who's *I*? *Who have worked harder than all of them* (1 Cor 15:10). And yet, where he said *I have worked harder than any of them*, he didn't say, *I, certainly, do not reckon that I have attained the goal*. So he was quite right to say *I* in this place, where it's a question of humility, not of self-satisfaction. *I*, he says, as far as concerns me, *do not reckon that I have attained the goal*. That's just himself. But where he says, *I have worked harder than all of them*, he continues, *Not I, however, but the grace of God with me* (1 Cor 15:10). We can hardly say, can we, that the grace of God didn't attain the goal? So very properly in that other place, *I*; not to attain, after all, is a matter of our weakness; to attain is a matter of the assistance of divine grace, not of human weakness.

So who is there who can show us, who is there who can teach us, who is there who can suitably convince us how true it is—and there isn't a shadow of doubt that it is true—that there is nothing in us that is really our own except sin? Let piety be aware of this, weakness accuse itself of this, charity seek to be cured of this. *Not that I have already obtained it*, he said, *or am already perfect* (Phil 3:12). And then he added, *Brothers, I, certainly, do not reckon that I have attained the goal*. And when he was urging us to run, and to stretch out our hearts to the things that lie ahead, *but as many of us as are perfect*, he said, *let us have this mind* (Phil 3:15). Earlier he had said, *Not that I have already obtained it, or am already perfect*; and later on he says, *but as many of us as are perfect, let us*

have this mind. You had said that you yourself, great apostle that you are, were imperfect; now you can already find several who are perfect, and you say, *but as many of us as are perfect, let us have this mind.* So clearly there is perfection and perfection.

The perfection of the traveler is to know that one has not yet arrived at where one is aiming

3. There are perfect travelers, who are not yet perfect arrivers. Perfect travelers set out well, walk along well, keep to the highway; but still they're travelers, they haven't yet attained the goal. Because obviously, if they're walking, and walking along the road, they are walking somewhere, and making an effort to reach something. So the apostle had not yet attained the goal he was making an effort to reach. And he's urging the perfect to be aware that they are not yet perfect, to be aware of their imperfection. The perfection of the traveler is to know that one has not yet reached what one is aiming at; travelers, after all, know how much distance they've covered, how much still remains for them. So let us be fully aware that we are not perfect, as many of us as are perfect, in case we should remain imperfect.

What shall we say, brothers and sisters? Wasn't the martyr Quadratus perfect? What could be more perfect than the square?⁶ The sides are equal, from every direction there is equality of shape; whichever way you turn it, it's upstanding, it's not a ruin. What a beautiful name, demonstrating the figure, indicating the future reality it's a figure of! He was already called Quadratus beforehand, and he hadn't yet been crowned; he hadn't yet been publicly subjected to the trials by which he would be squared off. And yet, when he was given the name it was being proclaimed that he had been *predestined before the foundation of the world* (Rom 8:30; Jn 17:24); and in order to be called this, he experiences this in it, so that it might be fulfilled.⁷ And yet he was still walking, and yet he was still on the way; and as long as he was in this body, everything was to be feared, both that he might stick fast, and that he might turn and go backward, and that he might go off the rails.

Now, however, he has run the course, he has come to the end of the road, he has taken his stand on solid ground; he has been built by its builder into the Lord's ark, about which the significant and symbolic command was given that it was to be built of squared planks.⁸ Now at last he need fear no trial or temptation; he has heard the one who called him, just as he in turn heard the one who called upon him; he has followed the savior, he carries about the one who dwells in him. He despised the world's blandishments, he overcame its terrors, he escaped its rage. Great indeed, brothers and sisters is the glory of the martyrs, it has the first rank in the Church, all other kinds of glory come after it. After all, it wasn't to no purpose that some people were told, *You have not yet struggled against sin to the point of blood* (Heb 12:4). When will you endure, when will you bear with the savagery of the world, when you are unable to scorn its blandishments?

The apostle's words, Rom 6:19, are held up as a mirror for each of us to look into and examine ourselves

4. The same apostle says, *I am giving a human example because of the weakness of your flesh; just as you presented your members to be the willing slaves of uncleanness for iniquity, so now present your members to be the willing slaves of justice for sanctification* (Rom 6:19). It is indeed something big that he appears to have urged upon us. Let us all measure ourselves against these words of the apostle; don't let's soothe ourselves with flattery; let us weigh ourselves up, and tell ourselves the truth. Why do you expect to hear it from me? You yourselves must tell yourselves the truth. I've simply arranged to put a mirror in front of you, in which you can all look at yourselves. I'm not myself the reflective power of the mirror, which can show those who look into it their faces. The faces I'm talking about now, you see, are the ones we have inside us. I can address them through your ears, I can't see them. Certainly, I'm presenting you with a mirror; look at yourselves, each one of you, and tell yourselves what you see. Take these words of the apostle's, which I have just quoted, as the mirror.

I am giving a human example because of the weakness of your flesh; just as you presented your members to be the willing slaves of uncleanness for iniquity, so now present your members to be the willing slaves of justice for sanctification. What's the meaning of *so* here? Just as that, in the same way this too. When you used to present your members *as weapons of iniquity to sin* (Rom 6:13) for uncleanness, did it delight you? I'm asking; think a moment, and answer. Did it delight you? I can hear your answer, even when you're saying nothing; after all, you wouldn't have done it, unless it had delighted you. So then, just as you presented your members to be the willing slaves of uncleanness for iniquity, and did so with delight, in the same way let justice at last delight you. "I don't want you to do it out of fear," God says to you; "after all, you didn't do that out of fear, did you?" *So now*, he says, *So now. Just as you presented your members to be the willing slaves of uncleanness for iniquity, so now present your members to be the willing slaves of justice for sanctification.*

You are being driven to justice by fear; you used to run to uncleanness out of love. What could be more beautiful than wisdom,⁹ I ask you? It surely deserves to be loved at least in the same way as uncleanness was loved. When you were running after uncleanness, you were forbidden, and you used to go; you offended your father, and off you used to run. You were prepared to be disinherited, rather than to be separated from the deformity of your love. What are you going to say? Justice requires of you what uncleanness had from you. You heard the gospel: *I did not come to bring peace to the earth, but a sword* (Mt 10:34). He said he would separate children from parents.¹⁰ So take a look at that sword. Perhaps you wish to serve God,¹¹ and your father forbids it? When you were in love with uncleanness, you used to run after it even though your father forbade it; now justice is urging you on¹² as its lover, and here too you have found your father forbidding you. Assert your freedom, just as at that time you asserted your lust. You were prepared to be disinherited then rather than be

separated from the deformity of that uncleanness; be prepared to be disinherited now, rather than be separated from the beauty of justice.

It's a big thing, but it's only fair and just. Is there anyone who would have the nerve to say, "But uncleanness ought to have been loved more than justice"? Meantime, justice is making a step for you. "Certainly," she says, "I'm very different; certainly there is the greatest possible distance between the darkness of that uncleanness and my light, between that deformity and my beauty, between her rank and my rank; certainly, the greatest possible distance. Meantime, I'm placing an intermediate step for you. That's my wish; but I ought to be loved more, I ought to be loved altogether much more; as much more as the distance between us, is how I ought to be loved. But *I am giving a human example*, I'm putting off the divine one. Why am I putting off the divine one? *I am giving a human example on account of the weakness of your flesh*. That's why *so now*, because I'm still sparing your weakness. That's why, *just as you presented your members as willing slaves to uncleanness for iniquity, so now you indeed ought to do more, but at least so walk, get as far as this. But also go on beyond this stage too. Meanwhile, I am giving a human example; but just as that, in the same way too this.*"

Observe all that uncleanness, and see how much more is required of you by piety and charity, by the beauty of justice and the sweetness of sanctification

5. Did Quadratus merely love justice like that? Certainly not just like that, but much more, and rightly more. I mean, take a look at all that uncleanness, and see how much more is required of you by piety and charity, and by the beauty of justice and the sweetness of sanctification; observe how much more is required of you. The lover of uncleanness doesn't want his evil deeds to be known; he's afraid of being condemned for them, afraid of prison for them, afraid of the judge, afraid of the executioner. He has designs on the chastity of someone else's wife, he deceives the husband, he seeks the cover of darkness, he dreads anyone knowing, he fears the judge; he's afraid of being known, because he's afraid of being punished for it. Now, on the other hand, let the Lord tell you what more the beauty of justice requires for itself, which the apostle put off mentioning for the time being, when he said, *I am giving you a human example, on account of the weakness of your flesh*; listen to this from the Lord: *What I say to you in the dark, that is in secret, utter in the light, and what you hear in the ear, proclaim upon the rooftops* (Mt 10:27).

Does the adulterer proclaim his villainy upon the rooftop? But why does he not only not proclaim it upon the rooftop, but also seek to be hidden by the roof? Why does he do that? Because that's as far as love of uncleanness could go; it's afraid, you see, of being detected, afraid of being punished. These lovers, on the other hand, of that invisible beauty, lovers of that comeliness which makes him *lovely in form beyond the sons of men* (Ps 45:2), so the lovers of that beauty, why are they not afraid of proclaiming upon the rooftops what they have heard in the ear? Inquire what that man's afraid of; it's of being recognized and

punished. Inquire why this man isn't afraid: the Lord himself went on to give the answer. You see, after he had said, *What I say to you in the dark, utter in the light, and what you hear in the ear, proclaim upon the rooftops, Do not, he went on, fear those who can kill the body* (Mt 10:27-28). So that you may utter in the light what you hear in the dark, so that you may proclaim upon the rooftops what you hear in the ear, *do not fear those who can kill the body*.

Let the adulterer fear those who can kill the body; after all, when that adulterer loses his body, he loses the workshop of his pleasures. Let him be afraid of losing the body, because he lives from the body; everything, you see, that he desires, he achieves through the body. That's why pleasure never satisfies him; he's burnt up with desire, until he attains to the utterly unclean pleasure of the body. You, on the other hand, man of God, if you have eyes in your heart with which to see the beauty of charity, with which to see the beauty of piety, if you have eyes in your heart, observe what you enjoy your loves with; in order to enjoy them, after all, you do not require the members of the body. Let the lover of sordid pleasure be afraid of the body being destroyed; but *peace on earth among men of good will* (Lk 2:14).

Don't hide your good works for fear of being mocked

6. How very far you are from such love as that, my dear Christian! If only you could get as far as that human example, and take delight in doing good, just as previously you used to take delight in sinning. After all, if you delight in doing good, if you're delighted to believe in Christ, if you're delighted to enjoy his wisdom in your own measure, if you take delight in hearing and doing his commands, then there has begun to be in you that human example on account of your weakness. You have already begun to have a good gift, though you haven't yet completed the square, and caught up with Quadratus.¹³ But, as I said, if you've got that far, proceed, the highway is still there, don't stick fast. There's still something for you to do; don't be afraid, and conceal your good deeds by being afraid. The fault-finders, the savage critics, what do they say to you? "What a great apostle you are! Your feet are hanging from the sky."¹⁴ Where do you come from?" And you're afraid to say, "From church," in case they say to you, "Aren't you ashamed, he man,¹⁵ to go where the widows and old ladies go?" In case you should hear that, you're afraid to say, "I was in church."

How would you stand up to the persecutor, if you dread the scoffer? And sure enough, these are times of peace. And they are the ones who ought to be ashamed. There are so many who have come along, have approached, and they feel ashamed; and so few who have stayed behind, and they don't feel ashamed.¹⁶ And these have approached—what? While those have stayed behind—where? These have approached the light of peace, those have stayed behind in the darkness of confusion. Aren't you ashamed of being ashamed of what you should be proud of? They aren't ashamed of what is shameful; and you people are ashamed of what you should be proud of? And what about the words you have just heard, *Approach him and be enlightened, and your faces will not be put to shame* (Ps 34:5).

Whoever is ashamed of Christ before men, Christ will be ashamed of him before his Father in heaven

7. I've said all this, my brothers and sisters, because I know, and it makes me very sad, that people fear the tongues of a few pagans, who are not raging, but just mocking, and that the spirits of people who wish to believe are held back, when they can't find relief in any encouragement from Christians. And what more is there? Or what am I to say about it? You see some pagan or other being browbeaten not to become a Christian, and you, a Christian, keep quiet. You think it's great that the man is sparing you, that he's not insulting you. When he's busy deterring that other man, you say to yourself, don't you, "Thank God he hasn't said anything to me"? You're running away, not in the flesh, but in the mind. You're standing there, and you're running away. You're afraid that foul-mouthed, scurrilous tongue may be turned on you, and you don't come to the help of the one you ought to be gaining for Christ. You don't help, you keep quiet; and as I said, you're running away, not in the flesh, but in the mind. You're a hireling; you see the wolf coming, and you run away.¹⁷

And what more am I to say? We all heard it just now. Let the Lord frighten us; the one we should love, he's the one to be feared. *Whoever, he says, is ashamed of me before men*—and notice when he was saying this; when the world did not yet believe, but was still threatening—*whoever is ashamed of me before men, I will put him to shame before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever acknowledges me before men, I too will acknowledge him before my Father who is in heaven* (Mt 10:33.32).¹⁸ Do you want to be denied by Christ, or do you want to be acknowledged by Christ? The one who mocks you will be very far away, when you find Christ denying you. What he promises will happen; is the one who has kept so many promises to be found misleading solely on the day of judgment? Perish the thought! Let those pagans keep their unbelief; or rather, indeed, let them too shed their unbelief. But offer yourselves to them to be imitated in your acknowledgement of Christ, and not to be defeated in your silence. They, after all, if they find Christians to be braver defenders of the weak by asserting their faith, by freely acknowledging it, by carefully teaching it, by lovingly instructing people in it, they will keep silent, believe me. They have nothing, you see, that they can say. It's just an empty noise, a *clashing cymbal* (1 Cor 13:1). What has ceased to sound in their temples¹⁹ has remained in their mouths.

NOTES

1. Kunzelmann says before 399, Fischer says a little after. Augustine is clearly not preaching in Hippo Regius; nor, I think, in Carthage. The opening sentence suggests a town which he did not often visit, or stop at. Possibly it was Utica, where Quadratus had been bishop at the time of the

Massa Candida martyrs; and having encouraged them in their sufferings, it seems he followed them three or four days later.

2. A very odd sentence, of which I assume I have got the general sense; but its details I cannot guarantee: *Cum tardis sit nobis, sed a celerioribus, ratio, cum ambulantiibus tamen.*

3. We bishops and clergy.

4. A very arbitrary construction of Paul's sentence.

5. See 2 Cor 5:6-8.

6. Which is what *quadratus* means.

7. I must admit that I have very little notion of what he is talking about here. The sentence runs: *et ut hoc vocaretur*—and in order to be called this—*hoc in illo compatitur*—he experiences this in it; I suppose he experiences "being squared" in it, in the world, but sympathetically, *compatitur*; his being named Square puts him in sympathetic touch with the four-square world?—*ut impleretur*—that it, his being squared, might be fulfilled. Sometimes Augustine defies translation, because he simply defies intelligibility.

8. See Gn 6:14, where the LXX, and hence Augustine's Latin version, has Noah's ark made of squared planks.

9. So the manuscripts and the Migne edition. A later editor suggests emending "wisdom" to "justice," which is certainly what one would have expected him to have said, and what, no doubt, he intended to say. But I think he said "wisdom," all the same, by a slip of the tongue, because of the way it is personified in the Wisdom literature as a beautiful feminine figure, in a way that justice never is.

10. See Mt 10:35.

11. As a monk or nun, is what he means.

12. The text says, *modo te prohibet justitia amatorem suum*; now justice is forbidding you, as its lover. But this cannot be right; the word *prohibet*, already used more than once, must have got jammed in the copyist's pen—or even perhaps on Augustine's lips, by mistake. I am assuming a word like *urget*; it could be *invitat*, is inviting you, or *jubet*, is bidding you. What it simply cannot be, since what is in question is serving God, is *prohibet*.

13. He just says, "you haven't yet completed the quadratus"; *necdum implesti quadratum*.

14. A graphic idiom, but I'm not at all sure what it means.

15. *Barbate*, bearded one.

16. The many Christians, contrasted with the few remaining pagans.

17. See Jn 10:12.

18. This quotation is deeply colored by the parallel in Mk 8:38; again, very probably a case of the gospel reading coming from a harmony of the gospels, like Tatian's *Diatessaron*.

19. Because they had fairly recently been closed by imperial decrees.

SERMON 306C

SERMON OF SAINT AUGUSTINE THE BISHOP AT THE TABLE OF CYPRIAN
ON SAINT QUADRATUS

Date: 397¹

*Quadratus was the bishop, whose flock was the Massa Candida;
he sent them ahead, and followed them himself four days later*

1. We have just heard the trumpet blast of the gospel, rallying the martyrs to the contest in which they were to overcome the world: *Whoever wishes to save his life² will lose it; because whoever loses it on my account will find it* (Mt 16:25). He will lose it by saving it, find it by losing it. What can this mean, if not that there is a kind of saving of life according to this age, and there's another saving of life according to God? So at the critical moment of the temptation by which the martyrs were tested, in such a way that one of two things was set before them, either to deny Christ or to experience death, those obviously, who wished to save their lives according to this age, denied Christ and lost them; while those who lost them according to this age, confessed Christ and found them.

To whom, after all, can one more safely entrust one's life than to one's creator? Who is able better to preserve what had been, than the one who was able in the first place to make what had previously not been? Quadratus, whose feast we are celebrating today, both learned and taught this lesson—he was a bishop, you see—and with his whole people, clergy and laity, he confessed Christ. He sent the flock on ahead, which he had been pasturing;³ four days later Quadratus followed them. The Shining White Mass, you see, whose feast was celebrated four days ago, was the people of God entrusted to this man's care. What a splendid wall for wall posters⁴ this Quadratus had presided over! And all that great number of souls, and out of so many souls,⁵ were not yet able to see the Church which we see; they weren't yet able to see it, and they were already constructing it out of themselves, and were hastening *as living stones* (1 Pt 2:5) into its structure by dying. And lo and behold, we now see the Church spread throughout the whole wide world; then it was great in its small numbers, now it is spread far and wide in its multitudes, and we can observe the predictions of the prophets fulfilled, which anticipated the occurrence of everything that we now see.

But for this to happen, when numbers were few, courage had to be great. By passing along the narrow road they widened it, and while they went along, trampling on the rough ways, they went ahead of us.⁶ These were followed by whoever in those times endured various tribulations for the name of Christ. Blessed indeed they were in losing their lives! What a lucky, fortunate loss that was! That's how sowers cast away, how sowers lose. Can there be any doubt, I mean to say, that in every sowing what is sown is cast away, is buried? But what a great hope there is of a harvest when such a seeding⁷ comes first! And when it's sown, nobody can see the harvest; everything is entrusted to God, committed to the earth. The earth keeps it, the earth quickens it, the earth multiplies it; but all this through the agency of the one by whom heaven and earth were made.

The significance of Quadratus' name, which means "square"

2. The name of this martyr requires us to say something about holy quadrature, or squaring. Saint Noah was ordered to construct the ark of squared planks.⁸ What is it about squareness that made it preferable, what was signified by it, if not that nobody can throw down a standing square block? I mean, which ever way you move it aside, it will go on standing. Wear yourself out by rolling it, toil away at overthrowing it; and when you overthrow it, you will find that what you have overthrown is standing in exactly the same way as before it was overthrown. On every single side it is assured of standing firm. Losses were threatened, the goods of those who confessed Christ were confiscated; Quadratus stood firm. Exile was threatened, and the loss of the land of his birth in the flesh; thinking of the homeland of the spirit, Quadratus stood firm. Torments and savage tortures were inflicted on him; thinking of the fearful pains of gehenna, Quadratus stood firm. Vast secular rewards were promised, if only Christ were denied; thinking of the heavenly crown, Quadratus stood firm.

Comment on the text, "The just man falls seven times, and rises again"

3. That's what any Christian should be like; but in order to be like that, you must call upon Christ. Let him square you off, him control you, him not allow you to fall when you fall. It's not for nothing, you see, that it was said, *The just man falls seven times, and rises again* (Prv 24:16). We shouldn't refer what's said here to the fall involved in any grave sin. The person falls gravely, after all, who was innocent, and becomes a murderer; falls gravely, who was chaste and becomes an adulterer. It's not about such falls that it was said, *The just man falls seven times, and rises again*. No, this was said about the falls involved in trials and tribulations. To fall means to be humiliated. However much a just man is humiliated, he gets up again. That person is squared, quadrated, who is knocked over, and stands up again. And in saying *seven times* it put this for a universal statement, using the perfect number to suggest however many times he falls. Seven times means however many times, just as *seven times a day I will praise you* (Ps 119:164) is the same as, *his praise is always in my mouth* (Ps 34:1).

And to show you that that's what's meant by these words, *the just man falls seven times, and rises again*, let's take a look at the surrounding context; at what holy scripture said before, and what it added after these words. That will make the sense perfectly clear. So what does scripture say, where this sentence occurs? *Do not apply the ungodly to the pastures of the just, nor be seduced by the satiety of the belly*; and it continues, *For the just man falls seven times, and rises again; but the godless will be weakened by evils* (Prv 24:15-16). Already, from the words that follow this sentence, its meaning has begun to be clearer: *The just man falls seven times, and rises again; but the godless will be weakened by evils*. So the one who falls seven times and will rise again, is not weakened by evils; and that's what falling and rising again means: being humiliated and not being weakened.

The souls of the just and the godless are equally pastured on the word of God, but with different results

4. So what's the meaning of what was said first: *Do not apply the godless to the pastures of the just, don't be seduced by the satiety of the belly*? As the Lord may be pleased to grant me, I will say what I can; someone who knocks more vigorously may find a better explanation. Look, my dearest friends, I'm preaching the word of God to you, you all hear it, you all take delight in it, you all enjoy it—you don't all do it. These are the pastures where the soul of the just man feeds; but the soul of the unjust also feeds there. Just and godless both hear together; they both hear together, and together at the end of the sermon, they say, "We've been well fed." But you now must distinguish the one who feeds more wholesomely from that other who is also fed, yes, and has a full belly, but doesn't have a steadfast mind. So distinguish, and *do not apply the godless to the pastures of the just*, that is, do not compare him to the just man feeding. Do not apply, that is don't compare. You see, this one feeds in one way, that one in another. Don't imagine they are both alike; don't apply the just man to that one.

But you hear that this one too has the scriptures at his fingertips;⁹ *don't be seduced by the satiety of the belly*. *Do not apply the godless to the pastures of the just*, because he too is fed in them and enjoys them; *nor be seduced by the satiety of the belly*, because he has it all at his fingertips. How each of them has been fed must be examined by temptation, tested by temptation. Look, let me show you the pastures of the just: *Seven times he will fall and rise again*. Look, let me show you the pastures of the godless: *But the godless is weakened by evils*. The just man feeds; like a squared block of stone, whatever way you turn him over, he will stand firm. The godless feeds; like a round and rolling stone, he won't stand still anywhere.

It is God alone who will free us from the snare of the hunters and from the harsh word

5. So that's what we all ought to be like; but in order that we may be able to be like that, we have to call upon God. *I will hope in him, since he it is who will*

set me free from the snare of the hunters and from the harsh word (Ps 91:2-3). The snare of the hunters, the traps of the persecutors; the harsh word, bitter taunts. How many of these were heard by those who found their lives by losing them! What snares were laid before them in their trials! And the one single soul of them all¹⁰ said, *My eyes are always on the Lord, since he it is who will pluck my feet from the snare (Ps 25:15). I will hope in him, since he it is who will set me free from the snare of the hunters.* How many accusations they had to hear! And they knew they were false. Doesn't the pain burn like fire, when one hears oneself falsely accused? But they had real, genuine patience, because they had a shining white conscience.¹¹ And how could they come by this, if not because he sets them free from the snare of the hunters and from the harsh word, the one who had said to them, *Blessed shall you be, when they speak every kind of evil against you (Mt 5:11)?* That's the harsh word. They didn't say, "Why do I have to suffer these taunts? What am I a Christian for; always to hear these false accusations?" They didn't say that, because they stood foursquare. And they were delivered, because they paid attention to the one who said, *Blessed shall you be, since your reward will be great in heaven (Mt 5:12).*

Just because there were those trials and temptations at that time, does it mean that they were the only ones who could enter the contest? There are evils in plenty in the world; we too must enter the contest. The snare of greed is set before you, to get you to betray someone. Be square; treat the promises made you with contempt, look down on what's being offered to you, look up at what's being deferred for you. What's being deferred is much more certain than what's being offered. What's being offered either leaves you while you are still alive, or is left behind by you when you die; what's being deferred, when it comes, will never end. It will neither leave you nor be left behind by you. That's where you will be, you won't move on. *Blessed, you see, he says, are those who dwell in your house, for ever and ever they will praise you (Ps 84:4).* They will praise you, because they will love you. And how they will love you when they see you, if they have loved you like that when without seeing you they believed in you!

The snare of fear is set before you, so that out of fear you may commit something bad, and do to yourself what the man frightening you could never do. I mean the one frightening you would be able to kill your flesh; you, by doing evil, are killing your soul. These things have never been wanting in human affairs; contests with temptations have never been lacking. Let our eyes be always on the Lord.¹²

In this life we don't know what's best for us

6. In this life, my brothers and sisters, we don't know what's best for us. Riches have been of benefit to many people, who have used them well; although it isn't the riches which have been of benefit, but the mind of the user, who even if he wasn't rich, would still keep to the divine pronouncement, *peace on earth to men of good will (Lk 2:14).* To how many people, all the same, have riches been a disadvantage! Who could ever count them? When could the number of

those whom riches have destroyed ever be computed? Cases can be seen every day, and those who see them don't correct themselves. So riches have been of benefit to some people, let us grant that; all the same, they have been to the disadvantage of far, far more. Secular power has been of benefit to some who have exercised it, let us agree; to how many, all the same, has it been a disadvantage!

Still, we shouldn't be blind. Can it be said that the kingdom of heaven was ever to anyone's disadvantage? Can it be said that living forever with Christ was ever to anyone's disadvantage? But these good things are not here, because they don't come from here; they are not of the world. So, *do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world. Whoever loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; since everything that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the ambition of the age, which is not from the Father, but from the world. And the world passes away, and its lust; but whoever does the will of God abides for ever* (1 Jn 2:15-17).

*God in his graciousness does not listen to the prayers of some,
and in his anger he does listen to the prayers of others*

7. There you have the construction of the saints, there you have the building of those who have been made square, quadrated. So let's leave to God the things about which we don't know whether they are to our advantage or disadvantage, because he both refuses in his graciousness to listen to some people, and also does listen in his anger; and again, he listens in his graciousness, and refuses to listen in his anger. I repeat, let us leave such things to him, who both refuses in his graciousness to listen to some people and does listen in his anger; and again, listens in his graciousness, and doesn't listen in his anger. So when out of our inexperience we ask for something that is not good for us, may he be gracious, and not listen to us.

So those who have been listened to, and had their desires satisfied, should avoid boasting. The desire of the Israelites, who loathed the manna and longed for meat, was satisfied. And read what's written: *While the food was still in their mouths . . .*¹³ (Ps 78:30). Why should I just speak about human beings? The devil was listened to, and God's servant entrusted to him for tempting and testing.¹⁴ The demons were listened to, and they went into the pigs.¹⁵ So what's so very great about being listened to? What makes all the difference is in what cause you are listened to. If you are asking for what's good for you, and you're listened to, God is being gracious.

Or do we, perhaps, know what we should ask for, while the apostle Paul didn't know? There we are, I showed you the ungrateful people listened to, but to their detriment; the devil listened to, the demons listened to. Now listen to the apostle not being listened to, thanks to God being gracious. Of course you'll be saying to yourselves, "If the devil was listened to, how much more should the apostle be listened to?" And yet, what does this same apostle say himself? *In case my head should be turned by the greatness of the revelations* (2 Cor 12:7). After he hadn't been listened to, he then discovered the reason why he

hadn't been. For that reason he didn't keep quiet about it, but mentioned it first. The fact is, something extraordinary and against all common ideas was about to be said by this great man, this holy, chosen vessel,¹⁶ who worked harder than all of them; not he himself, though, but the grace of God with him.¹⁷ When he read about God's promise, *While you are still speaking, I am present* (Is 58:9), he speaks once, and isn't heard; he begs again, nor is he listened to even so; he begs a third time, still he's not heard. *In case my head should be turned*, he says, *by the greatness of the revelations, there was given me a goad in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me* (2 Cor 12:7).

Many people have made many guesses about this; but it's best to believe what is said by the best of them,¹⁸ that the apostle Paul suffered from very severe headaches; that's why he says he was being buffeted, because he was suffering in his head, in case his head should be turned. He was being struck in that part which is not to be lifted up in pride. And what did he say, what did he add? *For which reason three times I begged the Lord that it might depart from me; and he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you; strength is made perfect in weakness* (2 Cor 12:8-9). What a way of not being listened to! That's a way, rather, of being assisted. Such a stringent poultice, but a wholesome one, that such a great doctor applied to the patient. The patient, under the sting of the poultice, begged the doctor to remove what he had applied; the doctor paid no attention to his wishes, and in this way attended all the more to his health.

In all our troubles, all our fears, all our joys, we should beg God to grant us those temporal benefits, which he knows are for the best for us

8. Don't we see such things every day in human affairs—a kind of hard and inexorable mercy? How many things sick people ask the doctors for, counter to their health, and how many things the doctors, in mercy, refuse them! They refuse them, and so spare them; if they grant them, they're being cruel. The doctor knows this; and doesn't God? The one who was created like you knows how to deal with you in this way; and doesn't the one who created you both know how to deal with you both? Accordingly, dearly beloved, in all your troubles, all your fears, all your joys, beg God to grant you, of temporal goods, what he knows is best for you. As for eternal things, though, such as *hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done as in heaven also on earth*, and others of that sort, ask for them without a qualm or qualification; they cannot possibly be to your disadvantage.

Choose, cherish, gather;¹⁹ he opens his hand, after all, and fills every soul with blessing.²⁰ *And when you give*, it says, *they gather* (Ps 104:28). None of us should have any doubts about heavenly good things; even if they are deferred, they will be given. The reward is not being refused, but desire is being whetted. We must go on desiring day after day, because it's a great thing we are going to receive. We must go on thirsting day after day, because it's the fountain of life we shall be drinking from.²¹ All the same, dearly beloved, there's something it's not an impudence for us to ask for, because the apostle taught us; let us ask

that we may spend a quiet and tranquil life, and with all piety and charity (1 Tm 2:2).

NOTES

1. So Perler. The sermon was preached on 21 August, four days after the feast of the *Massa Candida*, as Augustine says himself in section 1. That was on the 18, so this, by the Roman method of counting both ends, must have been on the 21, not the 22.

2. One must bear in mind that the word for life in this and related texts is, in the original, the word usually translated "soul," *anima* in the Latin here. The most accurate translation would perhaps be "self."

3. There is perhaps an oblique allusion here to Gn 32:13-21, where Jacob, returning to Canaan from Mesopotamia, sends his flocks and his family on ahead of him over the Jabbok, while he himself stays behind to wrestle with the angel.

4. *Parietem signinarium*. This odd word is not given in Lewis & Short's *Latin Dictionary*. I am guessing that here it indicates a wall—whitewashed, of course, because it was the White Mass—on which signs, advertisements, can be painted, and graffiti scrawled; it's a novel metaphor for a fervent community of martyrs: a billboard for Christ.

5. This phrase is just redundant as it stands; perhaps it was leading up to his saying "not one had yet seen," etc.; but he forgets this, and reverts to the other construction of his sentence.

6. What a lame ending! Surely he was intending to say, "they made them smooth for us." Then possibly he suddenly had second thoughts about whether that was quite what should be said.

7. Reading with the manuscript *quam praecedit sementis*, instead of the editorial emendation *quam praecedit seminantis*, which can only mean "when the hope of the sower comes first," which doesn't mean very much. *Seminantis* being in the genitive, it requires *spes* to be understood as the subject of the clause. The editors, it would seem, were unfamiliar with the extremely rare word *sementis*, which is however given by Lewis & Short, and which means a seeding or sowing. The emendation I would suggest to the manuscript is the addition of the word *tanta*: *quam praecedit tanta sementis*.

8. See Gn 6:14, LXX.

9. *Tenere scripturas*; my translation gives the man a little more, perhaps, than Augustine intended, but that is his general meaning.

10. See Acts 4:32.

11. The *Massa Candida*, of course, to whom his attention has now shifted a little from Quadratus, their "square" bishop.

12. See Ps 123:2.

13. He doesn't finish the quotation—they all knew how it went on.

14. See Job 1:12; 2:6.

15. See Mk 5:12-13.

16. See Acts 9:15.

17. See 1 Cor 15:10.

18. Who these were, I cannot say, and no modern commentary is going to tell us. But Augustine's view, derived from these best people (Origen, perhaps?), that it was a migraine, conforms to that of the "best people" nowadays, though it is rather more specific; they more cautiously confine themselves to saying "a physical malady." See the *Jerome Biblical Commentary* on this verse.

19. *Eligite, diligite, colligite*.

20. See Ps 145:16.

21. See Ps 36:9.

SERMON 306D

SERMON ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SAINT QUADRATUS

Date: uncertain

By believing the martyrs laid hold on life, and by speaking they discovered a death, in which the body would be sown as perishable, and imperishability would be reaped

1. The blessed apostle produced a text from the scriptures in which he commended to us the glory of the martyrs: *That is why it is written*, he said, *I believed which is why I spoke* (Ps 116:10); *and we too believe, which is why we also speak* (2 Cor 4:13). If, you see, they had merely believed and not spoken, they wouldn't have suffered. And so by believing they laid hold on life, and by speaking they discovered death, but a death in which the body would be sown as perishable, and imperishability would be reaped. This idea, that is that we believe, which is why we also speak, was explained by the same apostle in another place like this: *With the heart one believes unto justice, with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* (Rom 10:10).

There is a salvation common to man and beast, and a salvation proper to the faithful, proper to Christians

2. Here someone may possibly inquire, "How is confession made unto salvation, seeing that the martyrs, when they confessed the faith, were then killed? So confession certainly isn't made unto salvation." You've forgotten, *Give us help in affliction, and vain is the salvation of man* (Ps 60:11). Clearly, they confessed with the mouth unto salvation, unto the salvation proper to the faithful, proper to Christians, not common to men¹ and beasts. I mean even this salvation which is common to men and beasts, whom does it come from, if not from the creator of all things? The one, after all, by whom we were made in order to be, is the one from whom we have received the possibility of being safe and sound. Now the faithful know perfectly well that God is the creator not only of man but also of beast. Thus, *Men and brutes*, it says, *you will save, Lord, according to the multiplication of your mercy, O God* (Ps 36:6-7). Because, you see, you are the God and creator of human beings, the multiplication of your mercy extends even to the saving of brutes.

So what do human beings have over and above, but what follows: *but the*

children of men will hope beneath the cover of your wings (Ps 36:7)? What will they hope for, if not another salvation, not one of this time, but an eternal one? There is one salvation, you see, that is to be had here, another that is hoped for, and that is why the martyrs were so totally strong and brave in the faith; because they made light of what they had, in order to receive what they were hoping for. Salvation and salvation; one they knew, the other they believed; one they could see, the other they could not see. So what is faith really like, dearly beloved, what is faith like? Make light of what you can see, faith will get through.²

The distinction between men and the sons of men

3. From this a certain distinction between men and the sons of men begins to dawn on us. But all sons of men are men; how aren't all men sons of men? Because Adam and Eve were men, not sons of men. Which of these two did the Lord Christ prefer to be? Because, you see, it was necessary that the one who had made man should become man on account of man, and should become what he had made so that what he had made might not perish. He could, of course, have formed his flesh from wherever he liked, and be true man with true flesh. After all, in order to form the first man, he didn't go looking for a father or mother. He didn't go looking for the seed of man in order that the first man might be made.³ It also came to the point that the one who had made man should himself become man. He didn't wish merely to be man, which he could have been had he wished, but he preferred to be the son of man. And how vehemently, how assiduously he insists that he is the son of man! Just notice, and you'll agree, when the holy gospels are chanted, how incomparably more frequently he calls himself the son of man than the Son of God. This means that the majesty that is befitting to God needed only brief commendation, while on the other hand the humility of the Most High had to be more constantly drummed into us.

So among the other instances where the Lord Jesus assiduously testifies to his being the son of man, let us above all remind ourselves of the one where he says to his disciples, *Who do men say that I, the son of man, am?* (Mt 16:13). Who do they say you are, but a son of man?⁴ But there are many sons of men, identical in race, very different in virtue and condition. So he says, *Who do men say I am?* The answer was that some said he was Elijah, others Jeremiah, others John the Baptist or one of the prophets, as much as to say the son of man was one of the great men. But that's what men said, who share with the beasts a common salvation. *You, though,* he said, *Who do you say that I am?* (Mt 16:15), as though they were not men. He said in effect: "This and that is what I am said to be by men who belong to man. You though, sons of men, of course, belonging to the son of man, who do you say that I am?"

Then Peter answered, one for all of them, unity in all of them, and said, *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God* (Mt 16:16). Christ commends his humility to us, Peter confesses Christ's majesty. That's what was fitting, that's what was required. Listen, Peter, to what Christ is for you, and you in turn say who the son of man is for you. *Who, you see, do men say that I, the son of man,*

am? Who is this, who for your sake has become the son of man? You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. "I," Christ says, "am commending my humility to you; you, for your part, acknowledge my divinity. I am saying what I was made into for your sake; you, for your part, say how it is that I made you."

The salvation, or health, common to men and beasts, which the martyrs made light of, is something good, all the same

4. So this temporal salvation or health, common to men and brutes, was made light of by the martyrs, the health they had with Adam the man, not with the son of man. But the sons of men who belong to the son of man, in order to make light of the health common to men and brutes, *were hoping under the cover of your wings* (Ps 36:7). So what's the case, dearly beloved? For the martyrs to make light of this health, is this health not something good? If it wasn't good, who would be proud of making light of what is no good? They make light of the good, in order to come to the better. We are speaking about this kind of health here which nobody is to be blamed for seeking. We see people busying themselves with nothing else, as far as the support of this life is concerned, but with restoring this health if it has failed, or obtaining it if it has been lacking. But how long—it's going to come to an end, whether you like it or not—how long will you be able to hold on to this health, seeing that you can't cancel your last day? For each one of us the finishing post of our last day has been fixed. We are all running toward this finishing post, and not running willingly, but driven to it. We are nearer to this finishing post today than we were yesterday, nearer tomorrow than today; the thing about which we are always ignorant, "when," is coming sometime. So let us live carefully, because we don't know when we may die. We don't know when, and we don't know how near this "sometime" is I have just mentioned.

And thus it was that the blessed martyrs, when they came to the critical moment of temptation, either to retain this temporal life, with all its uncertainty about "when," or to lay hold of that life which is to be retained without end—why be surprised, my brothers and sisters?—that because they had faith they weighed things up and made their choice; they overcame because they chose the better part; they chose it because they loved it; and how did they have the capacity to love it, if not because they were loved? Oh, what blessed, what glorious, what brave, what fortunate martyrs! What a dedication to God! O men and women squared, quadrated, on every side!⁵ What you made light of is good, but temporal. What you chose is the eternal and imperishable good. Rightly indeed did you stand firm in your confession; whichever way the persecutor tried to turn you, you didn't collapse.

The martyrs have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb

5. This is to be truly happy, truly blessed;⁶ it is he that in a wonderful manner has made you white with his blood. The divine utterance says in the Apocalypse, *These are they who have come from great and frequent tribulation, and have*

washed their robes and made them white. Where did they make them white? *In the blood*, not of anyone, but of the Lamb (Rv 7:14). All other blood makes gory, the blood of the Lamb makes white. How does it make white? *Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world* (Jn 1:29). I mean, that they washed their robes in blood is not particularly surprising. Things can certainly be washed in blood, after all, which is why a certain poet said,

*with copious blood
they wash their necks and weapons.⁷*

They wash them, they don't make them white, do they? That's why the divine utterance was on the alert, and after saying, *they washed their robes*, it added what can well surprise you, *and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*. But after all, how could anything washed in that not be made white, since about that blood it was said, *This is my blood, which will be shed for many, for the forgiveness of sins* (Mt 26:28)?

NOTES

1. For reasons that should be obvious, it will mostly be impossible in this whole passage to avoid using this word for *homines*. It must simply be accepted that it is being employed in the inclusive sense—which it does have in traditional English; manifestly so when he says that Adam and Eve were men, but not sons of men, in section 3.

2. *Contemne quod vides, perveniet fides*. This is Dom Lambot's ingenious emendation of the manuscript's *Contemne quod vides, perveni et vides; . . .*, get through, and you see.

3. I suspect that this sentence crept into the text from the margin, where it would have been a comment on the previous, or perhaps the following, sentence, and that the word "first" was not in it; so that it meant, "He didn't go looking for the seed of man in order to be made man." Then, after it had crept into the text under the pen of one copyist, another puzzled copyist added *primus*, to make it refer to Adam.

4. Latin lacks the convenience, which is also the complication, of definite and indefinite articles. The phrase "the son of man" (or "the Son of man") is in English peculiar to Jesus. Without the article, Augustine has been able to equivocate, as it may seem to us, between the peculiar and the general reference of the expression "son of man."

5. This is the only allusion to Quadratus in the whole sermon—the only internal reason to suppose that it was preached on his feast day.

6. Does this really follow from the preceding section? It may be a fragment joined on here by Bede, as an assiduous "florilegist," or collector of patristic bouquets. But just as at the end of the previous section we had the only allusion to Quadratus, so here we have the only allusion in the sermon to the *Massa Candida*.

7. Virgil, *Aeneid* 721-722; the final single combat between Aeneas and Turnus is being described.

SERMON 307

ON THE BEHEADING OF THE BLESSED JOHN THE BAPTIST

Date: 415¹

The murder of John the Baptist occasioned by a rash oath

1. When the holy gospel was read, our eyes were presented with a cruel spectacle, the head of Saint John on a dish; and an errand of savage cruelty, because of hatred of the truth. A girl dances, and her mother vents her rage; and amid the lascivious pleasures of the banqueters a rash oath is sworn, and what is promised by it is impiously fulfilled. What John himself had foretold was done to him; about the Lord Jesus Christ, you see, he had said, *He must grow, while I must be diminished* (Jn 3:30). He was diminished by losing his head, while Christ grew by being stretched on the cross. The truth bred hatred. The admonition of the holy man of God could not be tolerated with equanimity; though he, of course, was seeking the salvation of those whom he was admonishing in this way. They for their part gave him an evil retort for his good words. What, after all, was he to say, but what he was full of? And what retort were they to make, but what they were full of? He sowed wheat, but found thistles. He was telling the king, *It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife* (Mk 6:18). The king, you see, was being defeated by lust; he was keeping with him his brother's wife, which was forbidden. But all the same, he indulged his lust without being enraged against John; he held in honor the man from whom he heard the truth.

That detestable woman, however, conceived a hatred to which sooner or later, given the occasion, she would give birth. When she was brought to bed, she bore a daughter, a dancing daughter.² And that king, who held John to be a holy man, who feared him because of the Lord, even if he didn't obey him, when John's head in a dish was demanded of him, was deeply grieved. But because of his oath and because of the guests, he sent a halberdier,³ and carried out what he had sworn.⁴

The reading calls for a sermon on swearing

2. This passage, dearly beloved, rather requires me, for the sake of your manner of life and morals, to talk to you a little about the matter of swearing oaths. Swearing a false oath is no light sin; on the contrary, it is such a great sin to swear falsely, that because of the guilt involved in a false oath, the Lord forbade the swearing of any oath at all. He said, you see, *It was said: You shall not swear falsely, but you shall pay your oath to the Lord. But I am telling you not to swear at all, neither by heaven, because it is God's throne; nor by the earth, because it is his footstool; nor any other oath whatever. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. But let there be on your lips yes for yes; no for no. If there is anything more, it is from what is evil (Mt 5:33-37).*

God, however, has sworn oaths

3. We find, though, in the holy scriptures that God swore an oath when Abraham obeyed him to the extent of sacrificing his beloved son. *The angel spoke to him from heaven, saying, By myself I swear it, says the Lord; because you have obeyed my voice, and for my sake have not spared your beloved son, blessing I will bless you, and I will fill up your seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand of the sea; and in your seed shall all the nations be blessed (Gn 22:15-18).* The fact that you can see Christians filling the whole wide world shows the truthfulness of God's oath.

And again in the psalms there was this prophecy about the Lord Jesus Christ: *The Lord has sworn an oath, and will not repent: You are a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4).* Those of you who know the scriptures know what was offered by Melchizedek, priest of God Most High, when he blessed Abraham. I mustn't say what it was, because of the catechumens. The faithful, though, can recognize how what we now see fulfilled was prophesied long before.⁵ And how is this so? Because the Lord swore it. *And the Lord has sworn an oath, and will not repent;* not like Herod, who did repent of having sworn an oath.

But we are very sensibly forbidden to do so

4. Seeing then that the Lord swore oaths, why did the Lord Christ forbid his followers to swear oaths? Let me tell you why. It isn't a sin to swear a true oath. But because it is a great sin to swear a false oath, the person who doesn't swear at all is a long way from the sin of swearing a false oath; while the one who swears even a true oath is drawing near to swearing falsely. So the Lord, in forbidding you to swear, didn't want you to be walking on the brink, in case your foot should slip in a tight spot, and you should fall.

"But the Lord swore," he says.

The one who is incapable of lying can swear without a qualm. Don't let it

trouble you that the Lord swore oaths; because it may well be that the only one who ought to swear is God.

When you, after all, swear an oath, what are you really doing? You are putting God forward as a witness. You make him a witness, he makes himself a witness. But you, being merely human, are often mistaken about many things, and thus frequently bring the truth⁶ forward as a witness to your own falsehood. Sometimes you can perjure yourself even without intending to, when you think what you are swearing to is true. This is not indeed such a great sin as when you know it's untrue, and yet you swear to it. How much better, though, you are, and far removed altogether from this grave sin, if you listen to the Lord Christ and don't swear at all!

Augustine managed to rid himself of the habit of swearing, so you can do it too

5. I know it's hard to get out of your habit; but it was also hard for me to get out of mine. Through the fear of God I managed to rid my mouth of swearing. Here I am, living among you; which of you ever heard me swearing? But hadn't I once been in the habit of swearing every day? But then I read passages like this, and I was afraid, and I struggled against my habit, and in the very struggle I called on the Lord for help. It was the Lord who helped me to stop swearing. Nothing is easier for me now than not to swear. The reason I have mentioned this to your graces is to prevent you saying, "Who can manage it?" Oh, if only God were really feared! Oh, if only people were really terrified of perjury! Then the tongue can be bridled, truth held onto, swearing eliminated.

NOTES

1. Fischer and Kunzelmann say about 414-415. But they also say this about Sermon 180 on the same theme of swearing. There is, of course, no reason why Augustine should not have preached on the same topic twice in the same year; but then again there is no reason why he should not have preached on it in other years. The style of this sermon does incline me to date it some years earlier—say about 405.

They also say, surprisingly, that it was preached either on 29 August, the feast of the beheading of John the Baptist in the present calendar, or on 27 December, which in our current calendar is the feast of Saint John the Evangelist. But it seems that in the Carthaginian calendar the feast of "Saint John the Baptist, and of James the apostle whom Herod slew" was celebrated on 27 December. See the note in the Maurist edition.

This sermon, though, as is fairly evident from section 5, was preached to Augustine's own people in Hippo Regius, and it is possible that that Church kept the feast, as we do now, on 29 August.

2. By a bold rhetorical device, the dancing daughter is tacitly identified with Herodias' hatred for John, because she would provide the occasion for its gratification.

3. *Spiculatorem*, a soldier armed, I take it, with a *spiculum*, as a halberdier is with a halberd, whatever that is—something very sharp, undoubtedly. The Greek text transliterates the Latin word *speculatore*, a scout; but I think Augustine, or his Latin text, correctly renders the intention of the Greek by rendering *spiculatorem*.

4. See Mk 6:17-28.

5. See Gn 14:18-20. What Melchizedek offered was bread and wine, and the faithful see fulfilled in the eucharist the oath that Jesus Christ is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. But the catechumens, because of the exceedingly threadbare "discipline of the secret," were not yet supposed to know about this, and that's why Augustine could not say what it was.

6. That is, God.

SERMON 308

ON THE SAME FEAST

Date: 420¹

Herod is faced with the choice between offending God by breaking his oath, and offending him by an act of savagery

1. I must say something to your graces on account of this passage which we heard today when the gospel was chanted. You can see that this wretched Herod loved John, the holy man of God;² but since he swore a rash oath, drunk with jollity and enjoyment of a girl's dancing, he promised he would give the girl, whose dancing had so pleased him, whatever she asked for. When, though, she asked for something cruel and wicked, he was indeed grieved; he could see, after all, what a terrible crime was afoot. But he was caught between his oath and the girl's request, and while he could see it was a bloody deed, he was also afraid of the guilt of a broken oath. So in order not to offend God by breaking his oath, he offended God by an act of savagery.

Someone says to me, "So what should Herod have done?" If I say he ought not to have sworn, anyone can see that he oughtn't to have done so. But I'm not being consulted about whether a person should swear or not, but about what a person should do when he has sworn. That's a big problem. It was a rash oath he swore, we all know that. Still there it is, he slipped up, he swore it. Here was the girl, asking for the head of Saint John; what should Herod have done? Let's give him some advice. If we say, "Spare John, don't commit such a crime," we are trying to persuade him to break his oath. If we say, "Don't break your oath," we are encouraging him to perpetrate a crime. A choice between two evils.

So before you get caught in this two-way snare, rid your mouths of rash oaths. Before you get into this bad habit, I'm warning you, my brothers, I'm warning you, my sons—what need is there for you to get into this bind, where we can't find any good advice to give?

The example of David, who broke a rash oath, rather than commit murder

2. Yet on combing the scriptures more carefully, I come across one example, in which I see a pious and holy man who slipped into swearing a rash oath, and

preferred not to do what he had sworn to, rather than fulfill his oath by shedding a man's blood. So let me remind your graces of it.

When Saul, ungrateful man that he was, was hunting David down, David was going around wherever he could with his companions, in order not to be found by Saul and killed. And one day he asked a rich man called Nabal, who was shearing his sheep, for some supplies for himself and his companions. This man ungenerously refused to give him anything, and what was more serious, returned an abusive answer. Saint David swore he would kill him. After all, he was armed; and without thinking he swore he would do what would have been easy enough, and what anger was persuading him would be perfectly just. And he set off to do what he had sworn to. Nabal's wife, Abigail, came to meet him, and brought all the things he needed and had requested. She begged and pleaded with him, she dissuaded him and deflected him from shedding her husband's blood.³ He swore a rash oath, but out of a more genuine religious sense, he did not carry out his oath.

Accordingly, dearly beloved, let me come back again to the warning I have for you. Here's Saint David; he didn't, indeed, shed a man's blood in anger; but can anybody deny that he swore an oath that was false? Of the two sins, he chose the lesser; but it was only less in comparison with the greater one. Because simply weighed in the scales by itself, swearing a false oath is a great evil. So first of all you must all work hard, and struggle against your bad, bad, bad, yes exceedingly bad habit; and rid your mouths of all oaths and swearing.

About swearing when challenged to do so

3. But if somebody challenges you to swear, because he reckons, perhaps, that he can be satisfied in this way, if you swear about the thing he thinks you have done or committed, and maybe you haven't done it; then to rid him of that evil suspicion, if you swear, you don't sin in the way he does by challenging you to. Because the Lord Jesus said, *Let there be on your lips, yes for yes, and no for no. If there is anything more, it is from what is evil (Mt 5:37)*. Now he was talking about swearing, and wanted us to realize that the mere act of swearing is from what is evil. If you are challenged by somebody else, the fact of your swearing is from his evil, not from yours. And in fact it's practically from an evil that is common to the human race, since we are unable to see into each other's hearts. I mean, if we could see into each other's hearts, who would there be for us to swear to? When would any oath be demanded of us, if our very thoughts were visible to our neighbor's eyes?

Forcing someone to swear when you think he will swear falsely is worse than murder

4. Engrave on your hearts what I am going to say: If you challenge someone to swear, and know he is going to swear to a falsehood, you outdo a murderer; because a murderer kills the body, you the soul—or rather two souls, both that of the person you challenge to swear, and your own. You know that what you

are saying is true and what he is saying is false, and yet you force him to swear to it? So there, then, he swears, so there, he perjures himself, so there, he perishes; and you, what have you got out of it? Why, you too have perished, because you have deliberately taken satisfaction in his death.

The story of Tutuslymeni

5. Let me tell your graces a story I've never told before, something that happened in this congregation, in this church. There was a man here, a simple soul, harmless, a true believer, known to many of you people of Hippo, indeed to all of you, a man called Tutuslymeni.⁴ Which of you, who are citizens, didn't know Tutuslymeni? It was from him that I heard what I am going to tell you.

Someone or other refused to give him back either what he had entrusted to him, or what he owed him; and he had relied on the man's honesty. He was so upset, he challenged him to swear to it. That man swore, this man lost his property. But while this man lost his property, that man lost his very soul. So this Tutuslymeni, a serious and reliable man, told me that that very night he was brought before a judge, and with considerable violence and terror he came into the presence of an awesome and exalted personage, attended by a court of similarly exalted persons; and that as he cowered in a corner,⁵ the order was given for him to be summoned back again, and that he was interrogated in these words:

"Why did you challenge a man to swear, when you knew he was going to swear falsely?"

He replied, "He refused to give me back my property."

"And would it not have been better," the answer came, "for you to lose the property you were demanding, than for you to destroy the soul of this man with a false oath?"

The order was given for him to be laid on the ground and beaten. He was beaten so severely that when he woke up the welts raised by the blows were evident on his back. But he was told, after being punished, "You are being spared for your otherwise blameless life; but take care you don't ever do this again." He certainly committed a grave sin, and was punished for it; but any of you here will be committing a much graver sin, if after this sermon and this warning of mine you go and do anything of the same sort. Beware of swearing false oaths, all of you, beware of swearing rash oaths. You will safely avoid these two evils, if you rid yourselves of the habit of swearing altogether.

NOTES

1. This is my estimate of the date—420 or later—from one or two turns of phrase and style, which suggest to me that it was an old Augustine speaking. No date is proposed by any of the

scholars. The sermon was clearly preached at home in Hippo Regius, whose citizens are addressed as such in section 5.

2. The Latin doubles the expression: *sanctum virum et Dei hominem*, holy man and man of God.

3. See 1 Sm 25.

4. A most peculiar name; a compound of *tutus*, safe, and *lymeni*; and what that means is anybody's guess. It would seem to be a genitive; if it is in fact Greek, as the *y* suggests, it should be the genitive masculine singular of the present passive participle of the verb *luo*, I loose: Safe-of-the-loosed-one? But the thought occurs to me that it could be a corrupt spelling, and ungrammatical declension, of the Greek word *limen*, meaning harbor, of which the correct genitive is *limenos*. So could Tutuslymeni have been a security man in the harbor of Hippo Regius, or perhaps the skipper of the Hippo lifeboat?

5. The Latin is just *perturbatum*: the order was given for him, being perturbed, to be summoned back again. I feel *perturbatum* has to be given a more concrete rendering, in order to explain the *retro revocari*, to be summoned back again. I take the picture to be of Tutuslymeni being haled before the heavenly court together with several other accused, and of his shrinking away into a corner, hoping not to be noticed, while the other cases are being tried. His dream experience recalls a much more famous dream: that of Saint Jerome, who was severely beaten, so he tells us somewhere, for being more of a Ciceronian than a Christian.

SERMON 308A

PREACHED IN CARTHAGE AT THE BASILICA OF THE MAPPALIA, THAT IS, OF THE BLESSED MARTYR CYPRIAN, ON THE EVE OF HIS BIRTHDAY

Date: 397¹

We must inquire who said, I have prepared a lamp for my Christ, etc.; and about whom he said it, because this psalm we have heard (Ps 132) requires this of us

1. Let me talk to your graces in the house of God about what this psalm here has reminded us of; who it is who says, *I have prepared a lamp for my Christ; his enemies I will clothe with confusion, but upon him my sanctification shall flower* (Ps 132:17-18); and what that lamp may be, which he prepared for his Christ; and who the enemies of his Christ may be, whom he has clothed with confusion by means of that lamp; and what the sanctification is of the one who prepared a lamp for his Christ, which will flower upon his Christ. In all these words, after all, the only thing that seems plain and open is what he says here, *my Christ*; none other, I mean, is to be understood, but Christ our Lord and Savior.

And so as we plumb the depths of this meaning, to the extent that God enables us to, we find that it is God the Father who says this. So it's God the Father, that is the person of God the Father speaking through the prophet, who says *I have prepared a lamp for my Christ*. That the Christ of God, though, is the same as the Son of God doesn't have to be explained to Christians. And so, having discovered the person of the speaker, let's see what the lamp may be, prepared by God the Father for Christ his Son. The Lord himself says about John the Baptist, *He was a burning and a shining lamp, and you people were willing to exult for a time in his light* (Jn 5:35). So he called John a lamp, which was lit from the fountain of light,² in order to bear witness to the truth.³

Humanity, you see, was sunk in such blindness, and in such weakness of the inner eye, that the *sun of justice* (Mal 4:2) had to be looked for with a lamp. Because if any of us had had the eyes of our hearts pure, we would have gazed on it directly from the first, and wouldn't have needed a lamp to bear witness to it. After he had said about that lamp, you see, *You were willing for a time to exult in his light, I, though, he went on, have a greater witness than John* (Jn 5:36).⁴ So the lamp was lit in the night for weak eyes. And how did he light it?

The Father says to Christ his Son about John, *Behold, I am sending my angel before you, who will prepare the way before your face* (Mal 3:1). He prepared a lamp for his Christ.

How Christ's enemies were clothed with confusion through John

2. How did he clothe his enemies with confusion by means of that lamp? Well, first notice what I said, that the lamp was lit from the fountain of light. John himself bears witness: *But we*, he says, *have all received from his fullness* (Jn 1:16). Now John was a man of such unique superiority, that he was thought to be, not sent ahead of the Christ, but the Christ himself. But if this lamp had been extinguished, and begun to smoke with the fumes of pride, when the Jews sent to him, and said, *Who are you? Are you the Christ, or Elijah, or the prophet?* (Jn 1:19-22), he would have said, *I am*. Yes, he could have taken the chance of pushing himself forward, with people making the mistake on their own of paying him a false honor. Was he trying hard to persuade them of what his questioners were the first to suggest?

But he was sent in lowliness to prepare the way for the Most High; that's what made him *the friend of the bridegroom* (Jn 3:29), that he was the servant who stated the case of his Lord. And he said, *I am the voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight* (Jn 1:23); *I am not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet. And they said, So who are you? And what did he say? I am the voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord.* Isaiah, you see, had already foretold this;⁵ but now we can understand whom he had foretold it about. "You have read this," he says, "in Isaiah, and perhaps when you read it you didn't know what it was all about; well, *I am the one it was all about.*"

How very low he casts himself, though, this man who was lifted to such a height that he was thought to be the Christ, just observe how very low he casts himself. *I*, indeed, he says, *am baptizing you in water; but the one who is coming after me is greater than I.* And it would be natural for the one who comes after to be greater than I.⁶ He says that that one is greater than he is himself. Tell us, how much greater? *The strap of whose sandal*, he says, *I am not worthy to undo* (Lk 3:16).

How to understand the purpose of John's being sent before Christ

3. From this you should already begin to understand the purpose of John's being sent before Christ. You can see how much less he is, and how much greater he admits Christ is, when he says he is unworthy to undo the strap of his sandal. How great, though, is this man, who says he is unworthy to undo the strap of the other's sandal? How great is he? Where can we inquire? If we inquire of John how great John is, we won't find an answer; he is humbling himself, after all, and he won't say anything about himself, whether truly or boastfully. So from whom are we going to hear how great John really is, who is not worthy to undo the sandal strap of one who was thought to be just a man?

Let's question the Lord himself, and say to him, "Lord, John bore wonderful witness to you, and while his great superiority among men was so evident that he was thought to be the Christ, and inquiry was made of him who he was, he said he was not the Christ, he said one greater than he was coming after him, and so much greater, that he himself was not worthy to undo the strap of his sandal. Like a faithful lamp he spoke of the superiority of your light. Help us to see who it is who said these things about you, how great the man is who humbled himself like this before you, and confessed that you are so much more important. Who is he? He said all this about you; you tell us something about him."

Listen to the voice of the Lord about John: *Among those born of women none has arisen greater than John the Baptist.* But how does he go on? *But the one who is less in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he* (Mt 11:11).⁷ He means himself; God, after all, isn't being arrogant, when he draws our attention to his own greatness. What does *the one who is less* mean? The one who is younger in age, greater in majesty. The Lord Christ, you see, was born after John, but in that element which he became for our sakes, not in that element through which we were made. The one who was born after John hears from the Father, not "Before John," not "Before David," not "Before Abraham," but *Before the daystar I begot you* (Ps 110:3). So if it was out of a certain consideration for our weakness that a lamp should precede the day, and if we believed what the lamp said about the day, how much more should we believe what the day says about the lamp; that *among those born of women, none has arisen greater than John the Baptist?*

When a man, therefore, than whom none greater has been born, says that he is unworthy to undo the sandal strap of someone, what must be that someone whose sandal strap the man than whom none was greater is unworthy to undo? If now John is such a great man that no man could be more so, whatever is greater than he must be more than man. If now John is so great a man that no man is greater than he is, the one who is greater than he is must be more than man. And as for the one who is more than man, and yet for man's sake is man, rightly does the sanctification of the Father flower upon him.

The Holy Spirit is the sanctification that flowers upon the Son

4. It was on him, you see, that the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove; the flower of sanctity in the form of a dove, in a simple and innocent form, was then shown more fully to John himself, to fulfill, *And upon him my sanctification shall flower* (Ps 132:18). *I*, he said, *did not know him; but the one who sent me to baptize in water, he it is that said to me: The one upon whom you see the Spirit coming down like a dove, and remaining on him, he it is who baptizes in the Holy Spirit. And I*, he said, *am bearing witness to what I have seen, that he is the chosen one of God* (Jn 1:33-34). About whom is he bearing witness? The one upon whom he has seen the Father's sanctification flowering.

How could he see the Holy Spirit coming down? After all, the Holy Spirit never at any time withdrew from the Son, nor the Son at any time from the Spirit,

nor the Son at any time from the Father, nor the Father from the Son, nor the Spirit from the Father and the Son; but these things have to be understood in one way by the purified mind,⁸ and demonstrated in another to the eyes. The Father does not precede the Son by any interval of time, the Son doesn't follow the Father after any interval of time; no interval of time, because there is no time there. Father and Son and Holy Spirit are the creator of time, the one God. So in that sphere, then, there is no occasion for you to say, "First the Father, afterward the Son." From whatever moment the Father, from that same moment the Son.

Ask, "From what moment is the Father?" You are soaring in thought above earth, heaven, angels, things visible and invisible, the entire creation, and you ask, "From what moment did the Father begin?" That's not the way to inquire about eternal realities. You mustn't ask from what moment, except about something that has a beginning. You mustn't ask from what moment, about that from which everything begins that has a beginning, and which begins from no other, because it has no beginning. But just as the Father has no beginning, so the Son has no beginning, but the Son is the brightness of the Father.⁹ Thus, the brightness of a fire is from the same moment as the fire; and the brightness of the Father is from the same moment as the Father. But from what moment is the Father? From eternity to eternity. So the Father's brightness is also from eternity to eternity; and yet, because his brightness is his Son, even as such he did not begin at a moment of time, by being begotten of the Father. Who can see this? Polish your heart, shake off the dust, wash out the stains; let whatever is disturbing your inner gaze be cured and healed; and what has been said, and is believed before it can be seen, will be revealed.¹⁰

How the Trinity was revealed at Christ's baptism

5. Now, in any case, brothers and sisters, we believe. What do we believe? That Father and Son and Holy Spirit do not precede one another by any interval of time. So while Father and Son and Holy Spirit do not precede each other by any interval of time, still, I was unable to name Father and Son and Holy Spirit, without these names taking up time, and being contained by their times. The Father doesn't come first, and the Son afterward; and yet I could only say one first and the other afterward. And all the syllables occupied their own space of time, and the second syllable of my words could not be uttered until the first had passed away. Spaces of time were run through in my syllables, while I was mentioning things that have no spaces of time.

So in the same sort of way, my brothers and sisters, when that Trinity was to be manifested to the senses of this human flesh of ours, the whole Trinity was revealed at the river, when the Lord was baptized by John. He was baptized, you see, he came up from the baptism, the dove came down, and the voice was heard from heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased* (Mt 3:17). The Son in the man, the Spirit in the dove, the Father in the voice. An inseparable reality has been demonstrated separately; if, that is, it is to be called

a reality, being rather the cause of all realities—if, that is, it is to be called a cause.¹¹ What are we saying, after all, when we are saying it about God? And yet we do say it, and he allows himself to be put into words, though he isn't as he is thought about, while even the way he is thought about cannot be put into words.

But as far as we human beings are concerned, brothers and sisters, there you are, he was revealed by means of a dove, and it fulfilled, *Upon him my sanctification shall flower* (Ps 132:18). *Shall flower*, you see, means “shall be seen more clearly”; there is nothing in a tree, after all, of greater clarity and brilliance than its flowers. Here we are, we've already reached the last words of the responsory, *but upon him my sanctification shall flower*; I've just remembered that I overlooked who the enemies might be that were put to confusion by means of the lamp.

The enemies of Christ were the Jews at that time, bad Christians at this time

6. *I have prepared a lamp for my Christ* (Ps 132:18). The Father is talking about the Son. What lamp? John. Question the Son himself: *He was a burning and shining lamp* (Jn 5:35). *His enemies I will clothe with confusion* (Ps 132:18). Who but the Jews were the open enemies of Christ? Because Christ, you see, has hidden enemies. All those who live unjust and irreligious lives are Christ's enemies, even if they are signed with his name, even if they are called Christians; I mean the ones to whom he is going to say, *I do not know you*, and they say to him, *Lord, in your name we ate and drank, in your name we performed many deeds of power* (Lk 13:25-26; Mt 7:22-23). What did we eat and drink in your name?¹² You see, they didn't value their food very highly, and yet it was with reference to it that they said they belonged to Christ. There is a certain food that is eaten and drunk, and it is Christ; Christ is eaten and drunk even by his enemies. The faithful know the Lamb without spot on which they feed;¹³ and if only they fed on it in such a way that they are not liable to punishment! As the apostle says, after all, *Whoever eats and drinks unworthily, is eating and drinking judgment upon himself* (1 Cor 11:29).

So those people are Christ's enemies, who prefer to live unjust lives, rather than to submit to him, and when it is said that he is going to come to judge the living and the dead, they are afraid of his coming. If they were allowed to, they would ensure he doesn't come. Because they were unable to ensure that he didn't come the first time, they would like to ensure he doesn't come back again. The Jews had already wanted to ensure he didn't come again. The son, you remember, was sent to those wicked farmers, to those wicked tenants, who refused to pay their rent, and stoned the servants who were sent to them. Then the householder, the owner of the vineyard, said, *I will send my son*; perhaps they will respect him. They, however, thought about it, and said, *This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours* (Lk 20:9-14). They couldn't ensure he didn't come from the Father, and they attempted to ensure he wouldn't go back to the Father. But what was the use? They could indeed see and despise

his mortality, but the only thing they could kill in him was death. Death died in the death of Christ. He rose again and ascended to the Father, and he is going to come again. What are you afraid of? Love, and you will be without anxiety. Don't we pray, *Thy kingdom come* (Mt 6:10)? So, brothers and sisters, we pray—and are we afraid of being heard?

*How Christ's open enemies, the Jews,
were put to confusion by the witness borne by the lamp*

7. But these, as I had started to say, are the hidden enemies. Let's talk about those open enemies who were openly jealous of him, openly raged against him, arrested him, scourged him, mocked him, crucified him, killed him, guarded him when he was buried. Let's see how they were clothed with confusion by means of that lamp. When these same enemies saw the miracles of the Lord,¹⁴ *Tell us*, they said, *by what authority you are doing these things* (Lk 20:2). It was with a hostile intent that they questioned him, so that if he admitted what his authority was, they could hold him as guilty of blaspheming. But he acted in the same way as over the coin, when they wanted to accuse him falsely, so that if he said, "Let tribute be paid to Caesar," it would be as though he had cursed the people of the Jews, making them subject and tributary to a foreign power; while if he had said, "It shouldn't be paid," they could trump up a charge against him before Caesar's friends and ministers that he was forbidding its payment. He, though, said, *Show me a coin; whose image and inscription does it carry? They answered, Caesar's. So pay to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's* (Lk 20:24-25). Which amounts to saying, "If Caesar can require his image in a coin, can't God require his image in a human being?"

Here too his enemies and carping critics in the same way *spoke evil things in heart and heart* (Ps 12:2). He could have said *in heart* just once, you see, except that those who spoke such things had a double heart and, as what we have just said shows, a conspiratorial heart, not a simple, single one. I mean to say, notice what the difference is. About many servants of God it is said that they had one heart; *they were*, it says, *of one soul and one heart in God* (Acts 4:32). Many simple, straightforward people have one heart, one crafty person has two hearts. So, because they were speaking in heart and heart, *Tell us by what authority you are doing these things*; that is, if you tell us, we can pay you due honor, if you tell us, we can show proper respect, if you tell us, we can make our petitions to you. That's what it sounds like from one heart. From the other, though—because there was a double heart there—if you tell us, we can trump up a charge, if you tell us, we will find something to hold on to, if you tell us we will find something to accuse you about.

Such were his enemies; but let them be confounded by means of the lamp; in a moment you will see them being confounded. And it's right and proper, because we are living at lighting up time,¹⁵ that the enemies of Christ should be confounded by means of the lamp which the Father had prepared for his Christ. *For he was a burning light* (Jn 5:35), as the Lord said himself. So how did he

answer these people who said, *Tell us by what authority you are doing these things? I too will ask one question: Tell me; John's baptism, where is it from? From heaven, or from men?* (Lk 20:2-4). But they were embarrassed by this; *If we say from heaven, he is going to say to us, Why did you not believe him?; that is, "Why are you asking me by what authority I am doing these things, when the one whom you questioned bore witness about me?"* So, *if we say from heaven, he will say to us, Why did you not believe him? If we say, from men, we are afraid of the people. For they all regarded John as a prophet.* On the one hand afraid of the people, on the other hand afraid of the truth; timid on this side, jealous on that, on every side blind, they answered, *We do not know* (Lk 20:5-7).

The lamp was brought out, the darkness fled; indeed, though present in body they fled in heart, by saying that they didn't know what in fact they did. An indication of their flight was the fear of their hearts. They were afraid of being stoned by the people, if they said John's baptism was from men; they were afraid of being put squarely in the wrong by Christ, if they said John's baptism was from heaven. They fled in confusion. So when John's name was raised, they were afraid, and lapsed into embarrassed silence. And Christ then said, *Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things* (Lk 20:8).

Head and body are the one Christ

8. So a lamp was prepared for Christ our Lord in the shape of John the Baptist; his enemies, trying to catch him out with their questions, withdrew in confusion when this lamp was brought out; thus was fulfilled *I will clothe his enemies with confusion* (Ps 132:18). Let us, though, brothers and sisters, acknowledge the Lord by means of John the Baptist his forerunner; indeed by the Lord's own witness, of which he said, *I have a greater witness than John* (Jn 5:36), let us believe in Christ, and in this way be formed into the body of him the head, so that head and body may be the one Christ; and so in all of us, made one, shall be fulfilled, *but upon him my sanctification shall flower* (Ps 132:18).

Turning to the Lord, etc.

NOTES

1. The basilica of the Mappalia, whatever they were, was built over Saint Cyprian's tomb. Another church dedicated to him was that of the Field of Sextus, also known as the Table of Cyprian, at the site of his martyrdom; both of these were outside the city walls of Carthage. There seems to have been a third shrine within the walls. See O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, 420-421. Perler is also our main authority for dating the sermon to 397.

The title here given is that of one manuscript, first edited by Denis (Denis 11); the eve of Saint Cyprian's feast was 13 September. But another manuscript, cited by Migne in the appendix to

Augustine's works (PL 46, 846), calls this "A sermon of Saint Augustine, the bishop, on the feast of blessed John the Baptist"; while Possidius in his Index, 8, refers to it simply as "A sermon on the responsory of the hundred and thirty-first psalm (Ps 132), *I have prepared a lamp for my Christ.*"

His is certainly the most accurate description of the sermon; it really has no business here among "Sermons on the Saints." It has no relationship to the beheading of John the Baptist, so no link with Sermon 308; and it contains no reference to Saint Cyprian, so there is no link with Sermon 309. Its proper place, given the overall arrangement of the sermons to which we are committed, would be among the sermons on the Old Testament. So it should really be numbered Sermon 31A. But that it was preached on 13 September there is no particular reason to doubt.

2. See Ps 36:9.

3. See Jn 1:7.

4. Implying, that is, that I also have John as a witness.

5. See Is 40:3.

6. *Et aliquanto posset me major dici*; and to some extent he could be called greater than I. The editor of the Migne text remarks candidly that this makes little sense. But one manuscript, instead of *posset*, reads *post*—after me. And that as it stands makes even less sense. However, for once it seems to me that a conflation of alternative texts may give the true reading. So the text I translate, rather freely, is *Et aliquanto posset post me major dici*; meaning that it is normal for the one who comes at the end of the procession, after those who prepare the way, to be greater.

7. We have come across this idiosyncratic punctuation of this verse, and the interpretation that goes with it, before; see Sermons 293A, 3; 293D, 1, 3.

8. Purified by faith; see Acts 15:9.

9. See Heb 1:3.

10. He means, I think, only in the next life.

11. Because God is not even a cause in the way in which we experience causes and causality in the created order; nor a reality in the way we experience the finite realities of this world.

12. Punctuated with a comma after "What," this could be rendered, "What does it mean, we ate and drank in your name?"

13. And the catechumens, the implication is, don't; the threadbare discipline of the secret again.

14. He is being rather careless; it was when they saw Jesus turning the merchants and money changers out of the temple, which was hardly a miracle.

15. In the last age, or evening of the world, inaugurated by the coming of Christ.

SERMON 309

SERMON PREACHED IN CARTHAGE AT THE TABLE OF THE BLESSED MARTYR
CYPRIAN ON HIS BIRTHDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER

Date: uncertain¹

*The Church's sadness at the time of Cyprian's
martyrdom has changed now to unalloyed gladness*

1. Such a happy and religious occasion as this, on which we are celebrating the blessed martyr's passion, requires me to pay the debt of the sermon I owe to your ears and hearts. The Church at that time was undoubtedly sad, not so much because it felt the loss of his death, as because his departure filled it with longing,² always yearning for the presence of so good a ruler and teacher. But his victor's laurels consoled those who had been wracked with anxiety at his trials. And now at this time we recall all that happened then by reading about it and appreciating it, not only without any sadness at all, but even with immense gladness; and we have been granted the right of being joyful, instead of fearful, on this day. We do not, after all, dread its coming upon us as a day of terror, but we look forward to its coming round again as a day of rejoicing. So we are happy to remember exultantly all those sufferings of this most faithful and brave and glorious martyr as things of the past, which the brethren at that time anxiously waited for as still to come in the future.

Cyprian's exile and return from exile

2. First of all, then, that he was sent into exile at Curubis³ for his faithfulness in confessing Christ, did no harm to Saint Cyprian, but conferred a great benefit on that town. What place, after all, could he be sent to, from which the one to whom he bore the witness for which he was sent, was absent? So Christ, who said, *Behold, I am with you always, until the completion of the age* (Mt 28:20), was there to welcome his member in every place, wherever the enemy's rage might drive him. Oh, the stupid unbelief of the persecutor! If you're looking for a place of exile where a Christian can be ordered to go, first find, if you can, a place from which Christ can be forced to depart. You imagine you are excluding the man of God from his own country, confining him to a foreign one, when in

Christ he is nowhere an exile, and in the flesh is everywhere an expatriate foreigner.

But now it is our pleasure to consider, after what Cyprian did not perceive as his exile but what the enemy regarded as such, and to remind ourselves of what followed in the course of his passion. When Cyprian, the holy martyr chosen by God, returned from the town of Curubis, where he had been sent into exile at the orders of the proconsul Aspasius Paternus, he stayed in his own country residence;⁴ and there he was hoping every day that they would come for him, as he had been shown.⁵

Cyprian brought to the proconsul by two officers—like Christ crucified between two thieves

3. In what way now could the persecutor's rage assault a heart that was always ready, strengthened as it had been by an additional revelation from the Lord? When, I ask you, would the Lord abandon him as he suffered, seeing that he did not suffer him to be arrested and taken unawares? So next, that two men were sent to bring him to his passion, and that they also lifted him up into the chariot with them, and set him between them; this too was a reminder from God, that he should recall with joy that he belonged to the body of one who was *reckoned among the wicked* (Mk 15:28; Is 53:12).⁶ Christ, you see, hung up on the tree between two robbers, was being offered him as an example of patience. Cyprian, for his part, taken in a chariot between two officers to his passion, was following in Christ's footsteps.

Cyprian, while thinking of the martyr he was to become, did not forget the pastor and bishop he still was

4. What about his being put off to the next day and being lodged with the guards, and a big crowd of the brothers and sisters forgathering there, and spending the night at the door, and his telling them to have the girls carefully guarded?⁷ What close attention we should pay it, what praises we should heap on it, how highly we should tell of it far and wide! With his bodily death so close at hand, pastoral vigilance was not dying in the spirit of the pastor; his mind was quietly occupied with the responsibility of caring for the Lord's flock to the last day of this life; and the approaching hand of the bloody executioner was doing nothing to shake the diligence of the faithful steward's spirit.

While thinking of himself as a martyr to be, he did not allow himself to forget that he was still a bishop; being more anxious about the account he was to give to *the chief shepherd* (1 Pt 5:4) about the sheep committed to him, than about the answer he was to give the unbelieving proconsul about his own personal faith. The fact is, he loved the one who had said to Peter, *Do you love me? Feed my sheep* (Jn 21:16). And he was feeding his sheep, for whom he was preparing, in imitation of his master, to shed his own blood. He gave orders for the girls to be guarded, knowing that as well as having a straightforward master, he also

had a cunning adversary, who could change his skin at a moment's notice.⁸ And so, against the lion roaring openly he armed his manly breast with his confession of faith, while against the wolf lurking in ambush for the flock he defended the feminine sex.

How Cyprian truly took counsel for himself, and consulted his own best interests

5. That is truly the right way to take counsel for yourself, when you think of God as the judge, before whom we are all going to present our case of how we have spent this life, and performed the duties he has laid upon us; where every person receives, as the apostle testifies, *what he has carried out in the body, whether good or evil* (2 Cor 5:10). That's how you truly take counsel for yourself and consult your own best interests, when living by faith⁹ and taking care not to be caught unawares by your last day, you reckon every day to be your last, and thus carry through to your last day a manner of life pleasing to God. That's how the blessed Cyprian, being both a most kindhearted bishop and a most faithful martyr, took counsel for himself; not in the way apparently advised by the devil's sly tongue, speaking through the mouth of the godless judge possessed by him, when he said, "Take counsel for yourself."

The judge, you see, observed that his mind was unshakably made up, when he said to him, "The princes have commanded you to worship,"¹⁰ and the other replied, "I am not doing so." So he went on to say, "Take counsel for yourself." That's the sly tongue of the devil, the accuser;¹¹ even if not of this one who didn't really know what he was saying, certainly all the same of the one who was speaking through him. The proconsul, you see, was speaking in the name, not so much of the human princes, whose orders he proudly claimed had been issued to him, as of *the prince of the power of the air, who, as the apostle says, is at work in the sons of unbelief* (Eph 2:2); who, as Cyprian well knew, was also at work through this man's tongue, though the man himself didn't know it. Cyprian, I repeat, knew that when he heard from the proconsul's lips, "Take counsel for yourself," what flesh and blood was saying routinely, the devil was saying slyly; and he could see two at work in one; this one with his eyes, that one with his faith.¹² This one didn't want him to die, that one didn't want him to receive his crown. Accordingly, he was calm in the presence of this one, on his guard against that one; and he answered this one openly, while he was defeating that one in secret.

Cyprian's final exchange with the proconsul

6. "Do," he said, "what you have been instructed to; in a case as just as this, there is no question of consultation." The other, you see, had said, "Take counsel for yourself," and to this he replied, "In a case as just as this, there is no question of consultation." Consultation, after all, is a matter of either imparting or seeking counsel. But the proconsul wasn't wishing to receive counsel from Cyprian, but was rather advising him to receive it from himself. But he said, "In a case as

just as this there is no question of consultation.” I am not still taking counsel, because I am not still in doubt; justice itself, you see, has rid me of any doubt, or hesitation. Now the just person, in order to die without anxiety, lives in the certainty of faith. Cyprian had been preceded by many martyrs, whom he himself had fired by means of his glowing exhortations with eagerness to overcome the devil;¹³ and it was, of course, only just that having sent them on ahead by speaking truthfully, he should follow himself by suffering fearlessly. So—“in a case as just as this there is no question of consultation.”

What are we to say to this? How are we to express the uplift we feel in our hearts? Having conceived such great joy, what else can burst forth from our hearts and mouths, but the venerable martyr’s own last words? You see, when Galerius Maximus read out the decree from his notes, “It is our pleasure that Thascius Cyprian should be punished with the sword,” he answered, “Thanks be to God.” Therefore, since to remind us of this great event we have this very place we are in, and the feast we are celebrating solemnly today, and his own most salutary example set before us, let us too say, from the very bottom of our hearts, “Thanks be to God.”

NOTES

1. The title is one published by Dom Morin, instead of the much shorter one, “On the birthday of Cyprian the martyr,” of the text here being translated. I have found it in O. Perler’s *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, 409.

Perler agrees with other scholars in being unable to date the sermon. But from his own work—unless the sermon were preached in Augustine’s old age, which seems unlikely—I have calculated that it can only have been preached in one of the following years: 394, 406, or 419. There are eleven extant sermons on Cyprian, from this 309 to 313F. Of these, seven are dated to 397, 401 (two sermons, one in the morning, one in the evening), 403, 405, 410, 417—all, of course, on the feast day of Saint Cyprian, 14 September. Of the remaining years, from 391, when Augustine was ordained a priest, to 424, when he was seventy-one years old, it is only in 394, 406, 411, 416, and 419 that he was in Carthage at that time of year, according to Perler’s investigation of his travels. In 411 and 416 Perler reports him as preaching *Expositions of the Psalms* 88 and 86 respectively; so it is unlikely that he preached this sermon in either of those years.

It is clear, not only from the title, but also from the last sentence of the sermon, that it was preached in Carthage; that is what limits it to one of those three years. Of these, I think 394 is the most likely. The sermon gives a pretty strong impression of being that of a novice preacher; I think Augustine was invited to preach it, while still only a priest, by his friend Aurelius, the recently elected bishop of Carthage, who was keen on breaking the deplorable African custom of only allowing bishops to preach—a duty they mostly tended to neglect.

The sermon is full of references to the *Proconsular Acts of the Martyr Cyprian* (PL 3, 1497-1508). A translation of these can be found in Butler’s *Lives of the Saints*, edited by Thurston and Attwater, volume 9, under September 16, the date on which the martyr is now celebrated, since his original feast day of September 14 has been taken over by the feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross. Besides these *Acts*, there is a life of Cyprian by his deacon Pontius, to be found also in PL 3, 1481-1498.

2. *Non damno cadentis, sed desiderio recedentis*. This strikes me as an almost completely vacuous rhetorical contrast—as vacuous in the Latin as in my translation; and this is the kind of thing that prompts me to prefer the earliest possible date for the sermon.

3. In the persecution of Decius in 250 Cyprian went into hiding, having only been elected bishop the year before. In that of Valerian in 257 he was first exiled to Curubis, wherever that was—somewhere on the south Tunisian coast, near the Libyan border, has been suggested; and then exactly a year later he was brought back to Carthage, tried and executed. It was presumably during his exile that the brethren of that time were anxiously waiting for what was still to come—or during the much briefer period between his being brought back to the city and finally executed, to which references will be found in the course of the sermon and later notes.

4. Under house arrest, evidently. His biographer says that Cyprian had sold this property on becoming a Christian, to distribute the proceeds to the poor, but that it had been restored to him *Dei indulgentia*, by God's favor, acting, presumably, through some wealthy admirer (*Life*, chapter 15: PL 3, 1494).

5. In a vision at the beginning of his exile. An enormous young man, *juvenis ultra modum enormis*, appeared to him, and took him before the proconsul. This worthy gave him one look, and began writing on his tablets, but didn't read out what he had written. The huge young man, however, was looking over his shoulder, and indicated by dumb show to Cyprian—with his hand, spread flat like a broad-sword, hitting his neck—what was written, namely sentence of death by beheading. Cyprian then asked for at least a day's deferment of execution, so that he could put his affairs in order. The judge then wrote again, and the young man, once more peering over his shoulder, indicated by lifting crossed fingers—*contortis post invicem digitis*—that the request was granted. Pontius tells us in his *Life* that Cyprian related this vision to him himself, and interpreted the day's reprieve as the year he was to spend in exile. Such a curious vision, with its odd details, surely must be authentic.

6. This is Augustine's own somewhat far-fetched symbolic interpretation of the little episode, not that of either the *Acts* or of the *Life*.

7. *Custodiri puellas*. This odd "last precept" of Cyprian's is reported in the *Proconsular Acts*, not in the *Life*; another manuscript has *castigari puellas*—he told them to have the girls chastised. The reason given in the *Acts* is as follows: "because all had remained in the street in front of the officer's quarters"; so the implication is that Cyprian was anxious that the girls shouldn't go wandering around at night alone and unescorted. But the variant readings also suggest to me that there was either a mishearing or a misunderstanding, or both, by the reporters of what was said; that perhaps they only reported what was in fact one part of a conversation between Cyprian and someone in the crowd asking for advice about what to do with his daughters, whether to give them in marriage or not, the answer being, in effect, "Not yet."

8. *Versipellem adversarium*; but "a skin-changing adversary" would, regrettably, hardly do in English.

9. See Rom 1:17.

10. According to pagan rites, of course, by "sacrificing" a few grains of incense before images of the deified emperors, and perhaps other gods.

11. Just *diaboli* in the Latin. But the word's basic (Greek) meaning of accuser or prosecutor was still, I imagine, apparent to Latin ears, in a way that "devil" in English carries no such connotation. The point is, Augustine was not calling the proconsul a devil in the kind of way we sometimes call people devils, meaning either extreme wickedness, or extreme cunning, whether we are speaking seriously or lightheartedly.

12. Hardly faith in the devil; but with the clarity of vision derived from firm faith in God.

13. See, for example, his *Letter to Fortunatus: An Exhortation to Martyrdom*, PL 4, 655.

SERMON 310

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE MARTYR CYPRIAN

Date: uncertain¹

What is meant by the birthdays of the martyrs

1. May the Holy Spirit teach me what I should say at this moment; I'm going to say something, you see, in praise of the most glorious martyr, Cyprian, whose birthday, as you know, we are celebrating today. This expression, that is to say, birthdays, is regularly employed by the Church in this way, so that it calls the precious deaths of the martyrs² their birthdays. This expression, I repeat, is regularly employed by the Church, to the extent that even those who don't belong to her join her in using it. Is there anyone to be found, I ask you, and I don't mean just in this city of ours, but throughout the whole of Africa³ and the regions overseas,⁴ and not only any Christian, but any pagan or Jew, or even heretic, who doesn't call today the birthday of the martyr Cyprian?

Why is this, brothers and sisters? What date he was born on, we don't know; and because he suffered today, it's today that we celebrate his birthday. But we wouldn't celebrate that other day, even if we knew when it was. On that day he contracted original sin, while on this day he overcame all sin. On that day he came forth from the wearisome confines of his mother's womb into this light, which is so alluring to our eyes of flesh; but on this day he went away from the deep darkness of nature's womb to that light, which sheds such blessing and good fortune upon the mind.

Why the table, or altar, set up in the place of his martyrdom is called the table of Cyprian

2. Living, he governed the Church of Carthage, dying he adorned it. It was there that he exercised his episcopate, there that he achieved his martyrdom. In the very place where he laid aside the trappings of the flesh, a savage crowd gathered then, which out of hatred for Christ would shed Cyprian's blood; there, a reverent crowd assembles today, which on account of Cyprian's birthday drinks the blood of Christ. And all the more delightfully is the blood of Christ drunk in that place on account of Cyprian's birthday, the more devotedly the blood of Cyprian was shed in the same place for the sake of the name of Christ.

Eventually, as you know, any of you who know Carthage, a table was erected to God in the same place; and yet it's called Cyprian's table, not because Cyprian ever dined there, but because he was sacrificed there, and because by this very sacrifice of himself he prepared this table; not as one on which to feed or be fed, but as one on which sacrifice might be offered to God, to whom he offered his very self. But this is the reason why that table, which is God's, is also called Cyprian's; it's because, in order that the table may now be surrounded by worshipers, Cyprian was there surrounded by persecutors; where now it is honored by his friends praying, there Cyprian was trampled in the mud by his enemies baying; finally, where it has been raised up, is where he was laid low. *Sing to God, recite a psalm to his name; the one who ascends above the setting sun* (Ps 68:4), has himself done these things above the slaughtered man.⁵

The glory of Cyprian's martyrdom has spread far beyond Carthage, to the whole Church

3. But since Carthage is where he had his bishop's throne, Carthage should be where he has his memorial shrine; why would we here be celebrating his birthday, if it were not the case that *precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his saints* (Ps 116:15)? His sound has gone forth to all the earth, and his words to the ends of the whole wide world.⁶ He faithfully preached what he was going to practice, he bravely practiced what he had preached. By living justly he attained to a precious death, while by dying unjustly he came to a glorious life; and he gained the triumphant name of martyr, because he carried on the fight for truth to the shedding of his blood.

Cyprian famous throughout the world for both his sufferings and his writings

4. However, as well as saying things that would be heard, he also wrote things that would be read; and so he not only reached some places through the tongues of other people reporting him, but also reached others by his own letters and other works.⁷ Thus he became well known to many regions, partly through the fame of his courageous martyrdom, partly through the delightful pleasure of reading his works. Let us therefore celebrate this day with enthusiasm, and so offer up our prayers with one heart and soul, that we may deserve both to hear and see our common father in a greater Church;⁸ here meanwhile we are going to have joy from hearing his words, and profit from the glory of his sufferings, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

NOTES

1. See Sermon 309, note 1. As this sermon was clearly not preached in Carthage, but probably in Hippo Regius or its neighborhood, we have a wider range of dates to choose from. Notwithstanding the formality of the style, it strikes me as representing an older, perhaps more mature Augustine

than Sermon 309; a man in his middle years. As I read O. Perler's "topographical chronology" (*Les Voyages de Saint Augustin, 430-477*), it could have been preached in 407, 408, 409, 410, 415, 420, or 421. Of these, I would opt for 14 September 415.

2. See Ps 116:15.

3. The Roman North African, Latin speaking provinces, from Mauretania in the west to Tripolitania in the east.

4. Across the Mediterranean; Italy, Gaul, and Spain are the chief regions he would have had in mind.

5. A very strained contrast, impossible effectively to render in English: *qui ascendit super occasum* (Ps 68:4), *ipse fecit ista super occisum*.

6. See Ps 19:4.

7. *Per suas litteras*. His letters constitute the bulk of Cyprian's literary output; but *litteras* includes the other works. He was in regular correspondence above all with the Church of Rome and its bishops, of whom there were four during his ten years as bishop of Carthage. The correspondence was sometimes warm and friendly, as with Cornelius, sometimes frosty, as with Stephen over the question of whether to accept heretical baptisms as valid; Cyprian saying No, Stephen saying Yes.

8. He must mean what is called in Heb 12:23 *the Church of the firstborn*, the Church triumphant of a later theology, the Church in its final glory in the kingdom, since it is only there that we can hope to see Saint Cyprian, who is here being called our common father, not just the father of Carthaginian Christians.

SERMON 311

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE MARTYR CYPRIAN

Date: 405¹

The right way to celebrate the feasts of the martyrs is by imitating their virtues

1. It is the passion of the most blessed martyr Cyprian that has made this day into a feast for us, and the celebration of his triumph that has brought us together in this place in such a spirit of devotion. But the right way to celebrate the festivals of the martyrs should be by imitating their virtues. It's easy enough to celebrate in honor of a martyr; the great thing is to imitate the martyr's faith and patience. Let us do the first thing in such a way that we commit ourselves to the second. Let us so celebrate the feast, that we prefer rather to imitate the virtues.

What is it that we admire in the faith of the martyrs? That they fought to the death for the truth, and that is how they were victorious. They scorned the world's allurements, did not yield to its ferocity; and that is how they came into God's presence as conquerors. In this age there is an abundance of both errors and terrors; this most blessed martyr overcame the errors with his wisdom, the terrors with his patient endurance. It's a great thing that he did; by following the Lamb, he defeated the lion. When the persecutor was raging, the lion was roaring; but the lion was being trampled on here below, because the martyr's attention was fixed on the Lamb there above; the Lamb who destroyed death by his death, who hung on the cross, shed his blood, redeemed the world.

Would the apostles have been prepared to suffer what they did, except out of a conviction of the truth and a love of Christ, the truth?

2. The first rams of the flock, the blessed apostles, saw the Lord Jesus himself hanging on the cross; they grieved at his death, were astounded at his resurrection, loved him in his power, and shed their own blood for what they had seen. Just think, brothers and sisters, what it meant for men to be sent throughout the wide world, to preach that a dead man had risen again and ascended into heaven; and for preaching this to suffer everything a raving, raging world could inflict: loss of goods, exile, chains, tortures, flames, wild beasts, crosses, painful deaths. All this for heaven knows what? I mean really, my brothers and sisters, was

Peter dying for his own glory, or proclaiming himself? One man was dying that another might be honored, one being slain that another might be worshiped. Would he have done this, if he hadn't been on fire with love, and utterly convinced of the truth?

They had seen what they were proclaiming; I mean, when would they have been willing to die for something they had not seen? Should they have denied what they had seen?² They did not deny it; they preached a dead man, whom they knew to be alive. They were well aware for what life they should be ready to scorn life, well aware for what fortune they should be ready to endure a transitory misfortune, for what rewards they should scorn these losses. Their faith would not be outweighed by the whole world. They had heard the words, *What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but suffers the loss of his own soul?* (Mk 8:36). The attractions of the world did not reduce their haste to be quit of things that pass away, nor did the prospect of any fortune, however brilliant and glorious, that had to be left behind here, and could not be transferred to another life, and sometimes had even here to be relinquished by the living.³

So despise the world, Christians

3. So despise the world, Christians; despise the world, despise it. The martyrs despised it, the apostles despised it, the blessed Cyprian despised it, whose memory we are celebrating today. You all want to be rich, want to be held in honor, want to enjoy good health; the man in whose memory you have come together despised the lot. Why, I want to know, do you have so much love for what the man you honor like this had such contempt—the man whom you wouldn't be honoring like this if he hadn't held it all in contempt? Why do I find you to be a lover of these very things whose scorner you venerate? Certainly, if he had loved these things, you wouldn't be venerating him.

So don't you love them either; after all, he didn't go in, and then shut the door in your face. See you despise them too, and go in after him. The way in lies open; Christ is the door.⁴ For you too the door was opened, when his side was pierced by the lance. Call to mind what flowed out from there, and choose the way you may enter. From the side of the Lord hanging and dying on the cross, after it had been pierced by the lance, water and blood flowed out.⁵ In one is to be found your purification, in the other your redemption.

Love of earthly things is the birdlime of the soul

4. Love, and don't love; in one connection love, and in another don't love. You see, there is something by your loving by which you make progress, and something by your loving by which your way forward is blocked. Don't love the road block, if you don't want to find the execution block. What you love on earth is a blockage, a hindrance; it's the birdlime for spiritual wings, that is for the virtues on which one flies up to God. You don't want to be caught, and you love the birdlime? Just because you're caught nicely, does it mean you're not

caught? I say this, and you applaud, and loudly approve, and love it. You get your answer, not from me but from Wisdom: "I want good deeds, not polite voices." Praise wisdom by the way you live; by producing, not just a noise, but a harmony.⁶

We have sung for you, and you have not danced

5. The Lord says in the gospel, *We have sung for you, and you have not danced* (Mt 11:17). When would I, here, ever say such a thing, unless I read it there? Empty-headedness mocks me,⁷ but authority supports me. If I hadn't first stated who said this, could any of you have tolerated my saying, *We have sung to you, and you have not danced*? In this of all places, while psalms are to be sung, is anyone to be permitted to dance? Once, not so many years ago, even this place was invaded by the aggressive rowdiness of dancers. Such a holy place as this, where the body lies of such a holy martyr, even this holy place, I repeat, as many of you who are old enough will remember, had been invaded by the pestilential rowdiness of dancers.⁸ Throughout the night impious songs were sung, and people danced to the singing. When the Lord so willed, from the moment holy vigils began to be celebrated here on the initiative of our holy brother, your bishop, that abuse, after some resistance, later yielded to his diligence, and blushed for shame in the presence of his wisdom.

The song to which we should harmonize our lives and our habits

6. So such things, by God's favor, don't go on here now, because we are not celebrating games for demons, where things like this are habitually done to delight those being worshiped, and with their filth regularly deprave their worshipers; but what we celebrate here is the holy festival of martyrs. So there's no dancing here, and yet, where there's no dancing, we hear it read out from the gospel, *We have sung for you, and you have not danced*. Those who didn't dance are being rebuked, reproved, accused. Heaven preserve us from the return, once more, of that abuse; listen rather to what was really intended by Wisdom.⁹

The one who sings is giving a command; the one who dances is carrying it out. What is dancing, but moving the body to the rhythm of the song? What is our song? Don't let *me* play it, don't let it be mine. It's just as well that I am only the instrument, not the composer. I will recite our song for you: *Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world. Whoever loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and worldly ambition, which comes not from the Father, but from the world. And the world passes away, and the lust for it; but the one who does the will of God abides for ever, just as God too abides for ever* (1 Jn 2:15-17).

One dances in time to this song by charity, not by cupidity

7. What a song that is, my brothers and sisters! You've heard me singing it, let me hear you dancing to it; see that you all do, by keeping time with your morals, what dancers do by keeping time with their bodies and their feet. Do this inwardly; let your moral attitudes match that song. Let cupidity, greed, be uprooted, charity, love, planted. Anything that comes from this tree is good. Cupidity is unable to produce anything good, charity anything bad.

The thing is said, it's applauded—and there's no change in anybody. Surely not! It's not true, what I've just said. Some fishermen underwent a change, afterward even a great many senators were changed; Cyprian underwent a change, whose memory we are celebrating today. He writes himself, testifies himself to the sort of life he led once, how profane, how godless, how reprehensible and how detestable.¹⁰ He heard someone singing; he presented himself to dance, not with the body but the mind. He adapted himself to a good song, adapted himself to the *new song* (Ps 96:1); he adapted, he loved, he persevered, he fought, he won.

Bad times are only made by bad men

8. And you all say, "The times are troubled, the times are hard, the times are wretched." Live good lives, and you will change the times by living good lives; you will change the times, and then you'll have nothing to grumble about. What, after all, are times, my dear brothers and sisters? The spacing and unrolling of the ages. The sun has risen; having done its twelve hour stint, it sets on the other side of the world; next day it rises in the morning and again sets. Count how often; there you have the times. Who was ever harmed by the rising of the sun, who was ever harmed by its setting? So time, then, has never harmed anybody. It's people who are harmed, and it's people they are harmed by. What a painful thought! People are harmed, people are stripped of their possessions, people are oppressed. By whom? Not by lions, not by serpents, not by scorpions;¹¹ but by human beings. Those who are hurt make a fuss; if they had the chance, wouldn't they do themselves what they object to? Then, perhaps, we find a person who was complaining, when he could himself be doing what he was complaining about. I applaud him, yes, I applaud him, if he didn't do what he was accusing others of.

Like time, gold is good in itself; it's put to good use by good people, to bad use by the bad

9. Those people, though, beloved, who seem to have power and influence in the world, how they are praised when they do less than they are able to!¹² The one scripture praised is the one *who was able to transgress and did not transgress; who did not go after gold* (Sir 31:10.8). Gold ought to go after you, not you after gold. Because gold is good; I mean, God did not create anything bad. Don't you be bad, and gold is good. Look here, I'm placing some gold between

a good person and a bad one. Let the bad person take it; the needy are oppressed, judges bribed, the laws twisted, human affairs turned upside down. Why is this? Because a bad person has taken the gold. Let the good person take it; the poor are fed, the naked clothed, the oppressed delivered, captives redeemed. How much good effected by gold in the hands of a good man! How much evil effected by gold in the hands of a bad person!

So why say, when you're feeling disillusioned sometimes, "Oh, if only there were no such thing as gold!" You just see to it that you don't love gold. If you are bad, you go after gold; if you're good, it goes after you. What does that mean, it goes after you? You lead, you aren't led; because you possess it, you are not possessed by it.

There is really quite a large number of good people among the Church's members, if you care to look for them

10. So let's get back to the words of sacred scripture, *Who did not go after gold. Who was able to transgress, and did not transgress. Who is this, and we shall praise him?* (Sir 31:8.10.9). Who is this, or who is there here?¹³ How many people are hearing, "And who is there here"! And yet God forbid I should despair of there being a single one here, or rather not a single one, but several. God forbid that I should despair of the threshing floor of such a great landowner. If you see the threshing floor from a distance, you think there is nothing there but chaff; you find the grain if you know how to look closely. The place where the chaff offends your eyes is where the heap of grain is lying hidden. The place where your eyes are offended by what is beaten in the threshing is where what is purged by the threshing is to be found. It's there, you can be sure, it's there. In any event, the one who sowed, who reaped, who brought it in to the threshing floor, is sure about it; he knows there's enough there to fill the granary, when it has been winnowed.

There was a kind of minor winnowing at the time of persecution;¹⁴ what grains emerged from that! From that came the flourishing White Mass of Utica;¹⁵ from that emerged such a great and choice grain as this most blessed Cyprian. How many rich people then scorned what they possessed! How many poor people then fell away when the test came! There you are; in that time of testing, as at a kind of winnowing, gold was no disadvantage to the rich, while it was no advantage to the poor, was it, not to possess any gold? The former overcame, while the latter fell away.

There is nothing wrong with things; it's the way they are used that is good or bad

11. It's only good loving that makes good living.¹⁶ Put gold aside when considering human dealings; or rather, let gold be present, to test the quality of human dealings. Cut out the human tongue because of the blasphemies uttered against God, and where will God's praises be found? What has the tongue done for you? Only let there be someone who sings well,¹⁷ and it is a good organ.

Bring a good mind to the tongue; good things are said, disputes are amicably settled, mourners are consoled, the self-indulgent corrected, the irascible restrained; God is praised, Christ is proclaimed, the mind is kindled to love; but to a divine, not a human, a spiritual, not a carnal, love. These are the good things done by the tongue. Why? Because there's a good mind using the tongue. Bring a bad person to the tongue; you will get people blaspheming, going to law, telling tales, delating, and informing. All bad things from the tongue, because there's a bad person using the tongue.

Material things mustn't be eliminated from human dealings. Let them be there, and let there be a proper use of good things. There are some good things, you see, which are only to be found in good people, and there are other good things which are common to good people and bad alike. The good things only to be found in the good: piety, faith, justice, chastity, prudence, modesty, charity, and other things of that sort. The good things common to good and bad alike: money, honor, political power, office, the very health of the body. These things too are good, but they require good people.

Objections against the ways of God's providence

12. And now here comes that grumbler, who's always looking for something to find fault with, and that in God. If only he would go back to himself, really see himself, find fault with himself, correct himself! So that fault-finder and carping critic is shortly going to bring me this objection against God: "And why does God, who is in control of everything, give these good things to bad people? He should only give them to good people." Are you expecting to hear God's reasons and intentions from me? Who's expecting, from whom, and what? All the same, I will try to suggest to you, according to my understanding, as far as I can grasp it, as far as he sees fit to grant me, something that may not satisfy you perhaps, but there is somebody here whom it may satisfy. So let me sing; in such a big crowd as this, after all, it's impossible I should find no one to dance for me.

Here you are then; listen, wise guy;¹⁸ listen. That God gives these good things even to bad people is, if you would really like to understand, done for your education, not out of God's perversity. I know you still haven't understood what I've said; so listen then to what I was saying, you there whom I was saying it to, who are so ready to find fault with God and blame God, because he also gives these earthly and temporal goods to bad people, which according to your way of thinking you consider should only have been given to the good. It's from this idea, you see, that a deadly impiety has crept into some people's minds, so that they actually suppose that God takes no notice of human affairs. This, you see, is how they argue and what they say: "Surely, if God paid any attention to human affairs, that man wouldn't possess wealth, would he, that man wouldn't enjoy honors, that man wouldn't have such authority? God doesn't care about human affairs, because if he did, he would only give these things to good people."

*Good things of this world are given to bad people,
in order to teach good people not to prize them highly*

13. Go back to your heart, and from there to God. You're going back to God, you see, from the nearest possible place, if you have gone back to your heart. Because when you take offense at these things we've been talking about, it means you have gone out even from yourself; you've become an exile from your own bosom. You're upset by things outside you, and you lose sight of your own self. You yourself are inside, these things are to hand outside. There are good things outside, but outside is where they are. Gold, silver, money in all its forms, clothes, dependents, servants, flocks, honors, they are all outside. If goods of this lowest sort, earthly goods, temporal goods, transitory goods, were not also given to bad people, they would be prized highly by good people. So God, by giving these things to bad people, is teaching you to desire better things.

Look, this is what I'm saying: by this management of human affairs God is somehow addressing you as your father; and he's teaching you, like a silly boy, by means of these words which I am putting before you as best I can, and all the more confidently, the more he is prepared to abide in me. Imagine that God, who has made you into a new creature and adopted you, is saying to you, "Son, what's the meaning of your getting up every day, and praying, and kneeling, and banging your forehead on the ground, and sometimes even weeping, and saying to me, 'My Father, my God, give me wealth'? If I give it to you, you think you've acquired something really good and great.

"Because you have asked, you have received; there, do some good with it. Before you had it, you were humble; no sooner have you begun to possess wealth, than you have started despising the poor. What sort of good is it, by which you have been made worse? You've been made worse, because you were bad, and you had no idea of what could make you worse; that's why you were asking me for these things. I gave them to you, and I tested you; you found them, and were found out. When you didn't have them, your true self was hidden. Correct yourself; vomit out cupidity, drink in charity. What's so great about what you ask me for?" your God is saying to you. "Can't you see the people I've given it to? Can't you see the sort of people I've given it to? If what you are asking me for were a great good, would bandits have it, would cheats and breakers of their word have it, would people who blaspheme me have it, would disreputable clowns have it, would shameless harlots have it? Would all these types have gold, if gold were an excellent good?

"But you say to me, 'Isn't gold a good thing, then?' Certainly, gold is a good thing. But bad people do bad things with good gold; good people do good things with good gold. So because you can see the sort of people I've given it to, ask me for better things, ask me for more excellent things; ask me for spiritual things; ask me for myself."

The world still loved, in spite of the bitterness in it; how much more would it be, if it were all sweetness!

14. “But,” you say, “bad things are done in the world, harsh, vile, hateful things. It’s a foul world, it shouldn’t be loved.” Yes, that’s what it’s like, and even so it’s loved. The house is in ruins, and we are too lazy to move. When mothers or wet-nurses see their babies growing bigger, and when it’s no longer right for them to go on being fed on milk, and yet they are still tiresomely demanding the breast, they smear their nipples with something bitter, to stop them sucking forever; this puts the infant off, so that it won’t demand milk any more. So why do you go on sucking it with such pleasure, if the world has turned bitter for you? God has filled the world with all sorts of bitterness; and here are you, panting for it, here are you, clinging to it, here are you, sucking it; only from this and that in the world do you get any pleasure. How long for? Suppose it was all sweetness, think how it would be loved.

Do these things offend you? Choose another life. Love God, scorn all these things; look down on human affairs, seeing that some time or other you are going to be gone from here; I mean you are not going to be here forever. And yet even so, however bad the world is, however bitter the world is, however full the world is of disasters, if you were told by God that you would stay here forever, wouldn’t you hug yourself for joy, exult, give thanks? And why? Because you would never be done with misery! The greatest unhappiness is the one that obliges you to love it; it would be less if it wasn’t loved; it’s all the worse, the more it is loved.

There is another life, much more worthwhile, which we should be preparing for

15. There is, after, all, another life, my brothers and sisters; there is, believe me, after this life another life. Prepare yourselves for it; be indifferent to all the present life has to offer. If you are provided with it, do good with it; if you aren’t, don’t burn yourselves up with greedy longing. Transport it, transfer it ahead of you; let what you have here go on up there, where you are going to follow. Listen to the advice of your Lord: *Do not treasure up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust ruin things, and where thieves dig through and steal; but treasure up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where a thief has no access, where moth does not spoil things. For where your treasure is, there too is your heart* (Mt 6:19-21). Every day, Christian believer, you hear, *Lift up your hearts*;¹⁹ and as though you heard the opposite, you sink your heart into the earth. Transport it. Have you got the means? Do good with it. You haven’t got the means? Don’t grumble against God. Listen to me, you that are poor; what haven’t you got, if you’ve got God? Listen to me, you that are rich; what have you got, if you haven’t got God?

NOTES

1. So Fischer, Kunzelmann, and Perler. It is clear from section 5 that the sermon was preached in Carthage.

2. In the text this is printed as a statement: they should have denied what they had seen. I can only make sense of it by treating it as a question; or, if you like, as a statement so ironical that it amounts to a question: they should have denied what they had seen, I suppose.

3. An extremely clumsy sentence, almost impossible to construe in the Latin.

4. See Jn 10:7.

5. See Jn 19:34. Augustine is not being quite accurate; it was not while Jesus was dying on the cross that the soldier pierced his side with a lance, but when he was dead.

6. *Non sonando, sed consonando*. The harmony he is calling for, of course, is the concordance of one's moral life with the teaching of Christ, as he goes on to illustrate vividly in the next section.

7. There were doubtless several audible sniggers at this point, from some of those who knew the history of the events he is about to refer to.

8. He was preaching, not at "the Table of Cyprian," where the saint had been martyred, but in the Mappalia basilica, where he was buried. It had been ten years earlier, when he was still only a priest in Hippo Regius, not yet ordained bishop, that he had preached against similar goings-on in that city; and it was presumably about then that Aurelius, the new bishop of Carthage, had put an end to the practice there. Ecclesiastics of that age clearly had no conception of dancing as a sacred and liturgical activity. Of course the dancing they suppressed, being usually accompanied by heavy drinking, was anything but sacred or liturgical in character. But what Augustine says here and elsewhere on the topic should not be taken as an authoritative argument against the employment of some sort of dancing in, for example, African Christian worship.

9. That is, by Christ; see Mt 11:19, where Jesus concludes this proverbial saying, about himself and John the Baptist, by remarking that Wisdom is justified by her deeds (or by her children).

10. See Cyprian's letter to Donatus, section 3; Letter 1: PL 4, 198-200. An English translation is available in the *Fathers of the Church* series, 36, where the letter is called a treatise. It is Augustine rather than Cyprian who is here indulging in pious exaggeration. Odd, because he quotes the passage himself in Sermon 312, 2. Cyprian certainly talks about himself "lying in darkness and blind night" and "being held tangled up in the many errors of his previous life." But he doesn't go into the sort of details which would really justify the adjectives Augustine here applies to his earlier life. What he does do is present himself as asking such general questions as how could the glutton ever learn moderation and thrift, and maintaining that bad habits cannot be broken, but that drunkenness must inevitably draw to the bottle, pride inevitably puff up, anger inflame, rapacity disturb, cruelty excite, ambition delight, and lust cast down. I take it that Augustine assumed that here Cyprian was describing his own past life. But that is not in fact what the text of Cyprian's letter states.

11. An echo here, perhaps, of Ps 91:13, and also of Lk 10:19.

12. The Latin puts this as a question: how can they be praised when they do less than they are able to? In that case the reference would be to the good they can do, but don't. The whole context, however, is concerned with the evil people can do, but don't, as the quotation goes on to indicate. So Augustine is, surely, remarking ironically here on how people foolishly praise the powerful of this world for not doing quite so much harm as they could do if they wished.

13. *Quis est hic, aut quis est hic?*; the two meanings of the little word *hic*: "this" and "here." There is no such possible ambiguity in the Greek, which simply has *Who is he?*

14. The major winning will be on the day of judgment.

15. See Sermons 306, 306A, 306B.

16. *Non faciunt bonos mores nisi boni amores*.

17. We are to remember the metaphorical meaning he has given to singing.

18. *Ecce audi, sapiens, sed a contrario*. It seems he is calling his fault-finding interlocutor *sapiens*, wise—but of course not in the real sense, *sed a contrario*. I consider the effect of that phrase,

“but in the opposite sense,” is conveyed by the very expression, “wise guy”; so I do not translate it in itself.

19. So daily Mass attendance was the normal practice for the ordinary Christians of Carthage, it would seem.

SERMON 312

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE MARTYR CYPRIAN

Date: 417¹

The martyr, being essentially mild and meek, is praised not in himself but in the Lord

1. The requisite sermon is demanded of me by the celebration of such a welcome and joyful day as this, and by such wonderful and happy festivities in honor of the triumph of so great a martyr. But his prayers are carrying together with me the burden of this great responsibility, so that if I pay out to you anything less than is your due, he will refresh you all by praying for you, instead of looking down on me as I speak to you. I will certainly do what I am sure is most acceptable to him, namely, praise him in the Lord, when I praise the Lord on his account. He was a meek and mild person, you see, even while he was enduring the perils of this murky and stormy life in various trials and temptations, a person who well knew how to sing to God from a sincere heart, *Let the gentle hear and be glad* (Ps 34:2). And now, having left the land of the dying behind, he is in blessed possession of the land of the living. He was one of those, after all, about whom it was said, *Blessed are the meek, since they shall possess the land* (Mt 5:4; Ps 37:11). But what land could that be, if not the one about which someone says to God, *My hope are you, my portion in the land of the living* (Ps 142:5)?

Or if the only land of the living is the bodies of those risen from the dead, taken from the land of this earth and changed into heavenly glory, then at least he is not groaning amid the infirmities of this mortal life, he for whom remaining in the flesh was not the best thing, but necessary for our sakes.² Instead, he has been released and set free from the drag of both the debt and the bond,³ and now with Christ peacefully awaits the redemption of his body.⁴ Since he hadn't been defeated by the testing of his flesh while it was alive, he is fully assured of its restoration after it has been buried.

What Cyprian was like before his conversion

2. So let his soul be praised in the Lord, that the meek may hear and be glad. Let the good soul be praised in the Lord, since it is his possessing it that makes

it good, his breathing life into it that makes it flourish, his enlightening it that makes it shine, his forming and shaping it that makes it beautiful, his filling it that makes it fruitful. It was through his abandoning it to its own devices, you see, that it was once tossing about dead, dark, deformed, and barren, before it had come to believe in Christ. I mean to say, what use to him as a pagan was his eloquence,⁵ with which, as from a jeweled goblet, he both drank and gave others to drink deadly errors? But when *the goodness and humanity of our Savior God shone forth* (Ti 3:4), it cleansed him, now a believer, from worldly cravings, and made him into a vessel of honor, useful to his household, ready for every good work.⁶

Nor was he so ungrateful as to keep quiet about all this. Heaven forbid that, knowing God, he should not glorify him as God;⁷ on the contrary, he gave thanks, not irreligiously swallowing what he had vomited up, but religiously calling to mind what he had changed. Writing to his friend, so that he too, from the darkness that was in him, might become *light in the Lord* (Eph 5:8), “I myself,” he said, “was once lying in darkness and blind night, and staggering around in doubt with wandering steps, I was being tossed about on the salty waves of the boastful and fickle world, unaware of my life, a stranger to truth and light.” And a little further on, “For as I myself,” he said, “was being held in the entanglements of the innumerable errors of my former life, which I did not believe I could be divested of, I was in consequence showing myself compliant to the vices that went with them, and despairing of better things, I was favoring my evil ways as being proper and native to me.”⁸

*Being converted by the grace of God,
Cyprian became truly Cyprian, or cypress-like*

3. There you have what Cyprian was like when Christ found him; there you have the sort of soul which that uprooter and planter approached in order to strike and to heal it. It’s not for nothing, you see, that it says, *It is I who kill, and I who make alive; I who will strike, and I who will heal* (Dt 32:39); nor for nothing that, as a hint of things to come,⁹ Jeremiah was told, *Behold, I have set you over nations and kingdoms, to uproot and dig up and destroy, and to rebuild and plant* (Jer 1:10). So the uprooter and planter approached that soul; and he overthrew the old Cyprian, and after laying himself there as a foundation, he built up the new Cyprian in himself, and made him into a true Cyprian out of himself.

The Church, you see, says to Christ, *A cypress berry¹⁰ is my cousin* (Sg 1:13). So when he was made into a Christian by Christ, then he was truly made into a Cyprian by the cypress. He was made, after all, into the good odor of Christ in every place, as the apostle Paul says, who in his turn was also destroyed as a persecutor and built up as a preacher. *We*, he says, *are the good odor of Christ for God in every place, both in those who are being saved and in those who are perishing; for some indeed the odor of life unto life, but for others the odor of death unto death. And for this, who is really suitable?* (2 Cor 2:15-16). Some

people, you see, by imitating Cyprian gained life, while others by being envious of Cyprian perished.

Cyprian, from being a pleader in the courts, was made into a preacher of Christ

4. To him be praise, to him be glory, who justified the soul of his servant through faith, and thus snatched him from the godless, and made him into his own claymore,¹¹ that is into a two-edged sword; this, in order that the folly of the Gentiles might be stripped naked and struck by the very tongue, which had previously covered it up and veiled it and made it seem beautiful to *the wise and the prudent* (Mt 11:25); this, in order that the instrument of such noble eloquence, which had previously woven unworthy embellishments for the disastrous doctrines of the demons, might be turned to the building up of the Church, whose growth meant their undoing;¹² and the trumpet of such a great voice, which had been in the habit of whetting the contest of forensic lies, might rouse the devoted martyrs, enlisted under Christ's banner and glorying in him, to lay the devil low with the precious deaths of the saints.¹³

Among them was Cyprian himself, who fired them with his pious and holy eloquence, which was no longer spewing out the smoke of fables,¹⁴ but was dazzlingly radiant with the light of the Lord. By dying he lived, when judged he overcame the judge, when struck he conquered the adversary, and slew death when slain. In the games of human perversity, you see, he had taught his own and other people's tongues how to utter falsehood, and to deny with crafty fallacies the objections raised by the adversary. But now he had learned in another school how to get round the adversary by confessing the truth. For where the enemy turned the name of Christ into a crime, there Christ turned the penalty into an honor.

That the martyrs conquered the demons is now obvious

5. And if anyone should still perhaps be asking who defeated whom, leaving aside any reference to the heavenly kingdom of the saints, which unbelievers refuse to believe in, because they can't see it; right now, on this earth, in this life, in houses, in the fields, in the cities, in the whole wide world, you can see how fervently the praises of the martyrs are sung—but where are the furious accusations of the godless? You can see how the memories of the slain are honored; now let those others show us the idols of the demons. Just imagine what those, who overthrew their temples just by dying, are going to do to them when they pass judgment on them! How the one who extinguished their smoking altars with the blood of the dying, will condemn their proud deceits by the splendor of his soldiers as they rise again!

How Cyprian stands out among the martyrs by both his teaching and his example

6. Among these regiments of Christ the most blessed Cyprian was both a teacher of the art of warfare and a most glorious warrior himself. He taught what

he was going to do, and he did what he had taught, in such a way that the spirit of the martyr could be foreseen in the words of the teacher, and the words of the teacher recognized in the spirit of the sufferer. He was not, after all, one of those about whom the Lord said, *What they say, do; but what they do, do not do; for they say and do not do* (Mt 23:3). This man, because he believed, spoke;¹⁵ because he spoke, he suffered. So what he taught in his life is what he did; and what he did in his death is what he taught.

To him be praise, to him be glory, to the Lord our God, *to the king of the ages* (1 Tm 1:17), to the creator and recreator of mankind, who enriched the Church of this city with this wonderful bishop of his, and consecrated this spacious site with so holy a body. To him be praise, to him be glory, who was pleased to predestine this man before all time to be among his saints, to create him among men at an opportune time, to call him when he strayed, to cleanse him when he was defiled, to form and shape him when he believed, to teach him in his obedience, to guide him in his teaching, to aid him in his fight, to crown him in his victory. To him be praise, to him be glory, who made this man a figure in whom to demonstrate to his Church to what great evils charity was to be opposed, and to what great goods it was to be preferred, and how there could be no charity in a Christian who did not cherish and protect the unity of Christ. This man so loved unity, that out of charity he did not spare the bad, and out of love of peace he tolerated the bad, both freely declaring what he thought himself, and peacefully listening to what he knew the brethren thought. Rightly did he earn the highest honors in the Catholic Church, since he maintained the bond of peace in it with such humility.¹⁶

So finally, dearly beloved, having paid the debt of a sermon to such a popular feast, I urge upon your love and your devotion that we should spend this day decently and soberly, and exhibit on this day, on which the blessed Cyprian suffered, what he loved enough to die for.¹⁷

NOTES

1. The date is agreed on by Fischer, Kunzelmann, and Perler, being suggested to them by a certain whiff of anti-Pelagianism here and there. It was preached in Carthage in the same basilica as Sermon 311.

2. See Phil 1:23-24.

3. *A nexu et debiti et vinculi*. What's the difference between the debt and the bond or chain? None, I suspect, both being the claim and grip sin has on us, condemning us to death. He is indulging in an elaborate instance of the figure of speech called hendiadys, a sophisticated way of saying the same thing twice.

4. See Rom 8:23.

5. Cyprian had been a distinguished and successful lawyer, or pleader, before his conversion.

6. See 2 Tm 2:20-21; Rom 9:21.

7. See Rom 1:21.

8. Letter 1, to Donatus, 3, 4: Pl 4, 198-200. See Sermon 311, note 10.

9. In *futurorum figura*; the things to come, in Augustine's mind at least, would be the coming of Christ, and the effects on the peoples of the world of the preaching of the gospel.

10. *Botrus cypri*. *Cyprus* does not in fact mean cypress, which is *cupressus* or *cyparissus* in Latin. As well as meaning the island of Cyprus, the favorite home of the goddess Venus or Aphrodite (after whom, I suspect, Cyprian was really named Cyprian) it was also the name—so Lewis & Short—"of a tree growing in Cyprus and Egypt, the flower of which yielded the *cyprinum*, a fragrant oil." But I have to translate it "cypress" in order to get the play on words. Augustine, of course, is taking the cypress berry, or *botrus cypri* to signify Christ.

11. *Framea*, a somewhat barbarous (old German) word for a sword. The allusion is to Ps 17:13-14, which runs in the Latin of the Vulgate, and evidently of Augustine's own version too, *Snatch my soul from the godless, and your claymore (framea) from the enemies of your hand.*

12. The undoing either of the embellishments or of the demons; take your choice, as long as the antecedent is neuter. This rules out its being the doctrines, which are feminine.

13. See Ps 116:15; what a sentence!

14. The pagan myths which had been the unworthy embellishments of the disastrous doctrines of the demons. "Spewing out"—I emend the *emovente* of the text, a rather colorless word which could be translated "putting out," to *evomente*. The old, unconverted Cyprian is being portrayed as a kind of dragon, I suppose!

15. See 2 Cor 4:13; Ps 116:10.

16. An allusion to Eph 4:3, though Augustine does not actually quote it, and talks of *concordissimum vinculum*, a most peaceful bond, which I prefer to render as the bond of peace.

17. That is to say, presumably, a holy and faithful Church. The overblown rhetoric of this sermon would normally incline me to date it much earlier than 417. I am not sure that the reason given by Kunzelmann for this date, and accepted by the other scholars, which really amounts to the use of the word "predestine" in the previous paragraph as indicating anti-Pelagianism, is all that cogent. The reference to Church unity in the same paragraph looks much more obviously anti-Donatist, and one could argue that the year 417 was rather too late for Augustine to be indulging in anti-Donatist polemic. In fact, I would respectfully suggest to the scholars that they switch the dates of Sermons 311 and 312, assigning 312 to the year 405, and 311 to the year 417.

SERMON 313

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE MARTYR CYPRIAN

Date: uncertain¹

The congregation is asked to acknowledge the preacher's devotion, if his speech does not manage to be worthy of the occasion

1. A most holy and solemn day has dawned for us today to rejoice in, and one that is very special and glorious for this Church as its crowning ornament,² seeing that the most blessed Cyprian filled it with light for us by the glory of his sufferings. For praising this revered bishop and venerable martyr no tongue would be sufficient, not even were he to praise himself.³ So in this sermon of mine, which I am paying to your ears as something owed you on his account, please acknowledge the loving readiness of my will, rather than demanding an effective display of any skill.⁴ Thus it is, you see, that when the holy praise-singer perceived himself to be less than capable of praising God—for which, indeed, not just speech, but even any thought is insufficient—he said, *Make the voluntary offerings of my mouth acceptable, Lord* (Ps 119:108). Let me too say the same; let this also be a sign of my devotion, and even if I am not equal to explaining what I wish, may there be an acceptable offering in the fact that I do wish.

God is being praised when the martyrs are praised

2. What, after all, are the praises of such a great martyr, but the praises of God? Or to whose credit is it that Cyprian was converted to God with his whole heart, but the one to whom it was said, *God of powers, convert us* (Ps 80:7)? Whose handiwork is Cyprian the teacher, but his to whom it was said, *Teach me your justifications* (Ps 119:135)? Whose handiwork is Cyprian the pastor and shepherd, if not his who said, *I will give you shepherds after my own heart, and they will feed you with discipline* (Jer 3:15)? Whose handiwork is Cyprian the confessor of the faith, if not his who said, *I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which your enemies will not be able to withstand* (Lk 21:15)? Whose handiwork is Cyprian, the man who endured all that persecution for the truth, but his to whom it was said, *O Lord, the patience of Israel* (Jer 17:13), and about whom

it was said, *Since from him comes my patience* (Ps 62:6)? Finally, whose handiwork is Cyprian the victor in all these things, but his of whom it was said, *In all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us* (Rom 8:37)? So we don't move away from praising God when we praise the works of God, and the battles of God in God's soldier.

The weapons the martyrs fought with, and the weapons God helped them with

3. This, you see, is the exhortation the apostle addresses to us: *Stand, with your loins girt with truth, clad in the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preaching of the gospel of peace; in all things taking up the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; and receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God* (Eph 6:14-17). What does it mean to be clad in the breastplate of justice, and receive the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, if not to be armed by the Lord with his gifts?

Nor would it have been enough for this soldier just to be armed, unless he had also obtained help from the actual armed warrior by whom he had been armed himself. It cannot be the case, surely, that such a devout martyr did not pray in the course of his struggle and passion, and say, *Judge, Lord, those who are harming me, outfight those who are fighting against me. Take up weapons and shield, and rise up to help me. Unsheathe the claymore and close with the men who persecute me; say to my soul, It is I who am your salvation* (Ps 35:1-3). How could anyone be defeated whom God was promoting armed like that, and to whose support he was coming, armed like that himself?

How God's weapons are to be understood

4. Heaven preserve us, though, from assuming with childish minds that God is armed with bodily equipment of some kind. Those who have received his support are the ones who acknowledge what sort of weapons they are with which God, fully armed, usually comes to the support of his soldiers, when they cry out and declare in their gratitude, *Lord, you have crowned us as with a shield of good will* (Ps 5:12). As for God's claymore, though, that is to say God's sword, the claymore which the body of Christ, which is the Church, prays to have unsheathed against those who persecute it, as God closes with them, it can, certainly, be understood in the place where the savior says to his body, *I have not come to bring peace to the earth, but a sword* (Mt 10:34). With this spiritual sword he removed from his martyrs, longing for heavenly joys, those fatally attractive earthly feelings, by which they would be pulled and called back from heaven to earth, unless the sword of Christ were to cut the link.

But God also has another very obvious claymore, the soul of the just man in the hand of God, about which he is asked in the psalm, *Snatch my soul from the godless, your claymore from the enemies of your hand* (Ps 17:13-14). The words *my soul* he repeated as *your claymore*, and the words *from the godless* he repeated as *from the enemies of your hand*.

Cyprian's soul was a great claymore in the hand of God

5. He unsheathed this claymore by scattering his martyrs on all sides; and he closed with those who were persecuting the Church, with the result that those who⁵ would not bow to the words of its preachers were broken in pieces by the virtues of its dying martyrs. Indeed, God forges potent weapons for himself against his enemies, those namely whom he makes his friends. So the soul of the blessed Cyprian was a grand claymore of God's, shining with charity, sharp with truth; used and brandished by the power of God in full war cry, what wars it settled, what bands of gainsayers it overcame with its arguments! How many foes it struck, how many adversaries it laid low! In the hearts of how many enemies did it slay the very enmity with which it was being fought against, and make them into friends with whom God could fight on wider fronts against others!

But when the time came for him to be taken, as though his enemies were winning, then it was that, to save him from being overwhelmed and defeated by their godless hands and giving in to them, God stood by him so that he might be preserved unconquered; he welcomed him as victor, once no further contest remained to be fought.⁶ He stood by his most faithful witness absolutely, as he fought to the death for the truth; he did what he had been begged in prayer to do, he snatched his soul from the godless, his claymore from the enemies of his hand. It is the holy flesh of this victorious soul, the scabbard, so to say, of that claymore, that we honor in this place with the supreme mark of respect, an altar for God; the flesh which is to be restored to that same triumphant soul in the resurrection, and thereafter, there being no more death, never to be laid aside again.

NOTES

1. See Sermon 309, note 1. If my reasoning there holds water, there would seem to be only two years in which this sermon could have been preached in Carthage: 406 and 419. Perhaps we had better wait for the next candidate for either of these dates to come along, before we make a definite choice. At the moment I think the scales tip slightly in favor of 419. From the concluding words we can gather that it was preached at the *mensa Cypriani*, Cyprian's table, or altar, at the site of his martyrdom. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, 421, thinks it was probably preached in the Mappalia Basilica, where Cyprian's tomb was, and again one can see why. But then, the closing words of Sermon 313A are almost the same as what we have here, with talk of honoring the martyr's body; and Perler on the previous page of his work has allotted that sermon to the *mensa Cypriani*.

2. *Atque huic Ecclesiae ornamento familiarior et praeclarior*—a phrase full of doubts and ambiguities. I have construed *huic* with *Ecclesiae*—meaning the Church of Carthage—and taken *ornamento* as a distinct dative, a dative of respect, I think it is called: a day that is very special for this Church for an ornament.

I have also translated the comparatives as superlatives. If they are to be treated as true comparatives, the only comparison can be with *ornamento*, construed as an ablative of comparison; and then

I think one would have to supply the word *ullo*: more special and glorious for this Church than any ornament.

Finally, the first three words could be construed together as “for this ornament of the Church”; but the only possible ornament he could have in mind in that case would be Cyprian himself, and that would be introducing him too early, and difficult to make sense of.

Translating *familiarior* as “very special” may seem to be taking something of a liberty; I have in mind something like “a special family occasion.”

3. Meant as a tribute, I suppose, to Cyprian’s eloquence; somewhat misplaced, surely, since were the condition fulfilled, it would be at the expense of the martyr’s modesty.

4. *Magis approbate voluntatis affectum quam exigite facultatis effectum.*

5. Reading *ut qui ...* instead of the text’s *ut quia ...*

6. A difficult sentence which I have treated somewhat drastically. After the semi-colon it runs in the text as follows: *suscepit victoriam, postquam nullum certamen ulterius remaneret, quam de hoc scilicet mundo et de mundi principe reportaret.* I have emended *victoriam* to *victorem*, and eliminated the last clause, *quam ... reportaret*, altogether as a marginal gloss. If the text is left as it stands, the subject of *suscepit* would have to be Cyprian—which hardly fits the structure of the whole sentence. If, however, one keeps this text, I would again make a slight emendation, reading *postquam*, after, as *post quam*, after which, and translate as follows: he earned the victory, after which no further contest remained to be fought, the victory, that is to say, which he won over this world and the prince of the world.

SERMON 313A

PREACHED IN CARTHAGE, AT THE TABLE OF THE BLESSED MARTYR CYPRIAN,
ON HIS BIRTHDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER

Date: 401¹

*Two things which make the straight and narrow way for Christians:
the rejection of pleasure and the endurance of suffering*

1. The holy festival of this most blessed martyr, which has brought us here together in the name of the Lord, requires something to be said about the merits and glory of so great a martyr. But it is impossible to say anything really worthy of him; perhaps, I suppose, a human tongue could have measured up to his virtues and glory, if he had been willing to praise himself.² Nonetheless, let me too praise him, more by my devotion than by any ability I may have; or rather, let me praise the Lord in him—the Lord in him, and him in the Lord. As to what he would be in³ the Lord, the voice of martyrs was heard in the psalm when it was read: *Our help is in the name of the Lord* (Ps 124:8). If the help of all of us is in the name of the Lord, how much more the help of the martyrs! Where the battle is harder, there greater help is needed.

You see, there are two things that make the way narrow for Christians: the rejection of pleasure and the endurance of suffering. You win, any of you engaged in the conflict, if you beat both what attracts and what repels. You win, Christian, I repeat, any of you engaged in the conflict, if you beat what attracts and what repels. We are dealing with the glory of the martyrs; it's easy to celebrate the feasts of the martyrs; it's difficult to imitate the martyrs' sufferings.

*The doors of greed and of fear have to be shut,
if we would enter through the narrow gate*

2. There are two things, as I had begun to say, which make the way of Christians straight and narrow: indifference to pleasure and endurance of suffering. So any of you engaged in the conflict should know that you are taking on the whole world; and in taking on the whole world, just beat these two things, and you beat the world. Just beat whatever is alluring, just beat whatever is threatening; because the pleasure is false, and the pain is passing. If you wish

to enter by the narrow gate,⁴ shut the gates of greed and fear; it's by these, you see, that the tempter attempts to subvert the soul. Through the door of greed he tempts with promises; through the door of fear he tempts with threats.

There is something you should and may crave, in order not to crave these things; there's something you should fear, in order not to fear these things. Greedy cravings should not be eliminated, but changed; fear should not be extinguished, but transferred onto something else. What were you craving for, when you were giving in to the allurements of the world? What were you craving for? The pleasures of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, worldly ambition. This is What's-his-name, the three-headed dog of hell.⁵ But listen to the apostle John, who lay upon the Lord's breast, and belched forth in the gospel⁶ this that he had drunk in at Christ's banquet; listen to him saying, *Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; since everything that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and worldly ambition* (1 Jn 2:15-16).

So this heaven and earth is called the world. In saying *Do not love the world*, he is not disparaging that world; whoever disparages that world, after all, is disparaging the maker of the world. Listen to the world mentioned twice in one place in different senses: it was said of the Lord Christ, *He was in this world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him* (Jn 1:10). The world was made through him: *Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth* (Ps 124:7). The world was made through him: *I lifted up my eyes to the mountains; from where will help come to me? My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth* (Ps 121:1-2). This world was made by God, and the world did not know him. Which world did not know him? The lover of the world, the lover of the work, the scorner of the workman.

Your love must migrate; cast off your moorings from creatures, moor yourself to the creator. Change your love, change your fear; the only things that make good or bad lives are good or bad loves. "That's a great man," someone will say, "he's good, he's great."

In what way, I'd like to know?

"He knows so much."

I'm asking what he loves, not what he knows.

So, *do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; since everything that is in the world—in the lovers of the world, of course—everything that is in the lovers of the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and worldly ambition.*

The lust of the flesh involves pleasure, the lust of the eyes involves curiosity, worldly ambition involves pride. Whoever overcomes these three, well there isn't any craving left in him to overcome. Many branches, but just a threefold root. How many evils are contained in the appetite for the pleasures of the flesh, how many evils it perpetrates! From it come adulteries, fornications; from it come extravagance, drunkenness; from it comes anything that tickles the senses unlawfully, and penetrates the mind with poisonous sweetness, leaves the mind in bondage to the flesh, topples the ruler from its citadel, subjects the commander

to the servant. And what can a man do uprightly when he's upside down in himself?

The effects of the vice of curiosity, the lust of the eyes

3. What evils vulgar, shameless curiosity is the cause of, the lust of the eyes, the avid craving for frivolous shows and spectacles, the madness of the stadiums,⁸ the fighting of contests for no reward! The charioteers compete for some prize; for what prize do the crowds fight over the charioteers? But the charioteer delights them, the hunter delights them, the player delights them.⁹ Is this the way it is, then, that vile baseness delights the decent man? You can also change your consuming addiction to shows and spectacles; the Church is offering your mind more honest and venerable spectacles. Just now the passion of the blessed Cyprian was being read. We were listening with our ears, observing it all with our minds; we could see him competing, somehow or other we felt afraid for him in his deadly peril, but we were hoping God would help him.

Anyway, do you want to know, in a word, what the difference is between our shows and spectacles and those of the theaters? We, to the extent that we are of sound and healthy mind, would love to imitate the martyrs whose contests we are watching; we, I repeat, would love to imitate the martyrs whose contests we are watching. Decent spectator, when you are watching a show in the theater, you're off your head if you have the audacity to imitate the performer you love. Look, here am I, watching Cyprian; I'm crazy about Cyprian. Imagine you are angry with me, curse me and say, "May you be like him!" I'm watching him, I'm delighted by him, as far as I can I embrace him with the arms of my mind; I see him competing, I rejoice when he wins. Be angry with me, as I said, and say to me, "May you be like him!" See if I don't jump at the idea, see if I don't choose to be so, see if I don't long to be so, see if I can't say I am unworthy, while to quail at the thought and to shrink from it is something I cannot do.

Now you watch your show, you be delighted with it, you be crazy about the performer. Don't be angry if I say, "May you be like him!"¹⁰ But I'll spare you, I shan't say it. Acknowledge me as your friend, together with me change the shows you attend. Let us be crazy about the sort of performers whom we don't have to blush about; let us love the sort of performers whom we would choose to imitate, so far as we were able.

"But the one whose performance is being watched is disreputable."¹¹

And is the one who watches it respectable? Eliminate your eagerness to buy, and there will be no indecency for sale. By watching it, you are establishing the whole disreputable business more firmly than ever. Why encourage something you find fault with? I would be very surprised if some of the disreputability of the person you're crazy about didn't brush off on you. But don't let it brush off, let decent respectability remain untarnished, if it can, while still being the spectator of lusts, the purchaser of vile pleasures!

Do I have the audacity to forbid shows and spectacles altogether? Yes, I do have the audacity to forbid them, I most certainly do. This place gives me the

confidence to do so, and the one who set me up in this place.¹² The holy martyr was able to endure the rage of the pagans, and shall I not be bold enough to instruct the ears of Christians? Shall I, here, dread unspoken criticisms, when he despised the shouts of open fury? I will say it straight out; I will certainly be refuted in the minds of my listeners, if what I say is untrue. It was an excellent act of the ancient Roman discipline, altogether an excellent act, to relegate every kind of showpeople to the place of infamy and shame. Not for them any post of honor in Senate or assembly,¹³ not even in one of the tribes of the common people; in every respect kept apart from the decent and respectable—and put up for sale to the decent and respectable!¹⁴ Why have you set them apart from yourself to preserve the dignity of your town council,¹⁵ and set them up in the theater to provide yourself with pleasure? Your pleasure should match your dignity. And these wretched unfortunates themselves have been put in bondage to the voices of the spectators, to the desires and preferences of the spectators, to the insane pleasures of the spectators. Eliminate all these things, these people are set free; when you refuse to be one of their spectators, you are doing them a kindness.

The evil consequences of worldly ambition

4. Let that do for the lust of the eyes. How much evil there is in worldly ambition! All pride is there; and what can be worse than pride? Listen to the judgment of the Lord: *God withstands the proud, while he gives grace to the humble* (Job 22:29; Jas 4:6; 1 Pt 5:5). So worldly ambition too is a malignant growth.

Someone's going to say, "The authorities of the world cannot be without it."

They most certainly can. One of their own authors—I can't remember which—said, "Agents infect their activities, each with their own faults."¹⁶ Of course they can. The ruler is set in a position of authority; let him rule himself, and he's become a ruler.

"But the human mind has a natural tendency to self-importance." Then self-importance should be checked. The one who sits in judgment on human beings must recognize he is only human himself. There's a disparity of rank, but a common share of human frailty. Anyone who thinks about this in a godfearing and religious way can both exercise authority and avoid lapsing into self-importance.

Cyprian overcame all these things. What, after all, did he not overcome, seeing that he held life itself to be of no account, riddled as it is with all these temptations? The judge threatened him with death; he confessed Christ, he was prepared to die for Christ's sake. When death comes, there will be no ambition left, no curiosity of the eyes, no appetite for sordid and carnal pleasures; one single life despised,¹⁷ and all these things are overcome.

Cyprian truly to be praised in the Lord

5. So, let the blessed Cyprian be praised in the Lord, because he has overcome all these things.¹⁸ When could he have done so, if the Lord had not come to his aid? When could he have been victorious, if the spectator, who was preparing a crown for him in his victory, had not provided him with the necessary strength in his toils? He too certainly rejoices, rejoices for us, not for himself, when he is praised in the Lord. He is very, very gentle, you see, and it is written, *In the Lord shall my soul be praised; let the gentle hear and be glad* (Ps 34:2). He was gentle; he wishes his soul to be praised in the Lord. Let his soul be praised in the Lord. Let his body be honored also, because *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints* (Ps 116:15). Let us celebrate in a holy way, let us celebrate as Christians. After all, we have not erected an altar to Cyprian as though he were God, but we have made an altar to the true God out of Cyprian.

NOTES

1. So Perler; others are rather vaguer. Perler has this sermon preached on the morning of 14 September, on a Saturday, the day after a particularly important meeting of a North African Council; *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, 237. Sermon 313B, he suggests, was preached on the same day in the afternoon.

2. See Sermon 313, note 3.

3. Reading *in* with the text given in PL 46, 863, instead of the *sine* of the text published by Denis: What he would be without the Lord.

4. See Mt 7:13; Lk 13:23.

5. Cerberus. Instead of the text here translated, *Nescio quis iste tricapitus est canis inferni*, the text in PL 46, 863 has, *Nescio, quis istorum trium capitum est carnis infernus*; presumably the work of a rather ignorant scribe, who didn't get the classical allusion: I don't know which of these three heads is the hell of the flesh.

6. Careless of Augustine; it was in John's first letter.

7. In his commentary on this psalm, *Expositions of the Psalms*, 121 he treats this last clause as a relative: *I lifted up my eyes to the hills, from where my help shall come*. But treating it as a question seems to suit the context here better, and I don't think Augustine ever felt the need to be universally consistent in such matters.

8. The chariot race tracks, the equivalent of modern football stadiums.

9. The two other principal entertainments besides the chariot races: the shows in the amphitheater, where the "hunters" took on wild beasts, and the playhouses—all severely frowned on by the Church.

10. "Don't be angry"—because in fact this would be an insult, since entertainers of all sorts, from charioteers to actors, were not only held in very low social esteem; they were also, as he goes on to remark, treated by law as being *infames*, officially of ill repute, and hence ineligible for any position of trust.

11. His interlocutor is now taking him up as though he did say, "May you be like him!"

12. God, or Saint Cyprian, or Bishop Aurelius? I rather think the last, because it can only have been at his request that Augustine was occupying the pulpit.

13. *In curia*—an institution or set of institutions in the old Roman Republic, of whose precise nature I am ignorant.

14. His admiration for the ancient Roman discipline is sardonically qualified—because the discipline, it is clear, and the hypocrisy that went with it, still prevailed in the class consciousness of the respectable citizens of the Roman Empire.

15. *Propter dignitatem decurii*; so the text in PL 46, 865. The text of the other edition has ... *de curia*; from the council.

16. Sallust, *On the War against Jugurtha*, 1, 4. See also Seneca, *Letter 50*.

17. The despiser's own, of course!

18. So the text in PL 46, 865. The other edition reads, "So, let the blessed man be praised in the Lord."

SERMON 313B

PREACHED IN THE SAME PLACE ON THE SAME DAY ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE
AFORESAID MARTYR

Date: 401¹

When Cyprian's blood was shed, there was probably not as big a crowd of his raging enemies as there is now, in the same place, of his admiring friends

1. We have sung a psalm: *Blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth* (Ps 124:6). A proper expression of gratitude for the gifts of God. *Blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth*. It's certainly the voice of gratitude, and a very fitting gratitude. And when can human gratitude ever match such divine gifts? When the blessed martyr shed his sacred blood in this place, I don't know whether there was as big a crowd here of people raging against him, as there is now a multitude of people praising him. I repeat—I'm delighted, after all, to see in the house of the Lord the people converging so religiously on this place, and to compare times with times—which is why I say again and repeat, and as far as I can I devoutly commend to your consideration; when the blessed martyr shed his blood in this place, I don't know whether there was such a big crowd here raging against him, as there now is a multitude of people praising him.

But even if there was, *blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth*. When they killed, they imagined they had conquered; they were being conquered by the people who were dying, and they rejoiced. If they were being conquered, they were naturally raging.² So the raging crowd has departed, and the praising multitude has taken its place. Let them say, let them say, the praising multitude, *Blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth*. Whose teeth? The teeth of the enemies, the teeth of the goddess, the teeth of those persecuting Jerusalem, the teeth of Babylon, the teeth of the enemy city, the teeth of a crowd gone stark, staring mad in their villainy, the teeth of a crowd persecuting the Lord, forsaking the creator, turning to the creature, worshiping things made by hand, ignoring the one by whom they were made. *Blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth*.

How hunters use nets, and chase their prey into the nets by frightening them

2. It's the voice of the martyrs; quite clearly, it's the voice of those who preferred to die for the name of Christ, rather than to live by denying Christ. So if those others wished to kill, these were killed; those did what they wished, these suffered; so how is the Lord blessed, who did not give us as a quarry to their teeth? What precisely is the gratitude for, *Blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth*? It's because the persecutors wished, not to kill but to devour; that is, to transfer the martyrs into their own body. They were heathen, they were godless, they were worshipers of demons and idols; that's what they wanted to make us, when they were longing to devour us. Just consider what we do with food, when we eat. What do we do with it, of course, but transfer it into our bodies? The godless formed a body; they devoured those who gave their consent to them in their godless activities; these undoubtedly passed into their body. So while those people were pressing the martyrs to deny Christ and adore idols, these resolutely withstood them, scorned the idols, confessed Christ, did not pass into their body by consenting to them. Let them say, then, yes let them say, let them gloriously say, happily say, truthfully say, *Blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth*.

Their nets consist of faithlessness, their nets consist of godlessness, their nets consist of the denial of Christ. The nets are spread out; you can hear the hunters.³ If you want to avoid the hunters, ignore the beaters trying to scare you. You know, I suppose, what hunters do. On one side they spread the nets, on the other they scare the game, which they drive into the nets. Are you afraid of the evil by which you are being scared? The evil into which you are running away is much worse. So the holy martyrs could see where the hunters had their nets spread out—the reason the persecutor threatened them with death, you see, was to get them to deny Christ—and they suffered, but by suffering they eluded capture.

What a fat prey, what a juicy quarry would godless Babylon have fed on, if the Lord had been denied by Cyprian the bishop! What a full meal would godless Babylon have had, what a quarry, what a choice prey would it have fed on, if Cyprian the bishop, the teacher of nations,⁴ the smasher of idols, the unmasker of demons, the winner of pagans, the strengthener of Christians, the man who fired the zeal of the martyrs; so if such and so great a man were to deny the Lord, what a noble quarry would godless Babylon have rejoiced over! *Blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth*. Let them rage as they would, persecute, torture, imprison, bind, strike, burn, toss to wild beasts;⁵ Christ was not denied, the confessor of the Lord was crowned. Their brutality never achieved its purpose, the constancy of the martyrs gained them glory.

Blessed is the Lord, let the Christian people say, yes certainly let them say, it's right they should say, *Blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth*. Let this very place say it now; it's filled with the people which confesses the faith, filled with the people which worships the one true God; let this place say it. It was then, you see, that this crop was sown, when that place was watered with the martyr's blood. Don't be astonished, soil of Carthage,⁶ at your fertility, if you were watered in this way to bear this bumper crop.

The Church of Christ also has teeth, to rival those of its enemies

3. So, *blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth.* With what sort of might, after all, were we snatched from the teeth of the godless? We claim nothing for ourselves, we don't attribute this to our own power. *Blessed is the Lord, who has not given us as a quarry to their teeth.* What did we amount to after all, when in our weakness we were being terrified by the strong, in our lowliness scared by the high and mighty, in our destitution frightened by the rich, scared in our need by those well provided for? What did we amount to, if our help had not been *in the name of the Lord, of him who made heaven and earth* (Ps 124:8)? Exult, exult, Jerusalem; exult, you too, not given over to the teeth of the hunters. Exult, you too; you too have teeth. *Your teeth like a flock of shorn ewes.* You too have teeth, O holy Jerusalem, *city of God* (Ps 87:3), Church of Christ, you too have teeth. To you it is said in the Song of Songs, *Your teeth like a flock of shorn ewes, coming up from the washing, which all produce twins, and there is none barren among them* (Sg 4:2; 6:6).

Splendid, splendid, that you didn't fear the teeth of Babylon. Babylon's teeth were the secular authorities; Babylon's teeth were the teachers of unlawful rites.⁷ You have not been given to these teeth. Acknowledge your own teeth; do yourself what those others wished to do.⁸ Convert yourself, and you have teeth as well. *Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes.* What do shorn ewes mean? Those who lay aside secular burdens. What does shorn mean? Those who lay aside their fleeces, like the load of secular burdens. Those persons were your teeth,⁹ about whom it is written in the Acts of the Apostles that *they sold all their possessions, and laid the proceeds at the feet of the apostles, so that distribution might be made to each, as there was need* (Acts 4:34-35). You have received the fleeces of your shorn ewes. That flock has come up from the washing of holy baptism. All have given birth, because they have fulfilled the two commandments.¹⁰

You remember, you've called it to mind, like well instructed people you cried out when I mentioned the two commandments; though I didn't say what they were, and yet in your voices I received an indication of your thoughts. You knew what I meant. All the same I shall spell it out, for the sake of those who don't come to church very often. The Lord says, the most truthful of teachers says, the prince of martyrs says, *You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depends the whole law and the prophets* (Mt 22:37.39-40).

So the reason your teeth won the victory is that they gave birth to such twins. To you, equipped with such teeth, is it said, to you, O Church, represented by the blessed Peter, is it said, *Arise, kill and eat* (Acts 10:13). *Arise*—it was said to Peter, when a container was let down from heaven, holding all nations, represented by animals, said to Peter when he was hungry, that is, to the greedy, voracious Church—*Arise, why be hungry? Arise, food has been prepared for you.* You've got teeth; *kill and eat.* Kill what they are, make them into what you are;¹¹ kill what they are, turn them into what you are. You have listened well,

equipped with such teeth, you have killed well, eaten well. The very judges, whom you refused to fear, you have drawn to yourself; the actual secular authorities, whom you refused to fear, you have turned into yourself. You scorned them as they raged against you, you have changed them into heaping honors upon you. What was promised to your Lord has been fulfilled, *And all the kings of the earth shall worship him, all nations serve him* (Ps 72:11).

Many of Cyprian's persecutors must later have come to believe. In any case, their descendants are here now in the Church, as faithful believers

4. That is something the persecutors didn't believe, while they were raging. How many of those persecutors, who saw the blessed Cyprian shed his blood, saw him kneel down, offer his neck to the sword, saw it here, watched it here, exulted here at such a spectacle, here, here heaped abuse upon him as he died; how many of them, which I have no doubt about, later came to believe! It's not to be doubted, it's to be believed without a shadow of doubt.

The Jews who killed Christ, who wagged their heads at him as they abused him hanging on the cross, and exulted as they said whatever words they liked against him, afterward came to believe in the very Lord they had crucified. It was impossible, after all, for the voice of the doctor to be without effect, as he hung on the cross and made a medicine of health and sanity out of his blood for them in their frenzied madness. So it was impossible for those words to be vain and without effect: *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34). They certainly were not without effect. There was a great number of them there for whose sake these words resounded out of the mouth of Truth. Because later on, when the miracle had occurred of the Holy Spirit coming from heaven, when the apostles spoke with the tongues of all nations, they were thunderstruck at the unexpected miracle and cut to the quick; and being converted to the one they had killed, as believers they drank the blood which they had shed as raging enemies.

The same sort of thing, clearly, is in no way to be doubted about the blessed Cyprian, Christ's holy martyr; that many of those who impiously watched him killed came to believe in his Lord, and perhaps even came to imitate him by shedding their blood for the name of Christ. In any case, that may not be certain about them; about those who were then present in this place, who saw Saint Cyprian executed in this place, let it be uncertain whether they came to believe. What is certain is that all these, or almost all of them, whose voices I can hear exulting in his praise, are the children of those who were abusing him in his death.

NOTES

1. See Sermon 313A, note 1. Apart from the title of the sermon in the collection from which both are taken, there is no internal evidence to suggest they were preached on the same day—nor that they were preached that year, immediately after the meeting of a very important council of African bishops. About this I have some doubts, which I will explain in an appendix to the notes on the last of these sermons on Saint Cyprian.

2. He is being provocatively paradoxical here. Were they rejoicing, or raging? Well, they were rejoicing when the martyrs were killed, raging when they could not force them to deny Christ—which was how they were being conquered.

3. More precisely, I suppose, the beaters who are driving the game, the quarry toward the nets by frightening them with noise. The hunters, I imagine, would be hiding near the nets to dispatch the animals when they were caught in them, or found their escape from the beaters blocked by them.

4. A title properly, of course, belonging to Paul; see 1 Tm 2:7.

5. He is letting his rhetoric run away with him a little, if he is still referring to Cyprian; the only two of these horrid things done to him were being imprisoned and being struck, that is being beheaded, with a sword.

6. He just says *terra*, earth or land. But I think he had that particular piece of earth, that particular African land in mind; he was implicitly voicing a Christian African patriotism here.

7. I do not know if he was being wittingly ironical; but the fact is that it was Christianity that had been the unlawful religion, the *religio illicita*, in Roman law before Constantine, and hence the religion that was promoting unlawful rites.

8. I presume, devour them, as they wished to devour you; turn them into your body by converting them to Christianity. But he doesn't pursue the point directly; with his characteristic habit of teasing, he veers off it and says instead, "Convert yourself." This, possibly, is a quotation from, or allusion to a line further on in the Song of Songs, 6:12, *Return, return; Revertere, revertere* in the Vulgate, but possibly reading *Converte te* in Augustine's Latin version. Meanwhile, wait for note 11 below.

9. Keep in mind that it is the Church which is being addressed.

10. Alluding to their all producing twins. The text in PL 46, 868 has "the two commandments of charity."

11. Now at last he makes the point he stopped himself making at note 8 above.

SERMON 313C

DISCOURSE ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SAINT CYPRIAN

Date: 403¹

The common advice of all the martyrs, to trade in this life for the sake of the next life

1. Today's anniversary celebration of the passion of this outstanding martyr of Christ, through whom above all others he governed this Church, increased it, adorned it and made it illustrious, does not recall him to our minds as though he had dropped out of them, but rather commends him to us all the more happily and gratefully, fixed permanently as he is in our memories. And so it is my duty with a formal sermon to praise in the Lord the soul of his servant, so that *the gentle may hear and be delighted* (Ps 34:2). That soul, in fact, while abiding in these mortal limbs, despised the death that was going to come anyhow sooner or later, in order to obtain the life that would abide without end; faithfully and prudently deciding to lose what even if held onto would in due course perish, in order to find what could never perish. I mean, if temporal life is held onto by denying Christ, it eventually comes to an end all the same, and everlasting life is not attained. How much better advised, then, to purchase the second by neglecting the first, than by wrongly cherishing the first to lose them both!

That is the unanimous advice of the martyrs, their common trading practice, to despise fleeting things in order to purchase things that abide; by dying to live, in order not to die by living; and to live always by dying once, rather than to die twice and not deserve to live later on; this by delaying the death that is coming anyway, and when it eventually comes after being delayed, by certainly failing to obtain the life that will abide. This, I repeat, is the unanimous advice of the martyrs, their common trading practice; this they learned together from their instructor and redeemer and Lord, because he said to everyone, *Whoever loves his soul² will lose it, and whoever loses it for my sake will find it in eternal life*. Accordingly, when the soul is loved it perishes, and it's found when it's lost; let it perish, if it loves, in order not to perish when it is loved.

What's said here, you see, can be understood in two ways: *whoever loves his soul will lose it*—whoever loves his soul in this age will lose it in the age to come; and, *whoever loses it for my sake will find it in eternal life*. According to the first way, whoever loves his soul to the extent of being afraid

to die for Christ, will lose it so that he doesn't live in Christ. And³ whoever loves his soul in order to live in Christ, will lose it by dying for Christ. He goes on, after all, *And whoever loses it for my sake will find it in eternal life.* Now the one who said "for my sake," *this one is true God and eternal life* (1 Jn 5:20).

*Cyprian gets his name from the cypress,
which is identified with Christ in the Song of Songs*

2. So while this is the duty of all the saints, this martyr of ours today gains the reward not only for himself but also for very many others besides. The fact is, he spread the good odor of Christ far and wide by his teaching, his living, his dying; his teaching about Christ, his living in Christ, his dying for Christ. So it is, dearly beloved, that since only Christ can be understood in the place where his bride the Church says, *A cypress berry⁴ is my cousin* (Sg 1:13), signifying by the most sweet smelling of trees the most fragrant⁵ grace, it follows that just as in his true faith he was made a Christian by Christ, so in his good odor he was made a Cyprian by the cypress. The apostle Paul, you see, also says, *We are the good odor of Christ in every place* (2 Cor 2:15.14). And so the good odor of Christ in our Cyprian emanated from this see; not that it was just enough for this city alone, or for Africa alone, of which this is the capital; but it spread so far and wide, that for it, from the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is praised,⁶ in whom Cyprian's soul will be praised, that *the gentle may hear and be delighted* (Ps 34:20).

What region in all the lands can be found, after all, where his eloquent words are not read, his teaching not praised, his charity not loved, his life not extolled, his death not venerated, the feast of his martyrdom not celebrated? How many there were, battling against the devil, whom the trumpet call of his preaching fired with ardor to follow the example of his passion! How many there were later on, who not only read his writings but also admired his fame, and thus followed by loving him, the one whom they had come to love, by learning from him! And so some, by his teaching, he sent ahead, to be imitated in due course, while by his suffering he went ahead of others who would duly imitate him.

He confounded the mouths of those who growled and barked against the teaching of Christ. He rendered virgins beautiful for Christ, not in their figures and their make-up, but in their way of life. He broke the arrows of jealousy and envy, and countered their poison, by his wholesome exposition of the Lord's prayer, to help us understand what we are asking for. And he wrote a little book for the lapsed,⁷ full of wise pastoral counsel and sympathetic understanding. The disdainful he reduced to the humility of grief, the grieving he drew up from the pit of despair. He sang the praises of patience, persuaded people to practice it, gave an example of it himself. He crushed the effrontery of heretics by his demonstration and preaching of unity. At his discussion of mortality and his commendation of the joys of immortal life, all fear in the souls of the faithful who were dying blushed for shame, as did all grief in the souls of those who were mourning the dead. He even produced evidence from secular literature to

confute the utterly vain and pernicious worship of idols. Showing up the folly of earthly avarice, he fired the spirits of Christians to grasp the extreme usefulness of almsgiving for reaping heavenly profits.⁸

And why should I say any more? Many people everywhere have the great corpus of his works. But let us, here, give more thanks than ever to God, because we have been found worthy to have with us the holy corpus of his body. There let us pour out our prayers with more ardent emotion to the Lord to whom he was well pleasing, and by whose grace he came to be what he was; and let us praise him in the Lord, rejoicing that the Lord has been so praised through him.

NOTES

1. The date is suggested somewhat tentatively by Perler. Fischer and Kunzelmann suggest 396 or 397. But Perler allots Sermon 313F to 397, and doubts if Augustine was in Carthage in the summer of 396. The sermon was preached, so it would seem from the reference in the last paragraph to the presence of Cyprian's body, in the Mappalia Basilica.

2. In the context of the gospel *anima* is normally and rightly translated as "life." But here I have to keep "soul," because of the way Augustine plays with the word; he did not simply identify *anima* with *vita*, as the evangelists did, or Jesus himself, speaking in Aramaic, and say "soul" means "life." A few centuries of Platonist influence on ordinary language had already rendered that concrete identification impossible and obsolete. The text quoted is a conflation of Mk 8:35 and Jn 12:25.

3. He here forgets to say "according to the second way."

4. *Botrus cypri*. The *cyprus* is not in fact the cypress; but I have to translate it as such in order to get the play on Cyprian's name. See Sermon 312, note 10.

5. Reading *fragrantissimum* instead of the text's *flagrantissimum*, which may indeed be just a misprint, absolving some medieval copyist from blame.

6. See Ps 113:3.

7. Those who had fallen away during persecution, and had sacrificed, or at least obtained through influential friends certificates of having sacrificed, without their actually doing so. These were called *libellatici*, the former *sacrificati*; both sorts *lapsi*.

8. In this paragraph he is, of course, alluding to Cyprian's works without actually naming them. They would be the following: *To Demetrianus, a Defense of Christianity against Pagan Attacks; On the Dress of Virgins; On Jealousy and Envy; On Works and Almsgiving; On the Lord's Prayer; On the Lapsed; On the Unity of the Church; On Mortality; On the Great Value of Patience; To Fortunatus, An Exhortation to Martyrs.*

SERMON 313D

DISCOURSE ON THE BIRTHDAY OF CYPRIAN

Date: uncertain¹

On the necessity of denying oneself in order to attain to immortal life

1. Today we are celebrating the holy festival of that martyr, who sent many martyrs ahead of himself by his eloquence, and brought many along after himself by his example. So what am I to offer so great a man as he was that is worthy of such a great matter, but to ask him not to expect to be praised by me, while not ceasing to pray for me? The fact is, we are certainly living in the same life as the one in which he endured his labors, even if not as meritoriously as he lived here. He, after all, spent this mortal life, and by spending it in the way of self-denial,² he merited the attainment of immortal life. This way of spending our mortal life and reaching immortal life was not prescribed for him by himself, but by his leader, king, emperor, forerunner, helper, savior, liberator, the rewarder of all martyrs, namely our Lord God and savior Jesus Christ, the only Son of God for our creation, and the Son of man for our re-creation. By the one who is unable to lie, who neither deceives nor is deceived, the rule was laid down which established the way of spending this mortal life and reaching eternal life.

Cyprian knew and taught this rule; he not only taught it, he also practiced it; thereby demonstrating that he wasn't deceiving those he was teaching, because he lived as he taught, and practiced as he lived.³ So what about the Lord? What way did he set out of spending this mortal life, and of meriting the attainment of immortal life? We heard it just now, when the holy gospel was read: *Whoever wishes*, he said, *to follow me, let him deny himself*. This might seem rather obscure, so the heavenly teacher added some more, and said, *Whoever loves his soul will lose it, and whoever loses it for my sake will find it*.⁴ That's the way to spend this mortal life, in order to obtain immortal life. It's about this way that I would like your graces to listen to something from me, with the one whose feast we are keeping doing me the favor of praying for me.

It's a great reward, after all, my dearest brothers and sisters, that has been set before us. Certainly, we are celebrating the feast of this most blessed martyr. All the brothers and sisters⁵ have gathered in a big crowd for the feast, and are

rejoicing as they celebrate the martyr's birthday. If it's his birthday, he was born; in order to be born, he was conceived. When was he conceived? In this life in which he was reborn.⁶ We all know this life, full of trials and tribulations; the life in which the blessed Cyprian was reborn here. And yet we are celebrating his birthday; and which of us would ever have the nerve to compare our own birthdays, which we celebrate in our homes, in the slightest degree with these birthdays of the martyrs? Anyone who did so would automatically convict himself of sacrilege.

*How we should lose our lives in order to gain them illustrated
from Cyprian's answer to the judge*

2. So let's see what it means, "let him deny himself." It's a great reward, after all, my dearest brothers and sisters, that has been set before us. We heard the confession of the blessed martyr Cyprian: "As for me, I worship the one God, *who made heaven and earth, the sea and everything that is in them.*"⁷ God keeps quiet, but the works of God speak; there you have the God, there you have the sort of God—or rather not "the sort of" and "the," but just God, there you have God, to whom Cyprian entrusted himself. So what does it mean, "let him deny himself"? Deny yourself. What does that mean, "Deny yourself"? Are you being forced to deny God? Deny yourself, and don't deny God. Don't love this temporal life of yours and work against eternal life; instead, give in to eternal life, so that you may be made eternal. Deny yourself, in order to confess God; deny yourself, man, woman, so that you may be made an angel. Deny yourself, mortal creature, so that by confessing God you may earn the right to live forever.

Look here; you love this temporal life; you don't want to deny it, and you wish to deny God; God, whom you've denied, whom you have refused to confess, withdraws from you; and you will continue to have the temporal life, which you refused to deny. So let's see how long you are going to have this life. Here we are then, there's tomorrow, and after tomorrow another tomorrow, and after many tomorrows comes the end. And where will you go? Where will you go out to? To God, of course, whom you have denied. Oh, you poor, miserable wretch! You have both denied God and willy-nilly lost your temporal life. This life, after all, my dearest brothers and sisters, whether we like it or not, is passing, is running out; so let us deny ourselves in this temporal life, in order to earn the right to live forever. Deny yourself, confess God.

Do you love your soul? Lose it.⁸ But you'll say to me, "How can I deliberately lose what I love?" Well, you do it in your own home, your own affairs. You love corn, and you scatter the corn which you had stored with such care in the granary, which you had sorted out with all the hard labor of the harvest and the threshing. It's now laid up, cleaned up; come the time for sowing, you will bring it out, scatter it, cover it up in order not to see what you scatter. There you are, by the very fact of loving corn you scatter corn. So, by the very fact of loving life, pour out your life; by the very fact of loving your soul, lose it; because when you lose it for God's sake in the present time, you will find it in time to come for eternal life. So, by the very fact of loving life, pour it out.

Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy

3. “But it’s hard, it’s difficult, it’s something sad, miserable.”

I sympathize with you, because the Lord our God also sympathized with us, suffered with us. You see, he revealed himself in you, and you in himself, when he said, *My soul is sad to the point of death* (Mk 14:34). He suffered for us, let us suffer for him; he died for us, let us die for him, in order to live forever with him. But perhaps you’re hesitant to die, O mortal creature, though you are bound to die sometime or other, precisely because you are mortal. Would you like not to fear death? Die for God. But perhaps the reason you are afraid to die is that death is such a sad business. Consider the harvest; the time for sowing is cold; but if the farmer declines to be made miserable by sowing in the cold in winter, he won’t rejoice in the summer. Take a look at yourself, and see whether the reason you are reluctant to sow is that there is the sadness and misery of the cold at seed time.

Look at the psalm: *Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going, they were going and weeping, casting their seed* (Ps 126:5-6). That’s what we were singing just now; let’s do what we have sung. Let us sow our souls in this time, like corn in winter, so that we may reap them in eternal time, like corn in summer time. That’s the way the holy martyrs, the way all the just, toiling away on earth, weeping cast their seed; this life, after all, is full of tears. And what follows? *But coming, they will come with exultation, carrying their lapfuls.*⁹ Your seed is the shedding of your blood; your lapful the reception of your crown.

The example of Cyprian in this respect

4. This is something our martyr believed, what he taught before he carried it out, what he carried out because he had already taught it. Those to whom Cyprian spoke were taught only by his words; we, though, have his twin teaching, having his words in writing, his example in our memories. So may he encourage us, and pray for us, and obtain for us such a will from the Lord as he himself spoke of in his passion, when he said, “A good will, which knows God, cannot be changed.”¹⁰ And when the judge said to him in a threatening way, “Take counsel for yourself,” that judge would seem to have hated, not loved the man, by saying to a mortal man, “Take counsel for yourself”; that is, take counsel for yourself, so that you may live a few more days now, and then die forever.

Saint Cyprian, though, paid no attention to the human judge, having authority on earth, but attended to God the judge, who made heaven and earth. So blessed Cyprian, if he wasn’t going to deny himself, if he wasn’t going, out of love for his soul, to lose it, in order by losing it to find it, would answer him, “I will certainly take counsel, and I’m grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to do so, or time to think again”; or at least, “Now accept my fealty; I will undertake the ceremonies of the emperors.” That’s what he would say, if¹¹ he wasn’t going to deny himself, and by perversely loving his soul wasn’t going to lose it; that is, if he wasn’t going to sow what he could reap. As it is, though, he ignored the

cold of winter, thought only of the joy of summer, and answered the man, the adversary he could see, in a way to defeat the one he could not see. What the devil was about, I mean, through that judge, the judge himself was unaware of, but Saint Cyprian knew very well.

He answered him, and said, "Do what you've been ordered to." The holy martyr was thinking of this order in a higher sense, remembering the Lord his God as he stood before Pontius Pilate, and how, when that man was roused to say, *Do you not know that I have authority to release you, and I have authority to put you to death?* he answered him, Truth speaking truthfully, *You would have no authority over me, unless it had been given you from above* (Jn 19:10-11). And indeed, brothers and sisters, it wasn't, after all, because the emperor had ordered it that Saint Cyprian suffered—and not because the one who was favoring us with such a martyr had ordered it?¹² So, remembering the Lord his God, he answered the judge, "Do what you have been ordered to; in such a just cause there is no counsel to be taken." It's in doubtful matters that one usually takes counsel; if I'm still taking counsel, it means I am still in doubt. "In such a just cause there is no counsel to be taken."

What is this just cause?

It is just that I should follow the martyrs whom I caused to go ahead of me to martyrdom by my words; it is not just that I should forsake those who went ahead of me, because if I do not do what I taught, while they have been crowned, others will grow cold. So it is just that I should fulfill what I taught, and by fulfilling it should teach what I have fulfilled.

The blessed Cyprian did this. "In such a just cause there is no counsel to be taken." He accepted the sentence, he earned the crown. The judge could see whom he was ill using, he could not see where he was sending him, because he was not worthy to see it. So what thanks are we to give to God for such gifts, my dearest brothers and sisters, but what the martyr gave himself? At the end, you see, when the judge said, "It is the court's pleasure that Tascius Cyprianus should be executed by the sword," Cyprian said, "Thanks be to God." So let us too, finding ourselves here at this celebration, seeing these things with the eyes of faith, and hoping that we too will come to where he hurried off to, let us too all say together, "Thanks be to God."

Turning to the Lord, etc.

NOTES

1. As I suggested in note 1 to Sermon 313, according to Perler's calculations of Augustine's journeys and his presence in Carthage on 14 September, Cyprian's feast day, and his tentative datings of other sermons preached there on that day, there are only two years left for Sermon 313 and this Sermon 313D to have been preached in: 406 and 419. Having now weighed up both sermons, my final vote is to assign this sermon to the later date, 419, and Sermon 313 to the earlier, 406.

2. There is a small gap in the text here, which runs, after "mortal life," *et modo . . . gerens impetrare meruit immortalē*. I have supplied the words *seipsum negandi ipsam*.

3. An entirely vacuous piece of rhetorical parallelism, which I think the less elderly Augustine of 406 would have taken greater care to avoid.

4. Mk 8:34-35; Jn 12:25. See Sermon 313C, note 2.

5. This time it is Augustine himself including the sisters: *omnium fratrum sororumque multitudo*; not just his translator dutifully desexistifying the word *fratres*, as in the previous sentence—which should perhaps, incidentally, be omitted, since it occurs again, word for word, as the second sentence of section 2.

6. Reading *qua renatus est* instead of the text's *qua natus est*. The conception leading to the birth of martyrdom into immortal life can only be baptism, which he goes on to mention as rebirth in the next sentence. The analogy is variable; in one relationship, the normal theological one, baptism is a rebirth, while in another it is a reconception. But in this whole passage he is making the contrast he wishes to make between one kind of birth, one kind of birthday, and another with a regrettable lack of clarity. It's the older gentleman again, in his middle sixties in 419, rather than the younger man in his early fifties in 406.

7. See the Proconsular Acts of Cyprian's martyrdom, PL 3, 1503. Cyprian was quoting Ps 146:6.

8. Don't be shocked, dear reader, at this advice; see Sermon 313C, note 2.

9. *Gremia sua*, literally their laps or bosoms; a very idiosyncratic translation of the Greek, which the Vulgate straightforwardly renders as *manipulos*, sheaves.

10. See the Proconsular Acts, PL 3, 1503.

11. Supplying *si*; the text simply reads, *non negaret se*, he would not deny himself.

12. He forgets how he started this short sentence, and ends it as a question. At least that is the only way one can make sense of there being a negative in each part of it.

SERMON 313E

DISCOURSE ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SAINT CYPRIAN

Date: 410¹

The Word made flesh taught those who believe in him how to live and how to die

1. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in whom lies all our hope of eternal salvation, though he was God became man for this reason, that man, having put himself far away from God, should not think he had been left far off and deserted. So he became our mediator, and thus after a fashion brought to an end the time of the distance which separated us from God, so that through him we might not remain far off, but could even draw near.² Nothing, you see, is so closely joined together as the Word and God;³ again, nothing is so closely joined together as flesh and man. So, since the Word and God was a long way away from flesh and man, the Word became flesh, and joined man to God. So this Lord and Savior of ours, the Son of God, the Word of God who became flesh, not by changing into flesh but by assuming flesh, taught those who believe in him how to live, taught them how to die; to live without greed, to die without fear. He taught us how to live, so that we might not die forever; he taught us how to die, so that we might live forever.

And so, eminent in the number of those whom he taught this was the blessed Cyprian, living in such a way as one who knew he was going to die, and dying in such a way as being certain he was going to rise again. He won God's favor by a twin grace, grace of course which he received from the one who was pleased with him. He pleased God because of God's gift to him; as far as concerned him in himself, you see, he had that which would displease God, not that which would please him. But, as it is written, *where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more* (Rom 5:20). He himself, a trustworthy and truthful martyr and servant of God, truthful by God's gift, confesses in his writings what he had been like previously; he doesn't forget what he had been like, in order not to be ungrateful to the one through whom he ceased to be like that.⁴ So he won God's favor by a twin grace, by the way he was a bishop and the way he was a martyr. As bishop he defended and held onto unity; as martyr he taught and gave an example of the confession of faith.

The greatness of Cyprian's faith

2. Oh, what a great, what a wonderful thing is faith! Faith is something great—and where is it? After all, we can see each other's faces, our figures, our clothes, finally, we perceive each other's voices and words with our ears. But where is the faith which I'm talking about now? Let it be shown to our eyes. Look here, faith can't be seen; and yet the whole of this crowd, which can be seen here in God's house, was drawn here by faith, which cannot be seen. So it's a grand thing, is faith, as the Lord also says in the gospel: *Be it done to you according to your faith* (Mt 9:29; 8:13); again, the Lord our God himself praises the faith of some people⁵ when he says, *I have not found such great faith in Israel* (Lk 7:9).

So it's not surprising if, out of faith which cannot be seen, this life is despised which can be seen, in order to obtain the life which cannot be seen. This was the faith Saint Cyprian was filled with, this the faith which fills, not false, but true Christians, who believe and trust God with their whole heart and an unshaken faith. The heretics, though, and the Donatists,⁶ who falsely boast that Cyprian belongs to them,⁷ should pay attention to the way he exercised his office of bishop, and then they wouldn't break away; to the way he went to his martyrdom, and then they wouldn't throw themselves over cliffs.⁸ The heretic breaking away in heresy, the Donatist jumping deliberately to his death, is certainly not one of Christ's disciples; certainly not one of Cyprian's comrades.

By tolerating Judas to the bitter end, the Lord showed how absolutely we must avoid breaking away from the Church

3. Let us consider, my dearest brothers and sisters, the case of Christ teaching and Cyprian following him; and then these people shouting in contradiction and claiming to be Christians, to belong to Cyprian. Listen to what Christ teaches: *My peace I give you, my peace I leave to you* (Jn 14:27). The Donatist or heretic is not a disciple of Christ; the enemy of peace is not a disciple of Christ. Just see whether the Lord our God said this and didn't do it—the one who said *My peace I give you, my peace I leave to you*. He tolerated Judas the devil⁹ among his disciples, he didn't set him apart. He was admitted to the Lord's supper, when he had already accepted the Lord's price. He wanted to sell Christ, you see, he refused to be redeemed by Christ. This was how our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ taught that separation is to be avoided, and division to be outlawed, peace and unity to be loved.

This peace he left, after a fashion, in his last will and testament to his disciples, our apostles. As he was about to go to the Father, you see, he said, *My peace I give you, my peace I leave to you*, and he didn't separate Judas from himself, though he couldn't have been making a mistake, if he had wished to separate him; I mean he would never separate an innocent person instead of a guilty one, or by separating the guilty forsake the innocent. He knew what he could do, and he didn't do it; he didn't bring about a separation, because he commanded us to love peace. He knew what he could do, and he didn't do it;

the one who knew didn't do it, so that any who didn't know wouldn't dare to do it. It was Judas himself who separated himself from the Lord. He was tolerated to the very end; he gave the kiss of peace, though he didn't have peace in his heart; and yet he accepted the kiss of peace. That kiss didn't bind him to Christ, but condemned him.

The Lord, you see, gave him a kiss in such a way as in effect to say to him, "Look what I have, look what you don't have." Christ, after all, was the head of his body which sings and says, *With those who hate peace I was peaceable* (Ps 120:6-7). So in tolerating him right to the very end, the Lord Jesus Christ forcefully insisted that separations are not to be made, but unity is to be cherished, and peace preserved.

*The Donatist fanatics are listening to the devil, not to Christ,
when they throw themselves over precipices*

4. I have said this about preserving peace on account of the heretics, who have broken away from the Catholic Church, and go on breaking away every day, and falsely call themselves Catholics. So I have reminded you of this commandment of the Lord's about peace because of the heretics. Let's see, though, what the Lord also says about martyrdom; we ought to remind ourselves of it, and on account of the Donatists who throw themselves over precipices, we must insist on the Lord's teaching. Now the devil said to the Lord when he was tempting him—the Lord was tempted so that we might learn how to resist the tempter—so the devil said to him, *If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down* (Mt 4:6). He had taken him up, you see, to the top of the pinnacle of the temple; he didn't acknowledge him as his Lord, and was trying to teach him as a man the art of hurling himself headlong. He was ignorantly trying out on the true Christ what he was preparing to persuade false Christians to do.

Well, the Donatists aren't false Christians, they're quite simply not Christians at all, since they listen to what the devil suggested, and don't listen to the answer Christ gave him. How, after all, did the Lord, our teacher and savior, answer the devil's suggestion of such things? *Get back, Satan, for it is written: You shall not tempt the Lord your God* (Mt 4:10.7; Dt 6:16). The devil, as a matter of fact, had taken his suggestion from scripture, and the Lord replied from scripture. The devil had said to the Lord, you see, *Since it is written: He will instruct his angels about you; they will lift you up in their hands, lest you should hurt your foot on a stone* (Mt 4:6; Ps 91:11-12). "Hurl yourself down," he said, "and if you are the Son of God, the angels are there to catch you; what are you afraid of?" The Lord could indeed both have cast down his body and not allowed it to die; but what the devil was suggesting to Christ at that time is the sort of thing Christ was *not* teaching future Christians. This, you see, is exactly what the devil is also suggesting to the Donatists, saying, "Hurl yourselves down, the angels are there to catch you; with such a death you don't go to punishment, but you win through to a crown." They would be Christians if they gave an ear to Christ and didn't trust the devil, who first separated them from the peace of the Church, and later on gave them cliff-jumpers.¹⁰

We inquire of them, and say, "If a voluntary death delights you, and you consider it a beautiful thing to die of your own accord, without any enemy pushing you to it, any opponent killing you, why do you run so readily to a precipice, and never to a noose? It's so easy, this other kind of death, and hanging from a noose preserves the body of the person dying far more intact than the precipice method which you choose; so why don't you hang yourselves with a noose, when you wish to die?"

They answer, "Far be such a thing from us, a curse on the noose! After all, Judas the traitor hanged himself with a noose."¹¹

Oh, unhappy and miserable wretches, what is this insanity, to refuse to do what the traitor did, and to do what the traitor's master, the devil, has taught them to do?

For Judas to betray Christ, so it is written, *Satan entered into his heart* (Jn 13:27); the one who persuaded him to betray Christ is the one who persuaded him to hang himself with a noose. He repented, you remember, of *having betrayed righteous blood* (Mt 27:4), but his repentance was without hope; he repented, but he also despaired, he didn't believe he would receive mercy. He didn't come to the one he had betrayed and ask his pardon; he didn't ask for pardon from him, he didn't implore him to set him free, he didn't entrust himself to his blood for redemption. It isn't the case, I mean to say, that the Lord, who was so merciful to the Jews, was cruel to Judas. Judas sold Christ to be killed, the Jews bought Christ to be killed. Do you want proof that he would have spared the seller? He prayed for the buyers. Hanging on the cross he said, *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34). Now those who crucified Christ, who wished to remain in that sin, perished, because they refused to repent; they despaired of clemency, so they did not deserve pardon. If any of them, though, did run to the clemency of Christ to be set free, as they had run to the shedding of his blood, urged on by the devil, they repented, they did deserve pardon; they were baptized. As rabid enemies they shed the blood of Christ; as believers they drank it.

*Unlike the Donatists, who followed the suggestions of the devil,
Cyprian preferred to follow the example of Christ*

5. So the devil, who has persuaded the heretics to break away, and the Donatists to jump over precipices, is also the one who persuaded Judas both to betrayal and to despair and to the noose. So you there, Mr Donatist, so keen to kill yourself, you shun the traitor's noose; why don't you also shun the devil's precipice? The devil persuaded Judas to tie a rope round his neck; he's also the one who suggested to the Lord that he should hurl himself down. So then, shun the devil in each case; just as you shun the devil over the noose, so too you ought not to consent to the devil about the precipice. What, pray, did the devil hear from the Lord, when he suggested a precipitous leap? *Get back, Satan.*¹² Say that, Mr Donatist, to the devil, when he suggests a nice high precipice to you; but he has even filled you all with the notion of being honored with a cult when you have jumped over your cliffs.

Yes indeed, brothers and sisters; you see, as well as hurling themselves over cliffs, they are also hurled over them by their misguided congregations. They are even greater murderers, the people who take up the bodies of the cliff jumpers with honor, who collect the blood of the cliff jumpers, who honor their graves, who get drunk at their tombs.¹³ I mean, when they see this sort of honor showered on the cliff jumpers, others are fired with the ambition to jump over cliffs themselves; the former get drunk over them on wine, the latter get drunk on madness and the worst possible error.

In contrast to these, we have the blessed Cyprian, commending to us the peace of Christ, teaching us about his passion. Notice each of these in him; he held on to peace in preserving unity, he held onto martyrdom in confessing the faith. Because our Lord Jesus Christ himself had also, of course, come to suffer, and had foretold he would suffer, and we wouldn't have been redeemed unless he had suffered. He had also said, *I have the authority to lay down my life, and to take it up. Nobody takes it from me; I myself lay it down on my own* (Jn 10:18). And of the Father it was said, *Who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all* (Rom 8:32); and of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, *Who loved me, and gave himself up for me* (Gal 2:20). So while the very reason he had come was that the Father might hand him over to the godless for our redemption, and that he might hand himself over to the godless for our redemption, all the same, after giving the supper he withdrew to the Mount,¹⁴ he fled from the eyes of the persecutors. He wanted them to come to him, he didn't offer himself to them of his own accord.

Now observe how Cyprian imitates him. You heard, when his passion was being read, how he said to the proconsul, "Since our discipline forbids anyone to offer himself."¹⁵ There you are, that's how he knew the discipline of suffering. He was of course encouraging others to suffer; but he never hurled them into it, he never drove them to offer themselves of their own accord. And the blessed Cyprian himself was sent for, and brought; he did not, however, offer himself of his own accord. The Donatists, though, do hurl themselves into it of their own accord, and they come to people and say, "Kill us." They answer, "We are not killing you." Oh, how insane, how perverse can you get! This is the point you come to: the reason you are going to call yourself a martyr is that you either do a murder or make a murderer; so that they come to people, and arm them against themselves, and force them by terror to kill them.¹⁶ If they were in their right minds, they would shrink in horror from throwing themselves over cliffs, and wouldn't commit murder. But this is what they do, what their father the devil has taught them, and their teacher Donatus has instructed them in. As against them, the blessed Cyprian manfully defended both unity and peace.

*Cyprian the vine branch that has been pruned;
the Donatists the branches that have been cut off*

6. So he is sent for; he is brought before the proconsul, he stands before the bench of the judge, a man. He had withdrawn, you see, to his own plot in the

country because of the persecution,¹⁷ as the Lord had done on the Mount of Olives after the supper. The Lord on the Mount of Olives watered and fostered the olive branch of peace; Cyprian at his country plot was cultivating the grain of mustard seed. Brought from there, he stood in the flesh before the proconsul, in his heart before the savior; he was respecting human authority, while not denying divine glory. First he is sent away from there into exile. He confessed Christ, he went off into exile. Fetched back from there, he is taken to his martyrdom, like a vine branch to the pruning hook, to be pruned, not cut off. The Lord said, you see, *I am the vine, you are the branches. My Father is the cultivator. Every branch that bears fruit in me my Father prunes, so that it may produce greater fruit, and every branch that does not bear fruit in me he will cut out, and it will wither and be thrown in the fire* (Jn 15:1-2.6).

So then, observe the branch that has been pruned, the martyr Cyprian; observe the branches that have been cut off, the heretics and Donatists. Why do you people say you belong to this man, this man who bore the fruit of peace and unity, who was pruned by the pruning hook of martyrdom, to obtain the crown of eternal salvation? Why do you compare yourselves to this man, heretics and Donatists, cut off from the vine by separation, defiled by your habit of headlong self-destruction? The blessed Cyprian takes his stand, he confesses Christ, he does not consent to what he is being compelled to do; he accepts the temporal judicial sentence, he becomes, with Christ, a judge for eternity. He accepts the sentence, and quite rightly says “Thanks be to God,” because he has quite rightly confessed Christ. How insane can you get, you Donatists, you rabid dogs! Thanks be to God. They say they are celebrating Cyprian’s birthday; their “Praise be to God” is a cry all Christian people dread.¹⁸ The Donatists, you see, have come together in crowds for all their evil deeds; even as they hurl themselves over cliffs, they shout “Praise be to God”; in their mouths, “Praise to God,” in their deeds, hateful to God. And so any Catholic Christian standing at that moment a long way off, who hears “Praise be to God,” immediately starts trembling, immediately looks around for a way of escape, in case he should have the misfortune to witness their cliff jumping exercises. That, precisely, is how the Donatists have introduced bitterness into the praise of God.

Further comparisons between Cyprian and the Donatist fanatics, the Circumcellions

7. As for us, though, we pay attention to the authoritative teaching of Christ; so let us take the example of Cyprian to heart, beseeching the Lord God, with the assistance too of the prayers of the saints, to preserve us from fearing such people, and from keeping quiet to them about the faith and the hope that is in us.¹⁹ So let us confess Christ, and not be afraid of men, nor keep quiet out of fear. Because the blessed Cyprian too spent his life among persecutors and the heathen, and though finding himself among the worshipers of idols, he had no fear of the temporal authority of the empire, and he didn’t keep quiet either about idols not being gods. It wasn’t only in the churches that he didn’t keep quiet, but he also demonstrated this in his writings.

He didn't say, did he, "I must take account of the times; those who exercise supreme authority worship idols; I must avoid putting them to shame, seeing that they are emperors, even though temporal ones"? Did he keep silent? Did the good shepherd run away when he saw the wolf? What's the use, after all, if the shepherd remains present in body, but runs away in spirit? If you keep quiet out of fear, you see, you are running away in spirit. No, God would speak against him in that case, and say "*I placed you as a look-out* (Ez 3:17); you should speak, not keep quiet; but you did keep quiet, to avoid being killed. So hadn't I already said, *Do not fear those who kill the body and cannot kill the soul* (Mt 10:28)? There you are, while fearing the death of your flesh, you have brought so many deaths to your soul." So the blessed Cyprian did not keep quiet, neither to the heretics, nor to the Donatists, nor to the emperors themselves. He spoke out, and he spoke out without a qualm, and with complete assurance in the Lord his God he spoke out and said that demons aren't gods.

I too speak out and say that the heretics aren't martyrs, that the Circumcisions aren't martyrs. The blessed Cyprian wasn't afraid of the worshipers of demons; we shouldn't be afraid of the gatherings of heretics, we shouldn't be afraid of the assemblies of cliff jumpers. Let us only pray to the Lord with all our hearts, that nobody should follow the plan of keeping quiet. And if they kill us on account of our faith, let us say "Thanks be to God"; and if they don't kill us, what's the length of time we are going to go on living here? Even if we reach extreme old age, how long is it? Are we never going to die? Just for the sake of the few days of this life, should the ministry of my heart and my tongue keep quiet? Perish the thought!

But if this life of mine is needed by your graces for the sake of this ministry, obtain its preservation from the Lord; I cannot remain silent. You can pray to God, if I'm still needed by you, to preserve me for you, and you for me. He is powerful enough to keep all of us safe from the threats, from the scurrilities, from the plots of all our enemies, from the twists and turns of the heretics. That we wish them well, and wish them converted, he knows well enough, who sees into and governs our hearts.

"But perhaps they will pay us back evil for good."

Has it only just begun to happen now, that the servants of God should be paid back evil for good? It's a very ancient tradition; there are plenty of examples; and it won't stop; it won't stop until the very end; and we are already at the very end of the age.²⁰

The value of the prayers of the saints

8. And so, my brothers and sisters, I adjure your graces to keep your hearts firm and ready in God. And let us all pray to God, that the Lord will lead us along the ways he knows best and keep us safe in them, body and spirit; nothing, you see, is going to happen either to me or to you which he doesn't wish to. But don't imagine either that the prayers of the saints²¹ for all of us can be without effect with God; it is by their prayers that your prayers too, and mine, will not

be wasted with God. I will give you an example from holy scripture. Tabitha, a widow woman, used to make clothes for the widows. It so happened that she died; Peter the apostle was sent for, and came. They showed him the tunics she had woven for the poor. The Lord was moved with pity; he listened to Peter, he gave back the good hard-working widow to the light of day.²² So just as she was brought back from death by the prayers of the poor widows, in the same way the Lord is well able, by the prayers of the blessed Cyprian and all the saints, to deliver us too from every evil.

NOTES

1. So Brown and Kunzelmann. They think the sermon was preached in Carthage or Utica. But there is nothing in the sermon itself to suggest either the date or the places proposed. It is a sustained attack on the Donatist Circumcellions, fanatics who courted martyrdom, sometimes ordering Catholics to kill them, and threatening, if they refused, to kill them instead; more frequently, if they couldn't get properly martyred, killing themselves by jumping over cliffs. Now I am not convinced that 410, a few months before the colloquy in Carthage of Catholic and Donatist bishops in 411, which was designed to settle the controversy between them once and for all, was the most likely time for such an attack. Augustine would surely have occupied himself with more central issues. But ten or more years earlier, around the time of the rebellion of Gildo, and the activities of the warrior (or bandit) Donatist Bishop Optatus of Thamugadi, would in my opinion have been a more likely time.

Nor does Carthage or Utica, both in the province of Africa (modern Tunisia), seem to be the most likely place for the preaching of this sermon. The custom of cliff jumping was far more prevalent among the Donatists of Augustine's own smaller province of Numidia, to the west, which seems to have been the heartland of the whole Donatist movement, especially of its more fanatical supporters. And in section 7 he talks about his ministry to the people in terms that strongly imply he had formal pastoral responsibility for them—that he was in fact their bishop. So I am inclined to infer that this sermon was preached in Hippon Regius, or its neighborhood, early in Augustine's career as bishop, in a year when he was not in or near Carthage on 14 September. Consulting Perler's chronology of Augustine's journeys (*Les Voyages*, 436), I find the years 395, 396, and 399 to be available. As Gildo's rebellion was crushed in 398, I think 395 or 396 are the more likely.

2. See Eph 2:13.

3. A very odd way of putting the truth that the Word was with God and the Word was God. As in the first of those two phrases from Jn 1:1, we must understand "God" as meaning "the Father."

4. See Cyprian's *Letter to Donatus*, PL 4, 198-200; also Sermon 311, 7 above and note 10 there; also Sermon 312, 2.

5. Why "some people" in the plural, when Jesus only says this to the centurion? I think it is because Augustine associated him in his mind with another Gentile whose faith was highly commended, the Canaanite woman, Mt 15:28. See Sermon 77, 12-13.

6. He is not really treating the heretics and Donatists as two distinct groups; he means the heretics which the Donatists were.

7. On the very plausible grounds, as a matter of fact, that Cyprian considered baptism conferred outside the Church in breakaway sects to be invalid, which was, in effect, the whole *raison d'être* of the Donatist schism. Augustine, of course, quite simply asserts that Cyprian was mistaken on this point, and then points out that even so he did not break away from the universal Catholic Church to found a Cyprianist Church of his own.

8. Like the Circumcellion fanatics. See note 1 above.

9. I think *diabolus* in Latin, in fact a transliterated Greek word, still had something of its basic Greek meaning of an accuser or slanderer, one who is always raising objections, making difficulties. One could almost, but not quite, translate *diabolus* here as "the joker in the pack." But see Jn 6:70.

10. *Eos . . . dedit praecipites*. It could be translated "made them cliff jumpers." But not all Donatists jumped over cliffs, though all seem to have approved the practice. I take "gave them" literally; he gave them cliff jumpers, as God gave the Catholic Church true martyrs.

11. See Mt 27:3-5.

12. Actually the answer Jesus gave the devil after the third temptation, Mt 4:10.

13. A regular feature of the African cult of the dead. Augustine succeeded, it seems, very early in his ecclesiastical career, in suppressing it among Catholics.

14. The Mount of Olives.

15. The Proconsular Acts; PL 3, 1500; Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, September, p. 201.

16. He is certainly not at his most lucid here. But I think what he is saying is that these Circumcellion fanatics either make a murderer, by forcing someone to kill them, or commit murder themselves by killing the reluctant murderer if he refuses to kill them.

17. Here Augustine seems to be mixing up two separate episodes. In the earlier persecution of Decius in 250, which broke very shortly after Cyprian had been elected bishop of Carthage, he had gone into hiding. In the persecution of Valerian, in 258, he had first been exiled to Curubis, then fetched back to Carthage and allowed to stay at his country residence under house arrest, until he was brought to the city and lodged with an official of the court; then finally brought before the proconsul, condemned and executed.

18. The rival battle cries: the Catholics shouted *Deo gratias*, the Donatists *Deo laudes*.

19. See 1 Pt 3:15.

20. See 1 Cor 10:11.

21. Reading *orationes sanctorum* in the accusative, instead of the dative or ablative of the text, *orationibus sanctorum*, which I find impossible to construe. It could easily be a copyist's mistake, his eye caught by the ablative coming a few words later.

22. See Acts 9:36-41. But it is not the prayers of Peter he seems to be thinking about, so much as those of the poor widows.

SERMON 313F

PREACHED IN THE BASILICA OF THE BLESSED MARTYR CYPRIAN IN THE
MAPPALIA, ON HIS BIRTHDAY

Date: 397¹

Having preached in the morning on charity, and said it should be restless, Augustine is now preaching at the evening service on hope, in response to a request from the local bishop

1. First of all, let me reply to my brother and colleague.² I, this morning, said that charity ought to be restless, not slothful. But because this is what he wanted, let me obey both him, and God through him, and you, and may God give you the habit of obedience. We have been singing, *I have placed my hope in the mercy of God* (Ps 52:8). Let me say a few words about our hope. The words, indeed, of my sermon will have an end, corresponding to the time at our disposal; but hope itself, which the sermon will be about, ought to last much longer, and not stop when my sermon does. We may speak, and stop speaking; but hope is always crying out to God.

But this very hope too—perhaps what I am going to say will seem hard, but it won't shock you if I show you why I say it, and really I don't think it will shock anyone—but this very hope too will not be everlasting. After all, when the thing hoped for comes, there will be no more scope for hope.³ One talks about hope, I mean, as long the thing hoped for is not in one's grasp, as the apostle says: *But hope which is seen is not hope. For why does anybody hope for what he can see? But if we hope for what we cannot see, we wait for it in patience* (Rom 8:24-25). So if *hope which is seen is not hope*, because *why does anybody hope for what he can see?*; and the reason it's called hope is that *we hope for what we cannot see*; when that comes which we may see, there will be no more scope for hope, because there will be the thing itself that was hoped for.

Nor will it then be a curse, to be without hope; now, though, being without hope is a curse and a reproach for anyone at all. And woe betide the person who is without hope now! It's bad, you see, to be without hope, because you are still without the reality; hope can cease to exist when the reality is in your grasp.

The things people hope for in this life, and never stop hoping for

2. But what is the actual reality that will be laid hold of? What is it that is going to succeed hope? I mean, we can see people now hoping for many things on this earth, and in terms of this age nobody's life is without hope; and until a person dies, none is without hope. There are the hopes of children, that they may grow and be educated, that they may get to know something; the hopes of youngsters, that they may marry wives, that they may beget children; the hopes of the parents of children, that they may rear them, educate them, see those grow up whom they used to dandle when they were little—just to give special mention to the stages of human hope which we would say are entirely natural and excusable and commonplace. There are, after all, many widely held hopes that are very reprehensible; but let's stick to this sort, which is social and natural.

This, after all, is what everyone is born for—to grow up, get married, have children, bring them up, even to be called the father of children.⁴ What more do you look for? And hope isn't done with yet; you desire to get wives for your sons, and you're still hoping. And when you've even got this, you desire grandchildren; and when you've got these, this is now the third generation, and the old man is reluctant to give way to the children. He's still looking for something to wish for himself, looking for something to hope for—and he seems so benevolent!⁵ “If only,” he says, “this child could call me Grandpa, and I could hear this from his mouth, and die!” The child grows, calls him Grandpa, and he for his part doesn't yet recognize himself as a grandfather. I mean, obviously, if he is a grandfather, if he is an old man, why doesn't he admit that he ought now to be moving on, so that the children who have been born to him may succeed him? And when he hears this honorable name spoken in the child's voice, he wishes to bring him up himself. Does he fail to hope even for a great-grandchild? So he dies, and hopes; and he hopes for something else and something else again, when he's got what he was hoping for. But he's not satisfied by getting what he was hoping for, he's panting for other things. What was the point of getting what you were hoping for? Certainly it's time you finished your course; the end isn't being extended indefinitely.

And how many people are disappointed in this kind of hope, this commonplace sort of hope! First of all the thing doesn't satisfy when it comes, and how many people there are for whom it never comes! How many have hoped for wives, and been unable to marry! How many have hoped for wives they could get on well with, and have married wives they have been tormented by! How many people have desired children, and been unable to have them! How many have had to groan and lament over the bad ones they have had! So it is in all matters. Someone hopes to get rich; if he doesn't he's tormented by greed; if he does, he's racked with fear. And there's no one who gives up hoping, nobody is ever satisfied; so many are disappointed, and never stop entertaining worldly hopes.

*Let God be your hope in the land of the dying,
and he will be your portion in the land of the living*

3. May our hope too eventually be, not disappointed but satisfied, and something so good that it cannot be improved on. So what is the reality we are hoping for, at whose coming true hope will cease, because the reality will take its place? What is it? Is it the earth? No. Anything that is generated in the earth, such as gold, silver, trees, crops, water? None of these. Anything that may fly in the air? The soul shudders at the thought.⁶ Could it possibly be the sky, so lovely, and adorned with lights? What, after all, among these visible things is more delightful, more beautiful? Isn't this either. And what is it?

These things are delightful, they're beautiful, they're good; seek the one who made them, he it is that is your hope. He it is that is now your hope, he it is that will later on be the reality you will possess; your hope while you believe, your possession when you see. Say to him, *You are my hope* (Ps 142:5). It's right that you should say now, *You are my hope*; because you believe, you don't yet see. He is being promised to you, you don't yet have him in your grasp. As long as you are in the body, you are wandering in exile away from the Lord;⁷ you are on the road, you haven't yet reached home. The ruler and founder of the home country has become the road, to lead you there. So say to him now, *You are my hope*. What later on? *My portion in the land of the living* (Ps 142:5). What is now your hope will later on be your portion. Let him be your hope in the land of the dying, and he will be your portion in the land of the living.

Turning to the Lord, etc.

NOTES

1. So Perler. The sermon is mentioned in Possidius' *Index*, 8 (PL 46, 17) three entries after the one on restless charity referred to in its opening sentences (a sermon now lost), and two entries after Sermon 308A, preached on the previous evening. The title translated here is the only thing that links it to Saint Cyprian's feast day; the saint is not mentioned or alluded to even once in the course of the sermon, which is about hope. Possidius refers to it as a sermon on the response of Ps 51 (52), *I have placed my hope in the mercy of God*; and that is the title given in Migne's edition of the sermon, PL 46, 915-917. That editor suggested that it should be inserted among Augustine's sermons after Sermon 20.

2. Presumably Aurelius, the bishop of Carthage. If he had asked Augustine to explain why he had said in the morning that charity should be restless, Augustine does not in fact do that. So I presume Aurelius had asked quite simply for a sermon on hope—as an antidote, perhaps, to the anxiety that the notion of a restless charity might so easily engender.

3. He is playing on his favorite jingle between *spes*, hope, and *res*, the thing hoped for. I import another, much less apt jingle, just to try to keep up with him.

4. A curious additional phrase, which it is hard to see the point of.

5. The implication, presumably, is that the old boy is in fact being thoroughly self-centered in his hopes.

6. I wonder why it should do so more at this prospect than at the ones just mentioned!

7. See 2 Cor 5:6-9.

*Appendix on the dating of the sermons preached on the solemnity
of Saint Cyprian*

There are twelve sermons extant, besides *Expositions of the Psalms*, preached by Augustine on the feast, or its vigil, of Saint Cyprian, 14 September in the African calendar. Of these, we gather from internal evidence or from the headings given them by some manuscripts that Sermons 308A (preached on the vigil), 309, 311, 312, 313, 313A, 313B, 313C, 313F were definitely preached in Carthage; 310 was definitely not, 313E probably not, 313D doubtful.

Now O. Perler, in his chronology of Augustine's travels, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, 430-476, has him in Carthage for Saint Cyprian's feast in the years 397, 401, 403, 405, 406?, 410, 411, 413?, 416, 417, 419. To 397 he assigns Sermon 308A, on 13 September, Sermon 313F (Denis 22) on 14; to 401 Sermons 313A and 313B (Denis 14 and 15), in the morning and evening respectively; to 403 Sermon 313C (Guelferbytanus 26); to 405 Sermon 311; to 410 Sermon 313E (Guelferbytanus 28); to 411, *Expositions of the Psalms* 72(73) and 88(89); to 413, no sermon—Augustine's great friend Marcellinus had just been executed, in a flagrant case of judicial murder, on 13 September; to 416 on 13 and 14 September *Expositions of the Psalms* 85(86) and 86(87); to 417 Sermon 312; to 419 no sermon.

This leaves, of the sermons possibly or probably preached in Carthage, Sermons 309, 313, and 313D (Guelferbytanus 27) undated by Perler or other scholars. For Sermon 309 I have suggested the year 394, for Sermon 313 the year 406, and for Sermon 313D the year 419. This leaves Sermon 310, the one sermon definitely preached elsewhere than Carthage, and I suggest dating it to the year 415. My reasons are given in note 1 to each of these sermons.

But about some of the dates suggested by Perler and other scholars I have certain reservations. Thus Sermon 312 is dated to 417 purely on the grounds, as far as I can gather, that Augustine talks in it of Cyprian being predestined; from this it is inferred that it must have been preached well after Pelagianism had come on the stage—an inference with very little force to it, in my opinion. It also has something severe to say about the Donatists; and they had, at the very least, taken a back seat on the stage by 417. So I suggest switching the dates proposed for Sermons 311 and 312, and allotting Sermon 312 to the year 405 and Sermon 311 to the year 417. See Sermon 312 above, note 17.

Sermon 313E, which Brown and Kunzelmann allot to the year 410, concentrates on the Donatist Circumcellion fanatics, who were considered by their admirers to have achieved martyrdom by hurling themselves over precipices. The two scholars also suggest that it was preached either in Carthage or in Utica. But Perler remarks that there is no indication, from internal or external evidence, about where it was preached; and he does not seem particularly convinced about the date. Neither am I, about either place or date. September 410 was only a few months before the crucial colloquy between the Catholic and Donatist bishops of 411; and I doubt if cliff jumping fanatics figured largely among the preoccupations either of the bishops at that time, or of the Catholic laity of Carthage or Utica. I suggest in note 1 to Sermon 313E that it was preached in Hippo Regius or its neighborhood in 395 or 396.

There is one interesting, if minor, detail concerning Sermons 312, 313A, and 313C, that may have a bearing on dates. In all of them the preacher quotes Ps 34:2; in Sermons 312 and 313A it is quoted as *audians mansueti et laetentur*; in 313C as *audians mites et jocundentur*. All three sermons were fairly certainly preached in Carthage, so presumably reflect the Psalter of the Carthaginian Church. If Sermon 313A was preached in 401 and Sermon 312 in 405, as I suggest, and 313C in 403 as Perler suggests, does this mean that the Psalter was changed between 401 and 403, only to be changed back again in 405? The idea seems absurd. The 312, 313A version is the Vulgate (Jerome) version, so we can reasonably regard the 313C version as the more archaic. So perhaps we should agree with Fischer and Kunzelmann who date this last sermon to 396 or 397. But Perler says Augustine was not in Carthage in 396, only in 397, and to that year he allots Sermon 313F. Well, he has Augustine preaching twice on this feast day in other years; why not in 397? So very tentatively I move Sermon 313C from 403 to 397.

Thus my tentative conclusion about the dating and placing of all these sermons is as follows:
394 Sermon 309 in Carthage;

- 396 Sermon 313E in Hippo Regius or its neighborhood;
- 397 Sermon 308A on 13 September;
 - Sermons 313F and 313C on September 14, all in Carthage;
- 401 Sermons 313A and 313B in Carthage;
- 405 Sermon 312 in Carthage;
- 406 Sermon 313 in Carthage;
- 415 Sermon 310 not in Carthage;
- 417 Sermon 311 in Carthage;
- 419 Sermon 313D, possibly in Carthage, possibly elsewhere.

SERMON 313G

ON THE FEAST DAY OF SAINT EULALIA

Date: 411¹

Christ, never having been of this world, chose the martyrs out of this world

1. The sacred readings that are chanted, suitable to the festivals of the martyrs, remind us that their triumphs were foretold beforehand, and were achieved with the help of the one who had promised these things. *If the world hates you, says the Lord, you must know that it first hated me. If you were of the world, the world would love what is its own* (Jn 15:18-19). The Lord Christ was never of this world, because he was not a sinner. His disciples, though, were of the world; but that they might not be of the world, he chose them himself from the world, he that was never of the world. He says this to them openly in so many words in another place:² *I have chosen you from the world* (Jn 15:19). I have chosen what I made, not what I found. Did he find anyone, after all, whose merits were anything but bad, when he came? But those whom he found to be bad, he made good. Of captives he made redeemed persons, of the redeemed he made servants,³ of servants brothers and sisters, of brothers and sisters members of his body.

What's left of the world still hates us

2. So because they had been made into his members, what else were they going to suffer but what he did himself? He demonstrated by his example what they ought to do. Are we to suppose that it was only his disciples who were told *the world hates you*, or was it all Christians? But now all Christians are the world itself, that is, the whole world. So what's left of the world to hate us? All the same, whatever is left does hate us. Any that are still pagans undoubtedly hate Christians.⁴ We don't hate them, but seek them. Any that are still Jews, rejected like the chaff of the threshing floor which was winnowed from the cross, they too hate us. Anything in the human race belonging to the heretics, that has gone outside the Church, they all hate us. And however many there are, however great they are, if the remnant left against us were counted, they hate us like that.

Just how the whole world raged and raved! Why look, the martyrs who

suffered, suffered all over the world. Who were they to stand up to the great roaring lion,⁵ if Christ hadn't come to their help? Wherever they went, wherever their travels took them, they were cursed, arrested, stoned, beaten, burnt on fires, offered to wild beasts, struck with the sword. Just look, those against whom this fury was turned have been crowned; as for those who indulged in the fury, where are they now?

Eulalia and other martyrs, though, were not put to death by people who thought that they were thereby offering a service to God

3. As to what the Lord said, though, *The hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering a service to God* (Jn 16:2), it doesn't apply to those martyrs among whom this one is included, whose feast we are keeping. This Saint Eulalia, you see, from the province of Spain, a holy and *valiant woman* (Prv 31:10), who by her love overcame the weakness of her sex like Saint Crispina, was like the blessed Cyprian, like many other holy martyrs, like the Eight, like the Twenty⁶ and all their companions, who all came to believe from the number of the Gentiles, and were killed by the pagans. So how can it be said that with them was fulfilled what the Lord said, *The hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering a service to God*? They aren't the ones about whom this was said, because those who killed them didn't think they were offering a service to God, but to idols.

So they are killed, that they may not perish; they are humbled, in order to be exalted;⁷ they die in order to live. That's how it happened. That's why the rest too *ran after the odor of his ointments* (Sg 1:3), the Twenty and the Eight, some here, others there; Cyprian, Crispina, Eulalia. And who could count them all? A few grains were sown, and produced such a huge harvest, and filled the granaries of Christ.

NOTES

1. Fischer and Kunzelmann say, more vaguely, between 410 and 412. The date of Saint Eulalia's feast is 10 December. She, as Augustine remarks in section 3, was a native of Spain. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* does not consider her worthy of mention, but Butler's *Lives of the Saints* tells us about her under 10 December. She was a girl martyr of Mérida, in southwest Spain, martyred in 304. According to the account, she was so ardent for martyrdom, that her mother took her off to a country village; but she escaped, and went back to Mérida and bearded the governor Dacian in his court, and provoked him by her somewhat unbecoming behavior (which included spitting in his face) to having her butchered on the spot. However, we are also informed that another Eulalia was, and is, honored in Barcelona on 12 February, also martyred in 304, also condemned by the governor Dacian (who figures as the villain in the Acts of Saint Vincent). If Augustine had been celebrating a girl martyr, like Saint Agnes, he would certainly have said so; and he would scarcely have called her in section 3 a *sancta et fortis femina*, comparing her with Saint Crispina, who was a married woman and a mother (see Sermon 286, on the feast of Saints Gervase and Protase, note 6). So I infer

he had in mind the adult martyr of Barcelona. Some scholars think they are two versions of one martyr; if so, I would guess that the child martyr is the mythical elaboration. Augustine would not, in any case, have approved of her courting martyrdom, as is clear from Sermon 313E, 5 above on Saint Cyprian.

2. Actually, the same place. He may have been thinking of Jn 17:14-16, which repeats the sense of this passage, though without saying that Jesus had chosen them from the world.

3. So far, probably quite a common social procedure. Goodhearted (or calculating) wealthy people would redeem Roman subjects captured by barbarian desert tribes, perhaps and in part payment for the ransom money spent, would require them to enter their service—or, indeed, would just buy them from the barbarians as slaves.

4. If, as suggested, the sermon was preached in 410, 411, or 412—that is, after the sack of Rome by Alaric and his Goths in August 410—then Augustine would certainly have in mind here the way the pagans were blaming the Christians for the catastrophe, a charge he sets out to meet in the first books of *The City of God*, begun at this time at the request of Marcellinus.

5. See 1 Pt 5:8-9.

6. Who were all these? Cyprian we know well enough; for Crispina see note 1 above. The Twenty Martyrs had a shrine in Hippo Regius, where Sermon 257 was preached, where, presumably, Sermon 325 was preached in their honor. We don't learn a great deal about them from this sermon, except that the first on the list was a bishop Fidentius, and the last a holy woman called Victoria, and shortly before her in what looks like an alphabetical list another holy woman called Valeriana; also that there were boys and girls among them, and that several of them were country people, qualified by *rusticitas*. They are also mentioned in *The City of God*, book 22, chapter 8, 8 (PL 41, 765). Their feast day is said by the scholars to be 15 November. But in what persecution they suffered is not certain. About the Eight no further information at all is available. But in Sermon 356, 10, Augustine tells us that the presbyter Leporius built a basilica to the Eight martyrs, from donations received from the faithful. See also O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 109, 114.

7. See Mt 23:12; Lk 14:11; 18:14; Jas 4:10; 1 Pt 5:6.

Introduction to the Sermons on Saint Stephen

The remains of Saint Stephen were discovered in December 415, after a priest in Palestine, called Lucianus, had a dream on Friday, 3 December, in which a venerable old man appeared to him, announced himself as Gamaliel, and said he had had Stephen's body buried in his own family tomb, together with that of Nicodemus, and was eventually buried there himself together with an infant son who had died soon after baptism; and he gave instructions about where the grave was to be found; it was on an estate about 20 miles from Jerusalem, called Kaphargamala, which a letter from Lucianus "to every Church" (Latin version, PL 41, 809) says means Villa of Gamaliel. Bishop John of Jerusalem had Stephen's body taken to the city, and from there relics were immediately taken all over the Roman world. Orosius, a Spanish priest who was a great admirer of Augustine, and wrote his first biography, brought some to North Africa, where Bishop Evodius, another friend and disciple of Augustine, secured the lion's share of them for his Church of Uzalis, turning it into a great center of pilgrimage and cures. Augustine eventually acquired some for his Church of Hippo Regius, and Eraclius, his senior presbyter and eventual successor, erected a shrine, a *memoria* of Saint Stephen there in 424. Sermon 318 below was preached on the occasion of the arrival of these relics.

See also Augustine's Homilies on the Gospel of John 120, 4; and *The City of God*, XXII, chapter 8, 10-22. Good background reading, for all the sermons indeed, but especially for these on Saint Stephen, is F. van der Meer's classic, *Augustine the Bishop*, section IV on popular piety.

SERMON 314

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE MARTYR STEPHEN

Date: 415-425¹

Comparison between Christ's birthday on 25 December, and Stephen's on 26 December

1. Yesterday we celebrated the Lord's birthday; today we are celebrating the birthday of his servant. But the birthday of the Lord which we celebrated was the one on which he was pleased to be born; the birthday we are celebrating of his servant is the one on which he was crowned. The Lord's birthday we celebrated was the one on which he received the garment of our flesh; his servant's birthday which we are celebrating is the one on which he threw aside the garment of his flesh. What we celebrated on the Lord's birthday was his becoming like us; what we are celebrating on his servant's birthday is his becoming as close as possible to Christ. Just as Christ, you see, by being born was joined to Stephen, so Stephen by dying was joined to Christ.

But the reason the Church marks the days of the birth and the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ with services of equal devotion, is that each of them is a salutary medicine for us, because he was born so that we might be born again, and he died so that we might live for ever. The martyrs, on the other hand, came to involvement in evil contests by being born, bringing with them the drag of original sin; while by dying they passed over to the most incontestable of goods, putting an end to all sin. After all, if the reward of bliss to come were not comforting them as they faced persecution, when would they ever have endured those various torments of martyrdom? If the blessed Stephen, facing that shower of stones, had not thought about the rewards to come, how could he have borne that terrible hailstorm? But he was bearing in mind the instruction of the one whose presence he could observe in heaven; and reaching out to him with the most ardent love, he longed to leave the flesh behind as soon as possible, and to fly off to him. Nor was he now afraid to die, because he could see that Christ was alive, though he knew he had been slain for his sake; and for that reason he was in a hurry to die for him, in order to live with him.

As to what the most blessed martyr saw as he engaged in that final, agonizing contest, you will no doubt recall his words, which you regularly hear from the book of the Acts of the Apostles; *Behold*, he said, *I see the heavens opened, and*

Christ standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55). He could see Jesus² standing; the reason he was standing, and not sitting,³ is that standing up above, and watching from above his soldier battling down below, he was supplying him with invincible strength, so that he shouldn't fall. *Behold*, he said, *I see the heavens opened*. Blessed indeed the man, to whom the heavens lay open! But who opened heaven up? The one about whom it says in the Apocalypse, *Who opens, and nobody shuts; shuts, and nobody opens* (Rv 3:7). When Adam was thrown out of paradise, after that first and abominable sin, heaven was shut against the human race;⁴ after the passion of Christ, the thief was the first to enter;⁵ then later on Stephen saw heaven opened. Why should we be surprised? What he saw in faith, he indicated in faith, and took violently by storm.⁶

Exhortation to follow in Stephen's footsteps, by praying for and forgiving our enemies

2. Come then, brothers and sisters, let us follow him; you see, if we follow Stephen, we shall be crowned with the victor's laurels.⁷ It is above all in the matter of loving our enemies that he is to be followed and imitated. You know, of course, that when he was surrounded by the surging throng of his enemies, and was being struck incessant blows by rocks hurled at him from this side and that, he remained calm and fearless, mild and gentle amid the stones that were killing him, and gazing upon the one for whose sake he was being killed, he did not say, "Lord, judge the manner of my death," but, *Receive my spirit*; he did not say, "Lord Jesus, avenge your servant, whom you see doomed to die by this form of execution," but, *Do not hold this sin against them* (Acts 7:59-60). So the most blessed martyr, standing firm in his witness to the truth, and on fire with the spirit of charity, came at last to his glorious end; and since, after being called, he persevered to the end,⁸ he acquired at the end what he was called; Stephen, by the glory of his name, was conducted to his crown.

So when the blessed Stephen shed his blood for Christ, being the first to do so, it's as though a crown came forth from heaven, so that by following him to the reward, those might receive it who had first imitated the example he set of courage in the combat. Innumerable martyrdoms later on filled the earth. All those who after him have shed their blood for confessing Christ, have placed that crown on their own heads, and preserved it intact for those who were to follow. And now, brothers and sisters, it's hanging down from heaven; whoever really longs for it, will swiftly fly up to it. And for me to encourage your holinesses briefly and clearly, I don't need many words: Follow in Stephen's footsteps, any of you that desires a crown.

Turning to the Lord, etc.

NOTES

1. See the introduction to the sermons on Stephen above. Of course, there is no reason to suppose that Augustine did not preach on Stephen before the discovery of his grave and the arrival of his relics in Africa. As this short sermon contains no reference to that event, it may well have been preached much earlier; the care taken with the style may indicate a date as early as 400. As against this possible date, see note 7 below.

Since Augustine is preaching the day after Christmas, which he nearly always spent in Hippo Regius, that is most probably the place where this sermon was preached.

2. The text just quoted actually has *I see Jesus standing*, not *Christ standing*. Odd, that Augustine changes "Jesus" to his favorite "Christ" in the quotation, and introduces "Jesus" here in his comment on it.

3. Emending the text's *cadebat*, falling, to *sedebat*. If Augustine had really said *cadebat*, the subject would have to be Stephen; but as the sentence proceeds, it becomes evident that the subject is still Jesus. There could surely be no question of Stephen seeing Jesus falling around in heaven.

4. See Gn 3:24. Paradise and heaven are being equated, which strictly speaking they should not be, as paradise was on the earth that the Lord God had created. But evidently the equation is already made by Luke, as in the next note.

5. See Lk 23:43.

6. See Mt 11:12.

7. *Stephanos* in Greek means the crown of laurel leaves awarded to winners in the games. Augustine is going to play on this meaning throughout this section, without ever actually explaining it. So he was either preaching it to a somewhat select and better educated congregation, which could have been at the date suggested in note 1; or else at a time when the Stephen cult was at its height, and at least all the martyr's devotees would be likely to know the meaning of his name; in which case we could date the sermon to about 420.

8. See Mt 10:22; 24:13.

SERMON 315

ON THE FEAST OF THE MARTYR STEPHEN

Date: 416 or 417¹

The Acts of this martyr, unlike those of others, are to be found in canonical scripture, the Acts of the Apostles, which are read every year during Easter time

1. How the blessed Stephen was ordained deacon with six others, himself being the seventh, and how he won through to his heavenly crown, you all heard when the reading was being read. This is the first special privilege of the first martyr, that has to be drawn to your graces' attention; that while we can scarcely lay hands on the stories of other martyrs, to be able to have them read as we celebrate their feasts, the passion of this one is to be found in a canonical book. *The Acts of the Apostles* is a book from the canon of scripture. The reading of this book starts with Easter Sunday, as the custom of the Church has it. So in this book, whose title is *The Acts of the Apostles*. you have heard how seven deacons were elected, and then ordained by the apostles, among whom was Saint Stephen. The apostles first, the deacons second; and the deacons produced a martyr before the apostles, the lambs provided a victim before the rams.

Similarities between the passion of Stephen and the passion of Christ

2. But what a very similar passion he underwent to that of his Lord and Savior! False witnesses against the one as against the other; and about the same matter. I mean, you know and recollect what the false witnesses said against the Lord Christ: *We heard him say ourselves, I will pull down this temple, and after three days I will build another new one* (Mk 14:58). The Lord, though, hadn't said this; but falsehood wanted to stick close to the truth. How are the witnesses, in fact, false? They heard he had said, *Pull down this temple, and after three days I will raise it up again*; the evangelist, though, says, *He was saying this about the temple of his body* (Jn 2:19.21). Where he said "Pull down," the false witnesses said "I will pull down." They changed a few syllables; but the false witnesses were all the worse, for wishing to stick near the truth in their calumny.

And what was this man charged with? *We heard him say that Jesus the Nazarene will destroy this temple, and change the custom of the law* (Acts 6:14).

They were giving false testimony, and prophesying the truth.² Just as Caiaphas, their master, chief of the priests, when advising the Jews that Christ should be killed, said this: *It is expedient that one should die, rather than that the whole nation should perish*; but the evangelist says, *This he did not say of himself; but since he was high priest that year, he prophesied that it was necessary for Christ to die for the people* (Jn 11:51). What's this, brothers and sisters? Great indeed is the force of truth. People hate the truth, and they prophesy the truth without knowing it. Actually, they don't do it, but it is done through them. So these false witnesses came trotting out just like the other false witnesses, but those on whose account³ Christ was killed.

*A difference between Christ and Stephen:
Christ remained silent before the council, Stephen spoke at length*

3. They brought him before the council, in order to obtain a more impressive judgment. But the friend of Christ, when they had stated their case,⁴ proclaimed the truth about his Lord. He was going to die; why should a God-fearing tongue keep quiet before the godless? Why not die for the truth? In this one respect he was unlike his Lord when their trials are compared, because of a very definite mystery. He, after all, is God in his supreme greatness. When the Lord was brought to his passion, he preferred to keep quiet on being interrogated; this man did not keep quiet. Why did Christ prefer to keep quiet? Because it had been foretold about him: *Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb without a voice before its shearer, so he did not open his mouth* (Is 53:7).

Why, though, did this one refuse to keep quiet? Because the Lord himself had said, *What I tell you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear in the ear, proclaim on the rooftops* (Mt 10:27). How did Saint Stephen come to proclaim on the rooftops? By treading on the roof of the mud house, the flesh. Whoever's not afraid of death, after all, treads on the flesh. First of all he expounded God's law to them from the beginning, from Abraham up to Moses, up to the giving of the law, up to the entry into the promised land; this in order to establish that the testimony on which they were trying to incriminate him was not true. Then from Moses he drew for them a great comparison with Christ.⁵ Moses was rejected by them, and it was he who delivered them; the one rejected was the liberator. He didn't return evil for evil; on the contrary, he returned good for evil. In the same way too, the Lord Christ, rejected by the Jews, is the very one who is later going to be their liberator.

The nation of the Jews will be liberated by Christ

4. But now, the one who dies is dead. The Jews whom you see around will have the time of their liberation through the one they rejected; but they don't realize it. The ones who blaspheme him now are perishing; then there will be others, not these ones;⁶ the nation will be liberated, not these ones now. Isn't God now liberating the nations? All nations are believing in Christ, and from

being children of the devil are becoming children of God. Yet those ancestors of ours, from whom we spring, who worshiped idols, have perished with their idols.

Stephen savage against the Jews with his tongue, gentle with them in his heart

5. You heard the story, and saw the spectacle with your hearts.⁷ You were spectators of Saint Stephen's great contest, in which he was being stoned. Who was? The one who was just now teaching the law.⁸ What law was he teaching? The one they had received on stone tablets. Duly turned into stone themselves, they stoned the friend of Christ. *Stiff-necked*—after teaching, he began to upbraid them—and *uncircumcised of heart and ears! Which of the prophets did your fathers not kill?* (Acts 7:51-52). He seems very scathing; a savage tongue, a gentle heart. He was shouting, and at the same time loving; he was scathing, and wanting them to be saved. Who wouldn't suppose that he was angry, who wouldn't suppose he was ablaze with the burning brands of hatred, when he said, *Stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart and ears?*

Meanwhile the Lord looked down from heaven and saw (Ps 33:13). Heaven was opened; he saw Jesus, so to say, encouraging his athlete. Nor did he keep quiet about what he saw; *Behold, I can see*, he said, *heaven opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of majesty* (Acts 7:56). When they heard this, as though what he had said was a blasphemy, they stopped their ears and rushed for the stones. It said in the psalm, *Like the deaf adder, that stops its ears* (Ps 58:4). Sure enough, they exhibited what had been prophesied about them. The stoning began. Now observe him being savage and scathing; recall his hard words, *Stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart and ears!* It was as though he was their enemy; as though, if it could possibly happen, he would love to kill them all. Let the person say this who cannot see his heart. Well, his heart was hidden; but his last words were heard, and his hidden thoughts were laid bare when he was being stoned. *Lord Jesus*, he said, *receive my spirit*. I have said it to you, I am dying for you. *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*. Because you helped, the one you supported has overcome. Receive my spirit from the hands of those who hate yours. That's what Saint Stephen said, still standing. And after that, he knelt down and said, *Lord, do not hold this sin against them* (Acts 7:58-59). Where now is that accusation, *Stiff-necked?* Is that all that you were going to shout at them? Is that the sum total of your scathing ferocity? You were shouting outwardly, praying inwardly.

Why Stephen remained standing while praying for himself

6. *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*; he said this standing up. You see, he was demanding his due when he said, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*. He was demanding the due which had been promised to martyrs; the due about which the apostle says, *I, for my part, am already being prepared for sacrifice,⁹ and the time of my casting off is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have completed the*

course, I have kept the faith; for the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord will award me on that day, just judge that he is (2 Tm 4:6-8). He will award it, he will award what he owes. The one whose due had previously been punishment, later began to hold God to the bestowal of a reward. Why had the apostle Paul been due for punishment? Because he had been an enemy of the Church, had been a persecutor. Listen to what he says himself: *I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God* (1 Cor 15:9). *I am not worthy*, says one who is worthy.

Why are you not worthy?

To suffer pain and punishment, to enter gehenna, to be tormented for my deserts, that's what I was worthy of; to be an apostle, I was not worthy of that.

So how did you come to be what you were not worthy of?

He continued, *But by the grace of God I am what I am* (1 Cor 15:10). By my own evil I was what I was; by the gift of God I am what I am.

So in order later on to demand his due, he first received what was not his due. What due later on? *There remains for me a crown of justice, which the Lord will award me on that day, just judge that he is*. He will award it to me, it's owing to me; it wasn't owing before. Why? *I am not worthy to be called an apostle; but by the grace of God I am what I am*. In the same way too Saint Stephen, *Lord Jesus*—standing up with every confidence in himself, because he had been a good soldier, had fought well, had not given in to the enemy, had trampled on fear, scorned the flesh, overcome the world and the devil; that's why he stood up when he said, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit* (Acts 7:58).

Saul's conversion into Paul

7. While Stephen was demanding his due, Paul the apostle was accumulating what was due to him. The former was asking for the payment of a good debt, the latter was adding to a bad debt. Well, what do you think, brothers and sisters? While Stephen was being stoned, you heard, but perhaps you didn't notice, the false witnesses laid their coats, the ones who were going to stone Stephen laid their coats at the feet of a certain young man, by the name of Saul.

This man Saul, and later on Paul, was a persecutor as Saul, a preacher as Paul. Saul, you see, is a name taken from King Saul. That Saul was the persecutor of King David. That Saul was to David what this Saul was to Stephen. But afterward, when he had been called from heaven, called, laid low, changed, when he began as an apostle to preach the word of God, he changed his name, and called himself Paul. And why did he choose this one? Because Paul means little, Paul means short. That's how we habitually talk: "I'll see you after *paulum*, that is after a little while." So why Paul? *I am the least of the apostles* (1 Cor 15:9). A splendid, a divine miracle! The one who was a persecutor involved in the slaughter of Stephen, later became a preacher of the kingdom of heaven. Do you wish to hear how savage he was in that slaughter? He kept the coats of the men who were doing the stoning, so that he could throw stones with the hands of them all. So then, after Stephen stood up and demanded his

due, saying *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*, he turned his attention to his enemies who were incurring a bad debt by stoning him, and were adding to the heap of which the apostle Paul says, *You, however, according to your hardness and your unrepentant heart, are heaping up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and of the revelation of the just judgment of God* (Rom 2:5). He turned his attention to them, and felt sorry for them, and for them he knelt down. For himself he stood up, for them he knelt down. He distinguished the just man from sinners; for the just man he made his request standing up, because he was claiming a reward; for sinners he knelt down, because he knew how difficult it could be to be heard on behalf of such vicious men. Though he himself was just, though he had that crown waiting for his head, he didn't presume, but knelt down; he didn't consider what he himself deserved to receive on request, but what those deserved to receive from whom he wished to lift such horrifying punishments. *Lord*, he said, *do not hold this sin against them* (Acts 7:59).

Stephen followed Christ's example; we should follow the example of them both

8. What the lowly Stephen did is what Christ the sublime did. What Stephen did, bowing to the ground, Christ did lifted up on the cross. Just call to mind, I mean, what he said too: *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34). He was seated on the master's chair of the cross, and was teaching Stephen the rule of lovingkindness. Good master, you laid down a good rule, you taught effectively. Here is your student, praying for his enemies, praying for those who are stoning him. He is showing how the lowly should imitate you the sublime, the creature imitate the creator, the victim the mediator,¹⁰ man imitate the one who is God and man. He is God, but yet on the cross he's man; God as Christ, but on the cross man, when he said loud and clear, *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing*.

So-and-so there says to himself, "He prayed for his enemies because he's Christ, he's God, he's the Only Son; so who am I, to do such a thing?"

If your Lord's example is a bit too much for you, don't you realize that Stephen is your fellow servant? God has taught you a lesson through Stephen just before his life drained away. If you see that these things happened before in the gospel,¹¹ my brothers and sisters, none of you should say to yourselves, "Who can do that?" There you are, Stephen did it. All by himself? Did he do it on his own? But if he did it by the gift of God, do you imagine he entered, and shut the door in your face? Did he cross the bridge and then cut it? Is that a bit too much for you? You too must ask. The fountain is still flowing, it hasn't dried up.

Be lenient with your enemies; anger is the really dangerous enemy

9. And indeed I'm telling your graces, my brothers and sisters; exert yourselves as much as you can to show gentleness, even toward your enemies. Rein in the anger which is prodding you to avenge yourselves. Anger, you see, is a

scorpion. If it stirs you up with its inner flames, you imagine it's a great thing if you avenge yourself on your enemy. If you want to avenge yourself on your enemy, turn your attention to that very anger of yours; because that is your enemy, which can kill your soul. My dear good man—you see, I don't want to say "Bad man," it's better I should say what I want you to be, rather than what you are. My dear good man, what is your enemy going to do to you? What's he going to do, that can amount to much, even supposing God permits him to do the utmost he longs to? He's longing to shed your blood. That's certainly difficult, and enemies are few and far between who carry their animosity to the point of death. Even enemies, when they see those they are hounding sorely afflicted, usually turn their anger into pity. You'll have difficulty in finding an enemy whose animosity extends to the point of death.

But very well, to the point of death; give yourself such an enemy, whose animosity toward you extends to the point of death. What's he going to do? What the Jews did to Stephen; for themselves punishment, for him a crown. Is your enemy going to kill you, as though you wouldn't otherwise die, as though you were going to live forever? What your enemy is going to do to you, is what a fever was going to do in any case sooner or later; if he kills you, he will be like your fever. So by killing you, is he going to do you any harm? No; indeed, if you die a good death, and love him, he's going to add something to your heavenly reward. Don't you understand what those stoning him bestowed on Stephen? They didn't know, did they, that a crown was to be awarded him for his goodness, and punishment to be awarded them for their malice? How many benefits the devil has bestowed on us! He's the one who has made us our martyrs. But is he going to get out of it on those grounds?¹² No, but as regards these benefits of his, which he didn't want, what is imputed to him is what he did desire, not what God did with it. So whatever enemy you may have to the point of death, he won't do you any harm.

The damage our enemy, anger, can do to us

10. Now see what harm anger can do. Recognize your real enemy, recognize whom you are fighting with on the stage of your heart. It's a very narrow stage; but God is watching; that's where you must tame your enemy. Do you want to see how this is your true enemy? I'll show you right away. You are going to pray to God; the moment is coming for you to say, *Our Father, who art in heaven*. You're going to come to that verse, *Forgive us our debts*. What follows? *As we too forgive our debtors* (Mt 6:9.12). That's where that enemy is standing against you; she¹³ is blocking the way for your prayer; she's putting up a barricade, and there's no way you can pass. You have said the whole thing very well; *Our Father*; it has run on smoothly; *Forgive us our debts*. And what next? *As we too forgive our debtors*. And lo and behold, your opponent contradicts; and not in front of the footlights, but in the private dressing room of your heart, that's where she shouts at you and contradicts you.

What sort of enemy is it, brothers and sisters, that contradicts *as we too*

forgive? You are not allowed to cherish animosity against your enemy; turn your animosity against this one. *Better is the one who conquers anger than the one who captures a city* (Prv 16:32), says scripture. What I have just said is scripture: *Better is the one who conquers anger than the one who captures a city*. When the emperor waging war comes up with some enemies, and finds a fortified city opposing him, excellently garrisoned with armed men, doesn't he demand a triumph, if he captures it, if he conquers it, if he overthrows it? But as scripture tells it, *better is the one who conquers anger than the one who captures a city*. It's in your hands. You can't destroy her, you can restrain her. If you're brave, conquer anger; and spare the city.¹⁴ I see you are all very attentive, I know you have taken the point well. May God assist at your struggles, so that you may profit from having been the spectators of such a great martyr's contest; and as you have seen him winning, and have cheered him on in his victory, so may all of you too win the battle in your hearts.

NOTES

1. While Fischer and Lambot assume, naturally enough, that the sermon was preached on 26 December, Kunzelmann infers from what Augustine says in section 1 about the reading of Acts in Easter time, that the sermon was preached during that season. It is a possibility; but one could take what Augustine says as just a reminder to the congregation that they should be very familiar with the story. The sermon was most probably preached in Hippo Regius—at the shrine of Saint Stephen if preached on his feast day.

2. What truth? I presume "a change in the law" from the old to the new, from the law of Moses to the grace of the gospel.

3. Or simply "for whom"; *pro quibus*. This is the most natural meaning, just as a few lines above it says that he must die for the people, using the same preposition, *pro*. But does Augustine mean that here? Or does he mean that it was because of them and their evidence that Christ was killed? But that does rather stretch the meaning of *pro*.

4. Reading *cum dixissent causam suam*, instead of the text's *cum dixisset* . . . , when he had stated his case. But Stephen's speech in Acts 7 contains no statement of his case as distinct from the truth about the Lord.

5. See Acts 7:35-39.

6. I here leave out a sentence, which either contradicts these two clauses between which it occurs, or else means nothing at all, and which has a baffling piece of Latin grammar in it. It can scarcely have crept in as a marginal gloss; but it does strongly reinforce my conviction that this whole short section 4 has no place in this sermon, and has somehow or other been imported from another quite different context, simply because of the conclusion of the previous section. Perhaps it comes from some commentary on Rom 9-11.

Meanwhile, here is the sentence I have omitted: *Quando ista dicimus, non aliis sed sibi promittimus salutem*; when we say this, we are promising salvation, not to others but *sibi*. Who can *sibi* refer to? A third person reflexive pronoun to the first person subject of the sentence, to ourselves? But even if that is grammatically possible, a piece of "vulgar" grammar, he is talking about salvation for the Jews—and goes on to illustrate from the parallel case of us Gentiles. So if *sibi* doesn't refer to the subject of the sentence, the only other possibility is that it refers to the Jews here and now, and not to others; and these (unless of course they are converted) he has just excluded from salvation;

in any case, that solution would be even more ungrammatical—and less likely as a piece of “vulgar” grammar.

7. Reading *spectacula corde vidistis* instead of the text’s *spectacula cordis . . .* ; the spectacle of your heart.

8. In his summary of Israel’s history in his defense, Acts 7. Augustine calls it the law, because most of it comes from the first five books of the Bible, the *Torah*, or law of Moses.

9. *immolor*; this primarily refers to the preparatory rites of a Roman sacrifice, especially to the sprinkling of sacrificial meal on the victim’s head.

10. The theological import of this pair quite escapes me. But see the end of section 1.

11. Evidently used very loosely to include the Acts of the Apostles.

12. This is just a stab at the meaning: *Sed numquid hinc iturus est?*

13. *Ira* is feminine, and of course is being personified.

14. This sounds very much like an allusion to the massacre of the citizens of Thessalonica which the emperor Theodosius had ordered in a fit of rage, and for which he had been excommunicated by Saint Ambrose. But that had happened in 390, twenty-six or twenty-seven years previously, if the date proposed for this sermon is correct. This could, of course, be taken as a slight argument for dating it fifteen to twenty years earlier.

SERMON 316

ON THE FEAST OF THE MARTYR STEPHEN

Date: 425¹

*The miracles worked by Stephen were performed,
not in his own name, but in the name of Christ*

1. The most blessed and glorious martyr in Christ, Stephen, has now given us our fill with his sermon;² but after that satisfying meal, I am setting before you, with the sermon my ministry requires of me, a kind of dessert. And what more delicious sweet can I find to provide for it, than Christ and the martyr himself? The one, you see, is the Lord, the other the servant; but Stephen, from being a servant, became a friend. We for our part are undoubtedly servants; may Christ grant that we also may be friends. Still, what sort of servants should we be? Such as can sing with unblushing conscience, *But for me, Lord, your friends have been highly honored* (Ps 139:17, LXX).

Before Saint Stephen was killed openly and crowned in secret, you heard how he had been chosen by the apostles.³ He was named the first among those deacons, just as Peter was among the apostles. So when he had been ordained by the apostles, in a short while he preceded his ordainers to martyrdom; he was ordained by them, but crowned before them. So what did you hear, when his passion was being read? *But Stephen, full of grace and the Holy Spirit, was performing wonders and great signs among the people through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 6:8).⁴ Be quite clear about whom, and in whose name. Those of you who know how to love Stephen, love him in Christ. That, after all, is his wish, that is what pleases him; he rejoices at that, he finds it entirely acceptable. I mean, he had no desire to vaunt his own name with those who stoned him to death. Notice whom he was confessing while he was being stoned; whom he was confessing on earth, whom he could see in heaven; for whom he was handing over his flesh, to whom he was entrusting his soul.

Have we ever read, after all, or can we possibly read anywhere in sound teaching, that Jesus ever performed, or still performs, signs by the name of Stephen? Stephen performed them, but by the name of Christ. This is what he is doing even now; whatever you see done by the memory of Stephen, is done in the name of Christ; so that Christ may be drawn to the world's attention,

Christ may be worshiped, Christ expected as judge of the living and the dead, and a stand be taken on the right by those who love him. When he comes, you see, people will stand on the right, stand on the left;⁵ blessed will be those on the right, wretched those on the left.

How Stephen provoked the Jews

2. However, let the blessed Stephen imitate his Lord. In a wonderful way he endured, amid the stones, the hard men hurling—what, if not what they were themselves? To show you that he was enduring hard men, this is what he said to them: *Stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart and ears, you people have always resisted the Holy Spirit. You wish to die, clearly, you are in a hurry to be stoned, you're eager to be crowned. You people have always resisted the Holy Spirit. While he was saying such things, they raged at him and gnashed their teeth* (Acts 7:51.54). Add something, Stephen, add something they won't put up with, add something they cannot stand; add something they can stone you for, so that we can find something to celebrate.

The heavens were opened, the martyr saw the chief of martyrs; he saw Jesus standing at the Father's right hand; he saw, so that he wouldn't keep quiet. As for them, they couldn't see, but they could be envious; and the reason they didn't see was that they were envious.⁶ As for him, he didn't keep quiet about what he saw, in order to reach the one whom he saw. *Behold, he said, I can see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of majesty* (Acts 7:55). Straightaway they covered their ears, as against a blasphemy. You can recognize them in the psalm: *Like the deaf adder, it says, which blocks its ears, in order not to hear the voice of the charmer, and the spell cast by the wise one* (Ps 58:4-5). Just as adders, you see, to avoid bursting out and leaving their dens when they are being charmed, are said to press one ear to the ground and block the other with their tails—and yet the charmer brings them out; so too these people were still hissing in their dens, while seething in their hearts. They weren't yet bursting out; they blocked their ears. Let them burst out now, let them show what they really are; let them rush for the stones. They rushed, they stoned him.

Stephen, dying, imitates his Lord in two respects

3. What did Stephen do?

What did he do? First take a look at the one whom this good friend was imitating. While the Lord Jesus Christ was hanging on the cross, he said, *Father, into your hands I commend my spirit* (Lk 23:46). This as man, as one crucified, as one born of woman, as one clothed with flesh; as one about to die for us, as one about to be in the tomb, as one about to rise again on the third day, as one about to ascend into heaven. All these things, you see, happened to the man. So, as man, *Father, into your hands I commend my spirit*. He, though, said, *Father, Stephen said, Lord Jesus*. What else did he also say? *Receive my spirit* (Acts

7:58). You spoke to the Father, I to you. I recognize the mediator; you came to lift up the fallen; you hadn't fallen with me. *Receive*, he said, *my spirit*.

That was his prayer for himself; something else came into his mind, in which he might imitate his Lord. Recall the words of the one hanging on the cross, and mark the words of the one who was being stoned for confessing him. What did the former say? *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34). Possibly, Stephen was at that time among those who did not know what they were doing. Many of them, you see, afterward came to believe. And we are not certain which group the blessed Stephen came from, whether he was one of those who had previously believed in Christ, like Nicodemus who *came to him at night* (Jn 3:2), who was found worthy to be buried where this one was too, because it was through him that this one was discovered.⁷

So it's uncertain whether he was one of those, or perhaps one of the others who were cut to the heart after the Lord's ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit, when the disciples were filled and started speaking with the tongues of all nations, and who said to the apostles, *Men and brothers, what shall we do? Show us. And Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and your sins will be forgiven you* (Acts 2:37-38). All their sins, do you suppose? What sin would still remain when even that sin was being forgiven by which the forgiver of sins was killed? What sin could be worse than killing Christ? This was wiped out. So what's the position, then? Perhaps Stephen was one of those. If he was, then that prayer also availed for him, *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing*.

And yet Saul too was one of those. When Stephen the lamb was being stoned, he was still a wolf, still thirsting for blood, still thinking his own hands were not enough to stone him with, and therefore keeping the coats of those who were doing the stoning. So Stephen recalled what had been said for him—if he was one of those about whom the Lord was speaking when he said, *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing*; so to imitate his Lord even in this respect, in order to be his friend, he too said, *Lord, do not hold this sin against them* (Acts 7:59). But in what posture did he say it? Kneeling on the ground. He entrusted himself to the Lord standing up; when he prayed for his enemies, he knelt down. Why did he entrust himself to the Lord standing up? Because he was entrusting a just man to him. Why did he kneel down for them? Because he was praying for vicious men. *Lord, do not hold this sin against them*.

Saul the wolf changed into a sheep by Stephen's prayer

4. Do you suppose Saul heard these words? He heard all right, but he jeered; and yet he was included in Stephen's prayer. He was still rampaging around, and already Stephen was being heard on his behalf. I mean, you already know, if I may say something about this man who was Saul, and later Paul; of course you know; it's written in the same book how Paul came to believe. When Stephen was slain, the Church in Jerusalem suffered a most grievous persecution. The brothers and sisters who were there were put to flight; only the apostles

remained, the rest were put to flight. But like burning firebrands, wherever they came, they set the place alight. The foolish Jews, when they drove them in flight from Jerusalem, were scattering coals of fire in a forest.

As for the man who was still Saul, for whom it was not enough for Stephen to have been killed, which is something we gladly recollect, because we already venerate him,⁸ what did he do? He received letters from the priests and scribes, so that wherever he might find men of this way, that is Christians, he should bring them back bound to face the sort of punishment Stephen had received. And off went Saul in his wrath, off went the wolf to the sheepfolds, to the flocks of the Lord; like a rabid wolf he was thirsting for blood, breathing out slaughter, off he went on the road. And Christ from above: *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?* (Acts 9:1-4). Wolf, wolf, why are you persecuting the Lamb? I, when I was killed, slew the lion. *Why are you persecuting me?* Rid yourself of the wolf; from wolf become sheep, from sheep become shepherd.

*The beauty of the picture which shows the stoning of Stephen
and the conversion of Saul together*

5. Such a lovely picture this is, where you can see Saint Stephen being stoned, can see Saul keeping the coats of those doing the stoning. This man is *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus* (1 Cor 1:1), this man is *Paul, the servant of Christ Jesus* (Rom 1:1). Yes, you listened very well to the voice saying *Why are you persecuting me?* (Acts 9:4). You were laid low, you were raised up; laid low as a persecutor, raised up as a preacher. Tell us, let us hear it: *Paul, the servant of Christ Jesus by the will of God* (2 Cor 1:1). Certainly not by your will, was it, dear Saul? We know, we have seen your fruits that came by your will; Stephen was slain by your will. We can see your fruits that came by the will of God: you are read everywhere, chanted everywhere, everywhere you are converting to Christ the hearts that oppose him, everywhere as a good shepherd you are gathering huge flocks.

You are reigning with the one you stoned, reigning with Christ. There you can both see each other, can both now hear my sermon; both of you please pray for us. He will listen to you both, the one who crowned you, one first, the other later on, one who suffered persecution, the other who did the persecuting. The first was a lamb then, the other was a wolf; now, though, both are lambs. May the lambs acknowledge us, and see us in the flock of Christ. May they commend us to him in their prayers, so as to obtain a quiet and tranquil life for the Church of their Lord.

NOTES

1. The sermon was clearly preached at a shrine of Saint Stephen, most probably at the one Augustine had built in Hippo Regius itself. He is at pains to remind his congregation that the miracles performed by Stephen, whether during his life or now at his various shrines, are not performed by him on his own, but by the grace and in the name of Jesus Christ. Thus, while always supporting popular devotions, he is careful to prevent them, as far as he can, from degenerating into crypto-paganism, with Stephen and other martyrs venerated as so many lesser deities in their own right. They are nothing in their own right; whatever they are, it is in the right of Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

2. His speech in his defense, Acts 7.

3. Not by the apostles, but by the whole community at the suggestion of the apostles, Acts 6:2-6, after which the apostles ordained them. Augustine, I regret to have to say, was not immune from that hierarchical clericalism which has always studiously ignored the elements of "democracy" in the early Church, and has concentrated every initiative, every exercise of authority in the hands of the apostles, and hence of course of the bishops.

4. The phrase *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, on which the whole force of Augustine's sermon will depend, is only found in the so-called "Western text," and is not generally regarded as an authentic part of the original. The idea it expresses, of course, is impeccable.

5. See Mt 25:33.

6. An untranslatable play on words: *Non illi videbant, sed inuidebant; et ideo non videbant, quia inuidebant.*

7. Actually, according to the letter of the presbyter Lucianus, it was through Gamaliel that both Stephen and Nicodemus were discovered, and Gamaliel himself.

8. Another untranslatable play on words: *quod libenter recolimus, quia jam colimus.*

SERMON 317

ON THE MARTYR STEPHEN

Date: 425¹

*What God must be keeping for us in the land of the living,
if he grants us such favors through the dust of the dead*

1. The blessed martyr Stephen, the first after the apostles to be ordained deacon by the apostles, and crowned before the apostles, shed luster on those lands when he suffered, and now that he is dead has come to visit these lands. Such a small quantity of dust has assembled such a big congregation here;² the ashes can't be seen; the favors received are visibly evident. Imagine, dearly beloved, what God must be keeping for us in the land of the living, if he grants us such favors from the dust of the dead. The flesh of Saint Stephen³ is widely known in several particular places; but it is the merit of his faith that is being commended to us. Let our hope and expectation of receiving temporal benefits be such, that we may deserve, by imitating that faith, to receive eternal ones. To pay attention to what the blessed martyr set before us in his passion for our imitation, to believe this, to fulfill this, that is the true way to celebrate the martyr's feast.

Among the great and salutary instructions, the divine and lofty precepts which our Lord gave his disciples, people think this one is very hard, in which he ordered them to love their enemies. It's a hard precept, but a grand reward. Anyway, notice what he said when he was giving this admonition: *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you.* You have heard what the work is, wait for the reward, and see what he will add: *that you may be, he says, children of your Father who is in heaven, who makes his sun rise on the good and the bad, and sends rain upon the just and the unjust* (Mt 5:44-45). We see this happening, we can't deny it. Has it ever been said to the clouds, "Drop rain on the fields of those who worship me, and keep away from the fields of those who blaspheme me"? Has it ever been said to the sun, "Those who worship me may see you, those who curse me may not see you"? Benefits from the sky, benefits from the earth; the springs bubble up, the fields are fertile, the trees are laden with fruit. The good enjoy these things, the bad enjoy them too; the grateful enjoy them, the ungrateful enjoy them. If he bestows

such blessings on good and bad alike, do you suppose he keeps nothing special for the good? He gives to good and bad alike what he gave to the men who stoned Stephen; but it is what he gave Stephen that he keeps for the good.

Besides the example of God the Father, we have the example of Christ and of Stephen

2. So, brothers and sisters, let us learn above all from the example of this martyr how to love our enemies. We have just had the example given us of God the Father, *who makes his sun rise upon the good and the bad*. The Son of God also said this, after receiving his flesh, through the mouth of the flesh which he received for love of his enemies. After all, he came into the world as a lover of his enemies, he found absolutely all of us his enemies, he didn't find anyone a friend. It was for enemies that he shed his blood, but by his blood that he converted his enemies. With his blood he wiped out his enemies' sins; by wiping out their sins, he made friends out of enemies. One of these friends was Stephen; or rather, is and will be.

Yet the Lord himself was the first to show on the cross what his instructions were. With the Jews, you see, howling at him from all sides, furious, mocking, jeering, crucifying him, he could still say, *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34); after all, it's blindness that is crucifying me. Blindness was crucifying him; and the crucified was making an eye-salve⁴ for them from his blood.

If the example of the Son of God is too much for us, we have the example of our fellow servant, Stephen

3. But people who are reluctant to carry out the precept, eager to get the reward, who don't love their enemies, but do their best to avenge themselves on them, don't pay any attention to the Lord, who would have had nobody left to praise him, if he had wanted to avenge himself on his enemies. So when they hear this place in the gospel, where the Lord says on the cross, *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34), they say to themselves, "He could do that, as the Son of God, as the Only Son of the Father. Yes it was flesh hanging there, but God was hidden within. As for us, though, what are we, to do that sort of thing?"

So didn't he really mean it, when he gave this order? Perish the thought; he certainly meant it. If you think it's asking too much of you to imitate your Lord, look at Stephen, your fellow servant. The Lord is Christ, the Only Son of God; is that true of Stephen? The Lord is Christ, born of the undefiled virgin; is that true of Stephen? The Lord Christ came, not in the flesh of sin, but *in the likeness of the flesh of sin* (Rom 8:3); is that true of Stephen? He was born in the same way as you; born from the same source as you; born again of the same Spirit as you; redeemed by the same price as you; he's capable of just as much as you are. One instrument of repossession was drawn up for all of us. The gospel is the instrument of repossession, under which we were all bought; it's as valid for

him as for you. Because we are slaves, it's an instrument of repossession; because we are sons and daughters, it's a last will and testament. Think about him, think about your fellow servant.

The cross is the lampstand, from which both Stephen and Paul shine as lamps for the world

4. Is it too much for you, since you have weak eyes, to gaze at the sun? Look at the lamp. The Lord, you see, said to his disciples, *Nobody lights a lamp and puts it under a tub, but on a lampstand, so that it may shine on all who are in the house* (Mt 5:15). The house is the world, the lampstand is the cross of Christ, the lamp shining from the lampstand is Christ hanging on the cross. From this very lampstand that man was also shining who first kept the coats of the stone throwers, Paul from being Saul, a lamb from being a wolf, both small⁵ and great; the robber of lambs, and the shepherd of lambs. He was shining from this very lampstand when he said, *Far be it, though, from me to boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world* (Gal 6:14). *In such a way, he said, let your light shine before men* (Mt 5:16).

Look, there's Stephen's light shining, that lamp shining; let's think about him. Nobody should say, "It's too much for me." He was human, you're human.

But it wasn't from himself that he got the capacity to do it.

But he didn't get it either, did he, and then exclude you from it? It's a common spring; drink from where he drank. He received it as a free grant from God. The one who gave it him has plenty more; you ask also, and receive.

Both the Lord and Stephen had very hard things to say to those whom they loved

5. The Lord had some harsh and bitter rebukes for the Jews, but it was out of love. *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!* (Mt 23:13). When he was saying all that, wouldn't anybody say that he hated them? It came to the cross, and he said, *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34). In the same way Stephen too first rebuked them savagely in his speech: *Stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart and ears*. They are the words of Saint Stephen, when he was addressing the Jews; *Stiff-necked, and uncircumcised of heart and ears, you people have always resisted the Holy Spirit, just as your fathers did too. Which of the prophets did your fathers fail to kill?* (Acts 7:51-52). By saying such things, it's as though he hates them, as though he's in a savage rage with them. His tongue is shouting, his heart is loving. We've heard the tongue shouting, let's test the spirit loving.

Well, when they had rushed for the stones, hard men for hard stones, they started hurling at him things just like themselves. He was being stoned with rocks, as he was dying for the Rock. It's what the apostle says: *But the rock was Christ* (1 Cor 10:4). And while he had been so steady and unbending in his teaching, notice how patient he was in death. These men, you see, were smashing his body with the blows struck by the stones, and he for his part was praying for

his enemies. The outer man was being pounded, the inner man was making his plea. But the Lord who *had girded him with strength* (Ps 18:32), who had tested him, who had stamped his mark, not on his hand⁶ but on his forehead, was watching his champion from above, ready to help him in the contest, to crown him in victory. In fact, he showed himself to him. *Behold*, he said, *I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God*. He alone saw him, because it was only to him that he showed himself.

And what did he say on his own behalf?⁷ *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*. When asking for something for himself, he stood up, for them he knelt down; upright for himself, bowed down for them; high up for himself, lowly for them, he knelt down and said, *Lord, do not hold this sin against them. And having said this, he fell asleep* (Acts 7:59-60). Oh, what a sleep of peace! The one who fell asleep under the stones of his enemies, how vigilant he will be in his ashes! He fell asleep without the slightest anxiety, resting in peace, because he had entrusted his spirit to the Lord.⁸

How effectively Stephen loved his enemies

6. So Stephen loved his enemies. I mean, while he stood up to pray for himself, he knelt down for them. Clearly, he fulfilled what had been written.⁹ He proved to be a true imitator of the Lord's passion, and a perfect disciple of Christ, completing in his own passion what he had heard from the master. The Lord, you see, while hanging on the cross, had said, *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34). And the blessed Stephen, when he was already almost buried under the stones, spoke like this: *Lord Jesus, do not hold this sin against them* (Acts 7:60). Oh, what an apostolic man, already from being a disciple become a master! It was necessary, after all, for the first martyr of Christ to follow the teaching of the Master. He prays for the godless, he prays for blasphemers, he prays for those who are stoning him. So because it was difficult to obtain a hearing on behalf of such as they, infirmity was brought into play to strengthen the hand of charity; he knelt down,¹⁰ he extorted what he was asking for.

Do you suppose he wasn't heard, when he said, *Lord, do not hold this sin against them*? He was certainly heard. Many of them, you see, came to believe. But I won't send you far to look for them; that Saul, who was throwing stones with the hands of them all, who was keeping the coats of the stone throwers—Stephen was heard for him. Shortly afterward he was still raging furiously; after getting letters against the Christians, he went raging on his way; he was thirsting for blood, breathing out slaughter; and the Lord, who had listened to Stephen praying for him, said, *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?* (Acts 9:1-4). The one you killed has been praying for you. And I now choose you, to confess me and die for me.¹¹

So let us celebrate Saint Stephen's birthday, and honor him with due reverence. We have celebrated the Lord's birthday; let us also celebrate his servant's. We have thronged to the birth of the savior; let us also throng to the birthday of

the martyr. The undefiled virgin Mary gave birth to our Lord, and our holy mother the Church has conferred on the glorious Stephen the palm of martyrdom.

NOTES

1. The sermon was clearly preached just after Stephen's relics (just small packets of dust from the recently discovered tomb) had arrived, and been distributed throughout the African provinces. Possibly it was preached on the day of their arrival in Hippo Regius as Fischer, Kunzelmann, and Wilmart suggest; see note 2 below. If so, the year would be 424. But in section 6 it is said unambiguously that it was preached on the feast of Saint Stephen, 26 December.

The sermon ends with section 5 in the Maurist edition; section 6 comes from a text edited by Dom Wilmart in the *Revue Bénédictine* 44 (1932) 204-205. The thought, in fact, crosses my mind that we may have here fragments of more than one sermon, stitched together by some old florilegist or collector, given the apparent discrepancy between section 1 and section 6 over the day it was preached on. But of course, it could have been arranged that the relics would be received in Hippo Regius on the saint's feast day.

2. This does rather indicate that the occasion for the sermon was the bringing of the relics to Stephen's shrine or *memoria* in Hippo Regius; which could, as I have just said, have been arranged for 26 December.

3. That is to say, the little packets of dust from his recently discovered tomb in Palestine. I don't think Africa was lucky enough to receive any of his bones—they would have gone to Constantinople and Rome.

4. See Rv 3:18.

5. The meaning of the name Paul.

6. Where Roman soldiers had the *character* or mark of the emperor branded on them.

7. This is where Dom Wilmart's text begins.

8. This is where the Maurist text ends.

9. It's hard to see what text of scripture Augustine had in mind here; probably it was just the Lord's command to love one's enemies. This hadn't, of course, been written and become "scripture" when Stephen was martyred.

10. This is the gesture of infirmity.

11. See Acts 9:15-16.

SERMON 318

ON THE MARTYR STEPHEN

Date: 325¹

The relics of Saint Stephen placed in his shrine, or memorial chapel

1. Your holinesses are waiting to hear what has been enshrined in this place today. They are the relics of the first and most blessed martyr, Stephen. You heard, when the account of his passion was read from the canonical book, The Acts of the Apostles, how he was stoned by the Jews, how he commended his spirit to the Lord, how also at the end he knelt down and prayed for those who were stoning him. From that day to these times his body lay hidden. Recently, however, it came to light, as the bodies of holy martyrs usually do come to light, by a revelation of God, when it so pleased the creator. In this way some years ago, when I was a young man living in Milan, the bodies of the holy martyrs Gervase and Protase came to light.² You know that Gervase and Protase suffered a long time after the blessed Stephen. So why their bodies first, and his later? It's not something to be argued about; the will of God calls for faith, not questioning.

But the truth was revealed to the man who pointed out the things that were discovered. The place, you see, was indicated by preceding signs; and it was discovered to be just as it had been revealed in them. Many people received relics from there, because that was God's will, and they came as far as here. So both this place and this day is being commended to your graces' devotion; each is to be celebrated to the honor of God, whom Stephen confessed. After all, we haven't built an altar in this place to Stephen, but an altar to God from Stephen's relics. Altars of this kind are pleasing to God. You ask why? Because *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints* (Ps 116:15). Those who shed their blood for their redeemer were redeemed by his blood. He shed his as the redemptive price of their salvation; they shed theirs as a means of spreading his gospel. They gave him something in exchange, but not from their own resources; their ability to do so, after all, was his gift; and for that to be done which could be done by them, was his gift. As a mark of his favor, he provided them with the occasion of their martyrdom. It happened, they suffered, they trampled on the world.

The martyrs not only scorned the world's delights, but also trampled on its terrors

2. It was little enough for them to scorn the world's delights; they also overcame its penalties, its threats, its torments. Yes, to scorn delights for the sake of confessing God is entirely admirable; but there's less to scorning what delights than to overcoming what irks and endangers. Suppose someone was told, "Deny Christ, and I will give you something you haven't got"; he scorned the delightful prospect, and did not deny him. But then that persecutor added, "You don't want to accept something you haven't got? I'll take away what you have." Gain does not attract as much as loss upsets; because it's less unpleasant not to eat than to vomit. He didn't acquire whatever it was, he didn't eat; he lost what he had acquired, he vomited out what he had eaten. In not eating, greed is thwarted; in vomiting, the stomach is turned upside down. So the one who hasn't feared loss is braver in confessing Christ than the one who has scorned gain.

But what sort of loss? Loss of money, loss of the inheritance, loss of all one's possessions. But the enemy hasn't yet approached very close. Possessions have vanished, which were available outside. If they weren't loved while they were owned, they weren't mourned when they were lost. And to put it in a nutshell, they leave as much grief behind them as the love they could inspire when possessed. But for the persecutor of those times, when the saints were being killed, it was nothing to say, "I will take away your possessions." "I will torture you," he said, "I will tie you up, I will kill you." Whoever was not afraid of that, really did overcome the world. Those who engaged in the struggle that far, really did carry the struggle for truth to its limits. This is what it says in the Letter to the Hebrews: *For you have not yet struggled against sin to the point of shedding your blood* (Heb 1:2:4). The perfect are those who have struggled against sin to the point of shedding their blood. What does "against sin" mean? Against the great sin, against the denial of Christ.

You all know how Susanna struggled against sin to the point of shedding her blood.³ But so that it should not only be women who can draw comfort from this, and that men too may look to one of their own number for the same sort of example as Susanna gave, you all know how Joseph struggled against sin to the point of shedding his blood.⁴ It's a similar case. She had as false witnesses against her those men whom she wouldn't consent to commit sin with; and he had that woman whose suggestion he wouldn't consent to. Against each of them the ones they did not consent to sin with gave false testimony, and those who heard it believed them; but they didn't defeat God. She was delivered, he too was delivered. What if they had even died? Wouldn't they have been even more fully delivered, when after being crowned they had nothing else to worry about? Why did I say that on being crowned they would have nothing else to worry about? Because there would be no further temptation. I mean, even if Susanna was delivered on that occasion, it was only to face temptation again sometime; and Joseph too was delivered, only to face further temptations. Why further temptations? Because *a trial and a temptation is human life on earth* (Job 7:1). Until death it's temptation all the way; after death, nothing but bliss—but for the saints whose death is precious in the sight of God.⁵

So she fought against sin, that is against adultery, and he also against the same sort of sin; they both struggled against it to the point of shedding their blood. It's a greater sin to deny Christ than to commit adultery. It's adultery of the flesh, to lie with someone unlawfully; it's adultery of the heart to deny the truth. In faith, in the mind, that's where chastity should be found. That's where our first parent Eve was corrupted. Do you want to measure the enormity of the iniquity committed through that corruption? Just think of the enormity of the calamity experienced by us, who have been born from that origin. I shall quote holy scripture to support this word of mine: From a woman came the beginning of sin, and because of her we all die (Sir 25:24). What she received as a punishment is what the martyrs scorn for the sake of victory. God threatened those first parents with death, lest they should sin; the enemy threatened the martyrs with death in order that they should sin. Those two sinned in order to die; these died, in order not to sin. What was inflicted on those as punishment was for these the restoration of glory.

*An example of a corresponding temptation to be overcome,
now that persecution no longer rages*

3. So they fought, and conquered; they were the first to conquer; but they didn't cut the bridge which they had crossed, and prevent our access to the other side. It's open to whoever likes to use it; and it's not a question of hoping for a persecution such as they endured; no, there's the daily temptation of human life. Sometimes a believer falls ill, and there you find the tempter. An unlawful sacrifice is promised him for his recovery, some harmful and sacrilegious amulet, an unholy spell, a magical consecration is promised him, and he's told, "So-and-so and What's-his-name were in much greater danger than you are, and they escaped it by these means. Do this, if you wish to live; you will die if you don't do it." Consider if that doesn't amount to "You will die if you don't deny Christ." What the persecutor said straight out to the martyr is what the occult tempter is saying to you indirectly. "Provide yourself with this charm, and you will live"; isn't that the same as "Sacrifice, and you will live"? "If you don't do it, you will die"; isn't that the same as, "If you don't sacrifice, you will die"? You've found yourself in a similar contest, look for a similar trophy. You're in bed, and you're in a stadium; you're lying flat on your back, and you're engaged in a contest. Abide in the faith, and though you are tired out, you are victorious.

So then, dearly beloved, you have no small consolation and comfort, a place to pray in. Let the martyr Stephen be honored here; but in his honor let the one who crowned Stephen be worshiped.

NOTES

1. Augustine, so all the authorities say, acquired a small portion of Saint Stephen's relics for his Church in 424. It was presumably after he had done so that his senior presbyter and eventual successor, Eraclius, had the shrine or memorial chapel for them built, as an annex to the main basilica. And only when that was completed could the relics be transferred there, which was the occasion for this sermon. And that, I presume, is why the authorities are unanimous in dating it to 425.

2. See Sermon 286, note 9.

3. See Dn 13 in the Roman Catholic edition of Revised Standard Version of the Bible; Susanna, in the Apocrypha supplement to the other edition.

4. See Gn 39.

5. See Ps 116:15.

SERMON 319

ON THE MARTYR STEPHEN

Date: 426¹

*Stephen lived and died and performed miracles,
all for the honor of Christ and in the name of Christ*

1. May the Lord, who enabled Saint Stephen to say such powerful and courageous things, enable me to say a few salutary things. He began, though, to speak to his persecutors, as though he were afraid of them, like this: *Men, brothers and fathers, listen* (Acts 7:1). What could be milder, what more gentle? He was being conciliatory to his audience, in order to commend to them the savior. He began politely, in order to be listened to all the longer.² And because what he had been accused of was that he had spoken words against God and the law, he expounded that very law to them, so that he was in effect the preacher of the law of which he was accused of being the wrecker. I heard this, and you heard it. Not many words are required from me, because you have heard a great many already.

The one thing I do urge upon your graces, to build you up in the faith, is that you should realize that Saint Stephen sought the honor of Christ, that you should realize that the holy martyr was a witness to Christ, that you should realize that he performed such great miracles at that time in the name of Christ. It is very salutary for you to realize, you see, that Saint Stephen performed miracles in the name of Christ, while the Lord Christ didn't perform any miracle in the name of Stephen, so that you may distinguish the servant from the Lord, the devotee from God, the worshiper from the one to be worshiped. It's when you make that distinction, you see, that he loves you. He didn't, after all, shed his blood for himself, but he did shed it for Christ.

How Stephen commended his spirit to Christ

2. Notice to whom he commended his soul. *Behold*, he said, *I can see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God* (Acts 7:55). He saw Christ as he confessed Christ, as he was about to die for Christ, as he was on his way to Christ; and at the end, when the stones were hitting him

thick and fast, and cruel wounds were being inflicted on him by cruel hearts, he saw himself close, not to destruction, but to departure;³ he saw that his soul was on the point of departing, and commended it—to whom? To the one whom he had seen, the one he had worshiped, the one he had served, the one whose name he had proclaimed, the one for whose gospel he was laying down his life—it was to him that he commended his soul. *Lord Jesus*, he said, *receive my spirit* (Acts 7:58). You have made me victorious, receive me in triumph. *Receive my spirit*. They are persecuting me; do you receive me; they are casting me out; do you let me in. Say to my spirit, *Enter into the joy of your Lord* (Mt 25:21). That, you see, is the meaning of *Receive my spirit*.

Where his spirit was received by Christ

3. But where did Jesus receive his spirit? Into what lodging?⁴ Into what heaven of heavens?⁵ Who can tell, who could explain? Do you want to hear it in a nutshell? Listen to Christ himself: *Father, it is my wish that where I am, they too may be with me* (Jn 17:24). To be where Christ is, what power of thought can grasp what that means, what sermon suffice to explain it? It is to be entrusted to your faith, not expected from my tongue. You heard, when the gospel was read, *Where I am, there too shall my minister be* (Jn 12:26). Read a Greek copy, and you will find “deacon.” What the Latin, you see, has translated as “minister,” is “deacon” in the Greek; because indeed the Greek “diakonos” or “deacon” is “minister” in Latin, or English; just as the Greek “martyr” is “witness” in English, the Greek “apostle” is “emissary,” one sent, in English. But we have already long been used to using Greek names in Latin or English. Many copies of the gospel, in fact, have this reading: *Where I am, there too shall my deacon be*.

Imagine that this is what was said, because in fact it was said: *Where I am, there too shall my deacon be*. So his deacon said very appropriately, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit* (Acts 7:58). You promised, I read the gospel, I preached the gospel, *Where I am, there too shall my deacon be*. I have been your deacon, I have administered my blood to you,⁶ I have laid down my life for you; give me what you have promised.

How Stephen prayed for those who were stoning him

4. And for the Jews, for those who were stoning him, for those bloodthirsty hearts, those cruel spirits, how did he pray for them? He knelt down. Such was the humility of Stephen, such the great guilt of that people. He prayed for himself standing up, for them he knelt down. Did he rate them above himself? Certainly not; it’s not to be thought of. He was indeed loving his enemies; but as regards your neighbor it says, *You shall love your neighbor as yourself* (Mk 12:31; Lv 19:18). So why did he kneel down? Because he knew he was praying for vicious men; and that the more evil-minded they were, the more difficult it would be for him to be heard on their behalf. The Lord, hanging on the cross, said, *Father,*

forgive them (Lk 23:34); Stephen, kneeling under the hail of stones, said, *Lord, do not hold this sin against them* (Acts 7:59). Like a good sheep, he followed in the footsteps of his shepherd; the good lamb followed the Lamb, whose blood has taken away the sin of the world.⁷ He fulfilled what the apostle Peter said: *Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, so that we might follow in his footsteps* (1 Pt 2:21).

How Stephen imitated Christ in his sufferings

5. Observe the man following in his Lord's footsteps. Christ on the cross: *Father, into your hands I commend my spirit* (Lk 23:46); Stephen under the hail of stones: *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit* (Acts 7:59). Christ on the cross: *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34); Stephen under the hail of stones: *Lord Jesus, do not hold this sin against them* (Acts 7:60). How could this man not be where the one he had followed was, where the one was he had imitated?

The discovery of his body, the power of his prayers

6. He triumphed, he was crowned. His body lay hidden such a long time, it came to light when God willed, it shed its light on many lands, worked many miracles. Being dead, he brings the dead to life, because he isn't in fact dead. So what I would impress upon your graces is that you should realize that his prayers obtain many favors, but not all. We find even in the leaflets that are given out that he has had many difficulties in obtaining something, and yet that eventually he won the favor, when the faith of the suppliant did not fail. There was no letup to the praying that was done, and eventually God granted it through Stephen. We have the words of Stephen's prayer and the answer he received: "The woman you are praying for doesn't deserve it; she has done this and that." And yet he persisted, he begged, he received.⁸ He has given us to understand that the one in whose name he performed miracles before he laid aside the flesh, is the one in whose name his prayers ensure that favors are obtained for people he knows they should be given to.

Stephen is our fellow servant; not to be worshiped in place of God

7. However, he prays precisely as a servant. A certain angel was going around⁹ with John. There are angels like that with God, so that if we have been good, and have earned full marks with him, we may be made equal to angels; *They will be*, he said, *equal to the angels of God* (Lk 20:36). An angel was showing Saint John the evangelist many marvelous things; overwhelmed by the marvels, he worshiped him; a man worshiped an angel; and the angel said to the man, *Get up, what are you doing? It is he that you must worship; I am the fellow servant of you and your brothers* (Rv 19:10; 22:8-9).

If that was the sort of humility manifested in an angel, what degree do you

suppose there should be in a martyr—as indeed there is? So don't let us imagine that Stephen is proud, by assuming that it is by his own powers that he does what he does. Let us receive favors through our fellow servant, let us give the honor and glory to the Lord. Why should I say any more to you, and talk at length? Read the four lines of the verse which I have had written up in the shrine; read them, hold onto them, have them by heart.¹⁰ The reason I wanted to have them written there, after all, was so that any who wanted could read them, read them whenever they wanted. So that all could remember them, that's why they are few; so that all could read them, that's why they are written up in public. There's no need to go looking for a book; let that little room be your book.

I see we have been proceeding a little more quickly than usual. But because a long reading was chanted, and the heat is rather oppressive, let us put off until Sunday the leaflet of God's favors received through Stephen, which we were going to have read today.

NOTES

1. A.M. la Bonnardière suggests this date, as she considers that the sermon was preached on the anniversary of the dedication of Saint Stephen's shrine; thus, a year after Sermon 318.

2. Augustine is here simply recalling the first rule of rhetoric or public speaking: win the goodwill of your audience; known technically, I believe, as *captatio benevolentiae*.

3. *Vicinum, non exitio, sed exitui*.

4. *In quam mansionem*; see Jn 14:2, of which the old translation ran, *In my Father's house are many mansions*.

5. See Ps 115:16.

6. An allusion to the deacon's liturgical function of administering the cup of Christ's blood at the eucharist.

7. See Jn 1:29.

8. Is this the story of a woman from Carthage, told in *The City of God XXI*, 8?

9. *Apocabatur*, a most peculiar word, of which Lewis & Short know nothing. It looks as if somehow or other it comes from Greek, but I cannot find anything like it either in Liddell & Scott. Could it possibly be, on the somewhat remote analogy of the Spanish *abogado*, derived from *advocatus*, a dialect form of *advocabatur*? But if so, and even so, what exactly would it mean? Perhaps something like "was assigned as a companion to John."

10. I wonder what they were. How provoking of him not to tell us! They would almost certainly have been two heroic couplets, of a hexameter and pentameter each, in the manner of almost all verse inscriptions or epigrams.

SERMON 319A

ON THE MARTYR STEPHEN

Date: none¹

Those who make progress in Christ are our joy and our crown

Certainly my one care is your building up in the faith, and my joy is your salvation; both your temporal and your eternal salvation.² *For we have the promise*, as the apostle said, *of both present and future life* (1 Tm 4:8). But God grants well-being or salvation in the present to both human beings and animals, to both good and bad alike; and it was this temporal well-being that the martyrs scorned for the sake of eternal salvation. You undoubtedly rejoice at my well-being, because you can see me in good health;³ and I rejoice at your well-being in Christ. But make it your business to see to it that I can rejoice with you on that day, because what the apostle said about his stewardship, which was so great and wide that we can scarcely follow in his footsteps, he said to us, whom he was building up in the faith; and he said, *You are my joy and my crown* (Phil 4:1).

So as many of you as are making progress in Christ as a result of my labors, are my joy and my crown; because my duty is faithfully to lay out, not mine, but the Lord's capital; yours is to receive and use it responsibly with great care. I, you see, can be a giver, not a collector; and a giver, not of my goods, so to say, but of God's; which I live on too, because we all belong to one great household, we are all under one head of the family. He has an ample storeroom, from which both we and you are able to live. Let us only beg him to rid us of all fastidiousness; first to make us hungry, and then to offer us bread. What I live on is what I utter to you; what I'm fed on is what I serve up to you. Because with you I am a poor man; the wealth we share in common is our Lord, the life of us all, which is blessed and eternal. So, *whoever boasts, let him boast in the Lord* (1 Cor 1:31).

NOTES

1. This scrap or fragment really has no business among the sermons on Stephen. It is only here, because in some manuscript or other it was attached to Sermon 319, or to a selection of extracts from that sermon, and is printed in Migne's appendix to Augustine's sermons, PL 39, 2142. It might come from almost any sermon of Augustine's, preached at any time on any subject.

2. *Salus* being a much wider term than the English "salvation," meaning as well health and well-being.

3. Perhaps he had just returned from one of his longer absences in Carthage; or perhaps he was visiting another Church, his home town of Thagaste for instance, where he had not been for some years.

SERMON 320

ON THE MARTYR STEPHEN, PREACHED ON EASTER SUNDAY

Date: 426¹

*The actual sight of the man cured by the prayers of Saint Stephen
is better than any leaflet describing the cure*

We are accustomed to hearing the leaflets which describe the miracles God performs through the prayers of the most blessed martyr Stephen. This man's leaflet is the sight of him; first-hand knowledge instead of some writing, his face presented to you instead of a document. You know what you had got used to seeing in him with sorrow and sadness; now read what you can see in him present among you with joy and gladness. In this way the Lord our God may be more abundantly honored, and what is written down in a leaflet may be engraved in your memories. Please excuse me for not giving a long sermon; you know, after all, how tired I am. That I could do so much yesterday, while fasting, and not collapse, and that I could also speak to you today, is something the prayers of Saint Stephen have obtained for me.

Turning to the Lord, etc.

NOTE

1. The date is proposed by Lambot and Perler; Kunzelmann suggests 425. This briefest of sermons must be read together with the next four—or at least with the next three. Sermon 124 provides a kind of supplement to the previous four. They really constitute a story rather than a set of sermons; and the gist of the story is contained in the leaflet describing the miracle that has just occurred, which was read out as Sermon 322. So the reader is advised to start there. These sermons were preached one after the other on Easter Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

Augustine also gives an account of the episode in *The City of God* XXII, 8, 22, from which we learn the names of the two people cured, Paul and his sister Palladia. F. van der Meer tells the whole story very vividly in *Augustine the Bishop*, 549-553.

SERMON 321

ON EASTER MONDAY

Augustine promises a leaflet about the miracle observed on the previous day

I did indeed say yesterday, as your graces will remember, that this man's booklet is the very sight of him. And yet, he has told me a number of things which you ought to know, to the greater admiration and glory of our Lord, about the memorial shrines of his saints, about whom it is said, *Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his saints* (Ps 116:15). So it will be only right to produce a leaflet which will contain everything I learned from his own lips. But, if the Lord so wishes, it will be compiled today, and read out to you tomorrow.

SERMON 322

ON EASTER TUESDAY: THE PROMISED LEAFLET

Augustine's introduction

1. Yesterday I promised your graces a leaflet, in which you could hear things about the man who was cured which you have not been able to see. So, if it pleases your graces—or rather because what pleases me ought to please you—let brother and sister both stand up in your sight, so that those of you who hadn't seen him, may see in her what he suffered from. So let them both stand up, one to whom grace has been given, the other for whom mercy must be begged.

Copy of the leaflet given by Paul to Bishop Augustine

2. I beg you, most blessed Lord, Pope Augustine, to command that this leaflet of mine, which I have presented on your orders, should be read out to the people.

When we were still living in our country, Caesarea of Cappadocia,¹ our eldest brother attacked our mother with intolerable insults, to the extent that he didn't even hesitate to lay hands on her. All of us children, who were assembled there together, bore this very patiently, so that we didn't even utter a word to our brother on our mother's behalf, asking why he did it. She for her part, goaded to fury by this affront to her womanly dignity, decided to punish her son for his outrageous insults by cursing him. And as she hurried off after cockcrow to the font of holy baptism² to call down the wrath of God upon the aforesaid son, someone or other met her then in the guise of our uncle, some demon we suppose, and was the first to ask her where she was going. She told him that she was on her way to curse her son for his intolerable abuse. But then that enemy, easily able to find a foothold in the woman's maddened heart, persuaded her to curse us all. Inflamed by this venomous advice, she flung herself on the ground, grasped the sacred font, and tearing her hair and baring her breasts, she demanded most forcefully of God that we should be banished from our homeland and wander round foreign countries, so that every race of mankind might be terror-struck by our example.

Very soon an effective revenge followed upon her maternal prayers, and immediately that same brother of ours, who was both older and more blame-worthy than the rest of us, was overtaken by a trembling of the limbs as great as your holiness has seen in me up until this last three days. And following the

order in which we were born, within a single year the same punishment overtook us all. But when our mother saw how completely effective her curses had been, she was unable to endure for long the consciousness of her breach of family piety and the reproaches of others; instead, tightening a noose around her throat, she terminated a life of grief with an even more calamitous end.

So we all went away, unable to endure our shame, and leaving our common home we were scattered far and wide through different regions. Out of us ten children, the one who follows the first in the order of birth was found worthy, so we have heard, to be restored to health at the shrine of the glorious martyr Lawrence, which was recently set up at Ravenna. As for me, who am sixth in the order of birth, together with this sister of mine, who comes next after me, I picked my way, with a great desire for the health I have longed for, among whatever peoples, through whatever lands I ascertained that there were holy places, in which God was working miracles. But to say nothing of other very celebrated places of the saints, in the course of these wanderings I even reached Ancona, an Italian city where the Lord works many miracles through the most glorious martyr Stephen. But the reason I was unable to be cured there is that I was being kept by divine predestination for this place. Nor did I leave out the African city of Uzalis, where the blessed martyr Stephen is reported frequently to work great miracles.

However, three months ago, on the first of January both I and my sister, who is with me, still suffering from the same malady, were given advice in a very clear vision. For a man of noble aspect, and venerable white hairs, said to me that the health I so desired would be mine in three months' time; while it was your holiness who appeared to my sister in a vision, in the appearance in which all of us present see you now. By this means we were given an indication that we should come to this place. And I also frequently saw your beatitude later on³ in other cities we passed through on our journey, looking exactly the same as I can see you now. Thus, advised by such evident divine authority, we came to this city almost a fortnight ago. To what I was suffering from, either your own eyes can bear witness, or my unfortunate sister, who for the instruction of you all offers an example of our common malady; so that those who can see in her what I was like, may recognize how much the Lord has done in me through the Holy Spirit.⁴

I used to pray every day with many tears in the place where the memorial shrine is of the most glorious martyr Stephen. But on Easter Sunday, as others who were present could see, while I was holding the railings as I prayed with loud weeping, I suddenly fell down. I did lose consciousness, and did not know where I had been. After a little while I got up, and experienced none of that trembling in my body. And so, being not ungrateful for such a great favor from God, I have offered this leaflet, in which I have also presented both things you were ignorant of about our misfortunes, and what you have observed for yourselves about my cure and restoration to health; so that you may also have the goodness both to pray for my sister and to give thanks to God for me.

NOTES

1. In central Asia Minor, now called Kayseri, about 150 miles southeast of Ankara.
 2. Why the baptismal font, rather than the eucharistic altar? Perhaps as one injured mother she was symbolically appealing to their other mother, the Church, from whom her children had been born again in baptism, to assist her in her prayer for vengeance, and so to say undo the grace of baptism.
 3. In vision or dreams, is what he means. It is noteworthy that in his account of this miracle in *The City of God*, Augustine makes no mention of his appearing in vision to these two.
 4. His sister Palladia, not yet cured, was standing beside him on the sanctuary steps, while the leaflet was being read out.
- The thought occurs to me that instead of "through the Holy Spirit," *per Spiritum Sanctum*, we should perhaps read *per Stephanum sanctum*, through Saint Stephen.

SERMON 323

PREACHED AFTER THE READING OF THE LEAFLET
ABOUT SAINT STEPHEN'S MIRACLE¹

A serious warning to both children and parents

1. By the mercy of God, brothers and sisters, we must surely believe that all these children, whom their mother's wrath struck with one and the same affliction from God, will one day be restored to health like this one, over whom we are now rejoicing. All the same, let children learn to show respect, parents be afraid of giving way to anger. It is written, *A father's blessing strengthens the house of his children; a mother's curse uproots its foundations* (Sir 3:9). Now these children, scattered through different countries, are no longer secure on the foundations of their homeland; everywhere they offer a sad spectacle, they place their punishment before us all; they present their wretched condition to our eyes, they are a fearful object lesson to the pride of others.

Learn, children, what scripture says, to pay due honor to your parents. But you too, parents, when you are offended, remember precisely that you are parents. A mother prayed against her children, she was heard; because God is indeed just, because she had indeed been wronged. One of them had both hurled abuse at her and laid hands on her; and the rest put up patiently with the wrong done to their mother, and didn't respond to their brother with even a single word on her behalf. It is because God is just that he heard her prayer, that he paid attention to her sense of injury. But what about that unfortunate woman? Was she not punished all the more, for being heard so quickly? You must learn only to make requests to God which you are not afraid of being granted.

*About the shrine of Saint Stephen at Ancona,
and why this brother and sister were not cured there*

2. We, though, brothers and sisters, must do all we can to give thanks to the Lord our God for the man who has been cured; and to pour out prayers for the woman who is still in the grip of her malady. Let us bless God for holding us worthy to see this. After all, what am I, that all unknowingly I should have appeared to these two? I mean, they could see me, and I was unaware of it; and they were thereby advised to come to this city. Who am I? I am one man out of many, not one of the great ones. And indeed, as your graces will hear, I am really astonished, and I rejoice that this has been granted to us; because this man was

unable to be cured even at Ancona; or rather, he could have been cured there, but for our sake he wasn't, because of course it could have happened very easily.

You see, many people know what great miracles are performed through the blessed martyr Stephen in that city. And listen to something that should astonish you. He has had a shrine there from a long time ago, and it is still there. But perhaps you will say, "His body hadn't yet been discovered, so how could he have a shrine there?" The reason is indeed not known;² but I won't conceal from your graces the story that reached us. When Stephen was being stoned, there were also some innocent people standing round, and especially some of those who already believed in Christ. The story goes that a stone struck his elbow, and bounced from there to land at the feet of a religious man. He picked it up and kept it. He was a seafaring man, and the chances of his seafaring brought him ashore at Ancona, and it was revealed to him that the stone should be deposited there. He obeyed the revelation, and did what he was told; and from that time there began to be a memorial shrine of Saint Stephen there; and the rumor was that an arm of Saint Stephen was there, as people didn't know what had really happened. In fact, though, we are to understand that the reason why it was revealed that he should deposit the stone there which had bounced off the martyr's elbow, is that the Greek for elbow is *ankon*. But let those who know what miracles take place there teach us about them. These miracles didn't start happening there until after the body of Saint Stephen had come to light. And lo and behold, this young man was not cured there, so that he might be kept for our eyes.

Augustine begins to tell about a miracle performed at Uzalis, when he is interrupted

3. Inquire how many miracles take place at Uzalis, where my brother Evodius is bishop, and you will find out. Leaving others aside, I will tell you about one which happened there, so that you may see what a powerful presence of the divine majesty makes itself felt there.

A woman's child was taken suddenly ill, so that for all her hurry she couldn't get help for him, and she lost him in her arms, while he was still only a catechumen. She cried out, "He's dead, my son, only a catechumen."³

Augustine interrupted by the shouting which proclaimed that the young woman Palladia had also just been cured

4. And while Augustine was saying this the people round the shrine of Saint Stephen began to shout, "God be thanked! Christ be praised!" In the midst of this continuous clamor, the young woman who had just been cured was led into the apse. When they saw her, the people prolonged their shouting for some time with great joy and weeping, not uttering any words, but just making a noise; and when silence was eventually obtained, bishop Augustine said: It is written in the psalm: *I said, I will utter against myself my wrongdoing to the Lord my God, and you have forgiven the impiety of my heart* (Ps 32:5). I said, I will utter; I

haven't yet uttered. *I said, I will utter, and you have forgiven.* I commended this unfortunate lady, or rather this ex-unfortunate, to your prayers. We were disposing ourselves to pray, and we were heard. Let our joy constitute our thanksgiving. Mother Church was heard more speedily than that accursed mother was to destructive effect.⁴

Turning to the Lord, etc.

NOTES

1. It is really rather absurd to treat this as a distinct sermon. It is all part of the same occasion; Augustine's conclusion to the reading of the leaflet, just as he briefly introduced it at the beginning of Sermon 322.

2. Does this indicate a certain skepticism about the story he is going to tell; or does it just mean that the ultimate reason for these things is hidden in the inscrutable will of God?

3. And so not saved by the grace of baptism; and as he was only a baby, incapable of "baptism by desire."

4. *Quam in perniciem maledicta mater illa.* But I wonder if he would really call the wretched mother accursed. He is surely thinking of the curses she uttered; perhaps one could emend *maledicta* to *maledicens*, that cursing mother. But how would it have got changed in the transmission of the text, being such an obvious description of the woman in her terrible rage? Or one could construe *maledicta* as a neuter plural noun, curses, and treat it as an accusative of respect: than that mother was with respect to her destructive curses. But if the sentence was really spoken as it is written, could his audience possibly have heard it in that sense? I think not. I would like to emend *mater illa* to *matris illius*: than the destructive curses of that mother. If he really said this, it would just have been possible for a later copyist to change it to the text as it stands, in order to make a more obvious balance with *mater Ecclesia*, mother Church.

SERMON 324

IN WHICH AUGUSTINE COMPLETES THE SERMON ABOUT A MIRACLE, WHICH WAS INTERRUPTED THE DAY BEFORE

The miracle at Uzalis of an infant restored to life just long enough for it to be baptized

I must finish the sermon which was interrupted yesterday by a cause for much greater joy. You remember that I had undertaken, and started to speak to your graces on the question of why these two, brother and sister, had been directed by divine authority to this city, so that it should be from here that they obtained their restoration to health, which they had desired and waited for so long. And wishing to say why, I had first begun to draw your graces' attention to the holy places in which they were not cured, and from which they were directed toward us. And I spoke about Ancona, an Italian city; I had begun to speak about the city of Uzalis, which is in Africa (it has as its bishop my brother Evodius, whom you know), because the fame of this same martyr and his works had brought them to that city too. They weren't given there what could have been given them, so that it might be given here, where it was meant to be given them.

Now since I wanted briefly to remind you of the divine works performed through the holy martyr, I had undertaken to tell you about just one, leaving out the others. As I was telling you this, that young lady was restored to health, and in the sudden joyful commotion that arose, I was forced to finish my sermon rather differently. So then, we know of a miracle performed there among many others, which cannot all, of course, be called to your attention. There was a woman whose son died in her arms, an infant at the breast, still a catechumen. When she saw that she had lost him, and that he was irretrievably doomed, she began to weep for him more as a believer than as a mother.¹ The only life, you see, that she was desiring for her son was that of the age to come, and what she was lamenting was that this had been taken from her and had been lost. Filled with a feeling of confidence, she picked up the dead child and hurried off to the shrine of the blessed martyr Stephen, and began to demand her son back from him, saying, "Holy martyr, you can see that I have been left without any consolation at all. I mean, I can't say my son has gone ahead of me, since you know very well he has perished. You at least can see why I am so grief-stricken. Give my son back to me, so that I may have him in the presence of the one who crowned you."

While she was praying in these and similar terms, and her tears were not asking but, as I said, demanding to be heard, her son came back to life. And

because she had said, “You know why I want him,” God also wished to reveal what her real spirit was. She took him straightaway to the presbyters, he was baptized, sanctified, anointed, hands were laid on him; when all the sacraments were completed, he was taken from her.² She, for her part, conducted his funeral with such a tranquil expression that it seemed she was laying him, not in the silence of the grave, but in the lap of the martyr Stephen. The woman’s faithful heart was tried and passed the test. So could not God have cured these two in a place where he performed such a miracle as that through his martyr? And yet they were directed here to us.

Turning to the Lord, etc.

NOTES

1. *Magis flere fideliter quam mater*, a rather lopsided, and not entirely grammatical contrast. My guess is that he was probably intending to finish *quam materniter*, when he realized there was no such word.

2. Does he mention the sacraments of initiation in order? It doesn’t look like it, as in that case “anointed” (confirmed) should come immediately after “baptized.” I suspect “sanctified” means the infant was given communion, as is, I believe, the practice in Eastern rites still. And “hands laid on him”? This was usually the gesture of absolution or reconciliation with the Church—as well as of ordination, of course. But was there any place for this immediately after the sacraments of initiation? Perhaps it was just a final solemn blessing. Alternatively, “baptized” and “sanctified” may refer simply to baptism and its effect, and “anointed” and “hands laid on him” to the sacrament of the sick.

SERMON 325

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE TWENTY MARTYRS

Date: 408¹

*The feasts of the martyrs are celebrated
in order to encourage us to imitate their example*

1. The debt of a sermon must be paid off to you on the feast day of the holy martyrs. May the prayers of the martyrs assist me, as I set out to speak about the glory of the martyrs, and to state briefly the just cause of their martyrdom. This, you see, is what your holinesses need to be reminded of by these solemn occasions; first and foremost, that we shouldn't imagine we are conferring any favor on the martyrs, by keeping their feasts with great solemnity. They have no need of our festivities, because they are rejoicing in heaven with the angels; but they also rejoice together with us, not if we honor them, but if we imitate them. But to honor and not imitate them is nothing more or less than false flattery. So this is why these feasts have been instituted in the Church of Christ; it's so that by them the congregation of Christ's members may be admonished to imitate Christ's martyrs. That's absolutely the only value of this festivity, there isn't any other at all.

You see, if it were God who was proposed as a model for our imitation, human frailty would reply that it's asking too much of it to imitate one to whom it simply cannot be compared. If next the example of our Lord Jesus Christ himself were proposed for our imitation, seeing that while he is God, the very reason he clothed himself with mortal flesh was to introduce a commandment to human beings who carry the burden of mortal flesh, and to show them an example; about whom it's in fact written that *Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, so that we might follow in his footsteps* (1 Pt 2:21); still even here human frailty can still reply, "What similarity is there between me and Christ? He, even if he's flesh, is still the Word as well as flesh. *The Word*, after all, *became flesh in order to dwell amongst us* (Jn 1:14). He took flesh, didn't lose the Word; he received what he was not, didn't lose what he was. *For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself* (2 Cor 5:19). So what similarity is there between me and Christ?"

So therefore, it was to deny our weakness and our lack of faith all such

excuses that the martyrs built for us a paved road. It was to be built of paving stones, on which we could walk without a qualm.² They made it with their blood, with their confession of faith. Or you could say, that despising their bodies, as Christ came to win the nations, seated as it were on that donkey, they strewed their bodies like clothes before him.³ Who would ever be ashamed to say, “I’m not God’s equal”? Obviously you aren’t. “I’m not Christ’s equal”? Not even the mortal Christ’s. Peter was just what you are, Paul was just what you are, the apostles and prophets were all just what you are. If you’re reluctant to imitate the Lord, imitate your fellow servant. The column of servants has gone before you in advance, depriving your reluctance of all excuse.

Finally, he’s still saying, “I’m not Peter’s equal, I’m not Paul’s equal.” Are you not the equal of truth? Country bumpkins are crowned, city slickers have no excuse. Finally, aren’t you the equal of boys, aren’t you the equal of girls? Aren’t you the equal of Saint Valeriana? If you’re still reluctant to follow, don’t you want to accompany Victoria? That, you see, is how the list of the Twenty Martyrs has been read out to us; it began with bishop Fidentius, and concluded with the faithful woman Victoria. It starts with fidelity, ends with victory.⁴

*It’s the cause, not the punishment, that makes the martyr;
an implicit attack on the Donatist martyrs*

2. So look here, brothers and sisters; celebrate the sufferings of the martyrs in such a way that you give a thought to imitating the martyrs. They, in order to undergo a fruitful punishment, chose a good cause. They paid attention to the Lord, you see, who said, not “Blessed are they who suffer persecution”; but *Blessed are they who suffer persecution for the sake of justice (Mt 5:10)*. Choose the cause, and you won’t have to worry about the punishment. But if you don’t choose the right cause, you will find punishment both here and in the next world. Don’t let yourself be confused by the penalties undergone by malefactors, by the sacrilegious, by the foes of peace and the enemies of truth.⁵ They aren’t dying, after all, for the truth; but what they are dying for is to stop the truth being proclaimed, stop the truth being preached, stop the truth being grasped, stop unity being loved, charity being chosen, eternity being grasped. O worst of all possible causes! That’s why the punishment bears no fruit.

Haven’t you noticed, you that boast so proudly of your punishment, that there were three crosses when the Lord suffered? The Lord suffered between two robbers; the punishment made no distinction between them, but the cause did.⁶ That’s why it is the voice of the martyrs that is to be heard in that psalm, *Judge me, O God*. He is not afraid of the judgment; after all, he has nothing that the fire in the judgment can consume; where everything is gold, why should the flames be dreaded?⁷ *Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from an unholy nation (Ps 43:1)*. He didn’t say “Distinguish my punishment,” did he? He would have been told, “Punishment is what the robber suffered.” He didn’t say, “Distinguish my cross,” did he? Even the adulterer is included there.⁸ He didn’t say, “Distinguish my chains,” did he? Even thieves are bound with those. He

didn't say, "Distinguish my wound," did he? Even vicious criminals are put to death with the sword. So when he saw all the things that are shared in common by the good and the bad in the matter of sufferings, he cried out and said, *Judge me, O Lord, and distinguish my cause from an unholy people*. If you distinguish my cause, you will crown my endurance.

Let that be enough by way of exhortation for your graces in this holy place, since the days are short,⁹ and there still remain things we have to do together with your graces in the main basilica.

NOTES

1. The feast day of the Twenty Martyrs was 15 November. Most authorities are rather vague about the year the sermon was preached, putting it between 405 and 410 or 411; Zwinggi is the precise one, dating it to Sunday, 15 November 408. It is possibly the last sentence that suggests to him that 15 November fell on a Sunday that year, with a further service to follow in the main basilica; and no doubt the calculators of calendars have been able to work out that only in 408 within the span of those years did that date fall on a Sunday.

2. It was to be, in fact, a good Roman road.

3. See Mk 11:7-8.

4. And that's almost all we know about the Twenty Martyrs. I presume Valeriana was a young girl. For just a little more information about them, see Sermon 236 below, and note 1 to that sermon.

5. He is not thinking here of common criminals, but purely and simply of the Donatists and the people they claimed to be martyrs. But I don't think that, even after the imperial laws had been enacted against them at the turn of the century, any of them were ever put to death simply for being Donatists. The laws inflicted heavy fines and confiscations on them, especially on their clergy. They may well, however, have sometimes courted the death sentence by doing such things as robbing temples or even murdering Catholic clerics.

6. See, for example, Lk 23:32-33.39-41.

7. See 1 Cor 3:12-15. Augustine also, no doubt, had in mind his favorite analogy of the goldsmith's furnace.

8. What a strange thing to say! I never heard that adultery was punished by crucifixion under Roman law—except possibly when a slave was caught committing adultery with a free woman.

9. 15 November, winter setting in.

SERMON 326

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE TWENTY MARTYRS¹

Date: uncertain

The young martyrs hastened with joy to their reward, while their parents grieved

1. The solemn feast of these most blessed martyrs has brought us a happier day than usual. What makes us happy is that the martyrs have passed over from this land of labor and toil to the territory of peace and quiet; but they earned this, not by dancing but by praying; not by drinking, but by fasting;² not by being quarrelsome, but by their endurance. Their parents, I suppose, were grief-stricken when they went off to suffer; but they themselves were very happy about it, and said, "*I was happy at the things that were said to me; we shall go into the house of the Lord* (Ps 122:1). Don't, dear parents, please don't bewail our joys. If you don't want those whom you have brought up to go to hell, you should imitate, not hinder us." They knew where they were going, and their non-believing parents were bewailing their fate for no reason at all. But at that moment, in their love, they were mourning their children of the flesh; later on, when they came to believe in God, they would say, *You have turned my wailing into joy, you have cut away my sackcloth, and have girded me with gladness* (Ps 30:11).

If only, brothers and sisters, the sackcloth of penance may be torn off us, and the price of pardon be poured out!³ The martyrs laid aside here, left behind here, all the burdens of the profits of this world, and ran along the road that leads to life like good, unencumbered light infantry; as it is written, *As having nothing, and possessing all things* (2 Cor 6:10). And indeed on earth they had nothing, but in heaven they possessed everlasting felicity. They were hurrying off, fully committed, toward heaven, and running along the road of life without a worry in the world; and while still a long way off they were stretching out their hands for the palm. Run, saints; *so run that you may obtain it* (1 Cor 9:24). *The kingdom of heaven is being subjected to violence, and those who practice violence are plundering it* (Mt 11:12). It isn't limited in space; whoever wishes to enjoy bliss should be hurrying along to the kingdom of heaven. It isn't closed to anyone, except those who have excluded themselves from it. Christ is ready to receive those who confess his name. He himself is saying from up above. "I'm watching you, I will help you as you struggle, I will crown you when you win."

How these martyrs answered their judge

2. Holding him to this promise, the martyrs took no account of the terrors and threats of the persecutor. I mean, when the persecutor said, "Sacrifice to idols," they answered, "We won't, because we have the eternal God in heaven, to whom we always sacrifice; because we don't make offerings to demons."

And the judge: "So why are you acting against the sacred instruction?"⁴

They answered, "Because the heavenly master tells us in the gospel, *Whoever leaves father and mother, and wife and children, and all that he possesses, for the sake of my name, will receive a hundred times over, and will possess eternal life* (Mt 19:29)."

And the judge: "So you will not submit to the instructions of the emperors?"

And they answered, "No."

And he in turn: "So what authority can you have, when you see yourselves subjected to execution?"

And the martyrs said, "We carry the authority of the eternal king; that's why we don't care about the authority of a mortal man."

Then they were thrown into prison, and loaded with chains. How often the goddess said, "*Where is their God?* (Ps 115:2) Let their God come, in whom they believe, and deliver them from prison, snatch them from the sword, snatch them from the wild beasts!" They were saying all these things, but they couldn't pull down those who were built on the rock.⁵ They raged on, but these ones were not afraid. The martyrs who confess Christ are crowned, and the judges who forsook him were left behind.⁶ God wishes to test every single Christian in such a way that once the test is passed he may, as he desires, crown us all together with the martyrs.

NOTES

1. Both the Maurists and the Latin of the Italian edition from which this translation is being made simply head the sermon "On the birthday of some martyrs." However, the Maurists add a footnote to the effect that in one manuscript Sermon 325 was followed by a cento of extracts from Augustine entitled, "Again a sermon of blessed Augustine the bishop on the birthday of the martyr Saint Victoria," who as we have just seen was one of the Twenty Martyrs; and that then comes this sermon with the title, "Again a sermon on the same subject as above." Two other codices, the Maurists tell us, support this information. So I have decided to have the courage of their convictions, not quite understanding why they did not have it themselves. If this is all really so, then we learn quite a bit more about the Twenty Martyrs. The sermon was presumably preached at their shrine.

2. This looks like an oblique attack on the habit of celebrating such feasts with dancing and much drinking at the *memoriae* or shrines of the martyrs. It was very early in his ministry that Augustine succeeded in suppressing this old custom in Hippo Regius. So I would infer that he is preaching here not so very many years later, when the memory of that event was still fresh, and some nostalgic regrets for the old ways were no doubt still lingering in the hearts of some of his flock. Thus I would suggest a date like 398 or 399.

3. This looks like an aside addressed to the *penitentes*, who were barred from communion for their sins, and had a special place, a kind of rogues' corner, in the body of the church, where they would no doubt be moderately conspicuous in their ritual sackcloth. In one sermon Augustine remarks, "There are far too many *penitentes* here. You seem to think penitents' corner is a place to relax in, instead of a place of penance." So presumably it was to some extent up to the penitents themselves to ask for readmission to the sacraments, and to accept the conditions imposed—above all, the condition of a genuine conversion of life.

4. Sacred, because issued by the authority of the sacred emperors, who were indeed the ones to whose images the martyrs were being required to sacrifice a few grains of incense. This imperial Roman language of sacredness attached to the supreme authority was inherited by the Christian Empire, both in the west and the Byzantine east; it now survives only in the Roman curia of the Holy See.

5. See Mt 7:24-25.

6. Presumably this means that some renegade Christians were involved in getting these martyrs executed. As well as the young people, even children, among the martyrs whom this sermon concentrates on, we should remember that the Twenty Martyrs included a bishop, Fidentius, in their number; see Sermon 325,1. Doubtless it was he who answered the judge in the name of them all; and perhaps it was some spite against him and his young protégés that led these *judices desertores* to initiate the prosecution.

SERMON 327

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: 405-411¹

It is the cause, not the punishment, that distinguishes the martyrs from other sufferers

1. We have sung to God in the words of the martyrs, *Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from an unholy people* (Ps 43:1). It is the voice of the martyrs. Who would dare to say *Judge me, O God*, unless they had the best of causes? The soul is tempted and tried by promises and menaces, soothed by allurements, tormented by pains; all these things were beaten for Christ's sake by the unbeaten martyrs. The world was beaten when making its promises, beaten when uttering its savage threats. Pleasure did not hold them back, torture did not terrify them. Gold refined in the furnace is not afraid of the fire of gehenna.² That's why, as having been refined by the fire of tribulation, the blessed martyr can say without a qualm, "*Judge me, O God. Whatever good you find in me, judge it. You have endowed me with what pleases you; find it in me and judge me. I have not been held back by the delights of this age, the tribulations of this age do not wrench me away from you. Judge me, and distinguish my cause from an unholy people.*"

Many people endure tribulation; they have equivalent pains, but not equivalent causes. Many evils are endured by adulterers, many evils by sorcerers, many evils by robbers and murderers, many evils by all sorts of villains; "I too, your martyr," he says, "endure many evils. But *distinguish my cause from an unholy people* of robbers, murderers, villains of all sorts. They can suffer the same sort of things as I do, they cannot have the same sort of cause. I am being refined in the furnace; they are just being incinerated." Heretics too suffer, and very often at their own hands; and they want to be called martyrs. But it is against them that we have sung, *Distinguish my cause from an unholy people*. It is not the punishment that makes the martyr but the cause.³

The difference between Christ and the two robbers crucified with him is discerned by one of them

2. When the Lord suffered, there were three crosses; one punishment, but by no means a similar cause. On his right one robber, on his left another robber; in

the middle the judge, hanging there between the two of them, as though giving judgment from the bench, heard one of them saying, *Deliver yourself, if you are the Just One*; he heard the other rebuking his fellow and saying, *Do you, then, not fear God? We indeed are suffering these things for our evil deeds; while this man is the Just One* (Lk 23:39-41).⁴ He had a bad cause, and was distinguishing the cause of the martyrs. What else, after all, can be the meaning of, *We indeed are suffering these things for our evil deeds; while this man is the Just One*? On what grounds⁵ would he distinguish the cause of martyrs from the cause of the godless undergoing punishment? “This man,” he says, “is to be acknowledged as the Just One; we are suffering on our own account, we are suffering for our evil deeds, *Lord*”; notice how he addresses his fellow sufferer. Christ was hanging there in the same way; but he wasn’t being marginalized in the same way. He was being acknowledged as Lord by the man hanging there. They were sharing one common fate of the cross; they were not sharing one common reward.⁶

What am I saying? Are you giving Christ a reward, seeing he is himself the giver of rewards? *Lord*, he said, *remember me when you come into your kingdom* (Lk 23:42). He could see him hanging there, could see him crucified; and was hoping he would reign in his kingdom. “*Remember me*,” he says, “not now, but *when you come into your kingdom*. I have done many evil things,” he says; “I am not hoping for a speedy relief. Just let the torments I endure until you come again be sufficient. Let me be tormented now; when you come, spare me then.” He was deferring himself, but Christ was offering him paradise, without his asking. *Remember me*—but when? *When you come into your kingdom*.

And the Lord: *Amen I tell you, today you shall be with me in paradise* (Lk 23:43). My disciples have left me in the lurch, my disciples have despaired of me; and you, on the cross, have recognized me, you haven’t despised me on the point of death, you have hoped in my coming reign. *Today you shall be with me in paradise*. I am not distancing myself from you.

The cause was distinguished; the punishment, surely, wasn’t. So it’s a good thing to say, *Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from an unholy people* (Ps 43:1). All of us who are living in this world, let us work hard at having a good cause; so that if anything happens to us in this world, it may be with a good cause that we make our exit from here.

NOTES

1. The sermon dwells on the same text, *Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from an unholy people*, Ps 43:1, as did Sermon 325 on the Twenty Martyrs, which Zwiggli dated precisely to Sunday, 15 November 408. This one contains an even more explicit attack on the Donatists. So we may draw either of two possible inferences—neither of them, of course, conclusive; either that this sermon too was preached in honor of the same Twenty Martyrs in 407 or 409; or else that it was

preached on some other martyrs a month or two before or after Sermon 325. Preached, in any case, in Hippo Regius.

2. The valley of the sons of Hinnom, just south of Jerusalem, where the city garbage was burnt—so a very different sort of fire from the goldsmith's furnace. Of course gehenna also stands for hell, and is Augustine's usual word for the place of eternal damnation; the Latin *infernum* had a milder, less specific meaning as a rule: the underworld, the place of the dead.

3. A favorite slogan of his against the Donatists.

4. Augustine is quoting very freely in both remarks; the first robber saying *si tu es justus*, the second *nam iste justus est*. In the context, I consider it would be an intolerable bathos to translate *justus* simply as "just": "if you are just"; "while this man is just." In the actual text the first robber says, *if you are the Christ*; while the second, after saying *this man has done nothing wrong*, clearly addresses Jesus as the Christ. So I treat Augustine's rather weak alternative as carrying a similar connotation. Now Jesus is called the Just One in Acts 3:14, where the Latin runs, *Vos autem sanctum et justum negasti*, which could, but clearly must not, be translated, "You, however, have denied a holy and just man." It has to be, and is, translated, "You have denied the Holy and Just One."

5. *Quis*; normally it means "Who?" But why Augustine should suddenly ask, "Who would distinguish," etc., I cannot conceive. So I take *quis* as being a rather rare form of the ablative plural, usually *quibus*, and assume that if it were pronounced in a particular way, it would be understood as meaning "by what means," "on what grounds."

6. Augustine is still, I think, expressing the thoughts of the good thief, which he immediately subjects to a little scrutiny.

SERMON 328

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: 405-411¹

*Christ made the rough way smooth by his endurance of his passion,
so that the martyrs could follow*

1. In the psalm we have said to the Lord our God, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his holy ones* (Ps 116:15). Precious is the death of the holy martyrs, because the blood of their Lord is the price paid for them. He suffered, you see, in his passion, because they were going to suffer after him. He went on ahead, and many others followed. The road, after all, was exceedingly rough; but he made it smooth,² when he passed along it ahead of all of them. That's why the rest were not afraid of passing along it, because he had passed along it first himself. He died, you see, and this terrified his disciples; he rose again, and this took away their fear and gave them love.³

When Christ died, after all, his disciples were dismayed, and thought he had perished. When they followed him, that's when you must observe the grace of God. The robber believed at the very time that the disciples were filled with dismay. There was one robber, you remember, being crucified with him, and he believed in him to the extent of saying, *Lord, keep me in mind, while you are coming into your kingdom* (Lk 23:42).⁴ Who could have been teaching him this, but the one who was hanging there next to him? Yes, he was nailed to one side of him, but was all the same dwelling in his heart.

The problem of the psalm text, Every man is a liar; can it be true of the martyrs?

2. But in this very psalm where we have said, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his holy ones*, something else is written that you also heard: *I said in my ecstasy, Every man a liar* (Ps 116:15.11). Now if the martyrs were truthful, how can it be true that every man is a liar? Scripture says, *Every man a liar*.⁵ If we say the martyrs were truthful, we make scripture a liar. But if scripture spoke the truth, because *every man a liar*, then the martyrs were liars. So what way is available to us to show both that scripture is telling the truth and that the martyrs told the truth? Perhaps the martyrs weren't human beings? If they were human, though, how can this be true, *Every man a liar*?

So what are we to do? I shall work hard to show you both that scripture is true, and so every man is a liar; and that the martyrs were truthful, because they died for the truth.⁶ That, you see, is why they are martyrs, because they suffered for the truth. "Martyr," you see, is a Greek word, and in English it means "Witness." So if they were true witnesses, they spoke the truth; and by speaking the truth, they received their crowns. But if, which is not to be thought of, they were false witnesses, then they went off to receive not crowns but penalties, because it is written, *A false witness will not go unpunished* (Prv 19:5). So let us show that they were truthful; but they've already shown it themselves, since they were willing to die for the truth. So how is scripture telling the truth, when it says, *Every man a liar*? Let us plead with our Lord Jesus Christ, and may he solve this problem for us. From where does he get its solution for us? From the gospel, from which he was speaking⁷ just now, while it was being read to you.

The martyrs were truthful, because the Spirit of God was speaking in them

3. You heard, remember, when the gospel was being read, how the Lord Jesus was saying to the martyrs, *When they hand you over, do not give thought to what you should speak, or what you should say; for it will be given you at that moment what you should speak. For you are not the ones who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you* (Mt 10:19-20). Because if you speak, you speak lies, because *every man a liar*. So the Lord himself observed that every man is a liar, and gave the martyrs his Spirit, to the effect that it would not be they who were speaking, but his Spirit, so that consequently they would not be liars, but would be telling the truth. There you are, that's why they were truthful; because it wasn't they who were speaking, but his Spirit. And now, as for what I am saying to you, if I am speaking from what is mine, I am speaking lies. But if what I am saying to you is of the Spirit of God, that means it's true. And mind you learn the lesson too, all of you; don't be eager to speak from what is yours, if you are keen on telling the truth; so that you don't have to remain lying human beings, but may be truthful children of God.

It is the cause, not the punishment, that makes the martyr

4. All heretics also suffer for what is false, not for the truth; because they are lying against Christ himself. All godless pagans, whatever they suffer, they suffer for what is false. So none should give themselves airs and boast about their sufferings; but first let them show the truth of their words. *You* are pointing out the punishment, *I* am inquiring about the cause. You say, "I have suffered"; I ask why you have suffered. After all, if we just pay attention to what people suffer, even bandits will get a crown. Does any of those have the nerve to say, "I have endured such terrible sufferings"? Why doesn't he? Because he will be told, "It's on account of your evil deeds; the reason you have had a bad punishment is that you first had a bad cause."

If suffering is what is to be boasted about, then the devil himself can also do some boasting. Notice how much he is suffering, with his temples everywhere

being pulled down, his idols everywhere being smashed, his priests and soothsayers everywhere being beaten.⁸ Can he say, do you suppose, “I too am a martyr, because I am enduring such great sufferings”? So the man of God should first choose himself a cause, and then go to his punishment with nothing to worry about; because if he goes to his punishment in a good cause, after the punishment he will also receive a crown.

*The certainty of the judgment to come; we shall rise again,
each with our cause, good or bad*

5. *So the just man will be remembered for ever; and he will not be afraid of an evil hearing (Ps 112:6-7).* The judge is coming, you see, of the living and the dead, as we read in the gospel. And it's true; since in fact the things we now see were not yet, when it was foretold they would happen. The fact that you can now see the name of Christ being proclaimed throughout all nations, people converted to the one God, idols being forsaken, temples pulled down, images smashed; none of these things had yet happened, and yet they were spoken of, and now they can be seen. So in the scriptures in which these things we can now see were written about (they were written, though, at a time when they could not be seen, but they were being promised for the future), in the very same scriptures we read of what has not yet come about.

I mean, the day of judgment hasn't yet come, the resurrection of the dead hasn't yet happened, the one who is going to judge hasn't yet come, who came the first time to be judged. Judged unjustly, set to judge justly; deferring his power, since he wishes to demonstrate his patience. So he's going to come then, and in the way he promised he would come with his angels, that's how he will come and be manifested in glory, as all the dead also rise again.

We are all going to rise again, you see, each of us with our own cause. Just as you are now when you die and are committed to the prison,⁹ that's how you come before the judge. The urgent need is for you to put your case together now; you can't do it when you are locked up. So those who have good cases or causes, are received into rest and quiet, while those who have bad cases or causes are received into pain and punishment. But they are going to suffer greater pains when they have risen again. In comparison with them, the pains that bad people who have died are now suffering are like the dreams of people who are being tortured in their sleep. Their souls, I mean, are suffering, their flesh isn't. But the agony is greater if they are tortured while awake.

So when we have all risen again, and appeared before the just judge, as he foretold himself, he will separate us as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; the goats he puts on the left, the sheep on the right. And he will say to those who are on the right, *Come, blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the origin of the world.* At these words those on the right will rejoice, the just will rejoice. To those, however, who are on the left he is going to say, *Go into the eternal fire with the devil and his angels (Mt 25:34.41).* It is of that evil hearing that the just man will not be afraid.¹⁰

The glory enjoyed by the martyrs will be infinitely greater after the resurrection

6. So while they have not yet received the fruits of their labors,¹¹ the holy martyrs are already in bliss, since their souls are with Christ. But what may be in preparation for them in the resurrection, who could possibly find the words to express? *What eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it come up into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those who love him* (1 Cor 2:9). If nobody can find the words to express such marvelous things as the good faithful are going to receive, it's not without reason that such rewards are being prepared for those who have fought for the truth to the shedding of their blood. The world could not entice them, no terror could break them, no torments overcome them, no blandishments deceive them. Their bodies will be magnificently adorned, because in them they suffered monstrous torments.¹²

The greatness of the bandit crucified with Christ

7. As for us, though, if we love them, let us imitate them to the point of first choosing a good cause, and for the sake of the good cause let us tolerate whatever is irksome in this world with equanimity and an even temper. There are many people, you see, who have not chosen a cause, and have died as bad people for a bad cause. They lost patience, because they didn't hold on to wisdom. It is not, after all, the punishment that makes the martyr, but the cause. Because if it's the punishment that makes the martyr, then even the bandit is a martyr when he is being put to death.

Do you want to make sure that it's not the punishment but the cause that makes the martyr? Look at the three crosses where the Lord was crucified between two bandits. It was the same punishment, but the cause set apart those whom the punishment was joining together. One of those bandits, while he was hanging there, believed the Lord Jesus Christ. And first he said to his companion—the other bandit, you see, his companion, insulted the Lord Jesus Christ, and said to him, *Deliver yourself, if you are the Son of God*—and then that other bandit, *Do you not fear God?* said he to his companion. *We are suffering these things for our evil deeds, but this man is the Holy One of God.* What a confession! Because, if he confessed, it means he wasn't hanging there any longer without a good cause. Then he said to the Lord Christ himself, *Lord, keep me in mind, when you come into your kingdom* (Lk 23:39-42).

What faith! He was hoping that the one he could see crucified was also going to reign. He could see him dying like himself, and he hoped he would reign over him. A great man, this bandit! He used force, and took the kingdom of heaven by storm.¹³ Where did he learn that? He was practicing his brigandage in the gorges, he was brought to the judge, he received his sentence; from the gorges to the judge, from the judge to the cross. When did he learn what he said, if not because the teacher who taught him was right there next to him? The Lord Christ, you see, the teacher of all, was hanging at his side, and teaching him in his breast. Why have I said all this, brothers and sisters? Because it is not the punishment but the cause that makes the martyr. The punishment is the same, but the cause

is different. One due for damnation, the other for salvation, in the middle the one who damns and saves. He punished one, released the other. That cross was his judgment seat.¹⁴

To love the martyrs means to imitate their endurance

8. So, brothers and sisters, let us struggle as long as we live to hold on to the true faith, to remain in the true Church of God, to lead a good life, if we love the martyrs, so that having a good cause we may be in a position to imitate them. But no one must say, "I cannot be a martyr, because there is no persecution now." Trials and temptations don't stop; fight them, and the crown is ready for you.

When, may I ask?

Look; just to mention one thing—because it would take far too long to recount all the circumstances in which the Christian soul is tried, and with God's favor wins through and celebrates a great victory, shut away there in the body, with no one to see; it fights in the heart, is crowned in the heart, but by the one who can see into the heart—so look then, just to tell you of one instance: perhaps one of you is sick. As many as there are human situations, how many people there are in that sort of danger! And they come to you lying on your bed there, and they say to you—or they make things to tie on, or goodness knows what magic runes,¹⁵ and you are tempted, and told, "Do this and that." Anybody who does do such things perishes with the devil, because none of these things are sacraments of the angels, but devices of the demons.¹⁶

So if you scorn such things, and though you hear some time or other, "If you don't do this, you will die," you answer him, "It's better for me to die than to do this," then you are lying on your bed, and practicing martyrdom. You're weary and worn out with fever, and unable to move yourself—and you are wrestling. You can't move hand or foot, and with the brawny arms of faith you strangle the lion¹⁷ of which the apostle Peter says, *Do you not know that your adversary the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour?* (1 Pt 5:8).

He described the devil as a roaring lion prowling round, and trying to grab and harm something from the sheepfold. He never stops; never, till the very end, does he refrain from stalking his prey. So if our adversary never sleeps, it means we are fighting every day. And we can't see this adversary of ours, and we can defeat him. Why can't we see him? Because it is inside us that we experience and check what he wishes to defeat us with. You can't see your enemy the devil, but you experience your avarice in yourself. You can't see your enemy the devil, but you experience your lust in yourself. You can't see your enemy the devil, but you experience your anger in yourself. Defeat what you experience inside you, and those who are stalking you outside are already defeated. So this is what it means to love the martyrs, this is what celebrating the feast day of the martyrs with devotion and piety really means—not drowning yourself in wine, but imitating their faith and endurance.

NOTES

1. So Fischer and Kunzelmann. But I think that references to the destruction of pagan temples, and also the closing remark about not celebrating the martyrs' feast days by drowning oneself in drink, indicate a rather earlier date round about 401 or 402. See note 8 below.

2. See Is 40:4. Augustine's words conjure up a picture that he cannot possibly have imagined himself: our Lord as a grader machine, leveling and smoothing the very rough dirt roads of Southern Africa.

3. He would have had particularly in mind Peter's threefold confession of love, Jn 21, to atone for and balance his threefold timorous denial.

4. The text is quoted rather differently from the way it is in Sermon 327; and later on in section 6 he quotes the whole passage more correctly than there. I wonder if this perhaps may not indicate that he was not preaching this sermon in Hippon Regius, where we presumed he preached Sermon 327. There, he was clearly just paraphrasing part of the text; but not the good thief's request to Jesus. Here, in another Church, he is keeping closer to the text of that Church in front of him.

5. Actually it doesn't, any more than it says, *There is no God*; it says, *I said, Every man is a liar*, just as it says, *The fool has said in his heart, There is no God*, Ps 14:1. But if Augustine had chosen to take note of this, it would have deprived him and his audience of much innocent, and useful, intellectual fun.

6. The Maurist text makes this sentence a question—rather absurdly in my opinion. One element in the transmission of these texts that we do not have to take seriously, and never need to feel bound by, is their punctuation.

7. Emending the text's *loquebamur*, we were speaking, to *loquebatur*. Augustine would never think of himself as speaking from the gospel. It is true the Latin text has *de quo loquebamur*, and this could mean, in isolation from its context, "about which we were speaking." But, a) he was not speaking about it just now, and certainly not while it was being read; and b) in this context *de* clearly means "from" or "out of," and not "about."

8. There was a wave of anti-pagan enthusiasm, resulting in such violence, about 400. See Sermon 24, note 1, and also Sermon 279, note 1. But those sermons were clearly preached against such violence. So perhaps this one, merely recalling it, was preached rather later, say toward the end of 401, or early in 402.

9. It seems clear that he is presenting us with a picture, in rather different language from what we are accustomed to, of what we now call purgatory; for him a sort of remand prison. He is sticking very close to the analogy of secular judicial proceedings—which were even more callous in Roman times than they are in most countries today.

10. See Ps 112:7.

11. Which they only receive at the resurrection. Augustine never has any doubt that the resurrection of the body in glory is our final destiny, not the bliss of the immortal soul.

12. Here the Maurist edition of this sermon ends. The rest of it comes from a manuscript edited by Dom Lambot.

13. See Mt 11:12.

14. In fact Augustine has no warrant for assuming that Jesus damned the other bandit, or thief. Here I always like to recall that variant text at Lk 23:43 (from the Codex Bezae, the chief witness to the so-called Western text): *But Jesus answered and said to the one who was reviling him: Courage; today etc.*

15. *characteres*; presumably things written on little pieces of paper or parchment, to be either swallowed, or soaked in a drink, or tied round the neck or the affected part. The Norse runes, I believe, were usually engraved on swords, sometimes on tombstones; but they did constitute a kind of magic writing.

16. Put in just here, this looks to me like a comment made by some copyist. I just don't think Augustine would have used the expression *sacramenta angelorum*. He entirely shared the sentiment, of course.

17. At the back of his mind he may also have been thinking of David's brag about his exploits as a shepherd boy, 1 Sam 17:34-37.

SERMON 329

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: 410-412¹

*The price paid to make the death of the saints
precious in the sight of the Lord was the death of Christ*

1. Through such glorious deeds of the holy martyrs, with which the Church blossoms everywhere, we prove with our own eyes how true what we have just been singing is, that *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints* (Ps 116:15); seeing that it is precious both in our sight and in the sight of him for the sake of whose name it was undertaken. But the price of these deaths is the death of one man. How many deaths were bought by one dying man, who was the grain of wheat that would not have been multiplied if he hadn't died! You heard his words when he was drawing near to his passion, that is, when he was drawing near to our redemption: *Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit* (Jn 12:24-25).

On the cross, you see, he transacted a grand exchange; it was there that the purse containing our price was untied; when his side was laid open by the lance of the executioner, there poured out from it the price of the whole wide world. The faithful were bought, and the martyrs; but the faith of the martyrs has been proved; blood is the witness to it. They have paid back what was spent for them, and they have fulfilled what Saint John says: *Just as Christ laid down his life for us, so we too should lay down our lives for the brethren* (1 Jn 3:16). And in another place it says, *You have sat down at a great table; consider carefully what is set before you, since it behooves you to prepare the same kind of thing yourself* (Prv 23:1-2). It is certainly a great table, where the lord of the table is himself the banquet. Nobody feeds his guests on himself; that is what the Lord Christ did, being himself the host, himself the food and drink. So the martyrs recognized what they ate and drank, so that they could give back the same kind of thing.

The martyrs paid back what God had paid back to them in the first place

2. But what could they give back the same kind of thing from, unless the one who made the first payment gave them the means of giving something back?

And so this psalm, where what we have just been singing is written, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful*, what does it draw our attention to? A man was there considering how much he had received from God. He looked round at all the gifts of grace of the Almighty who created him, who looked for him when he was lost, who pardoned him when he was found, who assisted his feeble powers in his fight, who did not abandon him in peril, who crowned him when he won, who gave him himself as his reward; he considered all these things, and cried out and said, *What shall I pay back to the Lord for all the things he has paid back to me?* (Ps 116:12). He didn't want to be ungrateful, he wanted to repay, and he didn't have anything to repay with. He didn't say, *What shall I pay back to the Lord for all the things he has paid to me, but for all the things which he has paid back to me.* He hasn't just paid, he has paid back. If he has paid back, it means we had paid out something ourselves. Certainly we had paid out our bad things, he has paid back his good things; he has paid back good for evil, while we have paid back evil for good.

So he's looking for something to pay back; he's very embarrassed, he can't find the means to pay off the debt; *What shall I pay back to the Lord for all the things he has paid back to me?* And as though he found something to pay back, *I will receive the cup*, he says, *of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord* (Ps 116:13). What's this? Was he really thinking of paying back? He's still looking to receive; *I will receive the cup of salvation*. What is this cup? The bitter and salutary cup of suffering, the cup which the invalid would be afraid to touch, if the doctor didn't drink it first. That's what this cup is. We can recognize this cup on the lips of Christ, when he says, *Father, if it can be so, let this cup pass from me* (Mt 26:39). And again, there were the sons of Zebedee seeking high places through their mother, that one of them should sit on his right, the other on his left, to whom he said, *Can you drink the cup which I am going to drink?* (Mt 20:22). You are looking for high station? One comes to the mountain through the valley. You're looking for a throne of glory? First drink the cup of humility.

It is about that cup that the martyrs said, *I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.*² So aren't you afraid of failing at that point?

"No," he says.

Why not?

"Because *I will call upon the name of the Lord.*"

How would the martyrs ever conquer, unless that one conquered in them who said, *Rejoice, since I have conquered the world* (Jn 16:33)? The emperor of the heavens was governing their minds and tongues, and through them overcoming the devil on earth, and crowning the martyrs in heaven. Oh, how blessed are those who drank this cup like that! They were finished with pain and sorrow, and loaded with honors and praise. So look at them very carefully, dearly beloved; you can't do it with your eyes, but think about them with mind and heart, and see that *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his holy ones.*

NOTES

1. So Fischer, Kunzelmann, and Poque. I do not know the reason, but a reading of the sermon does not suggest any other date as intrinsically more probable. There is a similar uncertainty about the place.

2. It is about this cup too that the offertory blessing of the Mass in the new rite over the chalice ends, “. . . we have this wine to drink, fruit of the vine and work of human hands; it will become for us the *calix salutaris*.” So the received English translation, “. . . it will become for us our spiritual drink,” is not only a masterpiece of the banal; it also eliminates the scriptural reference and thus entirely obscures the point.

SERMON 330

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: 397¹

*If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself,
and take up his cross, and follow me*

1. The feast of the blessed martyrs and the expectation of your holinesses is insisting on a sermon from me. I quite realize that this day calls for a discussion. This is what you want, this is what I want; may this be achieved by the one in whose hands are both ourselves and our words; may he who has granted us the will endow us with the capacity. It was in this respect,² after all, that the martyrs were aglow with enthusiasm; on fire with love for invisible things, you see, they thought nothing of the visible. What has the person loved in himself, when he has thought nothing of himself in order not to lose himself? They were temples of God, you see, and experienced the true God dwelling in themselves; that's why they wouldn't worship false gods. They had heard, they had thirstily gulped down and stored in the depths of their hearts, and after a fashion thoroughly digested what the Lord said: *If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself. Let him deny himself*, he said, *and take up his cross, and follow me* (Mt 16:24). It's about this that I want to say something, and your eager attention frightens me, while your prayers assist me.³

How to deny yourself when you love yourself

2. What, I ask you, is the meaning of *If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me*? We can understand the meaning of *let him take up his cross*; let him bear with his troubles. "Take up," you see, means "bear," "endure." Let him patiently accept, he is saying, everything he suffers on my account. *And follow me*. Where to? Where we know he went after the resurrection. I mean, he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. That's where he has also placed us. Meanwhile, let hope go ahead, so that the reality may follow. In what way hope ought to go ahead, those of you know who really listen to the words, *Lift up your hearts*.

But it remains for me to inquire, as far as the Lord assists me, and to discuss,

and if he opens to enter, and if he grants it to find,⁴ and to bring out to you whatever I manage to find—what he meant by saying, *Let him deny himself*. How can someone deny himself who loves himself? Well, that's a reasonable question, but humanly so; it's only a human being who says to me, "How can someone who loves himself deny himself?" God, though, says to such a person, "Let him deny himself, if he loves himself." By loving himself, you see, he loses himself; by denying himself, he finds himself. *Whoever loves his soul*, he says, *let him lose it*⁵ (Jn 12:25). This command was given by the one who knows what to command, because the one who knows what instructions to give knows what advice to give, and the one who was good enough to create knows how to restore. *Whoever loves, let him lose*. It is a painful thing to lose what you love. But from time to time even the farmer loses what he sows. He brings it out, scatters it, throws it away, buries it. Why be surprised? This despiser and loser is a greedy reaper. What has really been done is shown by winter and summer; the joy of the reaper shows you the wisdom of the advice of the sower. Therefore, *whoever loves his soul, let him lose it*.⁶ Whoever is looking for fruit in it, let him sow it. So that's the meaning of "Let him deny himself"; let him not lose himself by crookedly loving himself.

The difference between the right and the wrong love of self

3. There isn't anyone, after all, who doesn't love himself; but we have to look for the right sort of love and avoid the wrong sort. You see, anyone who loves himself by leaving God out of his life, and leaves God out of his life by loving himself, doesn't even remain in himself, but goes away from himself. He goes away into exile from his own breast, by taking no notice of what's inside and loving what's outside. What's this I've said? Aren't all who do evil ignoring their own consciences, while anyone whose conscience shames him puts a limit on his iniquity? So because that person has ignored God in order to love himself, by loving outside himself what is not himself he has also ignored himself.

Notice, listen to the apostle giving his support to this understanding of the matter. *In the last times*, he says, *dangerous times will loom up*. What are the dangerous times? *There will be people loving themselves*. That's the core of the evil. So let's see if they remain in themselves by loving themselves; let's see, let's hear what comes next: *There will be people*, he says, *loving themselves, lovers of money* (2 Tm 3:1-2). Where are you now, you that were busy loving yourself? Obviously, you're outside. Are you, I'm asking you, are you money? Obviously, after loving yourself by neglecting God, by loving money you have even abandoned yourself. First you have abandoned, and then later on you have destroyed yourself. Love of money, you see, has caused you to destroy yourself. You tell lies on account of money; *The mouth which lies kills the soul* (Wis 1:11). There you are, while looking for money you have destroyed your soul.

Bring out the scales of truth, not of greed; bring out a balance, but of truth, not of greed. Bring it out, I beg you, and put on one side money, on the other the soul. Now it's you that are doing the weighing, and out of greed you're

cheating with your fingers; you want the side that has money on it to sink. Put it there, but don't weigh it yourself; you want to cheat yourself; I can see what you're doing. You want to put money before your soul; to tell lies on account of the former, to destroy the latter. Put it on the scales, let God do the weighing; the one who doesn't know how to deceive or be deceived, let him do the weighing. There you are, he's weighing them; watch him weighing them, listen to him announcing the result: *What does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world.* It's the divine voice, it's the voice of the weigh-master who doesn't deceive, who is giving you a warning as he announces the result. You, on one side, were putting money, on the other the soul; notice where you put the money. What does the weigh-master reply? *What does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, but suffers the loss of his own soul?* (Mt 16:26). But you were wishing to weigh the soul against gain; weigh it against the world. You were willing to lose it in order to acquire the earth; this thing outweighs heaven and earth together.

But you do this because by leaving God out of your life and loving yourself, you have also gone away from yourself; and you now value other things, which are outside you, more than yourself. Come back to yourself; but again, turn upward when you've come back to yourself, don't stay in yourself. First come back to yourself from the things outside you, and then give yourself back to the one who made you, and when you were lost sought you, and as a runaway found you, and when you had turned away turned you back to himself. So then, come back to yourself, and go on to the one who made you.

Imitate that younger son; because perhaps that's who you are. I'm speaking to the people, not to one person;⁷ even if they can't all⁸ hear me, I'm not speaking to one person only, but to the human race. So come back, be that younger son, who by living recklessly dissipated and lost his fortune, and found himself in want, fed pigs, being worn out with hunger took a deep breath, recalled his father to mind. And what does the gospel say about him? *And returning to himself.* He had even let go of himself, but returning to himself—let's see if he remained in himself. *Returning to himself, he said, I will arise.* So he had fallen. *I will arise,* he said, *and go to my father.* There you are, he's now denying himself after finding himself. How does he deny himself? Listen. *And I will say to him, I have sinned,* he said, *against heaven and before you.* He's denying himself: *I am now not worthy to be called your son* (Lk 15:17-19).

There you are, that's what the holy martyrs did. They thought nothing of things that are outside; all the allurements of this age, all the errors and the terrors, whatever could tickle the fancy, whatever could fill the heart with dread, they scorned it all, trampled on it all. They had also come to themselves, and observed themselves; they found themselves in themselves, and they didn't like themselves. They hurried off to the one by whom they could be refashioned, in whom they could come to life again, in whom they could remain, in whom what they had begun to be by themselves would perish, and only that would remain which he had established in them. That is what denying oneself means.

How Peter learned eventually to deny himself

4. This is something the apostle Peter could not yet grasp, when he replied to our Lord Jesus Christ's forecast of his passion, *Far be this from you, Lord; this will not happen* (Mt 16:22). He was afraid that life would die. Just now, when the holy gospel was read, you heard what answer the blessed Peter gave the savior when he was foretelling that he would suffer for us, and indeed after a fashion promising that he would. The captive was contradicting the redeemer.

What are you doing, apostle? How can you contradict? How can you say *This will not happen*? So is the Lord not going to suffer? Is the word of the cross a scandal to you? It's to those who are perishing that it's folly.⁹ You are to be bought back, and are you contradicting the trader paying for you? Allow him to suffer; he knows what he is doing, he knows why he came, he knows how to seek you, he knows how to find you. Don't try to teach your master; look for your price from his side. Listen to him yourself, rather, as he corrects you; don't you start wanting to do the correcting; that's perverse, it's getting things back to front. Listen to what he says: *Get behind me*. And because he said it, I can say it. I'm not keeping quiet about a word of the Lord, nor am I doing the apostle an injury. The Lord Christ said, *Get behind me, Satan* (Mt 16:23).

Why Satan?

Because you want to go in front of me. Get behind me. I mean, if you get behind me, you are following me; if you follow me, you will take up your cross, and you won't be my adviser, but my disciple.

Why were you scared, after all, when the Lord foretold his death? What made you scared, if not your fear of dying yourself? By being afraid to die, you failed to deny yourself; by loving yourself wrongly, you denied him.¹⁰

But later on blessed Peter the apostle, after three times denying the Lord, wiped out his fault by weeping. When the Lord rose again he was strengthened, built up, he died for the one whom out of fear of death he had denied. By confessing him he encountered death, but by encountering death he laid hold of life. And lo and behold, Peter dies no more; all fear has passed away, no tears for him ever again, that has all faded away, he remains in bliss with Christ. He has trampled, you see, on all outside allurements, threats and terrors; he has denied himself, taken up his cross and followed the Lord.¹¹ Listen to the apostle Paul also denying himself: *Far be it from me*, he says, *to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world* (Gal 6:14). Listen again to him denying himself: *I am alive*, he says, *not I*; an open denial of himself, but now follows a glorious acknowledgement of Christ: *but it is Christ who is alive in me* (Gal 2:20). So what's the meaning of "Deny yourself"? Don't you live in yourself. What's the meaning of "Don't you live in yourself"? Don't do your own will, but that of the one who is dwelling in you.

NOTES

1. So Fischer, Kunzelmann, and Perler. The arguments for this date are highly complex. Perler, following Lambot, assumes the sermon was preached on the feast day of the martyrs of *Massa Candida*, the White Mass (see Sermons 306 and the following); but on what grounds I do not know. There is no reference to them in the sermon itself, nor in the title given it in the manuscripts. They also say it was preached in Carthage in the Mappalia Basilica, where Saint Cyprian was buried.

The Maurists consider the sermon as it stands to be incomplete, being taken, like most of these sermons entitled vaguely "On the martyrs," from Church lectionaries, which were only interested in extracts from sermons, sometimes strung together to make a longer reading. They cite a number of incoherences, and apparently inconsequential conclusions, about which readers must judge for themselves.

2. This looks like an example of the inconsequentiality just mentioned.

3. Emending *jubet oratio*, your prayer commands me, to *juvat oratio*. A copyist taking down the text from dictation would have heard the reader (especially a Spanish reader) say *jubat*, and corrected it to the grammatically correct *jubet*.

4. See Lk 11:9.

5. Reading *perdat eam* instead of the text's *perder*, will lose it. The future is indeed what is found in Jn 12; but it does not represent a command, and a few lines lower down he will actually repeat it in the subjunctive.

6. See note 5.

7. What he is insinuating is that the prodigal son represents the people—the people of the Gentiles, and in that sense the whole human race.

8. Reading *etsi non omnes me audire possent* instead of the text's *etsi omnes . . .*, even if they can all hear me. But that makes no sense. There is nothing easier than inadvertently leaving out negatives, as any proofreader or corrector of students' essays and examination papers can testify. One old pre-Maurist editor, Sirmondus by name, agrees with me—except that he emends to *omnes non me* instead of *non omnes me*.

9. See 1 Cor 1:18.23.

10. See Mt 26:69-75.

11. See Mt 16:24.

SERMON 331

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: uncertain¹

Two ways of interpreting, "Whoever loves his soul will lose it"

1. That trumpet call of the gospel, when the Lord said, *Whoever loves his soul will lose it; and whoever has lost his soul on my account will find it* (Mt 10:39),² stirred up the martyrs for battle; and they won it, because they relied not on themselves but on the Lord. Whoever loves his soul will lose it. What's said here, *whoever loves his soul will lose it*, can be understood in two ways. If you love it, you lose it; and the other way: Don't love it, or you will lose it. The first way has this meaning: If you love, lose it. So if you love it, if you love, lose it. Sow it here, and you will reap it in heaven. If the farmer doesn't lose wheat in the seed, he doesn't love it in the harvest.

The other way goes like this: Don't love it, in order not to lose it. People who are afraid to die seem to love their souls. If the martyrs had loved their souls like that, they would undoubtedly have lost them. What good, after all, would it be to hold on to the soul in this life and lose it in the life to come? What good would it be to hold on to the soul on earth, and lose it in heaven? And what does holding on to it amount to? Keeping it for how long? What you keep eventually vanishes from you; if you lose it, you find it in yourself.

"Look here, the martyrs held on to their souls."³

And how would they be martyrs, if they had always held on to them? But look here yourself, if they had held on to them, would they have gone on living until today? If, by denying Christ, they had held on to their souls in this life, wouldn't they sooner or later have passed on from this life—and of course lost their souls?

But because they did not deny Christ, they passed on from this world to the Father. They sought Christ by confessing him; they held on to him by dying. And so they lost their souls at a great profit; losing straw, earning a crown; earning a crown, I repeat, and keeping hold of life without end.

By dying for Christ the martyrs were not benefiting Christ, but themselves

2. Finally, there comes about, or rather there has come about in them, what the Lord went on to add: *And whoever has lost his soul on my account will find it* (Mt 10:39). *Whoever has lost*, he says, *on my account*. The whole cause is contained there; *whoever has lost*, not any old how, not for any kind of cause, but *on my account*. The martyrs, you see, had said to him in prophecy, *On your account we are being put to death all day long* (Ps 44:22). That's why it's not the punishment that makes the martyr, but the cause.

When the Lord suffered, it was the cause that distinguished between the three crosses. He was crucified between two bandits; on one side and the other criminals nailed up, and himself in the middle. And as though that stake were a judicial bench, he condemned the one who railed at him, crowned the one who acknowledged him.⁴ What will he do when he is going to judge, if he could do that when he was judged? So now the cause was distinguishing between the crosses. Because if the punishment were interrogated, Christ was like the bandits. But if you were to interrogate the cross about why Christ was crucified, it would answer us, "On your account."

So let the martyrs too say to him, "We too died on your account." He on our account, and we on his. But he on our account, in order to confer a benefit on us; while we on his account, not to bestow any benefit on him. It is our interests, as a matter of fact, that are being considered in each case; in the first, what issues from him comes to us; in the second what is done on his account redounds to us. He, after all, is the one about whom the soul says, as it rejoices in the Lord, *I said to the Lord, You are my God; since you have no need of my goods* (Ps 16:2). What in any case are my goods, if not what I have been given by you? And how can the one by whom every good is given be in need of any good?

*God's gifts that are common to good and bad alike,
and those that are proper to the good alone*

3. He gave us our nature, so that we might exist; he gave us the soul, so that we might live, gave us the mind, so that we might understand; gave us foodstuffs to sustain this mortal life, gave us light from the sky, springs from the earth. But all these things are gifts common to good and bad alike. If he has also given these things to the bad, does that mean he doesn't keep anything special for the good? He certainly does keep something; and what is that something which he keeps for the good? *What eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it come up into the heart of man* (1 Cor 2:9). What has come up into the heart of man, you see, was below the heart of man; the reason why it comes up into the heart, is that the heart it comes up into is above it. As for what he is keeping for the good, the heart goes up to that. It's not what comes up into your heart, but what your heart goes up to, that's what God is keeping for you. Don't turn a deaf ear to *Lift up your heart*.

So it's what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it come up into the heart of man. Eye hasn't seen it, because it isn't a color; ear hasn't heard it, because

it isn't a sound; nor has it come up into the heart, because it isn't any earthly idea. That's how you must understand, *What eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it come up into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him* (1 Cor 2:9).

God himself is the reward of the good

4. Perhaps you will still be asking me what this may be. Ask him, who has begun to dwell in you. However, I too will give you my opinion. What you are asking about, you see, is what special thing God is keeping for the good, if he generously bestows so many things on both good and bad. And when I said, *What eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it come up into the heart of man*, there's no lack of people to say, "Can you think what it is?" Here's what it is that God is keeping for the good alone, though it's he himself who has made them good; here's what it is. Our reward has been very briefly defined by the prophet: *I will be their God, and they shall be my people* (Jer 31:33). *I will be their God*; he has promised us himself as our reward. Look for something else, if you can find anything better. If I said, "He has promised gold," you would be delighted; he's promised himself, and are you disappointed? If a rich man hasn't got God, what has he got? Don't look for anything else from God, except God. Love him for nothing, desire from him only himself. Don't be afraid of going without; he gives himself to us, and that is enough for us. May he give himself to us, and let that be enough for us. Listen to the apostle Philip in the gospel: *Lord, show us the Father, and that is enough for us* (Jn 14:8).

A comparison between martyrs and misers

5. So why be surprised, brothers and sisters, if those lovers of God, the martyrs, endured such terrible things in order to obtain possession of God? Observe how much the lovers of gold are prepared to suffer. They commit themselves to sea voyages in the roughest winter weather; they are so heated up with avarice, that they don't dread any cold; they are tossed about by the winds, hoisted up and dumped down by the waves; pursued by unimaginable dangers to the point of death. Let them too say to gold, *On your account we are being put to death all day long* (Ps 44:22). Let the martyrs say to Christ, *On your account we are being put to death all day long*. The words indeed are the same, but the cause is very different.

Look, they both said, these to Christ, those to gold, *It is on your account that we are being put to death all day long*. Let Christ answer his martyrs: "If you die for my sake, you will find both yourselves and me." Let gold, on the other hand, give its answer to the misers: "If you're shipwrecked for my sake, you will lose both yourselves and me." So while loving and imitating them, not loving idly, but loving and imitating, let us celebrate the day of the martyrs, and temper the heat we are feeling with the refreshing coolness of our joys. We will reign with them, you see, without end, if it is by being faithful, not idle, that we show our love for them.

NOTES

1. As the last sentence but one indicates, the sermon was preached during the summer. The Maurists tell us that in one manuscript the title is "On the birthday of the martyrs Fabian and Sebastian"; but they add that this only indicates that the sermon was read in that particular monastery on their feast day, 20 January.

2. Conflated with Jn 12:25. The Church he was preaching in may have employed a harmony of the gospels for its readings. "Soul" in this text, of course, means "life." But the word has to be kept if we are fully to appreciate some of the points the preacher goes on to make.

3. I think this sentence has to be interpreted like this as a kind of interjection from one of his imaginary "fall guys."

4. See Sermon 328, note 14.

SERMON 332

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: 410-412¹

The martyrs are the friends of Christ

1. When we pay honor to the martyrs, we are honoring the friends of Christ. You want to know what cause has made them the friends of Christ? Christ himself shows us; he said, you see, *This is my commandment, that you should love one another*. Those who watch plays together love each other, those who get drunk together in shebeens love each other, those who share a bad conscience with each other love one another. So when Christ said, *This is my commandment, that you should love one another*, he should have distinguished the sort of love he meant.

As a matter of fact, he did; listen. After saying, you see, *This is my commandment, that you should love one another*, he added straightaway, *as I have loved you* (Jn 15:12). Love each other like that, on account of the kingdom of God, on account of eternal life. Be united in love, but of me. You would be loving each other if you were united in loving an actor. Love each other all the more by being united in loving one who cannot ever displease you, the savior.

The extent to which we are commanded to love one another

2. The Lord went still further, and had still more to teach. It's as though we said to him, "And how have you loved us, so that we too may know how we should love each other?" Listen: *Greater charity has nobody than this, that that one should lay down one's life for one's friends* (Jn 15:13). Love one another in such a way that you would each lay down your life for the rest. That, after all, is what the martyrs did, as John the evangelist himself also says in his letter: *Just as Christ laid down his life for us, so we too ought to lay down our lives for the brethren* (1 Jn 3:16).

You are approaching the table of a potentate; you, the faithful, know what table you are approaching.² Call to mind what scripture says: *When you approach the table of a potentate, know that it behooves you to prepare such things yourself* (Prv 23:1). What potentate's table are you approaching? One who sets

himself before you, not a table spread by the skill of cooks. Christ sets his table before you, namely himself. Approach this table, and take your fill. Be poor, and you will have your fill. *The poor shall eat, and shall have their fill* (Ps 22:26). *Know that it behooves you to prepare such things yourself.* To understand what this means, pay attention to John's explanation. Perhaps, after all, you don't know what it means, *When you approach the table of a potentate, know that it behooves you to prepare such things yourself.* Listen to his explanation: *Just as Christ laid down his life for us, so we too ought to prepare such things.* What's the meaning of *to prepare such things?* *To lay down our lives for the brethren* (1 Jn 3:16).

How to be poor, in order to be rich

3. In order to have your fill, you have come along poor; from what resources will you prepare such things yourself? Ask for them from the one who invited you, in order to have what you can entertain him on. Unless he gives it to you, you won't have anything. But you already have a little charity? You shouldn't even credit yourself with this. *For what do you have that you have not received?* (1 Cor 4:7). Ask him to increase it, ask him to perfect it, until you attain to that table than which there is none greater in this life. *Greater charity has nobody than this, than that one should lay down one's life for one's friends* (Jn 15:13). You have approached poor, you take your leave rich; or rather, you don't take your leave, but it is by staying that you will get rich.

It was from him that the martyrs received the grace that they should suffer for his sake; you must believe it, they received it from him. The master of the house gave them the means of entertaining him. We have him, let us ask for things from him. And if we are not so worthy to receive, let us ask through his friends, who entertained him from his own gifts. May they pray for us, so that he may give them to us too. And in order to get more, we receive it from heaven. Listen to John his forerunner: *Nobody can receive anything, unless it is given him from heaven* (Jn 3:27). So even what we have, we have received from heaven; and in order to have more, we receive it from heaven.

What we receive from heaven is the heavenly city, into which evildoers of all sorts, especially fornicators, are not going to enter

4. This is the very city that came down from heaven;³ let us be such that we may enter it. You have heard, after all, what sort of people enter, what sort don't. Don't be such as you heard will not enter; above all, fornicators. I mean when scripture listed those who won't enter, it also mentioned murderers; you weren't alarmed. It mentioned fornicators;⁴ I heard you beating your breasts. I heard, yes I heard, I saw; and what I didn't see in your bedrooms, I saw in the sound, I saw in your breasts, I saw when you beat your breasts. Cast sin out of there; because to beat your breasts and go on doing the same things is nothing else than to harden sins into cement. My brothers, my sons, be chaste, love chastity,

embrace chastity, have a preference for purity; because God, the promoter of purity in *his temple, which is what you are* (1 Cor 3:17), requires it; he drives the impure far away from his temple.

Be satisfied with your wives, because you want your wives to be satisfied with you. You don't want anything to be done by her apart from you; don't you do anything apart from her. You're the master, she's the servant. God made you both. *Sarah was obedient to Abraham, calling him lord* (1 Pt 3:6). It's true; the bishop has put his signature to these matrimonial tablets; your wives are your servants, you are the lords and masters of your wives. But when it comes to that business in which the sexes are distinguished, and each sex is mated with the other, *the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does*. Yes, you were delighted at that, you felt grand, you clapped yourself on the back.

"The apostle put it well, the *chosen vessel* (Acts 9:15) put the matter excellently: *The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does*. Because *I am the lord and master*."

You've all applauded. Listen to what comes next, listen to what you don't like, to what I beg you to like.

"What's that?"

Listen: *Likewise also the husband, that lord and master; likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does* (1 Cor 7:4).

Be happy to listen to that. It's vice, not authority, that is being taken away from you. It's your adulteries that are being forbidden, not women that are being raised up to equality. You're the man; show it. "Man" comes from "manliness," *vir* in Latin from *virtus*, or *virtus* from *vir*. So have you any manliness, any virtue? Conquer lust. *The head of the woman, it says, is the man*. If you're the head, lead, and let her follow; but see where you are leading her. You're the head; lead her where she should follow; and don't go where you wouldn't like her to follow. In order not to tumble over a precipice, take care you walk along the straight path.

In this way prepare yourselves to go in to that newly wed bride, to that beautiful bride adorned for her husband, not with jewels, but with virtues.⁵ If you enter her, you see, as men who are chaste and holy and good, you too will be members of this same newly wed bride, of the blessed and glorious heavenly Jerusalem.

NOTES

1. So Fischer, Kunzelmann, and Poque. See note 3 for a possible reason why such a date would seem likely. The reference to watching actors in section 1 may possibly indicate that the sermon was preached in Carthage, a metropolitan, cosmopolitan city large enough to have several theaters.

2. And the catechumens are not supposed to know, about the eucharist, of course; a formal bow to the threadbare "discipline of the secret."

3. See Rv 21:2. As the Maurists remark, the transition from the previous section is so abrupt, that we may suspect something has been left out by the composers of the lectionaries from which we derive this sermon. Of course, one can understand Augustine to be saying that the gift we ask for, which comes down from heaven, which in the context of section 3 is charity, is identical with the heavenly city, the holy society which is the Church. This is indeed his profound doctrine of the Church; that it, the society of those who love God in the body of Christ, is charity, is peace, is unity, is the perfect sacrifice of love. See *The City of God* VI. This work, of course, was begun after the fall of Rome to Alaric and his Goths in 410; and it may be this introduction of the theme of the heavenly city into the sermon here that inclines the scholars to suggest the date 410-412.

4. What scripture exactly? Rv 21:8, presumably, combined with 21:27, and with a memory of some text like Eph 5:5.

5. See Rv 21:2.

SERMON 333

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: uncertain¹

All the assurances given by Christ to the martyrs

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ convincingly reassured his witnesses, that is, his martyrs, when out of human frailty they were worried that perhaps by confessing him and dying they might perish, by saying to them, *Not a hair of your head shall perish* (Lk 21:18). So are you afraid you may perish, when your hair won't? If your superfluities are cared for like that, under what protection must your soul be? Your hair doesn't perish, though when it's cut you feel nothing, and is your soul to perish, by which you feel everything? Oh certainly, he foretold they would suffer many hard things, in order by forewarning them to make them better prepared, and so that they could say to him, *My heart is ready* (Ps 57:7). What does *my heart is ready* mean, if not "my will is ready"? So the martyrs have their wills ready for martyrdom; but *the will is made ready by the Lord* (Prv 8:35, LXX).

But after reminding them of those hard and harsh evils to come, he added, *In your patience shall you gain possession of your souls* (Lk 21:19). *In your patience*, he said; after all it wouldn't be your patience if your will wasn't there also. *In your patience*; but how is it ours? Ours is anything had by us, ours too is anything given to us; I mean, if it isn't ours, it hasn't been given. How after all can you give anything, if it isn't to be his or hers, to whom you give it? We have this clear acknowledgement: *Shall my soul not be subject to God? For from him comes my patience* (Ps 62:5). He says to us, *in your patience*; let us say to him, *from him comes my patience*. He has made it yours by giving it to you; don't be ungrateful by ascribing it to yourself.

Don't we say in the Lord's Prayer that what comes from God is also ours? We say every day *our daily bread*. You've already said *our*, and you go on to say *give us*.² There you are, *our*; there you are, *give us*; by his giving it to us it becomes ours. If it's by his giving it to us that it becomes ours, it's by our being proud that it becomes someone else's.³ You say *our*, and you say *give us*. So why should you ascribe to yourself what you haven't given to yourself? *For what do you have that you have not received?* (1 Cor 4:7). You say *our* and give

us. Acknowledge your benefactor, confess that you receive it, so that he may gladly agree to give it. What if you didn't feel the want of it, you there, combining begging with pride? Or aren't you begging, when you are asking for bread? Our bread is eternal, Christ in his equality with the Father; our bread is daily, Christ in the flesh; eternal with no time, daily in time. Yet he really is *the bread which has come down from heaven* (Jn 6:41.51). The martyrs are brave, the martyrs are strong; but it is *bread that strengthens the heart of man* (Ps 104:15).

*How God gives what enables us to claim a reward from him,
illustrated by the case of Paul*

2. So now let us listen to what the apostle Paul has to say, when he was drawing near to his passion, confident about the crown prepared for him: *I have fought, he says, the good fight, I have completed the course, I have kept the faith; for the rest there remains for me a crown of justice, which the Lord will award me on that day, just judge that he is; not only to me, though, but also to all who love his appearing* (2 Tm 4:7-8). The Lord, he says, will award me a crown, being a just judge. So he owes what he will award; so the just judge will award; having inspected the work, after all, he can't deny the reward. What work does he inspect? *I have fought the good fight*, is a work; *I have completed the course*, is a work; *I have kept the faith*, is a work; *there remains for me a crown of justice*, is the reward. But with the reward you do nothing; with the work, you don't act alone. The crown simply comes to you from him; the work on the other hand comes from you, but only with him helping.

But while the apostle Paul, previously as Saul, was the cruelest and most monstrous of persecutors, he wasn't deserving anything good at all, on the contrary, he was deserving the greatest possible evil; he was deserving, that is, to be damned, not chosen. And lo and behold, suddenly, while he was committing evils and deserving evil, he is laid low by a single utterance from heaven. The persecutor is hurled down, the preacher raised up. Listen to him confessing this very thing: *I who was previously a blasphemer and persecutor and abuser; but I obtained mercy* (1 Tm 1:13). He didn't say there, did he, "The just judge will award it to me"? *I obtained*, is what he said, *mercy*; I deserved evil, I received good. *He has not dealt with us according to our sins* (Ps 103:10). I obtained mercy, what was owing to me was not paid back; I mean, if what was owing had been paid back, a grievous punishment would have been awarded me. I did not, he says, receive what was owing; but I obtained mercy. *He has not dealt with us according to our sins*.

*The case of Paul continued; the change in him
prophesied in Jacob's blessing on Benjamin*

3. *As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our iniquities from us* (Ps 103:12). Turn away from the west, turn toward the east.⁴ Here we have one

man, Saul and Paul; Saul in the west, Paul in the east, persecutor in the west, preacher in the east. There sins set, from this side justice rises. In the west is the old self, in the east the new;⁵ in the west Saul, in the east Paul. How did this happen to Saul, how to the cruel man, how to the persecutor, how to the non-shepherd? He himself, after all, was a *ravenous wolf* (Gn 49:27), *of the tribe of Benjamin* (Rom 11:1); he said so himself. Now it was said in prophecy, *Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he goes ravening, in the evening he will divide the food* (Gn 49:27). Previously he devoured, later on feeds the sheep. He went ravening, he certainly did. Read about it; he went ravening. Read the book of the Acts of the Apostles. He had accepted letters from the chief priests, so that whomsoever he might find following the way of Christ, he should bring them back in chains to be punished. Off he went raging, breathing out slaughter and blood;⁶ there you have him ravening.

But it's still morning, vanity under the sun;⁷ it turns to evening for him, when he is struck with blindness. His eyes are shut to the vanity of this world, other inner ones are enlightened. A short while before a rejected instrument, he becomes a *chosen instrument* (Acts 9:15), and here you have fulfilled, *he will divide the food*. His divisions of the food are chanted everywhere.⁸ Notice how he divides up the food. He knows what is suitable for whom; he divides, he doesn't dish it out at random and indiscriminately. He divides, that is to say, he distributes, he distinguishes; he doesn't dispense it at random and indiscriminately. He *speaks wisdom among the perfect* (1 Cor 2:6); while for some who are not capable of taking solid food he divides it and says, *I gave you milk to drink* (1 Cor 3:2).

Later on Paul paid back good works by the grace of God

4. There you are, that's what he's doing, the one who a little before was doing—what? I don't want to remember. But no, let me remember the man's wickedness, in order to appreciate God's mercy. The man Christ was suffering from now suffers for Christ; from being Saul he becomes Paul, he becomes a true witness instead of a false one. The one who was scattering is now gathering;⁹ the one who was attacking is now defending. From where did all this that I'm saying come to Saul? Let's listen to him. "Are you wanting to know," he says, "where I got all this from? None of this," he says, "comes to me from myself; *I obtained mercy*. None of this," he says, "comes to me from myself; *I obtained mercy* (1 Tm 1:13).

"*What shall I pay back to the Lord for all that he has paid back to me?* He has paid back, you see, but not evil for evil; he has certainly paid back, but not evil for evil; he has paid back good for evil. So what will I pay back? *I will take the cup of salvation* (Ps 116:12-13)."

Are you sure you were paying back? You're taking, you're still receiving.¹⁰

"But now, certainly, as my passion approaches, I will pay back good for good."¹¹

So first the Lord owed evil for evil; he was unwilling, though, to pay back

evil for evil, but instead he paid back good for evil. By paying back good for evil, he found the means of paying back good for good.

Paul's good works are God's gifts

5. Because look here; in Paul, previously Saul, he didn't find anything good. Since he hadn't found anything good in him, he forgave the evil, paid back good. So when he first paid back good things to him,¹² he was anticipating. But by giving good things, for which he would pay back good things, there you have him paying back a reward for these good things, for the good works; to Paul fighting the good fight, completing the course, keeping the faith, he paid back good things. But for what good things? For ones he himself had given.

Or wasn't it by his gift that you were able to fight the good fight? If it wasn't by his gift, what's the meaning of what you say in another place, *I have labored more than them all; not I, though, but the grace of God with me* (1 Cor 15:10)? Here you are again, saying *I have completed the course* (2 Tm 4:7); wasn't it also by his gift that you were able to complete the course? If it wasn't by his gift that you completed the course, what's the meaning of what you say in another place, *It doesn't depend on one's willing, or on one's running, but on God showing mercy* (Rom 9:16)?

"I have kept the faith" (2 Tm 4:7).

You've kept it, you've kept it; I realize that, I congratulate you; I admit you've kept it. But, *unless the Lord guards a city, the one who guards it watches in vain* (Ps 127:1). So it was with his help and his gift that you both fought a good bout, and completed the course, and kept the faith. Excuse me, apostle, but the only things I know that are proper to you are bad ones. Excuse me, apostle; I can only say it because it's you that taught me. I hear you confessing, I don't find you ungrateful. Absolutely, the only things of yours that we know were prepared for you by yourself are evil. So when God crowns your merits, he is not crowning anything but his own gifts.

More about the grace of God

6. Don't let any persuasive arguments root out this faith and this true piety from your hearts; this faith and true piety, I mean, which stops you priding yourself on your free will in your good works. Whenever you receive the capacity for such good works, you should so receive it that you know who gives it, so that you won't be ungrateful to the giver, won't treat the doctor disdainfully, whether you're still in bad health, or restored to good health, but no thanks to you. Preserve what you have received. *For what do you have that you have not received?* (1 Cor 4:7). This is really to acknowledge God, to say what the apostle Paul said: *We, however, have not received the spirit of this world* (1 Cor 2:12). The spirit of this world makes people proud, the spirit of this world gives them swollen heads, the spirit of this world makes one *think he is something, though he is nothing* (Gal 6:3). But against the spirit of this world, what does

the apostle say? Against the spirit of this world, puffed up, proud, conceited, swollen, not solid, what does he say? *We, however, have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is from God.* How can you tell? *So that we may know the things which have been given to us by God* (1 Cor 2:12).

So¹³ let us listen to the Lord when he says, *Without me you can do nothing* (Jn 15:5). And again, *Nobody has anything, unless it has been given him from above* (Jn 3:27). And, *Nobody comes to me, unless the Father, who sent me, draws him* (Jn 6:44). And again, *I am the vine, you the branches; as a branch cannot produce fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so also you, unless you remain in me* (Jn 15:5.4). And there's that affirmation of the apostle James, when he says, *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights* (Jas 1:17). And what the apostle Paul cries out, to repress the presumption of those who boast about free will, when he says, *What do you have that you have not received? But if you have received it, why boast as though you had not received it?* (1 Cor 4:7). And again, *By grace we have been saved through faith; and this not from ourselves, for it is God's gift, so that no one should give himself airs* (Eph 2:8-9). And again, *To you it has been granted for Christ's sake, that you should not only believe in him, but should also suffer for his sake* (Phil 1:29). And again, *God who has begun the good work in you, will perfect it* (Phil 1:6).

Let us thank God for everything

7. Let us give thanks to our Lord and savior, who for no preceding merits of ours cured us when we lay wounded, and reconciled us when we were enemies, and redeemed us from captivity, brought us back out of darkness into the light, called us back from death to life. And humbly confessing our frailty, let us implore his mercy; so that, because according to the psalmist his mercy has anticipated us,¹⁴ he may be good enough not only to guard, but also to increase his gifts or benefits, which he has been good enough to give us himself; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

NOTES

1. The sermon passes entirely uncommented on by any of the scholars. In the second half it is clearly warning the congregation against the Pelagians. So I would suggest as a date 415-420.

2. In the order of the Latin; *panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie*; Mt 6:11.

3. *Fit alienum*. Who else's? The devil's, perhaps? But I rather think he has nothing very precise in mind; he is just juggling with verbal contrasts.

4. One of the first rites for those enrolling in the catechumenate was to stand on a goatskin or sackcloth, and first facing west to renounce Satan, and then turning to the east, the rising sun representing Christ (Lk 1:78), to acknowledge Christ.

5. See Col 3:9-10, Eph 4:22-24.

6. See Acts 9:1-2.

7. See Eccl 1:14.

8. Reading *ubique* with the Maurists, instead of *quotidie*, every day, with a more recent edition.

9. See Mt 12:30.

10. Following the Maurists. The later edition attributes this sentence to Paul as *Adhuc accepi*, I have still been receiving, and ties it in to the next.

11. Because the cup of salvation which I will take signifies the cup of suffering. I here leave out a phrase, *non bona pro malis*, not good for evil, which simply has no place here. A scribble, doubtless, and not a very sensible one, in some margin. I suspect the lectionary compilers omitted a section about the crown of justice that was being kept for Paul, 2 Tm 4:7.

12. Omitting, with the Maurists, the word *inquis*, you say; it is quite out of place here.

13. The Maurists suggest that from here to the end has been added by someone else, possibly Caesarius, as with other sermons.

14. See Ps 59:10.

SERMON 334

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: uncertain¹

If God is for us, who is against us?

1. All good faithful Christians indeed, but supremely the martyrs can make their own these words: *If God is for us, who is against us?* (Rom 8:31). The world was roaring against them, *peoples were meditating vain things, princes were gathered together* (Ps 2:1-2); new torments were being thought up, and the ingenuity of cruelty was finding unbelievable ways of inflicting pain. They were smothered with reproaches, subjected to false accusations, shut away in intolerable dungeons, gouged with hooks, slain with swords, fed to wild beasts, burnt with fire—and the martyrs of Christ said, *If God is for us, who is against us?*

The whole world is against you, and you can say *Who is against us?*

They answer you: “And what is the whole world, when we are dying for the one by whom the world was made?”

Let them say it, let them say it, let us hear them, let us all say together, *If God is for us, who is against us?*

They can rave, they can curse, they can slander, they can hound us with false reproaches, finally they can not merely destroy the body but even reduce it to shreds; and what will they achieve? *For behold, God is my helper, and the Lord is the upholder of my soul* (Ps 54:4).

Tell me, blessed martyr, your body is being torn to shreds, and you can say, “It has nothing to do with me?”

“Yes, I said that.”

Why? Tell us why.

“Because *the Lord is the upholder of my soul*. My body is restored through my soul. My hair is not to perish, and is my head to perish? My eyelashes won't perish.”

But your body is being torn by dogs.

“Even if my body is being torn by dogs, still it is to be raised up by the Lord. The world is the slayer of my body, but *the Lord is the upholder of my soul*. And what disadvantage is it to me, since the Lord is the upholder of my soul, that the

world is the slayer of my body? What have I lost, what have I missed? Seeing that the Lord is the upholder of my soul, he will also be the restorer of my body. What will I be lacking, if the enemy tears my limbs to shreds, since God is numbering my hairs? To encourage his martyrs not to be in dread of anything from hostile persecutors, Christ said, *Your hairs are all numbered* (Lk 12:7). So shall I fear the loss of limbs, when I have received an assurance about the number of my hairs?"

So let us say, let us say out of faith, let us say in hope, let us say with the most ardent charity, *If God is for us, who is against us?*

The various assurances we have that God is for us

2. Look, the king is against you, and *you say, Who is against us?* Look, the whole people is against you, and *you say, Who is against us?* How can you prove it, O glorious martyr, how can you prove to me what you say: *If God is for us, who is against us?* It's obvious that if God is for you all, who can be against you? But prove that God is for you.

So can't I prove it? Here, I'll teach you: *Who did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for us all.* You heard this that follows when the apostle was read. You see, after saying *If God is for us, who is against us*, as though he were told, "Prove that God is for you," straightaway he brought forward a grand document in proof, straightaway he introduced the martyr of martyrs, the witness of witnesses; namely the one whom as his own Son the Father did not spare, but handed him over for us all. This is how the apostle proved he had spoken the truth when he said, *If God is for us, who is against us? He that did not even spare his own Son, but handed him over for us all, how has he not also granted us all things together with him?* (Rom 8:31-32). Seeing that he has granted us all things together with him, he has obviously granted us him. Can the shrieking and screaming of the world terrify me, seeing that I have been granted the architect of the world?

Let us rejoice that Christ has been granted to us, and let us fear no enemies of Christ in this age. Just notice, after all, who it is that has been granted to us: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* That's Christ, that's the only-begotten Son of God, that's the one who is coeternal with the one who begets him. *All things were made through him* (Jn 1:1-2). How can the things that were made through him not have been granted to us, when he himself has been granted to us, through whom all things were made? And to show you that it really is himself, *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us* (Jn 1:14).

Desire and long for the life of Christ that has been granted you; and until you get there, hold on to the death of Christ as your guarantee. He couldn't, after all, have given us a greater guarantee, when he promised he was going to live with us, than to die for us. "I have borne," he says, "your evils; will I not pay you back my good things?" He promised, he made out a promissory note, he gave us a pledge; and are *you* still hesitant about trusting him? He made the

promise when he was walking around here among men; he made out the promissory note when he wrote the gospel. It is to his pledge that you say “Amen” every day.² You have received his pledge, it is offered you every day. You really needn’t despair, you that are living on the pledge.

Christ himself is going to be our possession

3. Or perhaps an injury is being done to the only-begotten Son when it is said that he has been granted to us, as though he is going to be our possession? He certainly is going to be. I mean, what if someone were to grant you today a pleasant and fertile estate, where you would love to live all the time because of its amenities, and on which you could easily support yourself because of its fertility; wouldn’t you accept the gift with both hands, and thank the giver? Well, we are always going to stay in Christ. How will he not be our possession, in whom we shall stay, and on whom we shall live? Let scripture say this too, in case I should seem with my fancies to have introduced something that goes beyond the discipline of God’s word. Listen to what someone said to him, who knew that if God is for us, who is against us. *The Lord*, he said, *is the portion of my inheritance* (Ps 16:5). Wasn’t he saying,³ “O Lord, why give me some inheritance? Whatever you give, it isn’t worth much. You be my inheritance; I love you, I love you with all I am, with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind I love you.”⁴ What can it mean to me, anything you give me apart from yourself?” That is to love God freely, to hope in God for God, to hasten to be filled with God, to be satisfied with him. He, after all, is enough for you; apart from him, nothing is enough for you. Philip knew this when he said, *Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us* (Jn 14:8).

So when what the apostle says comes about in the end, *that God may be all in all* (1 Cor 15, 28), that he may be for us whatever we long for here without him, and out of longing for which we frequently sin against him;⁵ then he himself will represent all things for us, when God is all in all. You sin against God in order to eat, you sin against God in order to have clothes to wear, you sin against God in order to live, you sin against God in order to be honored. And when shall I ever complete the whole list? Don’t sin against God for these things. Is it on account of food that you are sinning against God? God will be your eternal food. Is it on account of clothes you are sinning against God? God is going to clothe you with immortality. Is it on account of honors that you are sinning against God? God will be your honor. Is it for love of temporal life that you are sinning against God? God will be eternal life for you. Don’t sin against him for anything at all. You ought to be loving him freely, after all, seeing that he himself will be able to satisfy your desire for anything and everything.

NOTES

1. Dom Lambot suggests the sermon was preached on the feast of Saint Sixtus II, who was martyred in Rome in 258, a few days before his more famous deacon, Saint Lawrence; but what the evidence for this suggestion is, I do not know. My first guess would be that the sermon was preached in Hippo Regius. About the date, it gives no hint at all.

2. The eucharist.

3. Reading *Nonne dixit*, instead of the text's *Non dixit*, He didn't say. But it is surely clear that Augustine is paraphrasing the psalmist's words.

4. See Mk 12:30.

5. The Latin text puts a question mark here, not a semi-colon, treating the *Quando* with which the sentence begins as an interrogative; "When will what the apostle says come about . . . ?" But it doesn't matter (in this context) when it will come about; what does matter is that God will satisfy *all* our desires for anything and everything.

SERMON 335

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: 410-412¹

*The martyrs could not have overcome the world's assaults,
unless they had first overcome its seductions*

1. Since it is a feast of the holy martyrs, what could it give us more pleasure to talk about than their glory? May the Lord of the martyrs assist us, because he is himself their crown. It was in the tones of the martyrs that we heard the blessed apostle Paul proclaiming a short while ago, *Who will separate us from the charity of Christ?* Those are the very tones of the martyrs. *Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword? As it is written: It is on your account that we are being done to death all the day long, we have been counted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we overcome through him who loved us* (Rom 8:35-37). Those are the tones of the martyrs, to endure everything, and to rely on oneself not at all; to love the one who is glorified in those who are his, *so that whoever glories, should glory in the Lord* (1 Cor 1:31).

They were also familiar with that thing we have been singing a short while ago, *Rejoice in the Lord and exult, you just* (Ps 32:11). If the just rejoice in the Lord, the unjust only know how to rejoice in the world. But that precisely is the first battle line to be overrun; first it's the delights that must be defeated, and next the pains and hurts. How can you overcome the world's ferocity, if you can't overcome its caresses? This world caresses and coaxes by promising honors, riches, pleasures; this world threatens by brandishing pain, poverty, humiliation. If you don't treat lightly what it promises, how can you overcome what it threatens? Riches are enjoyable; we all know that. But justice is more enjoyable still. Enjoy riches with justice. But where the crunch of temptation comes in such a way that these two, riches and justice, confront each other, and you can't have them both, but if you stretch out your hand to riches, you are bound to lose justice—now's the time to choose, the time to fight. Now let's see if you've had good reason to sing, *Rejoice in the Lord and exult, you just*. Now let's see if it wasn't quite pointless, your hearing, *Who will separate us from the charity of Christ?*

And indeed he passed over all the things with which the world coaxes and caresses, and wished simply to alert you, whom the world is coaxing and caressing. Why? Because he was foretelling the contests of the martyrs, those contests, of course, in which they defeated persecution, hunger, thirst, want, shame, and finally the fear of death and the most ferocious of enemies.²

Comparison between the martyr and the miser

2. But notice, brothers and sisters, that it's all achieved by belonging to Christ's party.³ The apostle admonishes us to prefer the charity of Christ to the world. How many kinds of distress are experienced by those who want to lay their hands on other people's property! *Or persecution?* he says. Not even that breaks their spirit.⁴ Many also suffer from hunger, while they are amassing fortunes and making profits. When we tell them to fast, they make excuses for their delicate stomachs; then they spend the whole day counting the shekels, and go to bed fasting. *Or nakedness?* he says. What shall I say about nakedness? Every day traders emerge naked, stripped of everything, from a shipwreck, and off they go again to sea and its dangers. For what other reason do these people face dangers every day, but for the acquisition of wealth? Not even the sword stops them. Falsification of wills is a capital crime, and yet the inheritance is still whittled away.⁵ So if greed for temporal things earns this sort of thing, why shouldn't the inheritance of Christ earn it too?⁶

The miser says to himself, though he probably daren't say it out loud, "Who shall separate us from the greed for gold? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution?" Misers can also say to gold, "It is on your account that we are being slain all day long." So the holy martyrs are absolutely right to say in the psalm, *Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from an unholy people* (Ps 43:1). Distinguish, he is saying, my tribulation. Misers too experience tribulation. Distinguish my distress; misers also are frequently distressed. Distinguish my persecutions; misers also suffer from them. Distinguish my hunger; misers too go hungry for the sake of amassing gold. Distinguish my death; misers too die for the sake of gold. What's the point of "Distinguish my cause"? *It is on your account that we are done to death all the day long* (Rom 8:36). They on gold's account, we on yours. The same sort of punishment, but a very different cause; where the cause is differentiated, there victory is certain.

So it's when we look at the cause that we love the feast days of the martyrs. Let us love in them, not their sufferings, but the causes of their sufferings. Because if we just love their sufferings, we are going to find many people who suffered worse things in bad causes. But if we are to pay attention⁷ to the cause, then pay attention to the cross of Christ; there was Christ, there also were the bandits. The same sort of punishment, but a different cause. One bandit believed, the other blasphemed. The Lord, as from a judicial bench, judged between the two of them; the one who blasphemed he condemned to Tartarus;⁸ the other he brought with him into paradise. Why so? Because even if the punishment was the same, the cause was different. So choose the causes of the martyrs as your own, if you wish to attain to the martyrs' palms of victory.

NOTES

1. So Fischer and Kunzelmann.
2. The devil, perhaps. The whole paragraph reads a little oddly. I have the feeling that something has been left out, possibly by one of those rather insensitive compilers of lectionaries.
3. Reading *quia totum pars Christi facit*, instead of the text's . . . *totum ars Christi* . . . ; that it is all achieved by the art of Christ. This is indeed a rather striking and beautiful idea; but one quite unrelated to the context. The Maurists suggest emending to *caritas Christi*, which is indeed mentioned in the next sentence. But first: how is *caritas* likely to have been inadvertently changed into *ars*? Just possibly, I suppose, through an abbreviated form of it. But secondly, and more to the point: the context is going to be the comparison between the martyr and the miser, the lover of Christ and the lover of gold. The question is, which party do you belong to, the Christ party or the gold party? Augustine very frequently calls the Donatists the *pars Donati*, and if the context were a piece of anti-Donatist polemic, he would indeed never call Catholics the *pars Christi*. But in this quite different context, I think the expression would have occurred to him quite readily.
4. Here I leave out a sentence that really doesn't fit in this place, and looks like a marginal comment, culled from many other texts on the topic. It runs: *Avaritia terretur, avarus rapit et timet poenam, aestuat in rapinam*: Avarice goes in dread, the avaricious man plunders and fears the punishment, is all hot for plunder.
5. I presume the inheritance that is whittled away is someone else's; the falsifier's elder brother, or other relative. But again the sense is very hard to follow.
6. Why not indeed? But heaven knows what he means!
7. Reading *Sed si causam attendamus*, adding *si*, if, to the text. Without it, it would mean, "But let us pay attention to the cause."
8. The classical pagan hell. See Sermon 328, note 14.

SERMON 335A

ON THE FEAST DAY OF SOME MARTYRS, OF WHOM ONE WAS CALLED PRIMUS,
TWO OTHERS VICTORIA AND PERPETUA

Date: before 401¹

*The passion of the martyrs just read shows the difference
between the witnesses of Christ and of the devil*

1. The word “martyr” is Greek; in English it’s “witness.” So if the martyrs are witnesses, it’s because they suffered such terrible things for the truth of their testimony. Truth was serving God, iniquity was lying to itself. That, you see, is what is written; the body of Christ, which is the Church, is speaking in the psalm: *Iniquitous witnesses have risen up against me, and iniquity has lied to itself* (Ps 27:12). Witnesses and witnesses; iniquitous witnesses and just witnesses; both witnesses of the devil and witnesses of Christ. We saw, we watched, we heard each kind of witness, when the passion was being read of the blessed martyrs whose feast day is being celebrated. When interrogated, they replied that they had held a meeting, because they were Christians. That is the testimony of truth. The judge said, “Since you have confessed to the crime. . . .”² That is the testimony of iniquity; God was being preached, and it was called a crime. In preaching God, truth was obeying God; in calling it a crime, iniquity was lying to itself. What they said, you see, was turned against them, and what was not a true crime was condemned by a real crime.

Our martyrs were not committing a crime; the martyrs of Christ were not committing a crime by congregating in a meeting to praise God, to listen to the truth, to hope for the kingdom of heaven and turn their backs on the present utterly worthless age. These were not the ones committing a crime; this is called piety, the proper name for this thing is religion, the proper name for this thing is devotion, the proper name for this thing is true testimony. So what crime were those people committing, who went on to kill these who had confessed to piety? “That man and that man,” said the unjust judge, the false witness, “that man and that man; it is the court’s pleasure they should be executed by the sword.” There’s the real crime. Listen now to the voice of piety. “Thanks be to God,” was the testimony given by the first. The first, called Primus, closed his testimony with perpetual victory.³

I'm sure your graces noticed, when the passion of the saints was being read, that the one who first confessed was called Primus; the one before last was Victoria, at the very end came Perpetua. Oh, what a victory without a fall, what an end without end! What, after all, is victory perpetual¹ but victory without end? That means conquering the allurements of the flesh, conquering the threats of the crooked judge, conquering bodily pain, conquering love of life.

The martyrs conquered the love of life by their love of life

2. With the Lord's help let me tell you, if I can, my brothers and sisters, what I think; in the holy martyrs love of life was conquered by love of life. Those of you who clapped and applauded have understood; but for the sake of those who haven't understood, permit me, you that have done so, to open up for a few moments what I have just said. This is what I said: in the holy martyrs love of life was conquered by love of life; in loving life they thought nothing of life. Who, in loving silver, ever thinks nothing of silver? Who, in loving gold, ever thinks nothing of gold? Who, in loving broad acres, ever thinks nothing of broad acres? None of us thinks nothing of what we love. We've found the martyrs loving life and thinking nothing of life. They wouldn't reach that life, if they didn't trample on this one. They knew what they were doing; they were amassing by spending.

Don't imagine, dearly beloved, that they had lost their wits when they loved life and thought nothing of life. They hadn't lost their wits; they were scattering seed, and looking for a harvest. I observe that the farmer has his wits about him, and I recognize that the martyrs have their wisdom. The farmer, in loving wheat, scatters wheat. If you don't understand what the sower is doing, you may perhaps take him to task, and say, "What are you doing, stupid? You bring out what you gathered with such labor and difficulty, you scatter it, you take it from your sight, throw it down on the ground, cover it up with earth?" He answers you, "I love wheat, that's why I'm throwing it down; if I didn't love it, I wouldn't throw it down; I want it to grow, not to rot."

There you have what our martyrs did, incomparably wiser than farmers. The sowers, after all, scatter a few grains, and the reapers gather a great many. But both what they scatter and what they gather comes to an end; what is scattered is not very much, and what is gathered is; each, however, gets finished. And you didn't want our martyrs to scatter life, due to end in death anyway some time or other, in order to receive a life which doesn't end in death? They are good investors, good sowers; the one who multiplies what they sow is God. It's he that also multiplies the crops in the fields; he that nourishes whatever grows in the ground. God can multiply grains; can he not keep his martyrs safe? Look, I'm telling you; listen to what they heard.

The martyrs have made a very good investment

3. You too heard just now, when the gospel was being read; you learned what they were promised: *They will hand you over*, he said, *in their councils, and*

scourge you in their synagogues, and some of you they will kill; but I tell you, not a hair of your heads shall perish, and by your patience you will possess your souls (Mt 10:17; Lk 21:16.18-19).⁵ You will possess them, and not lose them; there is no enemy there, after all, to persecute, and no friend ever dies there. You will be in a place where an everlasting day has no yesterday preceding it, no tomorrow following it. In that place you will be good investors, where the devil cannot follow you.⁶

Endure for a time, rejoice forever. The things you have to bear with are very hard, but what you are sowing produces a grand crop. Read what was said about you while you were sowing: *Going, they were going and weeping, as they cast their seed*. With what result, to what purpose, with what consolation? *But coming they will come with exultation, carrying their sheaves* (Ps 126:6). It's from these sheaves that crowns are made. So let us celebrate the feast days of the martyrs, by honoring the sufferings of the martyrs, not by indulging ourselves in drink.

Turning to the Lord, etc.

NOTES

1. So Fischer and Kunzelmann. But there is a wide variety of opinion about the day of the year on which the sermon was preached. Frangipane, editing it in the early nineteenth century from two manuscripts in the Abbey of Monte Casino (which simply give it the title, "About several martyrs"), considers it was preached on 12 February, the anniversary of the martyrdom in 304 of Primus and his 47 companions, who are mentioned by Augustine in his *Summary of the Conference with the Donatists*, 17, 31. But he doesn't mention their names; he only states that they had admitted that they had held an assembly and celebrated Sunday. They are also mentioned by his older contemporary, Saint Optatus of Milev. In the calendar of the Carthaginian Church, however, they are mentioned as being commemorated on five distinct feast days. So other authorities, Dom Morin in particular in his edition of the text in *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, 1931, propose either 4 November or 2 February as the day on which this sermon was preached.

Now as they were Carthaginian martyrs, Frangipane thinks, and I agree with him, that the sermon was most probably preached in Carthage. But according to Perler Augustine very rarely went there in the winter. In fact, the only winter in which he has Augustine in Carthage after his ordination is that of 412-413. So whichever of the three days proposed is right, the sermon was preached much later than Fischer and Kunzelmann suggest, either on 4 November 412, or 2 or 12 February 413. If they, however, are right, then it certainly wasn't preached in Carthage, and most likely in Hippo Regius. For reasons of style, I think the later date is far the more likely.

2. The crime of unlawful assembly, of holding "unlawful conventicles," a crime regularly committed by both Catholic and Protestant dissenters in England and Scotland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and by the Huguenots in France after Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes.

3. He is playing for all he is worth on the names of the martyrs, Primus ("First"), Victoria and Perpetua; and it is impossible, really, to tell when to translate these words into English, or when to treat them as proper names. I have to make my choice, sometimes siding with Frangipane, sometimes with Morin. The latter prints the two sentences so as to mean, ". . . was the testimony given by the first of them, Primus; the testimony was closed by Victoria Perpetua," treated as one woman with two names. I here treat "perpetual victory" as signifying precisely the death of the martyr; but of course alluding to their names.

4. I have to keep this order in English, because it is the order in which Victoria and Perpetua suffered—if my interpretation is correct. I revise the punctuation of the text in the first sentence of this paragraph, from “that the one . . .” on. As printed it reads, . . . *qui primus confessus est, Primus vocabatur ante novissimum; Victoria in fine Perpetua*. So Morin; Frangipane agrees, but keeps lower case throughout. I revise to . . . *qui primus confessus est, Primus vocabatur; ante novissimum Victoria; in fine Perpetua*.

5. This quotation, from a gospel which has just been read, proves, I think, conclusively that the Church in which he was preaching, probably Carthage, employed a harmony of the gospels in its liturgy. This mixing of Matthew and Luke cannot simply be ascribed here to Augustine’s memory; he is reminding the congregation of what they have just heard.

6. Your investment, I imagine—or rather your dividend—will be your souls, which persecutors and the devil are trying to make you lose in this life.

SERMON 335B

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME HOLY MARTYRS

Date: 410-412¹

Christ teaches us to have an attitude to death which is the opposite of Adam's

1. We call the holy martyrs blessed above the rest of humanity, because they contended with sin to the point of shedding their blood; we call them blessed, though, because they underwent death for the sake of the truth, and by dying discovered life. They wouldn't have died, after all, if the Man² hadn't sinned; because if the Man had kept the commandment, he would have lived. God threatened him with death if he sinned;³ so out of fear of death he should have refrained from transgressing; but he gave more credence to the serpent's deception than to the creator's warning. He didn't believe God, and he duly discovered what he didn't believe. So nature left to itself stumbles into death; and insofar as it can, it struggles hard not to die; but it dies unwillingly, because it sinned willingly.

Nor did the first man, after all, in sinning make light of death; in fact he didn't believe he was going to die even if he did sin. He was told, "Don't touch it; if you do, you will die the death." He didn't say himself, did he, "I will touch it, and die"? He didn't say to himself, did he, "God has threatened me with death, to stop me tasting of that tree; all the more reason for me to taste it, and so experience what there may be in that food; and if death results, what's that to me?" No, he didn't say that, because out of pride and curiosity he wanted to sin, but by nature he didn't want to die.

Finally, even the serpent himself, or rather the devil in the serpent, sin's advertising agent,⁴ the demolisher of faith, didn't relieve him of the fear of death by substituting contempt for death. I mean, he didn't say to him, in his evil touting, "You're afraid to die; and what does dying amount to? Death isn't an evil; you've no reason to be afraid of what isn't an evil." That's not what he said to him; after all, he knew how abhorrent to nature is a willingness to die. But what did he say to him? *You will not die the death* (Gn 3:4). He didn't persuade him to have a contempt for death, but took away from him belief in death. So he did what he was persuaded to, not because he made light of death, but because he didn't believe he would die. Death followed on his sin; he begot all of us, not

as he had been created, but as he had become by sinning. We have been born, contracting from the transgressor both fault and punishment.

One man came to counter one man, because *through one man death, and through one man the resurrection of the dead. For just as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive* (1 Cor 15:21-22).⁵ So one man came to counter one man; nor did he come in the same way as the one he came to rescue had come; no, he came from the virgin, he came without lust, he came conceived not by sexual desire but by faith. So one man came to counter one man. In order to come to the rescue of mankind, he took something from the human race; but he didn't take everything which the one he was coming to the aid of had. So he came, and he found us lying fallen in both the fault and its punishment; he took upon himself only the punishment, and released us from both the fault and the punishment.

God said at the beginning, "Don't sin, in order not to die"; now he says, "Die, in order not to sin." Then, it was, "By sinning you encounter death"; now, "By dying, you arrive at life"

2. So the Lord Christ undertook to encourage his martyrs, by example as well as by word, not to fear death. Christ's encouragement was not like the serpent's seduction. The serpent, you see, said, "If you sin, you will not die the death." Christ said, "If you sin, you shall die the death. If you deny me—or rather, even if you don't deny me, you will die. But *do not fear those who kill the body* (Lk 12:4). O man, don't now fear those who kill the body. That was the time you should have feared death, in order not to encounter death. If you had feared death then, you would not have encountered death. If you fear death now, you will not be delivered from death."⁶ But forget about the devil's seductive persuasiveness. The Lord God himself said one thing to man then, says another now. At that time he said to him, "Do not sin, in order not to die"; now he says to him, "Die, in order not to sin." At that time he said to him, "By sinning you encounter death"; now he says to him, "By dying you arrive at life."

So the punishment of the sinner has been made into the instrument of power; then, by listening to the devil, they died; now we, by dying for the sake of the truth, overcome the devil. Why flatter yourself, you that took me captive? It's with your own tools that I defeat you. You persuaded me to sin, and took away my belief in death. You said, "You won't die"; I believed you, and died. You persuaded me, tricked me, deceived me, held me, cast me into death by your evil persuading of me; but by Christ's dying you lost those whom you had taken possession of. You have no means of frightening us, when death itself is accepted in order to avoid sin; death which at that time we should have feared, in order not to sin. Against your poisonous, whispered hisses the martyr sings, *I will make music to my God, as long as I live* (Ps 146:2).

So don't you make music to God when you've died? Indeed, that's when you make more music than ever, as long as you live. Right now, you see, it isn't "long," anything that has an end. I myself wouldn't even say that Adam had lived long, if he had just died today; what, I mean to say, would be the value of

long past ages, when they were, precisely, past? Yes, he lived a long time; still he has had his life. But if he is still living, tell me, and if his being alive will have no end, then I too will say it is long. Shouldn't we Christians, who have been promised eternal life, understand what some author or other of the pagans understood, who said, "What, after all, is the meaning of this phrase 'a long time,' where there is eventually a last time?"⁷ Eliminate the end, and I will acknowledge length of time; if, however, you fix an end, I will convince you of time's shortness.

So then, *I will make music to my God, as long as I live*. That's how we ought to understand "long," so that it really is long. "As long as I live," therefore "because I live forever," you must connect with that other text, *Blessed are those who dwell in your house; for ever and ever shall they praise you* (Ps 84:4). This is the reward that the holy martyrs loved, and by loving life they were willing to die. So because they died with great fortitude and patience, do you suppose they were in love with death? Perish the thought, they were in love with life, they longed for life; they wished to live without death, since they chose to die for the sake of life. They thought very lightly of what is not "a long time," in order to arrive at the real "long time."

A conversation between the persecutor and the martyr

3. What sort of persecutor is it, though, who comes and says, "Deny Christ, if you don't want me to kill you"?

Shall I deny life on account of life? On account of a brief life, shall I deny eternal life? Supposing you spare me today, and tomorrow a fever carries me off? If the fever carries me off, it doesn't carry off my faith. This life, which you say you can grant me, is not in your power; so I will not on its account deny the life which Christ is, who has in his power both death and life. So shall I deny him, seeing that I live here as long as he wishes, not as long as you wish? And when I cease to live here, I come to him, in whom there is nothing but living.

"Look, if you don't deny him, I'll kill you."

I know who's really speaking; through you he now says to me, "Deny, and you won't die." It's practically the same as what he said to me then: "Touch it, and you won't die." Then I didn't want to die, now I am on my guard against you.

So whatever it's like, this life is sweet, and nobody wants to end it, wretched though it is. If any sort of life is as sweet as all that, what must that other life be, my brothers and sisters? Consider the glory of the martyrs; unless death were bitter, there would be no glory for the martyrs. If death is nothing, what was so great about the martyrs making light of it? Consider the Lord himself: *Greater love has no one than this, that one should lay down one's life for one's friends* (Jn 15:13). And though he had the power to lay down his life, and had the power to take it up again,⁸ yet all the same, in order to represent us in himself, *My soul, he said, is sorrowful to the point of death* (Mk 14:34). He also said to blessed Peter, *When you are old, another will gird you and take you where you do not wish* (Jn 21:18)—even when you are old.

So what must that blessed life be like, if one cannot help loving even this miserable one? What is the activity engaged in by this life, which is loved so much? To desire, to fear, to hope, to be disappointed, to toil, to get ill; real sadness, bogus cheerfulness; pouring out prayers, fearing temptations and trials. What's this life like? Who can possibly have the eloquence adequately to describe its wretchedness? We love it, all the same. But now, what's the activity engaged in by that other life? I won't take up much more time, I won't take a long time to describe it: *I will make music to my God, as long as ever I live* (Ps 146:2).

The difference between making light of death for the love of God, and for worldly greed

4. The martyrs were in love with life, that's why they were tolerant of death. However, my brothers and sisters, so sweet is this ugly, wretched life, so sweet is it, that the martyrs would not have been able to make light of it for the sake of the truth and of eternal life, unless the one who told them to make light of it had helped them. Greed or lust also frequently makes light of death, but where there is no health; where vice is being constrained by vice, since greed and lust belong to this age. *Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world; if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the ambition of the age* (1 Jn 2:15-16). People frequently risk death for lust of the flesh; they risk death for lust of the eyes; they risk death for the ambition of the age. But anyone who risks death for the love of God cannot possibly achieve that without God's help.

And then there's also the martyr himself; after saying *I will make music to my God as long as ever I live*, and meditating upon eternal life, he was prompted also to turn round and say, *Do not trust in princes*.⁹ Don't, when the prince spares you, trust in him. May God, the prince of princes, help you to trust. Be trustful out of faith;¹⁰ and don't *trust in princes, and in the sons of men, for whom*¹¹ there is no salvation (Ps 146:3). So not in yourself either, because *salvation is from the Lord* (Ps 3:8). As for you, I mean, do you want to know what you are on your own, and as far as you are concerned? *His spirit will go out, and he will revert to his dust; on that day all their thoughts will perish* (Ps 146:4). There you have what you are, if in yourself you are nothing but you. So because you should not trust in the sons of men, for whom there is no salvation—their salvation, you see, is not in them from them, which is why it says, *salvation is from the Lord, and your blessing upon your people* (Ps 3:8)—if you don't trust in men, for whom there is no salvation, you shouldn't trust in yourself either, because you are a man, for whom there is no salvation.

God's helping us with his grace does not mean that we ourselves do not do what he is helping us to do

5. Come on, answer me now, and say, "If I don't trust in myself, then it's not I who am making light of death; not I who am fulfilling the commandment not to deny Christ."

Blessed is the one whose helper is the God of Jacob (Ps 146:5). It is indeed you that make light of death, you that believe and fulfill the commandment; you that trample on the threats of the persecutors; you that most ardently love and long for eternal life. It's really true that it's you; but, *Blessed is the one whose helper is the God of Jacob.* Remove the helper, all I find left is a deserter. Adam the deserter, the helper Christ. What's that deserter, but what he was told: *Dust you are, and to dust you shall go (Gn 3:19)?* His spirit will go out, and he will return to his dust.

The helper, though, underwent death, and taught us to make light of what he took on. And my helper said to me, "You are not afraid¹² of sin, but the reason you are willing to sin is in order not to die. Here I am, suffering what you are afraid of. I suffer what you are afraid of; be afraid of the thing I don't do. What are you afraid of? Death. Here I am, suffering it. Be afraid of the thing I don't do, sin." *Who committed no sin, nor was any guile found on his lips (1 Pt 2:22).* So don't do what he didn't do, and don't fear what he suffered. After all, you are not going to do death, but to suffer it; be afraid of your deed, not of your suffering. Be afraid of what you do willingly, not of what you suffer unwillingly. Death won't kill you, if you are not death to yourself.

It wouldn't even be there, though, if there hadn't been any sin. True, it's to be made light of, it's to be trampled on, it at least¹³ is transitory. Why "it at least"? If only one could say "it alone"! What do I mean by "If only it alone"? If only there were just the first death, which releases the spirit from the flesh. Be afraid of the second death, where the soul is not wrenched from the flesh, but the soul is tormented with the flesh. Don't be afraid of the transitory death, be afraid of the permanent one; there is no worse death than where death doesn't die. For fear of death you were willing to sin; sin killed your inner self; sin killed the very life of your flesh.

Finally, that death of the body would not have followed, unless it had been preceded by the death of the soul. The soul deserted God willingly, and deserted the flesh unwillingly. The Lord, though, did not desert the flesh unwillingly; he died when he wished, because he was born when he wished. But why all this? Just so that you wouldn't be afraid, there you have the reason it all happened. And we are afraid of death; we're afraid of death as though we were able to avoid death. Fear what you can avoid, that is to say, sin. Sin you can avoid, death you can't.

We have recognized ourselves, seen ourselves, taken a thorough look at ourselves; let us groan and sigh in ourselves, pour out prayers, that we enter not into temptations.¹⁴ We mustn't rely on our own powers to overcome all these things. *Blessed, after all, is the one whose helper is the God of Jacob, his hope in the Lord his God (Ps 146:5);* not in himself, because he is a mere man. But *cursed be everyone who places his hope in man (Jer 17:5).*

NOTES

1. So Fischer and Kunzelmann.
2. The Latin is just *homo*. But as Augustine clearly has Adam in mind, I think it requires being treated as having a particular, not a merely general, reference.
3. See Gn 2:17.
4. *Peccati suasor*.
5. The quotation has been affected by echoes from Rom 5:2.15.
6. Reading *a morte non liberaberis*, instead of the text's *a morte liberaberis*, you will be delivered from death—which derails the whole movement of thought.
7. Cicero, *For M. Marcellus*, 9. A curiously disparaging way of referring to one who was, perhaps, his chief pagan hero.
8. See Jn 10:18.
9. In the Roman Empire *princeps*, prince, was the normal way of referring to the emperor.
10. Trust and faith being much more obviously the same thing in Latin, which here runs, *Fidus esto de fide*.
11. It becomes clear at the end that he takes the *quibus* of *quibus non est salus* as a dative; his text does not, like the Vulgate, read *in quibus*. So he has to exert himself to interpret it as meaning "for whom there is no salvation from themselves."
12. Reading *Peccatum non times* instead of the text's *Pecatum times*, You are afraid of sin. But this makes no sense in the context. An alternative would be to emend *Peccatum* to *Mortem*, You are afraid of death. But that would be a more drastic emendation than inserting an easily omitted negative. Yet a third possibility would be to read *Peccatum time*, Fear sin.
13. Reading *transitoria est vel ipsa*, instead of the text's *transitoria est*. The question he goes on immediately to ask surely requires it. The first *vel ipsa* could easily have been omitted by the mistake called haplography: copying a word or phrase once which should have been written twice.
14. See Mk 14:38.

SERMON 335C

A SERMON OF BLESSED AUGUSTINE THE BISHOP ON ONE MARTYR

Date: 405-411¹

The glory of the martyrs was ignored by the world, their patience was tested and proved

1. Seeing that the birthday has dawned of the blessed martyr, whom the Lord willed that we should celebrate with you, let me hold forth a little, if the Lord grants me what to say, about the glory and the patience of the martyrs. Their glory, indeed, was ignored,² their patience was tested and proved. Their glory, you see, was lying hidden away in heaven, their patience was being exercised on earth. If you're not horrified at their patience, and what they suffered, may you attain to their glory. It is, after all, considered the utmost wretchedness to suffer harsh and bitter things in the flesh, because it is indeed grievous. If it weren't grievous for men and women, it wouldn't be glorious for martyrs.

Two kinds of love, the greedy and the dear

2. Now set before your eyes two persons, so to say, one the person of greedy love, one of dear love.³ By greedy love I mean the love of sinning, because sometimes there is a greed which is talked of in a good sense. Again, by dear love I mean the love of living rightly, because sometimes dear love, or charity, also is used in a bad sense. That's why I wanted to define what I've said. The faithful are greedy for the kingdom of heaven; even brigands are said to hold one another dear. There isn't really charity, though, or dear love among people who are bound together by a bad conscience, but only among those whose social bond is a common delight in wisdom.

3. Reflect, then—and distinguish—how greedy people suffer many evils, and how for the things they are greedy to get they endure hardships that seem intolerable to people who aren't greedy for the same things. Those others, though, are made brave by their love. But love of what is bad is called a greedy love, love of what is good a dear love. Many of the things loved by the greedy are so diverse that sometimes they are even found to run counter to each other. Avarice hoards money, self-indulgence throws it around. One is mean, the other spendthrift, and what could run so clearly counter to each other as hoarding

money and throwing it around? Still, avarice gives the command, and how many things are done! And how many hardships and harsh conditions it commands you to endure by putting up with pain! . . . ⁴ than you love pleasure. Yet even pleasure in the madness of love is sometimes both loved disgracefully, and causes many things to be endured bravely for its sake.

The courage of true charity

4. So it's hardly surprising, dearly beloved, if charity too has the courage of its love. This is what the martyrs had, with it they endured all kinds of hard knocks. They were in love with what they could not see but believed for sure, and what, as far as it can be perceived by any human being carrying the flesh, they perceived with their hearts. After all, doesn't this flesh have its genuine beauty? And doesn't unfading wisdom have its own beauty? But the unjust are alive to the beauty of wisdom, and sometimes they even desire it at last. They too, you see, would like to be wise, if they were allowed both to hold onto what they love and to have wisdom. Undoubtedly they would like to have both, they haven't rejected wisdom.

You find the lover of sensual pleasure also wishing to be wise. But you find the wise person having little regard for sensual pleasure. Very rarely could you find the lover of pleasure having little regard for wisdom. If he could, he would have both; but he puts one before the other, and that's why he is miserably put upon by himself. He is cheating himself, because he will lose the better things by loving the inferior ones; but when he is delighting in base pleasures, he is insensitive to being cheated of heavenly ones.

It's the cause, not the punishment, that makes the martyr

5. So give me a lover of the good, about whom the apostle⁵ says, *And who can do you any harm, if you are lovers of the good?* (1 Pt 3:13). In that case, you see, you suffer no loss in the thing you love. Whatever the one who's raging against you may deprive you of, the one who made you will not destroy you if you love him. And the more you are deprived of earthly goods, the more your heavenly goods are increased, provided that it's for your love of them that you are deprived of these. It makes a difference, after all, why you lose what. And that's why it's not the punishment but the cause that makes the martyr. And so we don't call these martyrs just, simply because they have suffered much, except when we take notice of why they suffered.

It is on your account, he says—it's the voice of the martyrs—*it is on your account that we are being put to death all day long* (Ps 44:22). Remove *on your account*; what good does *we are being put to death all day long* do you? Add *on your account*; what harm does it do you to be put to death all day long? Being put to death all day long on your account not only doesn't do any harm, but even does the most possible good. The cause is expressed in the words *on your account*, suffering in the words *we are being put to death all day long*. You build

a good building out of suffering, if you don't pull away the foundation of the love of God.

The cause of sensual lovers

6. It makes a difference why you say "On your account." After all, even that licentious lover, who has stumbled on the beauty of the flesh and got stuck to it, preens himself like this to his beloved: "It's on your account, on your account," he says, "that I incurred my father's wrath, on your account that I was beaten very severely by my father and unmercifully by the magistrates. It's on your account that I have spent absolutely everything I had, on your account that I am left penniless."

How often you say "on your account"! And nothing for yourself? Indeed though, not only nothing for yourself, but even absolutely everything "on your account."

The cause of avarice

7. If money could hear its lovers, how many would be saying to it, "It's on your account that I endured a hard winter at sea, on your account that I experienced so many shipwrecks, on your account that in danger from the waves I jettisoned cargo, on your account that I even lost you; you see, by concentrating on what I still longed to get, I lost what I had."

How many "on your accounts!" But the one you are speaking to is deaf, and doesn't listen to you if for her sake⁶ you even lose yourself. And what good does it do you, when you perish on account of money? You perish yourself, and you don't find her. Or rather, whatever money you have, you leave behind here in perishing. You pass on; then along comes another of her lovers. How many people, loving her, have left her behind, and by loving her and passing on have perished!

You see, *although man walks in the image, yet it is in vain that he is troubled*. It's a miserable state of affairs that, though he walks in the image, God's of course, he is troubled in vain. *He heaps up treasure, and does not know for whom he collects it* (Ps 39:6-7). Why is he troubled, after all, if not to heap up treasure? Look here, by all means heap up treasure, but where wisdom has told you to, not where avarice lurks.

God's advice about money

8. God has given some advice about money, so that what has been acquired shouldn't just vanish. *Make for yourselves*, he said, *friends with the mammon of iniquity, so that they too may receive you into the tents of eternity* (Lk 16:9). The martyrs, who had a good cause and endured much for the love of God, were received by some people when they were hungry, covered when they were naked, welcomed when they were strangers.⁷ It's a service, after all, for those

who find themselves in trouble. They were made into friends with the mammon of iniquity. So the Lord even gave some good advice about money, if anyone happens to be listening. Naturally, I mean to say, if you love your money, you ought to take care it doesn't simply vanish. If it has vanished for them,⁸ it vanishes for you. You see, it departs from you,⁹ attaches itself to someone else. Make something of it, which will ensure it doesn't vanish for you, and before¹⁰ it has taken its leave of you. bank it in heaven, *where no thief can approach, and no moth destroy* (Lk 12:33). The place is a fortress; why hesitate to transfer your assets? Send what you have on ahead, so that you may come to where you have sent it. Buy something with it for yourself which cannot just vanish.

You know, dearly beloved, on what advice people greedy for money act, when they see they have accumulated an amount of coins. What do they say? "The thing's round, it rolls, it vanishes; it must be tied up with some purchase of real estate." And they want to tie their money up by buying a country house. And hey, presto, they've bought a house in the country, they will have a house in the country. Will the country house, though, always have them? But neither will they have it always, seeing that after a short while they will move on without any deferment. You can't tie up your soul to the place where you've tied up your money. The time will come, you see, when your soul will be required of you; what you have bought, whose will it be then?¹¹ So you won't have the country house, and the house in the country won't have you, except perhaps as regards your body, if you're buried there when you're dead. Why, then indeed something wonderful happens; it will have you, you won't have it.

9. So it's good advice of the Lord's, and golden, that's given to the person who's told, "Transfer it where you can't lose it."

"What sort of advice is that I'm being given? But I won't see it."

You'll see it later on; though you won't see the actual stuff you've sent ahead, because you've invested it at a good rate of interest. You've given one thing, another will be given back to you. The one you've been willing to lend to is almighty. He accepts small amounts, gives huge ones. He receives just a few things, gives back in vast numbers. He created the earth for you like that; you will throw down a few grains, in order to fill whole granaries. If that is the sort of earth he created for you, what must the one who created heaven and earth be keeping for you when you sow good works?

A prayer to God to heal the deaf ears the preacher's words are falling on

10. But I'm speaking to the deaf, to greedy people, whether the licentious lovers of beautiful bodies, or the misers who make a lot of money, and hoard it on earth. I'm speaking to the deaf, they can't hear me. Lord, may they be cured, so that they can hear. Nothing is impossible to you. No disease is incurable for you, because you are a great physician, supremely because you have shown us your charity going ahead of us, because you have not spared your own Son, but have handed him over for us all; how have you not, with him, also given us all things?¹²

Stretch your jaws wider, miser; make light now of a few things, you will have many. That man had conquered, crushed, stamped on greed, who could say, *As having nothing, and possessing everything* (2 Cor 6:10).

No earthly glory can compare with the glory the martyrs won

11. So to many licentious and miserly people the martyrs seemed to be out of their minds, when they suffered such terrible things for the sake of Christ's name, and confessed him all the time truly and faithfully. They were urged to deny him; when instead they confessed him, they were killed, burnt, held up as food to wild beasts; they were suffering horrifically in the open; in secret they were being crowned inexpressibly. If they were seeking rewards on earth, what can be added to this glory with which their birthdays are celebrated? Many brave men have been crazy for glory, and have said that one should shed one's blood for one's country; nor have they hesitated to shed theirs, aware indeed that life itself will pass, but that at least an immortal glory will remain for them. What glory of theirs can be compared with the glory of the martyrs?

Who has ever been able to find in the glory of this earth, who has ever been able to find in the glory of human annals, which great leader¹³ has ever been able to find what a fisherman has been able to find? The tombs of the brave men who died for their country are there in Rome. To whose tomb has an emperor ever deigned to pay a visit?¹⁴ There you are; if earthly glory was to be desired, those who looked for honor only among the angels were not even done out of that. We see their glory and renown on earth, and we are amazed. What would we experience if we could see it in heaven? What amazement and wonder would overwhelm us if we could see the martyrs triumphing among the angels, as we see whole populations celebrating their birthdays!

The three crosses on Calvary

12. However, seek the invisible rewards of the martyrs, my brothers and sisters. Love what they loved. Even if you don't endure what they endured, brace your spirits to endure it. To begin with, as far as you can, choose their cause. Because, apart from the choice of a cause, didn't the martyrs suffer the same sort of things as robbers often suffer, as adulterers, as sorcerers, as any kind of sacrilegious offenders? If you pay attention to the punishments, they are of the same kind; if you count up¹⁵ the causes, these are very different from those. What could be so close and similar to each other, and yet having no kinship with each other, as the three crosses, one the Lord's, and two those of the robbers? There were three of them, they were all crosses, all in the same place, all those bodies were hanging on the wood, but the cause set them all apart from each other. In the middle the savior, on either side the guilty. That cross was a judgment seat; he was hanging there and giving judgment. Judged himself, he was hanging there, and passing judgment on those hanging there.

Of those two guilty men, one earned a punishment, the other a reward.¹⁶ Why

did the other deserve a reward? Because on the cross he changed his cause. Hanging there, he believed in things promised for the far distant future;¹⁷ when the Lord had come into his kingdom, that's when he wished to be kept in mind by him. But what did the Lord answer, when this man said, *Lord, remember me, when you come into your kingdom*, as much as to say, "I know my cause, I know my merits, so I deserve to be tortured for what I have done; but when you come, have mercy on me"? He was deferring what he requested, Jesus was offering it then and there: "*Amen, amen I tell you, today you shall be with me in paradise* (Lk 23:42-43). You are hoping I'm going to come, but I am never absent; I am everywhere, and yet I also come where I am; but *today you shall be with me in paradise*, because there you will live happily, and you cannot live happily without me."

So all the souls of the blessed, though they haven't yet received back their bodies, are happy with Christ, finding their happiness only in Christ. He, you see, is the one they loved, the one they valued above all else; in him they had justice, in him wisdom, in him knowledge, in him *the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (Col 2:3). How many things they made light of here as they suffered! They didn't want to be very rich; what, after all, does the poor person lack, who has God?

The right order of love

13. Love what is good, my brothers and sisters; there is nothing more beautiful, even if it can only be seen with the eyes of the heart. I'm speaking to you, there.¹⁸ Look here, all the things you can see with the eyes of the flesh are beautiful, *the sky, the earth, the sea and everything that is in them* (Ps 69:34), the stars shining from the sky, the sun filling the day, the moon tempering the night, creatures that fly, that swim, that walk, human beings, themselves made, among all other things, *to the image of God* (Gn 1:27), to be praisers of the creator,¹⁹ lovers of the creation, but only if they are lovers of the creator. Whatever you love to the neglect of God, it was none but God who made it. Whatever, I repeat, you love to the neglect of God, it was none but God that made it. Because if it wasn't beautiful, it wouldn't be valued by you; and where could its beauty come from, if it were not created by the one who is invisibly beautiful?

You value gold, God created it. You value beautiful bodies and the flesh, God is their creator. You value pleasant properties, God created them. You value very highly this light, God created it. If you are neglecting God on account of what God has created, grant some value also, I implore you, to God himself. How fit to be valued and loved he must be, after all, how fit to be valued and loved, because he has created everything that you value and love. Esteem and value that in such a way that you esteem and value him more. I don't want you doing no loving at all, but I want your loving to be rightly ordered. Put heavenly things before earthly ones, immortal things before mortal, eternal things before temporal. Put the Lord before everything else, not just for praising but for loving.

Yes, it's easy enough to put him first as regards praising. When you are questioned, after all, "Which is better, money or wisdom, money or justice, lastly money or God?" you don't hesitate to say wisdom, justice, God. Just as you don't hesitate to say them, so don't hesitate to choose them. Which is better, justice or money? And just like children when they are questioned in school, you all eagerly chant "justice." I know you all,²⁰ I can hear your thoughts; justice is better. But temptation's coming; it puts forward on the other side, money. And temptation says to you, "You can have this money; if you do some cheating, the money rolls in." But justice will say, "What are you choosing? Now's the time for me to test the value of your words." Questioned a moment ago, you put justice before money; now though, with the two of them set before you, money this side, justice that, as though ashamed you shut your eyes against justice and stretch out your hand to money. You stupid good-for-nothing, when you were questioned by me and preferred justice to money, you uttered evidence against yourself. Is God going to look for any other witness after you've convicted yourself? In the matter of praising you preferred justice, in the matter of choosing you preferred money. Can't you see whose side you have decided to be on? On the side destined to lose of the creature destined to be lost. Money, of course, is undoubtedly going to be lost, because *both the world will pass away and all its lust*. Choose justice, because *whoever does the will of God abides forever, just as he himself abides forever* (1 Jn 2:17).

NOTES

1. So Lambot, who adds in view of the opening sentence that it was not preached in Hippo Regius. But as I read on in the text, the conviction grows on me that this is not one sermon, but the construct of one of those compilers of lectionaries. A whole number of minor incoherencies and inconsequentialities support this impression. See in particular note 20 below.

2. By the world and their persecutors, I presume he means.

3. *Cupiditas* and *caritas*. I would have liked to translate "cupidity" and "charity," but he is going to play on their root meanings or derivations, in particular of *caritas* from *carus*, dear.

4. There is a gap in the text here which actually affects the preceding sentence, where I have postulated, from the gap, "it commands you." Then there was presumably something about the relationship of self-indulgence, *luxuria*, to the willingness to suffer evil. The fragment of sentence that follows, . . . *quam diligis voluptatem*, could also be rendered, "the pleasure which you love."

5. It is very rarely indeed that he calls any of the apostles but Paul simply "the apostle." He may possibly have thought for a moment that he was quoting Paul—something for example from Rom 8:31-39.

6. Money, *pecunia*, is feminine.

7. See Mt 25:35-36; Is 58:7. He is probably referring to the care the faithful took of the martyrs and confessors while they were still in prison before being put to death, or even while they were on the run.

8. Presumably those in trouble.

9. Reading *Tibi enim decedit, alteri accedit*, instead of the text's *Tibi enim decidit* . . . ; it falls away from you.

10. Reading *Et antequam discesserat* instead of the text's *Et cum ante discesserat*, which I really do not know how to translate: and when it had taken its leave before. The question arises, how could an original *antequam* be turned into *cum ante*? Well, copyist A could leave out *quam* by mistake; copyist B would note the need of it in the margin, but rather carelessly and not very legibly; finally copyist C would read it as *cum* and introduce it into the text in the only place *cum* could be introduced, before *ante*.

11. See Lk 12:20-21.

12. See Rom 8:32.

13. *Quis dictator*. He had in mind those great generals of the heroic days of the Roman Republic who were given absolute power by the Senate for a short term in moments of extreme crisis. The word did not have the bad connotation it has acquired for us in this century.

14. As, presumably, the Christian emperors paid their respects at the tomb of Saint Peter. I do not know if he had a particular occasion in mind.

15. Reading *si causas plurimes* instead of the text's *si causas plurimas*. It is an emendation suggested by Lambot. The verb *plurimo*, unknown to Lewis & Short, I take to mean "make very many."

16. See Sermon 328, note 14.

17. *In longinquas emissis*—a rather baffling phrase. I hope I am justified in treating *emissis* as here having the same meaning as *promissis*. If I am not, then it may perhaps be interpreted as coming from *emito* in the sense of release or emancipate: so that he believed in the far distant releases, emancipations. The construction of *longinquas*, the feminine accusative plural of an adjective with no visible noun to qualify, must remain for me inscrutably mysterious. I take it to be used in an adverbial sense.

18. *Tibi loquor*. What does this indicate—that he pointed at a particular person? He constantly changes, of course, from the second person plural to the singular; but this is an unusually abrupt challenge.

19. Reading *creatoris* with the manuscript, instead of the edited text's *creaturae*, of the creation.

20. Does this not suggest that he was preaching in his own church of Hippo Regius, as against the inference to be drawn from the opening sentence of the sermon, in note 1? It certainly reinforces my conviction that what we have here is not a single sermon at all, but a construct of the heavy-handed art of the compiler of lectionaries.

SERMON 335D

ON THE MARTYRS

Date: uncertain¹

The martyrs made drunk on the plenty of God's house

1. The holy martyrs, when they are suffering evil things here, hope in the Lord; they have been saved, after all, in hope.² They are traveling toward what they have been promised, it hasn't yet been given them to keep. So because they were hoping under the shelter of your wings, so that they might endure the evils of the world with courage and patience, what will you give them? *They will get drunk on the plenty of your house* (Ps 36:8). If he had any more he could say, he would say it. After all, what could he say? "They will drink"? One drinks even when it's only a drop. What could he say? "They will take their fill"? You can take your fill even when you're sober. No, they will drink so much that they will get drunk. In that drunkenness, you see, all past evils are forgotten. Oh, what a holy drunkenness! I would wish to see all of us drunk with that drunkenness.

2. That, I suppose, is the kind of drunkenness those of you desire who get drunk at the shrines of the martyrs, and who persecute with their cups the ones those people persecuted with stones;³ who go on even to dance and give the members of Christ over to the demons for play;⁴ and they think they are pleasing the martyrs, when in fact they are pleasing unclean spirits. How many times do I have to say these things? They should surely turn their attention to those at whose memorial shrines they get drunk; if they had approved this sort of behavior, they wouldn't have been martyrs.

*Though persecutions have ceased, temptations have not;
you can be a martyr even on your sickbed*

3. So don't imagine, my dearest brothers and sisters, that you cannot share the merits of the martyrs, because there are no more persecutions such as there were in those times when the martyrs were crowned. There are no persecutions nowadays, but temptations never cease. Undoubtedly, my brothers and sisters, there are Christian men and women who hope under the shelter of God's wings.⁵

And when the time of hope has passed, and the joy of the reality has come, they will get drunk on the plenty of his house, and from the torrent of his pleasure he will give them to drink. Where will he give them to drink from? What will they get drunk on? Listen to where from: *since with you is the fountain of life* (Ps 36:7-9). Getting drunk on life means living without end. This drunkenness is one you can never get over; no one ever gets over it and comes back to being thirsty.

So there are men and women included in the number of these sons of men who hope under the shelter of God's wings, who struggle on their sickbeds and overcome, who overcome and are crowned. People though who belong to "man,"⁶ who are not sons of man, only care about health or salvation here, and reckon there is no other sort to follow it when it's passed away; so when they find this health beginning to be endangered, even if they are called Christians, they seek out diviners, they send to the astrologers, they hang unlawful charms round their necks. They desire health and tie things round their necks; they bind the neck of the outer self, and stifle the throat of the inner self.⁷

But the one who says, "I won't do it"—when a friend suggests it, a neighbor mutters something about it, or a neighbor's maid, sometimes even his own old nurse⁸—who says, "I won't do it; I'm a Christian. God prohibits this sort of thing. These are the sacraments of demons. Listen to the apostle: *I do not wish you to become the associates of demons* (1 Cor 10:20)"—well, he gets this answer from the one who is suggesting it: "Do it, and you'll get well. So-and-so and Such-and-such did it. What? Aren't they Christians? Aren't they believers? Don't they hurry off to church? And yet they did it and got well. So-and-so did it and was cured immediately. Don't you know Such-and-such, that he's a Christian, a believer? Look, he did it, and he got well."

This sick man, though, because he doesn't value highly the health or salvation that is common to men and beasts,⁹ says, "Even if So-and-so was saved that way, I for my part have no wish to be saved that way. You see, I can be saved by the one to whom it was said, *Men and beasts you will save, Lord, as you have multiplied your mercies, O God* (Ps 36:6)."

There you can see God's athlete, you can hear the voice of Christ's athlete. A man indeed who's both sick and sound! A man who's both weak and strong! A man who's lying on a sickbed and reigning in heaven!

"But fine, he doesn't wish to save me; he isn't depriving me, is he, of that divine salvation? It continues, *But the sons of men will hope in the protection of your wings* (Ps 36:7). But that's a salvation you can't see, because *the salvation of the just is from the Lord* (Ps 37:39). I, though, know he is keeping it for me. The one who made me will himself remake me.¹⁰ But you are trying to frighten me about death, though life itself died for me. Christ bestowed his death on the ungodly; will he not bestow life on the godly?"

The person who says that sort of thing, who utterly rejects such remedies, even more those generally approved, even more such as are alleged to have been tried and tested, the person who flees from such things, is a martyr on his sickbed. He's languishing and conquering, scarcely able to move his limbs and

fighting battles to the finish. So such a person suffers no evil at all, even if he dies of that disease. He doesn't perish, you see; why, he doesn't even lose anything; that's the time, rather, when he finds what he's seeking. He will depart to his Lord, his forehead signed with the cross of Christ, whom he has not insulted with unlawful amulets. Shall Christ, then, not give him what he promised, seeing that he himself protected him when he was engaged in mortal combat? Most certainly the Lord protected him, so that he should not suffer any evil, and assisted him in the contest, so that the devil would be conquered by him.

Many people say, you see, my brothers and sisters, "How did the martyrs conquer the devil?" In the same way as all good faithful Christians do. Listen to the apostle, saying, *Your conflict is not against flesh and blood* (Eph 6:12). It was flesh and blood, after all, that was raging against the holy martyrs. What's meant by flesh and blood? Mortal human beings. Emperors, governors, judges, soldiers, they were all flesh and blood. The crazy populace, the furiously raving crowds, what else are they but flesh and blood? So to keep the martyrs from hating these raving and raging human beings, and from being overcome by evil through paying back evil for evil in their hearts, the apostle is instructing them about whom they have to engage in battle. *Your struggle*, he says, *is not against flesh and blood*. The people you see raving, raging, shouting *Crucify, crucify* (Jn 19:6), are flesh and blood. They're not alone, it's not the ones you see; the devil is raging through them. You, then, beware of the devil stealing your gold. What are you afraid of in straw, being straw yourself? Why be afraid of earth on behalf of earth? What is the godless man but earth? On behalf of what thing do you fear him, if not of your own earth, that is, of your flesh which was made from the earth?¹¹ The other earth passes away, and your earth will rise again.

So don't be afraid of them, but pray for them and speak to them: "Why is it, brother, that you are raging, why are you so churned up? It's against me, indeed, that you're raging, but yourself that you're losing. Oh, if only you would change your frame of mind! Oh, if only you would change your way of life! Because we are all going to die and rise again. I, indeed, place my hopes in God, for whose sake I am suffering these things. You, however, if you persist in this unbelief, will in a little while cease to be—and if only you ceased to be for your own good! But you will continue to be, for your own ill, with unquenchable fire, and the worm that never dies."¹²

But the other retorts, "These are the words of self-satisfied Christians, priding themselves on the resurrection. Who has ever come back from there and proved to you that what you say is true?"

"You're right; your grandfather hasn't come back from there; but your Lord has returned from there, the very God whom you are persecuting in me;¹³ and it's on his account that you are putting me to death as guilty, though God has not been offended by me."

The struggle against principalities and powers

4. Let's get back to the point, my brothers and sisters. *Your conflict is not against flesh and blood.* They are raging, indeed, but they are the instruments of another. Fear the armed man, not the bow and arrow; that is to say, the devil, not that human being through whom the devil operates. As a matter of fact, don't even fear him, but beware of him. How will you avoid fearing him? By hoping under the shelter of God's wings, from whom comes *the salvation of the just*, because he is *their protector in time of trouble* (Ps 37:39). He says, you see, *Your conflict is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the world* (Eph 6:12), that is, of people who are in love with the world. He didn't call these unclean spirits rulers of heaven and earth, but rulers of the world, because by "world" he meant people who love the world, because they are being maneuvered by them to rage and rave. It is as they have been prompted, that they proceed against you.

The prince of the power of this air, says the apostle, that is, the devil. And what did he add? *who is now at work in the children of unbelief* (Eph 2:2). The children of unbelief, flesh and blood. So you have to beware of them, because the devil is at work in them to make them rage against you. Be on your guard against him, love them; fight him to a standstill, pray for them so that he may be driven out of them too, and they may become your imitators, having previously been your persecutors.

So you have to be on your guard against those others. But you're going to say, "I can't see them; how can I fight against them? *Against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Eph 6:12), he said."¹⁴ By the heavenly places he means *this air* (Eph 2:2); not, you see, in that high heaven where the sun, the moon and the stars are, but¹⁵ where the birds fly, and yet they are called the birds of heaven. So the unclean spirits, since they had been sublime angels, have been thrust down into this air as into their prison, indeed; and they try to seduce people with whom they can burn.¹⁵

So imitate the martyrs on your sickbed

5. So don't say there aren't any persecutions, because temptations never cease. So restrain yourselves from unlawful things, from amulets, from spells, from astrologers, from soothsayers. When you fall sick, don't go looking for such things, and don't withdraw from God, or you will perish. Instead, you will say with the apostle, *For when I am weak, then it is I am powerful* (2 Cor 12:10). You are lying on your sickbed, and are one of God's athletes. You can't move hand or foot, and you're fighting battles to the finish. The fever doesn't leave you, and your faith goes ahead to God. But lo and behold, a neighbor at your bedside, and a friend and a maid, even perhaps, as I said, your old nurse, bringing wax and an egg in her hand and saying, "Do this and get better. Why prolong your illness? Tie on this amulet. I heard someone invoke the name of God and the angels over it, and you will get better. To whose care will you leave your widowed wife, to whose care your young children?"

But he says, "I won't do it, because I'm a Christian. Let me die in such a way that I don't thereby die forever." Listen to the true voice of the martyr. See if it isn't the very thing the pagan used to say: "Sacrifice, and you will live." But, "I won't," he says. Yes, may the merits of the martyrs never be wanting! They won the victory in the amphitheater, this man on his sickbed; theirs over the killer, his over the seducer. But he is not defeated, because the one who hung upon the cross for him is protecting him.

NOTES

1. From his remark in section 2, "How many times have I said this?" I would conclude that he was preaching on his home ground in Hippo Regius, perhaps in a suburban parish. See note 3 below for a possible hint that it was preached in or after 424 or 425.

2. See Rom 8:24.

3. An allusion, perhaps, to the martyrdom of Stephen, Acts 7:59. If so, it would be a slight indication that the sermon was preached as late as 424 or 425, or later, since it was not until then that a relic of the first martyr was given to Augustine, and a shrine built for him in Hippo Regius. The occasion, though, for the sermon would not have been his feast day, but that of some other martyrs—or even, perhaps, just a sermon on Psalm 36.

4. An allusion to the episode of the golden calf, Ex 32:6.

5. For a fuller statement of the way Augustine understood the difference between "men" and "the sons of men" in this psalm, see Sermon 23, especially section 11.

6. An allusion to Ps 36:6, *Men and cattle you will save, Lord.*

7. The language, but not the thought, of 2 Cor 4:16.

8. *Dematricula ejus*; I am just guessing what this person could be; a wet nurse seems the most likely. She is unknown to Messrs Lewis & Short.

9. See Ps 36:6.

10. Emending the text's *refecit*, has remade, to *reficiet*, or possibly *reficit*. The manuscript here seems full of bad spelling; it gives us *terris* instead of *terres* for "you are frightening." I presume it's the manuscript, and not the editor.

11. See Gn 2:7.

12. See Is 66:24; Mk 9:48.

13. See Acts 9:4.

14. I include the quotation in the questioner's objection, mainly because if I don't, the quotation is no sort of answer at all to the question; whereas if it is the questioner supporting his difficulty with the quotation, Augustine, while still rather sidetracking the question, can give his explanation of the quotation.

15. Supplying *sed* to the text, which as it stands just continues, "where the birds fly," as though that were at the same level as the sun, moon and stars.

SERMON 335E

ON SOME MARTYRS

Date: uncertain¹

The martyrs are like the squared timbers of which the ark was made

1. The Lord has willed that I should celebrate the feast day of the blessed martyrs with you. So let me say something about this, as the Lord may grant me, whose will it was that the ark, by which he had the Church represented, should be constructed of squared timbers.² Throw³ a squared timber down in the dust, you see, any way at all, you will find it standing upright. It's a wonderful fact, and seems almost impossible, but all the same just watch, and you'll find it's true; a squared timber can be thrown down, it can't fall. The martyrs were thrown down on the earth of humiliation, but they didn't fall, because they were crowned in heaven. There has never been a martyr who was not, in truth, squared.⁴

The blood of the martyrs the seed of the Church

2. The glory of the martyrs in the celebration of their feasts is something people can observe, but what cannot be seen is how great it is with God. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints* (Ps 116:15). How immensely precious, and what's more in the sight of the Lord! Because when they were being slaughtered in the sight of men, they were worthless. How could the blood of the martyrs have been shed so freely, if it hadn't been worthless to those who were shedding it? Those who were killing the martyrs didn't know it was going to seed itself.⁵ From those few, you see, falling into the earth this crop has sprung.

So the death of his saints was precious in the sight of the Lord even at the moment when it seemed cheap to human eyes; and how precious! What was the price of their death, but the death of the Saint of saints? What is the Saint of saints? It's well known, there is no need for me to say.⁶ So why should we be surprised if the death of the saints is precious, seeing that the Saint of saints died for them? He himself was the first grain from which this one comes. He spoke about it himself in the gospel; *Unless a grain of wheat, he said, falls into the earth, it remains alone. But if it has fallen and been done to death, it bears much*

fruit (Jn 12:24). Christ was sowing, and the Church was springing up. And the grain fell, and the grain rose again, and the grain ascended into heaven where there is a multitude of grains.

Question the psalm; where is the grain that fell? *Be exalted above the heavens, O God* (Ps 57:5.11). Where is the crop? Why did you all shout even before I had yet said, if not because you too belong to this crop yourselves? Still, I will say what you already know. It is a pleasure, after all, to say what we owe, so that as a result we may deserve to obtain what we believe. Where is the grain that fell? *Be exalted above the heavens, O God*. Where is its crop? *And over all the earth your glory* (Ps 57:5.11).⁷

The problem of "every man a liar"

3. Perhaps, though, dearly beloved, you may have noticed in the holy readings which were chanted a short while ago, a problem that is not to be ignored. In the book of Saint John, you see, which is called the Apocalypse, where the reading was about the glory of the martyrs, it was said about them, *And in their mouths no lie was found, and they are irreproachable* (Rv 14:5). Again, the psalm which was sung was suitable to the martyrs, and we heard, *Every man a liar* (Ps 116:11). The martyrs are praised, and it says, *In their mouths no lie was found*; and again there is the voice of a martyr saying, *I said in my ecstasy, Every man a liar*. If *every man a liar*, then the one who said this is a liar; but because the one who said this is not a liar, therefore *every man a liar*. And yet because the one who said this was a man, wasn't he a liar? How then was what he said true, *Every man a liar*? If I found one single man to be truthful, I would prove false the statement which says *every man a liar*. So many thousands have been found, about whom we had the reading from the Apocalypse, in whose mouths no lie was found, and then I have this read out to me: *Every man a liar!*

Or perhaps we should feel sorry for the one who said this, seeing that he was agitated when he said it. He says, you see, *I said in my ecstasy*.⁸ Ecstasy is to be understood as panic. In fact many codices, where it's written *I said in my ecstasy*, have *I said in my panic*. Others have *when out of my mind*. So since some were putting being out of his mind, others panic, the one who used the actual Greek word thought it would be the neatest way to avoid rash interpretations weakening the force of the expression. So perhaps, since panic is a kind of fear that shakes the mind from its moorings, we can therefore reasonably interpret the one who put *panic* as agreeing with the one who said *when out of my mind*. So perhaps, as he was being sorely tempted and all prepared to deny the faith, he said in his panic *Every man a liar*; that is to say, "What need is there for me to die for telling the truth? But if I deny Christ and utter a falsehood, I will remain a liar; *Every man a liar*."

He must not give in⁹ to his panic; in his panic he is likely to be mistaken. And while he was trembling with fear, he was given courage, where he said, *O Lord, I am your servant, and the son of your maidservant; you have burst my chains asunder* (Ps 116:16). My biggest chain was the love of staying alive, and therein

was the cause of my dying. Many, you see, for love of staying alive, have died eternally. And again, many martyrs, by thinking nothing of life that has an end, have gained life without end. Just as the person who loves money often disregards money for love of money, so as to gain more money by disregarding money. So we have the dictum of a well-known personage,¹⁰ “On occasion to take no account of money is now and then extremely profitable.” And that’s what moneylenders do; they amass money by giving it away, as though sowing a little of it in order to reap a large quantity. In the same way, too, the martyrs for love of life disregarded life. By fearing death they would have died; by wishing to live they would have refused to live.¹¹

So there are many chains binding the soul; love of wealth, love of power, love of the affection of wife, parents, children, brothers and sisters, love of country, love of one’s land, love of this daylight, love of any sort of life simply because it’s life. So while it’s being held down by these chains there comes the acid test, that if it confesses Christ, they will all be snapped. Terrified, and tied up by so many mooring warps, afraid of being set adrift, he said in his panic, *Every man a liar*. Let us pardon his panic, welcome his joy—*You have burst my chains asunder*. Love has made him truthful, where panic made him a liar. Look at Peter saying, *with you to the death* (Lk 22:33); look at him, making a promise in his presumption, uttering denials in his panic. Thrown off balance by the question of a single maidservant, he said, *I don’t know him, I never have* (Lk 22:57). I wonder if he didn’t say straightaway, *Every man a liar*. But then he *wept bitterly* (Lk 22:62), and with his copious tears washed away the filth of his fear. And the Lord rose again, and strengthened him by the example of his resurrection. He could see that the one whose dying he had grieved over was alive. Christ wouldn’t find him any longer denying him out of panic. Why did he deny him, after all, if not because he was afraid to die, because he had no hope of resurrection? The Lord rose again, showed himself to his very eyes, confirmed him in charity by questioning him three times about love, since he had denied him three times out of fear, poured out upon him the Holy Spirit.¹² This short life grew cheap in his eyes, endless life became the object of his love, and Peter suffered. Fear perished, love conquered. When he was questioned, *Every man a liar*; when he suffered, *You have burst my chains asunder*.

Paul re-establishes the truth of the statement, “every man a liar”

4. Yes, we can say that, and because of the panic of the speaker, reckon that the statement is not true, in which he says *Every man a liar*. But the apostle Paul corrects this opinion, because he brought forward this testimony from scripture, and said, *God alone is truthful, while every man is a liar, as it is written* (Rom 3:4). So then, every man is a liar. Take this as the voice of truth, not of panic; because if you take it as the voice of panic, not of truth, you are accusing the apostle of being wrong. It is absolutely true: *Every man a liar*. And what was said about so many thousands of men and women is also true: *In their mouths was found no lie* (Rv 14:5). When the martyrs suffered, they acknowledged

Christ, they did not deny they were Christians, they admitted without hesitation or trepidation that they had met in an assembly¹³ against the orders of the infidel rulers of that time. That is why no lie was found in their mouths. And if by any chance there had been any lies there before, to verify *Every man a liar*, they erased them with the truth, they covered them with charity, because *charity covers a multitude of sins* (1 Pt 4:8).

Further, more convincing solutions to the problem called for

5. Let the searcher of the scriptures question me still more persistently, and say, "So what then? When they were telling the truth, weren't they still men? When they told the truth in their confession, in their sufferings, were they not then human beings anymore? But if they were human beings, and did tell the truth, how is it true: *Every man a liar*?" I say with complete certainty, I say it without wronging the martyrs in the least, indeed I say it to the glory of the martyrs, that *whoever glories, let him glory in the Lord* (1 Cor 1:31). Certainly, insofar as they were men, they were liars. So how did they speak the truth? Because the Lord had said to them, *For it is not you who speak* (Mt 10:20). Didn't you also hear today's reading from the holy gospel: *Do not meditate beforehand about what to say; for I myself will give you a mouth and wisdom* (Lk 21:14-15)? I myself will give it you, because *every man a liar*. So every man is a liar, left to himself, truthful with what comes from God. A liar in himself, truthful in God.

For you were once darkness, but now light in the Lord (Eph 5:8). Look at Peter himself: *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*. A man being truthful, but not, surely, because he was a man? It didn't come from what was his own, because every man a liar. But from where? Listen to the Lord himself: *Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jona, because flesh and blood, that is to say, man, has not revealed it to you, because every man a liar; but my Father who is in heaven* (Mt 16:16-17). So from what is yours, you are a liar, from what is mine you are truthful. *For everything that the Father has is mine* (Jn 16:15). Finally, a short while later, do you want to find Peter among all human beings, because he too was human; do you want to hear Peter being a man, and thus a liar? The Lord began straightaway to predict¹⁴ his forthcoming passion and death. Where's Peter? Where's the man? *Far be this from you, Lord; this shall not happen*. A man, a lying man, just like a man speaking from his own ideas. And do you want to make sure it was from his own ideas? What was the Lord's immediate reply? *Get behind me, Satan, you are a scandal to me*. Why, if not because he has lied, if not because he has spoken falsely what was his own? But where does he get the lie from? *For you do not savor the things of God, but the things of men* (Mt 16:21-23).

All good things come to us from the supreme good

6. So all good things come to us from the supreme good. All good things come to us from the perennial fountain of goodness. Unless, perhaps, we get

goodness from God's and patience from our own supply. That, you see, is how the reading of the gospel concluded: *And in your patience you shall gain possession of your souls* (Lk 21:19). So someone's going to say, "Truth isn't ours, since *every man a liar*, and only one who has it from what is God's is truthful, when he is truthful. But patience is ours. The Lord himself says, *In your patience shall you gain possession of your souls.*"

Don't preen yourself, or you may lose what you have received. The reason, you see, that patience is yours is that you have it, provided, that is, that you do have it. Yours because you have it, not because you have it from yourself. *For what do you have that you have not received?* (1 Cor 4:7). Just as we say, *Give us this day our daily bread* (Mt 6:11); we say "ours" and we also say "give us." So what you call "ours" doesn't come from you to be yours. After all, if God didn't make what he gives us ours, he wouldn't, clearly, be giving it; what he gives you becomes yours by your receiving it. But let us prove this point about patience, in case perhaps it may be so with bread, but not be so with patience. Who was it that said to us, *In your patience you shall gain possession of your souls?* Who but Christ, who but God? The one to whom we say, *Is not my soul subject to God, for from him is my patience* (Ps 62:5). He says to us *In your patience you shall gain possession of your souls*; we say to him, *Since it is you that are my patience* (Ps 71:5). Therefore let the weak person say to strength, if he wants to have strength, *I will love you, Lord, my strength* (Ps 18:1). Let us pray to have what we don't yet have. Let us not be ungrateful for the things we do have. *For we have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things that have been given us by God* (1 Cor 2:12).

NOTES

1. Lambot thinks the sermon may have been preached on the feast of the martyrs of Abitina; La Bonnardière prefers that of the Scillitan martyrs. For these suggestions I can find no internal evidence. In fact, it really does not seem that we have here a single sermon, but again a patchwork masterpiece of a compiler of lectionaries, made up, I would suggest, of three pieces: section 1, which looks as if it may have been preached on the feast of Saint Quadratus (see Sermons 306A-D), or of the *Massa Candida* martyrs, whose bishop he was; section 2, which presents no internal evidence about its occasion; and sections 3-6, which could have been preached on the feast of Saints Primus, Victoria, and Perpetua and their companions (see Sermon 335A, and note 13 below).

The first sentence suggests that Augustine was not preaching that sermon at least in Hippo Regius. It was very probably at Utica, where Quadratus had been the bishop.

2. *Lignis quadratis*. See Gn 6:14. The squared timbers represent Augustine's version's rendering of the original *gopher wood*. See Sermon 306B, note 8.

3. Supplying *Jace*, or a word like it. The text simply has *Quadratum enim quacumque in pulverem*—a sentence with an object, but no verb or subject.

4. Surely a sermon could only begin with a paragraph like this if it were being preached in honor of the martyr Quadratus (squared), or at least had some connection with him.

5. Again, what seems a very defective sentence, possibly just very condensed: *Nesciebant . . . seminaturum*. I presume the subject of *seminaturum* in an accusative and infinitive clause is an understood *sanguinem*, blood, from the previous sentence.

6. Christ, of course; but seen through the prophecy of Dan 9:24, which looks forward to the anointing of a Holy of holies after the restoration of the temple, recently desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes.

7. They had shouted, because this was one of his favorite anti-Donatist punch lines. He “owed” it to them to say it, by his duty as a preacher and interpreter of the scriptures.

8. See Sermon 328, note 5, where I charge Augustine with ignoring this phrase as setting the context of *Every man a liar*. Here he makes amends, but only to return to his vomit, so to say, with the help of Saint Paul, in section 4. But I wonder if this fuller exegesis of the psalm here may not indicate that this sermon—that is to say the sermon from which sections 3-6 have been extracted—is later than Sermon 328, later, that is, than the year 402.

9. Reading *non cedat* instead of the text’s *non credat*; he must not trust his panic.

10. Not well known to me, or, it seems, to Dom Lambot, the editor of the text.

11. The text here has these two statements in the indicative: they died, they refused to live—which, of course, as martyrs they didn’t. Perhaps the Latin idiom allowed this indicative to be understood as a conditional; contemporary official Church Latin is constantly making indicative statements about the Church and its members which should really, in English at least, be in the optative or conditional. But if the Latin of Augustine’s time did not have that idiomatic usage, I am here emending *mortui sunt* and *noluerunt* to *mortui essent* and *noluissent*.

12. See Jn 21; Acts 2.

13. So this sermon—or the matrix sermon of these sections—could have been preached in honor of Primus, Victoria, and Perpetua and their companions, who confessed to the same “crime.” See Sermon 335A, section 1. But no doubt it was something that several groups of martyrs confessed to.

14. Reading *praedicere* instead of the text’s *praedicare*, to proclaim.

SERMON 335F

FRAGMENT OF A SERMON ON THE MARTYRS

Date: uncertain¹

The great assurance given to the martyrs

1. But what are we to say about the martyrs? What a great assurance was given them, so that they shouldn't worry even about the cutting up of their limbs! He takes care of the number of their hairs, and takes no care in the resurrection about the integrity of their limbs? So then, acknowledge Christ. Choose for yourself one of two things. Do you wish Christ to acknowledge you in the presence of his Father?

"Yes," he says.

You too, then, see you acknowledge Christ in the presence of men.²

The martyrs did not rely on themselves, but sought relief from Christ

2. The holy martyrs, you see, did not rely on themselves, but asked for relief from Christ. That's why they were also victorious. Listen to the voices of those who do not rely on themselves; it's the voice of the holy martyrs: *Unless the Lord were among us, let Israel now say; unless the Lord were among us when men rose up against us, they would perhaps have swallowed us alive* (Ps 124:1-3). The martyrs say, *Unless the Lord were among us*, unless he had helped us, unless he had strengthened our hearts with faith, unless he had endowed us with patience, unless he had provided us with power as we fought, *they would perhaps have swallowed us alive*.

What's the meaning of *would have swallowed us alive*? In the way that we know Christ, that we know that he suffered and rose again, that we know that he is going to come himself to judge the living and the dead, that's how, if he hadn't helped us, they would have swallowed us. By "alive" he meant "having knowledge." One who doesn't know Christ is something else. The reason he's swallowed up is that he thinks there isn't a savior. That's why he's swallowed, but he's swallowed up dead. Whereas the one who knows that Christ is the savior and denies him, is swallowed up alive. He is aware, being alive with his knowledge and his foresight, of just how he perishes. He denies Christ, and

seems not to perish. But he does perish then all the more. Look, they denied Christ, they were released from prisons, from their chains. Did they perish or didn't they? I'm asking the faith of your heart, not your eyes of flesh. You can see that not perishing means perishing, and perishing means not perishing. That's why it was said, *The one who finds his soul will lose it* (Mt 10:39). By losing it he doesn't lose it, by not losing it he loses it all the more.³

Why are you denying Christ, you there, so glad at having just now been released from your chains?

You reply, "I was afraid," you say, "for my soul. I was due to be put to death. That's why I denied him. I was advised to do so for the sake of my soul, in order not to lose it."

You've lost it all the more surely; you've been swallowed up alive. If you had really been afraid for your soul, you wouldn't have lost it. Fool, it was your body you were afraid for, not your soul. Didn't you ever listen to the one who said, *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot do anything to the soul* (Mt 10:28)? Not even for the body itself did you take good thought, because on the day of judgment souls will burn with the body. You were afraid for your body, that the persecutor might kill you. Here you are, he didn't kill you, because you denied Christ. You've rid yourself of the persecutor by denying Christ. Rid yourself of the fever if you can. Look, it's going to come, there you are, it'll grow worse, there you are, it will eject you from the body. Where will you go when you leave the body?

But as I had begun to say, not even for the body itself did you take good thought. While your soul is wasting away and writhing in the torment of fire, your body is rotting; it will be reduced to ashes.

"And the martyrs," he says, "weren't they human beings? Their bodies too are changed to ashes."

And when a voice comes from heaven, you will both rise again. The martyr comes out from the grave, out you come too. But notice who goes where, where he goes, where you go. You rise again, indeed, jointly with him, but *those who have done good to the resurrection of life, those however who have done evil to the resurrection of the judgment* (Jn 5:29). What sort of judgment? What sort of punishment? Listen to the prophet Isaiah: *Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be extinguished* (Is 66:24). If you don't mend your ways while you are alive, just see what you will rise again to; to a blaze, to flames where the fire won't be extinguished, and worms won't die. What is it you were afraid of? What was it you were afraid for? For the body. Well there you are, the gehenna of fire and of the worm is clinging to the body. You can see that when you were afraid, you didn't even consult the body's interests.

Don't be afraid; and be afraid. Don't be afraid of your soul being ejected here by the persecutor; don't be afraid of your body being killed. You haven't been afraid for the soul, and you've consulted the best interests of the body. With respect to both body and soul God will be your upholder, both restoring your soul and renovating your body.

NOTES

1. This fragment certainly talks about the martyrs. But the sermon the lectionary compiler extracted it from need not necessarily have been about the martyrs, or preached on a feast day of the martyrs. It may have been on the gospel passage, the whole or a section of Mt 10.
2. See Mt 10:30.32-33.
3. "Soul" here and in the rest of the fragment also means life, because in fact, in scripture, "soul" equals "life." It is, after all, the *anima* which animates.

SERMON 335G

A FRAGMENT ON THE MARTYRS

Date: uncertain¹

The perfect charity of the martyrs cast out all fear

1. And so our martyrs loved God very much.² It's because they had in themselves perfect charity, that they didn't fear the savagery of the persecutor. So the perfect charity of the martyrs made them afraid of nothing. Persecutors were raging all round them; they were experiencing on all sides the gales and storms of this world. They were brave in God and in Christ. They were being persecuted more effectively by their own people weeping for them than by their enemies venting their wrath on them. On this side the enemy was inducing terror. On that side the wife was wringing her hands: "To whom are you leaving us? Consent, stay alive with us, God will pardon you. To whom are you leaving us in our bereavement?" This was the kind of threat the other was making: "Unless you do it, I will torture you, kill you, burn you."

Between the persecutor's threats and the wife's tears he stood firm, neither broken from this side, nor dissuaded from that, fixed firmly in God, upright in Christ, laughing at the persecutor's threats—after all, the persecutor couldn't threaten him with eternal pains—ignoring even the tears of his wife, because the marriage of the soul with Christ comes first. Hoping for heavenly things, he spurned those of earth. His gaze fixed on the future, he wasn't affected by present terrors, and charity being complete, as it is written, *casts out fear* (1 Jn 4:18).³ There was, after all, nothing for a man perfected in charity to fear.

But we find it said elsewhere, *The fear of the Lord is chaste, abiding for ever and ever* (Ps 19:9). Here it says, *Charity being perfected casts out fear*, there that the fear of the Lord abides forever and ever. So there are two sorts of fear; one which charity casts out, the other abiding forever and ever. So there is an earthly fear, there is also a chaste fear; it couldn't be given a better name than chaste.

*It's not the punishment but the cause that makes martyrs;
the schismatics do not have a good cause*

2. So, as I had begun to say,⁴ why boast of your bad punishment, Mr Schismatic, when it doesn't have a good cause? So let us honor the martyrs inside, in the Catholic Church, who have grace not effrontery, piety not temerity, constancy not obstinacy, who represent gathering, not scattering.⁵ Listen, what's more, to the martyr praying: *Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause* (Ps 43:1). He didn't say "my punishment," but *my cause*. His attention, you see, was fixed on the martyr of martyrs, the head of martyrs, the lord of martyrs, the example of martyrs, the one who watches martyrs, helps martyrs, crowns martyrs. His attention was fixed on him, not as glorifying the punishment but as distinguishing the cause. He himself, you see, had said, *Blessed are those who suffer persecution*. There's still some confusion; the adulterer suffers persecution for lust, the murderer for cruelty, the thief for stealth; other wrongdoers suffer persecution for their misdeeds. Let me hear what you are really saying. You have mentioned the punishment; distinguish the cause. Listen, he says, I'll distinguish it. Read on: *who suffer persecution on account of justice* (Mt 5:10).

Why make a mountain of the punishment to me, you false witness? Prove its justice. So it's not the punishment but the cause that makes martyrs. Don't make a mountain out of your punishment, first prove your justice; which you're not going to do, but you're certainly going to prove your iniquity by the way you have cut yourself off.⁶ If, brothers,⁷ you wish to imitate the true martyrs, choose yourselves such a cause as will enable you to say, *Judge me, Lord, and distinguish my cause from an unholy people* (Ps 43:1). Distinguish, not my punishment, because an unholy people also has this, but my cause, which an unholy people doesn't have. So choose yourselves a cause, a good and just cause, because *blessed are those who suffer persecution on account of justice, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Mt 5:10).

NOTES

1. Fragments are not really datable; this one, however, as it appears from section 2, comes from a sermon aimed largely at the Donatists and their fanatical Circumcellion martyrs. So possibly we may date it to any year from 396 to 410.

2. It would seem that this fragment does come from a sermon on a definite group of martyrs.

3. The text of this second half of the sentence is, I take it, corrupt, because as it stands we have an ablative absolute acting as the subject of the verb. In fact, I suspect that something has fallen out, some phrase or sentence to explain the martyr's indifference to his wife's tears, balancing his being unaffected by present terrors.

4. Before the beginning of this fragment.

5. See Lk 11:23.

6. Another piece of weird grammar, where I treat a genitive as the object of the verb. What my translation after the comma renders is: *sed probaturus sane praecisione iniquitatis tuae*. So perhaps I should say I am emending the last two words to *iniquitatem tuam*.

7. I take him here to be addressing the schismatics.

SERMON 335H

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: uncertain¹

How much the future life is to be desired, and this life to be held in little regard

1. All the feast days of the most blessed martyrs² remind us what little regard we should have for this present life, and how much we should set our hearts on the life to come. That's why our Lord Jesus Christ himself, the chief of martyrs, whose sufferings were the price paid for the martyrs, who was born not subject to death by the condition of nature but by the consent of his mercy, why he too willed both to die and to rise again. He wouldn't have died, after all, if he had been unwilling to die; nor would he have risen again, of course, unless he had died. So it was his will to do both, for this reason: by dying he impressed upon us a proper disregard for this present life; by rising again an eager desire for the life to come. "These are the things I am drawing your attention to;³ observe each of them in my passion and resurrection, both, that is, what you should put up with in this life, and also what you should desire in the life to come."

So in his sufferings Christ showed us one life that is laborious, full of troubles, temptations, fears and griefs, the life with which this age runs its course; while by his resurrection he demonstrated that life where nobody will grieve, nobody be afraid, nobody be reconciled because nobody will quarrel; as though to say, "Look, there's what you have to endure, and what you have to hope for; to endure sufferings, to hope for resurrection." And what a resurrection! Not the sort that was granted to Lazarus, who would die again. *Christ rising again from the dead*, as the apostle said, *dies no more, and death has no further dominion over him* (Rom 6:9).

I know that you all desire such a life.⁴ Who wouldn't desire it, after all? The godless Gentiles⁵ themselves wish to be immortal. But they don't believe they can be; those, you see, who have not accepted the faith have forfeited the hope of immortality.⁶ So there's nothing very great about desiring immortality; it's a desire we share, after all, with the godless; but it is indeed a great thing to believe that we shall be immortal, and to live in such a way that we are able to attain to that immortality. That's why all people would like to have, if they could, the power of the angels, but they don't want to have the justice of the angels.⁷ They

want to have immortality, and they don't want to have true piety. They will the end to be arrived at, and they don't will the way to arrive at it.

Exhortation to imitate the martyrs, to become God's friends by opening ourselves to his grace

2. So then, I'm admonishing you, brothers and sisters, urging and begging you, that just as you are celebrating the feast of the martyrs with great devotion, so you should love the holy conduct of the martyrs. They are martyrs, yes; but they were human beings. They help us with their prayers, but they were just what we are. So don't despair of equaling their merits. The one who endowed them can also endow us. You see, we are not worshiping them like gods, but honoring them on God's account, while the God we worship is the one who is both our Lord and theirs. They are his friends by his grace, let us, at least, be his servants.

However, if we really and honestly love the martyrs, and follow in their footsteps, why should we too not be God's friends, by his grace, not our merits? Our happiness⁸ redounds to his praise, because it is he that turns us from being miserable into being happy creatures. We, you see, could make ourselves miserable all by ourselves; but we haven't the capacity to make ourselves happy. Let us run to him, let us implore him, and we too will receive what they received.

A repetition of the exhortation to the catechumens to enroll for baptism

3. Yesterday I urged your graces, all of you that are catechumens, to hurry on to the *bath of rebirth* (Ti 3:5), putting all delays behind you; all of you that were living reprehensibly in sin, in shame, in uncleanness, to change your way of life, to do penance,⁹ not to despair of life; also all of you that are doing penance—and finding it very pleasant as a state not of repentance for sins but of license—to change your way of life and all be prepared to be reconciled to the will of God, since what God wishes is better for men and women, not what we wish. Let us indeed beseech him who is powerful enough to do so, to deliver us from all evil, and give us peace, as he delivered the three boys from the furnace. Those boys, or rather young men, it's by custom you see that they are called boys, because scripture . . . them . . .

NOTES

1. From the last section we can infer that this sermon—and it does seem to be a complete sermon, with only a few lines missing at the end, not just a fragment—was preached at the beginning of Lent, with his exhortation to catechumens, sinners, and penitents to do what Lent was instituted for. Thus it must certainly have been preached in his own church of Hippo Regius. As for the date, see note 6 below for reasons for very tentatively concluding that it was preached between 416 and 420.

2. The only martyrs we have so far come across whose feast was celebrated round about the beginning of Lent, that is to say in February, are Primus, Victoria, Perpetua and their companions on 12 February. See Sermon 335A above. So perhaps this too was preached on their feast day. But if Easter was very late that year, it could have been the feast of Saints Felicity and Perpetua on 7 March—a different and more famous Perpetua. See note 8 below.

3. The text runs *Haec vobis in mea passione et resurrectione utrumque conspiciete . . .* It strikes me as clearly defective; so after *vobis* I supply *commendo* and a semi-colon.

4. He is addressing in particular the catechumens, for whom the only way to such a life is baptism, and the grave sinners and penitents, for whom the only way is reconciliation to the will of God and the Church.

5. Not, in my experience of him, his usual manner of referring to the pagans. It became standard with the scholastics in the middle ages.

6. See *The Trinity* XIII, 10-12, where he develops this idea at length. This part of that work was certainly composed after 416. So we may perhaps date this little sermon to that period; to any year between 416 and 420. By immortality, it is worth noticing, he does not just mean the immortality of the soul; the godless Gentiles he mentioned, especially the Platonists, were quite convinced of that. We only have to think of Plato's dialogue *Phaedo*, and Socrates going to his death assured of such immortality. Augustine means the immortality of the whole person, which requires the resurrection of the flesh.

7. He probably had mainly in mind people who went in for what they called theurgy, which really means "working the gods"—demons for Augustine; the practice of magical and esoteric arts, made respectable by Neoplatonists like Porphyry.

8. *Felicitas*. This may just possibly indicate that he was preaching on the feast of Saints Felicity and Perpetua, that is on 7 March. We have seen him often enough playing on the names of the saints being celebrated.

9. These are the baptized grievous sinners being urged to join the ranks of the *penitentes*, to which they probably had to ask the bishop for admittance.

SERMON 335I

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: uncertain¹

The price paid for sinners made them precious

1. We know what we've been singing, and we have a good grasp of it: *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints* (Ps 116:15). It's the price of it, naturally, that makes the death of the saints precious. And so it shouldn't surprise us that the death is precious of those who were bought for such a price. The whole world, you see, cannot balance in the scales the blood of the one through whom the world was made. But in order to have the blood to shed for us, *the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us* (Jn 1:14). So his blood is the price of us all; yet this blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins. What were sinners worth, I would like to know, or how much were they worth? Is it really the case that that blood was the price of sinners?

Yes indeed, *Christ died for the godless*. Listen to the apostle: *God proves, he says, his charity toward us, because while we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Rom 5:6.8). While we were still sinners, were we worth all that much? On the contrary, we would be worth nothing, if we remained sinners. With the price he paid, that purchaser of ours cleansed what he bought. How, after all, could any sinners be bought for such a price, if they weren't each cleansed by their price?

It certainly wasn't by loving sinners that Christ died for sinners

2. So let us not look back at what we were before he bought us, in case we should remain stuck on the road. Let us not look back, and at the same time, though, let us keep it in remembrance. If we look back, you see, we return to it; if we forget it, we will be ungrateful. So it's good both to remember what we were and at once to hate it; to remember it in order to give thanks, to hate it in order not to return to old ways. Not even Jesus, you see, died for sinners through loving sinners. If we look into that statement superficially, we are faced with quite a difficult problem. After all, how could he not love those he was willing to die for? And who are the ones he was willing to die for? You heard the apostle:

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. So if he loved those for whom he died, and those for whom he died are sinners, then he loved sinners.

Let the sinner keep quiet, let the savior speak. I know where what you are saying comes from, my dear sinner; you love being a sinner. After all, you wouldn't say the savior loves sinners, unless you loved being a sinner. So, as I said, let the sinner keep quiet; let the savior speak. What does the savior speak? *Look, you have now been healed; do not sin, in case something worse should happen to you* (Jn 5:14). How menacing his prohibition of what you love! So does he really love what you wished to be, seeing that he threatens you with such a fate if you return to what you were?

3. So how did he die for sinners, if he doesn't love sinners? It was assuredly not through loving sinners that he died for sinners. Understand the point, and you won't make heavy weather of it. You are questioning me about how the one who died for sinners did not love sinners. Tell me first what I am questioning you about, and you will find that you yourself are answering yourself about the question you had asked. Do people want what they love to exist, or don't they want it to? I rather think that if you love your children, you want them to exist; but if you don't want them to exist, you don't love them. And whatever you love, you want it to exist, nor do you love at all what you would very much rather did not exist.

So what was the Lord's wish, when he died for us? That we should be sinners, or that we should be delivered from sins? If the reason he died for us was to delete our sins, did he love what he deleted? Does anybody delete what he loves? If you are a faithful believer, if you have believed in him, if you have lifted up your heart, he has deleted what you were in order to write what you are.

*Comparison between the one blood sacrifice of Christ,
and the many blood sacrifices of the old law*

4. Look at him. Listen to him speaking in the psalm through the prophet: *Their infirmities have been multiplied, he says, later on they accelerated* ² (Ps 16:4). What's the meaning of *Their infirmities have been multiplied*? *Where the offense abounded, grace has abounded all the more* (Rom 5:20). What next? *Later on they accelerated*, because riddled with diseases they sought the healer. What next? *I will not gather together their conventicles*, he said, *with the blood of victims* (Ps 16:4). What's *I will not gather together their conventicles with the blood of victims*? I will not gather them together through the sacrifices of cattle, not with the blood of victims, but with the blood of one victim, the blood on account of which *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints* (Ps 116:15).

So now *I will not gather together their conventicles with the blood of victims*. By the blood of those victims, you see, they were convicted, not cleansed. The blood of one victim that cleanses was given, was poured out in place of the blood of many victims that convicts. The blood of one victim was given, and what next? *Nor will I be mindful of their names upon my lips* (Ps 16:4). Before the

blood of that one victim was shed, when their conventicles were being gathered together with the blood of many victims, their names were not dying; the adulterer was an adulterer, the thief was a thief, the man of violence was a man of violence, the sacrilegious man was sacrilegious. The blood of the one victim was shed; I will not be mindful of their names upon my lips. *Make no mistake*, says the apostle, *neither fornicators, nor the worshipers of idols, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor those who lie with males, nor thieves, nor misers, nor drunkards, nor the rapacious, nor slanderers, shall gain possession of the kingdom of God*; those were their names. And to let you know those were their names, listen to what follows: *And such, indeed, you were*. And what about *I will not be mindful of their names upon my lips*? *But you were washed, but you were sanctified* (1 Cor 6:9-11). So now you are no longer what you were.

Christ came to the sick to make them well

5. Yes, certainly God loves sinners; certainly sinners, through his blood, are no longer what they had been. How can they be loved, when the Lord Christ loved the just, not sinners? He loved what he wished to make, not what he found. The healer, if he fulfills what he is called, loves the healthy, not the sick. And I certainly make bold to say, and it's true, the reason he attends the sick is because he doesn't love the sick. What I've said seems to be contradictory; but let me put this question to you: Why does he attend the sick? To make them healthy; so he doesn't love the sick; he loves what he wants to make, he doesn't love what he wants to get rid of.

So the martyrs were restored to health, bought for such a price, redeemed by their creator. Slaves twice over, because both made and bought; and insofar as slaves, thereby free; the property of the creator, brothers and sisters of the redeemer. To see them as slaves, read the gospel as the bill of sale; there you will see that they were bought. Observe the actual transaction; the purse containing their price hung on the gibbet; it was run through, it was shed.³ It poured out the price and bought them; you can read it, and find there the invoice of the purchase of slaves. He made brothers and sisters out of slaves, and what had been the invoice of the purchase of slaves became the testament of the inheritance of sons and daughters. Amen.

NOTES

1. I can see no reason to suppose this sermon was not preached in Hippo Regius. In it we have Augustine at his most *extempore* and off the cuff. I would be inclined to assign it to his later years, 420 or later.

2. It sounds ridiculous; but then his version's rendering of the psalms often was.

3. He forgets that the subject is the purse *sacculus*, and is now thinking of it as the blood.

SERMON 335J

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF SOME MARTYRS

Date: uncertain¹

The martyrs fight a battle inside them, and win it outside

1. The holy martyrs, witnesses to Christ, fought against sin to the shedding of their blood, because he was in them, and it was through him that they overcame. And now too, those who fight against sin acknowledge it is a fight and desire the winners' prize. You see, when the enemies of Christ's name were persecuting the martyrs, the martyrs were fighting inside themselves, and overcoming outside. But they wouldn't overcome outside, unless they first overcame inside. Look, let me tell you how the enemy would tackle the martyr. He would arrest him, and bind him, and bring him before the judge. The judge would say to him, "Deny Christ, if you wish to go on living." But he wouldn't deny him, because he did wish to go on living. So how was he first fighting inside? Because the sweetness of this life was saying, "Deny him." He wouldn't listen, and he acknowledged Christ instead. Overcoming the sweetness of life inside, he overcame the persecutor outside.

The same sort of fight against sin still has to be fought by all Christians

2. So what is it that I have said? Even now those who are fighting against sin are engaged in a fight, and those who acknowledge it as a fight desire the winner's prize. That's what I said just now, you see, and I must explain to you what it means. You heard when the apostle was being read. Let me remind you of the very words: *For if you live according to the flesh, he said, you will die. But if with the spirit you put to death the activities of the flesh, you will live* (Rom 8:13). That is the Christian battle; putting to death with the spirit the activities of the flesh. It is an activity of the flesh to desire another person's wife. The very enjoyment of the idea and the desiring is already the delight of the flesh. He's not yet committing adultery, but desire is already tickling his fancy. But conscience will win, if patient restraint is exercised.

Is there anybody who doesn't experience such a war? Everyone experiences it, but not everyone wins. Just as all don't win, though, so not all, either, are

defeated. But there are some who don't even fight. The very moment desire springs up in his heart, you see, he gives it his consent. But the reason he doesn't do it, is that he can't find an opportunity. If the reason you don't do it is that you haven't found an opportunity, for the time being you haven't had a place for it on earth, and you've lost your place in heaven.

*If you consent, you are taken prisoner;
if you fight the desire, you can win and remain free*

3. Lust has raised its head, and you've raised yours. But you are unable to get at the other man's wife. You are already walking around in chains, because when you consented you remained a prisoner. But the person who doesn't consent has not been defeated by lust. She² fights with the weapon of delight. You should fight back with the weapon of contradiction. She will say, "Let's do it, so that we may live delightfully."

You answer her, "Let's not do it, so that we may live without end."

You must go on fighting with her, until she stops raising her head. Or if she does raise it for a moment or two, she will quickly feel ashamed and fade away. What I've said about loving another man's wife I also say about loving drunkenness, loving money; I say about the love of pride and all other cases of loving badly and living badly.

*Whatever bad things we do come from ourselves;
whatever good things we do come from God*

4. But any who resist bad ways of loving become Christians with good ways of living. And they battle every day in their consciences, so that they may request the prize, when they win, from the one who sees them. But surely they wouldn't win, would they, if they were battling by themselves? Leave them there alone by themselves, and they're defeated. So when it's in relying on yourself that you don't consent to the lusts of the flesh, you are on your own, and because you are trusting in yourself, you are acting alone. But when you take no account at all of your own powers, and hand yourself over totally to God, *God is the one who is working for you both the willing and the acting on your good will* (Phil 2:13). And that's why he said, *If with the spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live* (Rom 8:13).

Human frailty should claim nothing for itself, attribute nothing to its own efforts and nothing to its own powers, because if it attributes anything to itself, it makes room for pride, and pride makes room for a mighty fall. But those who attribute whatever progress they make entirely to God, are making room for the Holy Spirit. And that's why the apostle says, *For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the children of God* (Rom 8:14). So if we are the children of God, the Spirit of God is leading us, the Spirit of God is ruling us. Whatever evil we do is ours, while whatever good we do is God's, *who works in us both the willing and the acting on our good will* (Phil 2:13).

NOTES

1. A much neater little sermon than the last one. Let us assign it to a decade or so earlier, about 410. Again there is no reason to suppose it was preached anywhere else but Hippo Regius.
2. *Concupiscentia*, like most vices and passions—and also most virtues—is feminine.

SERMON 335K

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BURIAL OF A BISHOP

Date: uncertain¹

Death, in itself, neither good nor bad, but good for the good and bad for the bad

1. This solemn occasion, my brothers and sisters, is being held to the honor of God on account of a servant of God. When a servant, after all is being honored properly, he is honored in the name of his master. So the blessed X,² the servant of God, today laid aside the burden of the flesh, and entrusted to the earth the flesh that is to rise again. Earth was given back to earth, the spirit to the Spirit of God. Now for every individual the laying aside of the body has the same value as his life in the body had. Death, you see, is a kind of middling thing, which in itself is neither good nor bad; when the last day of this life arrives, it separates two things that had been joined together, the invisible soul from the visible flesh, the sentient soul from the flesh in which the soul senses, because without the soul the flesh senses nothing. So separate these two things that are joined together, very different from each other, soul and flesh, and you get death. Accordingly death, which unjoins and separates these two, appears in itself to be neither good nor bad, but it's good for the good and it's bad for the bad.

Paul's attitude

2. You heard what the apostle said: *Which to choose I do not know. But I am torn between two things, having a desire to cast off and be with Christ; for that is much more the best; but to remain in the flesh is necessary on your account* (Phil 1:22-24). One is good, the other is necessary. What's good is called so from goodness, what's necessary is called so from necessity. If all of them were well instructed, what need would there be for the apostle Paul to be held any longer in this life? But because there were many still requiring to be built up, the architect was being retained, who knew how most skillfully to place Christ, the foundation,³ in the hearts of believers.

So too, the blessed X dispensed the word and sacrament of God as long as the Lord willed. But when it pleased the householder to summon his servant from his mud dwelling and transfer him to heaven, the mud house was commit-

ted to the earth, and the same mud house awaits the resurrection, when it is to see the creator. *For the day is coming, as the Lord said, when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice, and those who have done good will come forth to the resurrection of life, those however who have done evil to the resurrection of the judgment* (Jn 5:28-29). Life is to be loved, judgment feared. It is here you must choose what you should love, avoid what you should fear. Nobody, you see, can avoid the judgment by being afraid of it, but only by living a good life. I mean, what's the use of being afraid and living a bad life? If you live a bad life and are afraid, you will come to what you love,⁴ but can you avoid what you fear?

*This life a ring, with God the spectator of the fight;
the example of David matched against Goliath*

3. So here we have a combat on our hands; this life is an amphitheater for God, who has a ringside seat. Here it's a fight, here a conflict with all the vices, and supremely with the prince of vices, as with Goliath.⁵ The devil, you see, is so to say challenging the soul to single combat. He can be defeated, it's agreed,⁶ but in the name of the Lord, not in the might of the warrior. So whatever evil or unlawful thing may be suggested to your thoughts, whatever dark, unwholesome desire wells up from your flesh against your mind, these are the weapons of the enemy, who is challenging you to single combat. Remember, you're fighting. The foe is invisible, but your protector also is invisible. You can't see the one you are locked in combat with, but you do believe in the one you are protected by. And if you have the eyes of faith, you can even see the former; every believer, after all, can see with the eyes of faith the opponent challenging him every day.

But what are you to fight with? Well, what do you think? Look, do as David did. From the stream he chose five smooth stones. The stream is the passage through time of temporal affairs; in this passage of temporal affairs the human soul has received the law from God. And since the law was originally contained in the five books of Moses,⁷ he chose five stones from the stream. The reason, though, they are said to be smooth, is that the one who was using them⁸ was smooth, because he was meek, because he was mild, because he was obedient;⁹ *For my yoke is smooth, and my burden is light* (Mt 11:30).

The law powerless without grace

4. But what help is the law, if there is no grace? That's why he put those five stones in a milk can,¹⁰ because milk signifies grace, because it is given gratuitously, freely. The woman has taken food; what is necessary for the support of her body is transferred to the juices of the flesh, the rest that is superfluous is carried off by the proper channels, the milk-forming juice flows to the breasts, in order to feed the hungry little ones freely, gratuitously. The mother's breasts, you see, are full, and she is looking for lips into which she may pour the milk, which is burdensome to the mother if there is nobody to suck it.

In the same sort of way God's saints have their bosoms full of the grace of

God; they are looking out for people into whom they can milk themselves. And just notice what the Lord himself did in order after a fashion to suckle us. His wisdom,¹¹ which none of us could grasp with the mind as solid food, but the angels are capable of it, because the angels live on that very food; human beings, though, cannot use such food, because they are weak; so what did God do, but what a loving mother does? Because the tiny infant is unable to take in solid food, the mother transforms the solidity of the food into flesh, and after a fashion incarnates it, so that it may be suitable to the infant.¹² That's the way God incarnated the Word, so that it might be suitable for us little ones.

Here's the solid food: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing. What was made is life in him; and the life was the light of men, and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it* (Jn 1:1.3-5). What human weakness can approach anything as solid as that? What faculty of ours can grasp it? But don't panic, you crowd of tiny babies! *The Word became flesh, and dwelt amongst us* (Jn 1:14).

Back to David, going out to battle armed with grace, signified by the milk can

5. That's why, to signify this grace, the servant of God put the five stones into the can in which he was in the habit of collecting the milk when he was milking, and he went forth to battle armed with grace, and all the more unconquerable, the more faithful and trusting he was. The other *cursed him by his gods* (1 Sam 17:43); David did not return curse for curse, but the other spoke, this one was confidently presumptuous. Those gods were only fit to be cursed by, our God was fit to be confidently presumed upon. With a single stone he laid low such a monstrous and fearsome foe. He took it on the forehead, where he didn't have the sign of grace,¹³ and fell. David ran up, stood over the prostrate but not yet entirely lifeless form—he was lying there indeed, but still with a little life in him—and with Goliath's own sword did away with the last shreds of life.

This too signifies something. My brothers and sisters, at the first appearance and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, as of the spiritual David who sprang from the stock of David, our enemy received a blow on the forehead, and was laid low. All the superstitious religions of the nations lay prostrate, and were unable from then on to rise up against the Church of God, because even when they did rise up, the Church was then indeed struck at, but martyrdom was given the victor's crown. Then as the Church made progress, since that Goliath carried a great kris or claymore,¹⁴ that is, a monstrous sword, representing the eloquence of this age, which was subjugating many minds to itself, many servants of God also learned this eloquence, so that Goliath might be killed with his own sword. How eloquent Saint Cyprian was, what a shining claymore flashes through his writings! It's the sword of Goliath, but wrenched from him already lying there, so that the enemy might be finished off. With that eloquence we are fighting Goliath every day, and if only it were our good fortune to kill him outright and

triumph over him! Every day, though, he is fighting with what's left to him in the hearts of human beings; but let us overpower him in the name of the Lord.

In this fight we must be neither careless and negligent nor too self-confident

6. None of us, my brothers and sisters, absolutely none of us should be engaging in combat with some vice in our hearts, and presumptuously relying on ourselves. Don't be careless and slack about fighting, but don't either be proud in relying on yourselves. Whatever it is that troubles you, whether it arises from ignorance or desire, face up to the fight, don't be slack, but call upon the spectator who is ready to help you in difficulties. In that way you can win. Put another way, you don't win, because it isn't you winning. Was it David that won, after all? Pay attention to his words and note that it wasn't he that won. He said, you see, *The battle is God's* (1 Sam 17:47). What does it mean to say, *This is God's battle*, but "God is fighting through me"? He's using me as his tool, it's he that lays the enemy low, he that sets the people free, he that gives glory, not to us, but to his name.¹⁵

By fighting like that and acknowledging him, we can finish this life without anxiety, and when the contest is over, we can rest in the bosom of a holy quiet, where the blessed X is resting, after grievous contests, to be sure, after admirable battling, undoubtedly. A person fights, you see, sometimes without any other person observing it. Another person, after all, cannot see in your heart what thoughts you are experiencing, under what suggestions you are at risk, with what desires you are being goaded. There are some things alluring you, others terrifying you; you must be on your guard against being enticed by the allurements, broken by the terrors. What remains in this combat, but to say, *In the name of the Lord my God I will overcome him* (1 Sam 17:45); what remains to be said in this combat, but, *Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name give the glory* (Ps 115:1)? If you hold on to all this, having the law in a milk can, you will all be unconquered. Whatever opposes you is easily laid low, so that the one who put you in for the contest may watch you engaging in it, help you when the going is hard, and crown you with the victor's laurels when you win.

NOTES

1. It is only the title that tells us the person being honored was a bishop. Throughout the sermon he is called a servant of God, and that was an appellation usually applied to religious, to monks. But in the next section it is said that he dispensed the word and sacraments, so clearly he was a cleric, and indeed most likely a bishop.

2. The name of the person is left blank throughout the sermon, which makes me wonder if this isn't a kind of model sermon Augustine had up his sleeve, to present as occasion required. Against this, though, is the frequent carelessness of the composition. It could have been a rough draft, dictated to a secretary, and then more or less forgotten.

Throughout, the subject is also called "the blessed X." Does this mean he was a non-martyr saint? That is Lambot's conclusion. But I rather think that in those days every bishop on his death was routinely beatified by his flock—unless it was glaringly obvious that he did not qualify.

3. See 1 Cor 3:11.

4. What can this mean? Is he just being very paradoxical? If you live a bad life, it means you love what is bad, and will certainly come to a bad end, which—heavy irony—you presumably love. One could construe the whole sentence as a question: will you come to what you love? Then the "but," *sed*, at the beginning of the next phrase doesn't fit in. So it could be emended to *aut*—or can you evade what you fear?

5. See 1 Sam 17:8-10.40-51.

6. Reading *constat* with the manuscript, instead of *cum stat*, when he stands, with the editor.

7. Genesis to Deuteronomy, the *Torah*, the Law, of the Hebrew Bible.

8. Christ, represented by David; see also Jacob and Esau in Gen 27:11. Esau was an hairy man, but Jacob was a smooth man.

9. See Mt 11:29; 21:5; Lk 2:51.

10. Augustine regularly interprets David's shepherd's scrip as a container of milk. See Sermon 32, 5, note 14. In that sermon he follows his version in calling it a *vas pastoralis*, a shepherd's "vessel," which I translate by "gourd." But here he calls it a *sitella lactis*, which is closer to the Greek Septuagint, *kadion*, meaning a can.

Now this may possibly tell us something about the date of the sermon, because here he has the unrevised old Latin at the back of his mind; there a revised translation, presumably that of Jerome. That sermon is provisionally dated to about 403; so this one would be even earlier. Alternatively, while that sermon was preached in Carthage, the metropolitan Church which would keep its biblical texts up to date, this one could have been preached in an up-country Church, which lacked such resources; and so could have been preached later—if it was ever preached at all.

11. In the accusative; the object of a verb he forgets to introduce; so we are being launched into a long non-sentence.

12. He is well and truly confusing the symbol or sign with the thing symbolized or signified.

13. The sign of the cross: a splendid anachronism!

14. *Rhomphaeam vel frameam*; both weapons of barbarous peoples.

15. See Ps 115:1.

SERMON 335L

IN MEMORY OF A JUST MAN

Date: uncertain¹

The Church celebrates the anniversaries of the deaths of just and holy persons, not to increase their honor, but to set their example before us for imitation

1. Today we are celebrating the memory of a just man. So in this sermon that I owe your graces in carrying out my ministry, I must say something about what we have been singing to the Lord with full and harmonious hearts and voices: *The just man will be held in eternal memory, he will not be afraid of an evil hearing* (Ps 112:6-7). The psalm, clearly, was read in order to remind us what good purpose is served by this sort of solemn celebration. The reason, you see, that holy Church celebrates every year the anniversary of the last days of the just and holy people who have departed from this world, is not thereby to increase the honor enjoyed by these just persons, but to set before us an example to be imitated.

The truth of the resurrection; Christians should not be troubled by the question of the Sadducees

2. You see, if we neglect the memory of the just, it means we don't love the just, and reckon that when they are dead, they are just dead, which God preserve us from; that would make us like those Sadducees, about whom we heard when the gospel was read just now; it was because they didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead, or think there is any kind of life after this life, that they put the question to the Lord about the seven men who all had the same wife, succeeding one another in being married to her. They were able, you see, to upset the Jews with this question; they won't be able to upset Christians, because they didn't catch Christ out with it, but were instead caught out by Christ.

So who are upset by such a question? People who imagine that what the dead rise again to is to live in that age in the same way as they live in this age. That's why they said, "All the brothers died, and all had the same wife, and finally she herself died too; *in the resurrection, of which of them will she be the wife?*" (Mk 12:23). This worried the Jews. Why did it worry them? Because they were

hoping for a life according to the flesh after death. It worried the Jews, but it didn't worry the one whom the Jews killed; and Christ solved the problem posed in it, precisely so that Christians shouldn't be worried by it either.

So let us listen to the answer given by our teacher. He said, you see, *You go wrong through not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they marry neither husbands nor wives, but will be like the angels in heaven* (Mt 22:29-30). So why wonder whose wife she is going to be, where nobody will have a wife? Wives are necessary in human circumstances, so that people may be born who are going to live and to succeed those who are going to die. There, however, what need of a consort, where there is no need of offspring? What need is there for children to be born where parents don't die, where they all have one Father, whom they cannot carry out to his last resting place?

So because what we have been promised in the resurrection is that we shall be like the angels in the heavens, that's the sort of eternal memory in which the just man will be held, *and will not be afraid of an evil hearing*. But while it is clear in what kind of eternal memory he will be held, it is less than clear what kind of evil hearing he will not be afraid of. And so it is right that you should be reminded by me of what you already know; not as though you were hearing something you are ignorant of. I will jog your memories in a moment, and you will all recognize what evil hearing the just man will not be afraid of.

*The evil hearing: Go into the eternal fire,
which has been prepared for the devil and his angels*

3. *The just man will be held in eternal memory*, the eternal memory in which the soul of the just man now lives at rest with the saints, far removed and set apart from all the pains and darkness of the godless; while at the end of the world, after getting back the body, no longer mortal but immortal, not merely ensouled anymore but enspirited, which *is sown in contempt and will rise again in glory* (1 Cor 15:43-44), then he will be made the equal of the angels of God,² and it is in that eternal memory that the just man will be held.

But of what evil hearing will he not be afraid? Hear this too, and act in such a way that you need not be afraid of an evil hearing either. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, you see, and he cannot be deceived, because he doesn't deceive anybody: *When the Son of man, he says, comes in his glory, all the nations will be gathered together before him, and he separates them as a shepherd does the sheep from the goats; he places the sheep on the right, the goats on the left*. He recalls the good works of those, inveighs against the bad ones of these. To cut a long story short, *he will say to those on his right, Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the origin of the world*. That's the eternal memory in which the just man will be held. What will he say to those on the left? *Go into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels* (Mt 25:31-33.34.41). That's the evil hearing of which the just man will not be afraid.

So let us choose while we are alive where we are going to be after death, because it's according to the merits of each one of us that the just judge is going to distribute his rewards. Let us keep awake then, in order to ensure, as far as by his gift we are able to, that we also have this same Son of God, who is the judge of all, as our advocate.

NOTES

1. Lambot suggests that the occasion was the feast of a "confessor bishop"; certainly of a man locally "canonized," as we can gather from the concluding words of section 1. As bishops were the most obvious and common candidates for this kind of spontaneous canonization, this unknown just man is more likely than not to have been a bishop. He may even have been Augustine's patron and predecessor as bishop of Hippo Regius, Valerius. The tone of the sermon certainly suggests to me that it was preached in that city.

2. See Lk 20:36.

SERMON 335M

ON A JUST MAN, SAINT DOMITIAN

Date: uncertain¹

If we wish to be at rest when death overtakes us, let us be just

1. Today we are celebrating the day of a just man, and he isn't here. But if you wish to know where he is, question the reading which you heard first: *If the just man is overtaken by death, he will be at rest* (Wis 4:7). For whom, after all, is there any rest or relief in this age, where everything is full of troubles, and when troubles ease off, then full of temptations? This world, you see, whether it's threatening or alluring, is to be feared. But let God be feared, rather, and the world despised, so that we may be all the more on our guard against it.² So if we wish to enjoy relief and rest, when death catches up with us, let us be just.

2. Someone will say, perhaps, "That's too much for me. Let's take a look, I mean, at what's written: *If the just man is overtaken by death, he will be at rest*; and when we inquire who is just, the psalm terrifies us: *Every man a liar*. Let us listen to the book of Wisdom: *If the just man is overtaken by death, he will be at rest*. Let us listen to the psalm: *I said while out of my mind, Every man a liar* (Ps 116:11). Wasn't Saint Domitian a man? So if he was a man, and *every man a liar*, how was he just, if he was a liar? Or how is he at rest, if he wasn't just?"

Christ is a man, and not a liar, and he died for us

3. So let us indeed take a look, dearly beloved. As regards this thought, supported by any number of witnesses, we have no small relief and comfort in what we heard the apostle saying: *For it was to this purpose that Christ died, that he might be Lord both of the living and the dead*; and, *For whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's* (Rom 14:9.8). He is just, he won't lose those who are his own; we are quite sure that Christ was not a liar. Christ a man, and not a liar.

So how is *every man a liar*?

Because Christ is a man in such a way that he isn't only a man. Unless he were both God and man, he would be a liar. So it was such a man, and so great

a man that died for us, and shall we fear death? He went ahead, and rose again; we are his members, and we follow our head.

Relief and reassurance from the very same psalm

4. In fact, the very same psalm reassures us: *What shall I pay back to the Lord for all that he has paid back to me?* (Ps 116:12). The one who said, *I said when out of my mind, Every man a liar*, as a man who was a liar gave thanks to the Lord, and couldn't find anything to pay back to him for all the great benefits he had received from him. What have we in fact received from him, when we inquire what we are to pay him back with and can't find anything? We didn't exist, and he created us; and there were no animals, and he created animals; even more, there's the fact that he made us to his own image; we had got lost, and he came looking for us; he gave us the death of his Son as a pledge, and promised us the life of his Son; he cleansed us from all our sins in the saving waters of baptism, and because as we go on living here we have contracted more for him to forgive, he taught us to say, *And forgive us our debts* (Mt 6:12); he cleaned off everything in baptism, he cleaned off everything in those reborn to new life; he doesn't leave them to die; he doesn't allow them to die—I mean in sin, which is the malignant and eternal form of death; having called them he advises, instructs, helps, pardons, sets free. *What shall I pay back to the Lord for all that he has paid back to me?* What are you saying, man? What do you want to pay back? Whatever you may find, you have received it from him.

We shall arrive there, if we live by faith

5. So we shall arrive there, we shall arrive, if we live by faith; then, you see, we shall be just, because *the just man lives by faith* (Rom 1:17; Hab 2:4). So we shall attain to that reward which is equally the same for everyone. Children believe, they have come at the first hour; teenagers believe, they have come at the third hour; young men and women believe, they have come at the sixth hour; maturer people believe, they have come at the ninth hour; decrepit old crocks believe, they have come at the last hour. They came at different hours, and they received the same wages. In this way the last became first, and the first last. How's that, the last first and the first last? Because what the first received, the last received also.³ What's that tinner they were paid?⁴ Eternal life. Why the same for all of them? Because there nobody lives more, nobody less. Let us wend our way to this reward, let us trust in the Lord, let us shun the way of temptation, may we obtain the life of perfect felicity.

NOTES

1. About who Saint Domitian was, or where he was venerated, there seems to be no other information available, apart from what we have here. Even in so short a piece as this, I suspect the hand, that is the scissors and paste, of the compiler of lectionaries. There are large gaps in the argument, in the line of thought from time to time (for instance between sections 4 and 5), which lend weight to this suspicion.

2. The reasoning seems scarcely valid; if you despise an enemy, you tend to drop your guard. Augustine, or this compiler fellow?

3. See Mt 20:1-16.

4. A *denarius*, a penny in the traditional translations. So called because originally, back in the early days of the Roman Republic, it contained ten *asses*, the smallest coin in circulation.

SERMON 336

AT THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

Date: uncertain¹

God's Church is really built and dedicated in us

1. What we are all gathered here to celebrate is the dedication of a house of prayer.² So while this is the house of our prayers, we ourselves are the house of God. If we ourselves are God's house, we are being built up in this age, in order to be dedicated at the end of the age. The building, or rather its construction, involves hard toil, its dedication means exultant rejoicing. What was going on here when these walls were rising, is going on here and now when believers in Christ are being gathered together. It's by believing, you see, that beams and stones, as it were, are being hewn out of the forests and the mountains; but when they are catechized, baptized, formed,³ it's as though they are being chipped and chiseled, straightened out, planed by the hands of carpenters and masons.

However, they don't make a house for the Lord unless and until they are mortised and cemented together by charity. If these beams and stones here didn't fit into each other according to a definite order, if they didn't peacefully link themselves together, if they didn't somehow love one another by fitting into each other, none of us would come in here. In a word, when you see the stones and beams in a building fitting properly into each other, you go in without a qualm, you aren't afraid it will collapse on you. So as the Lord Christ wished to come in and dwell in us, he said, by way of constructing us, *A new commandment I give you, that you should love one another* (Jn 13:34). I am giving you a new⁴ commandment, he said. You were old, you see, you were lying in the ruins of yourselves. So in order to be rescued from the ruins of your old selves, love one another.

So your graces should consider that this house is still being built throughout, as foretold and promised, the whole wide world. When the house, you see, was being built after the exile, as another psalm has it,⁵ they were saying, *Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth* (Ps 96:1). What it said there, a new song, is what the Lord said here, a new commandment. What, after all, has a new song got, but a new love? Singing is what a lover does. The voice of this singer indicates the fervor of a holy love.

God is to be loved for his own sake, others in God and for God's sake

2. Let us love, let us love freely and for nothing. It is God, after all, whom we love, than whom we can find nothing better. Let us love him for his own sake, and ourselves and each other in him, but still for his sake. You only love your friend truly, after all, when you love God in your friend, either because he is in him, or in order that he may be in him. That is true love and respect; if we love ourselves for any other reason, we are in fact hating rather than loving. *Whoever loves iniquity, you see—what does he hate? Maybe the man next door, maybe the woman next door?*⁶ It's his turn to be horrified: *hates his own soul* (Ps 11:5). Love of wickedness means hatred of your own soul. So on the other hand, hatred of wickedness means love of your own soul. *You that love the Lord, hate evil* (Ps 97:10). God is good, what you love is evil, and you love yourself when you are evil; how can you love God, when you are still loving what God hates?

You heard, I mean to say, that God loved us;⁷ and it's true, he did love us; and if we consider what sort of people we were when he loved us, we should feel ashamed. But the reason we don't feel ashamed is that by loving us when we were that sort, he made us to be not that sort. We're ashamed as we recall the past, we rejoice as we pin our hopes on the future. Why, after all, should we still feel ashamed of what we were, and not rather be confident that *it is in hope that we have been saved* (Rom 8:24)? Then again we heard, *Approach him and be enlightened, and your faces shall not blush for shame* (Ps 34:5). If the light withdraws, you go back to shame and confusion. *Approach him and be enlightened*; so he is the light, we without him are darkness. If you withdraw from the light, you will remain in your own darkness; so if you approach it, you will shine with a light that is not your own. *For you were once darkness*, says the apostle to those who have become believers from being unbelievers. *You were once darkness, but now light in the Lord* (Eph 5:8). So if light in the Lord, darkness without the Lord. Accordingly, if light in the Lord and darkness without the Lord, *approach him and be enlightened*.

Psalm 30 on the dedication of the temple is a prophecy of Christ's passion

3. Observe in the psalm of dedication, which we have just been singing, a building rising from a ruin. *You have torn up my sacking*; that refers to the ruin. So what about the building? *And have girded me with joy*. Here are the words of dedication; *so that my glory may sing to you, and I may not be pierced* (Ps 30:11-12). Who is it that's speaking? You can recognize him by his own words. If I try to explain, it remains obscure; so I'll quote his words, straightaway you will recognize who's speaking, and so love the one who's talking to you. Who's the only one that could say, *Lord, you have snatched my soul from the underworld* (Ps 30:3)? Whose soul has already been snatched from the underworld, if not the one about whom it says in another place, *You will not leave my soul in hell* (Ps 16:10)? What is proposed is a dedication,⁸ and what is actually sung about is a liberation; the song for the dedication of the house is being jubilantly

sung, and what is said is, *I will exalt you, Lord, since you have upheld me, and have not delighted my enemies over me* (Ps 30:1).

Observe the enemies, the Jews, who thought they had killed Christ, defeated him as an enemy, destroyed him as a man like the rest, and a mere mortal. He rose again on the third day, and these are his words: *I will exalt you, Lord, since you have upheld me*. Observe the apostle, when he says, *Therefore God has exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name* (Phil 2:9). *And you have not delighted my enemies over me*. They were indeed delighted at Christ's death, but at his resurrection, his ascension, and his being publicly proclaimed and preached, some of them were pierced with compunction. So at his being preached and being made widely known through the constancy of the apostles, some were pierced with compunction and converted, others remained obdurate and were put to confusion;⁹ none, though, was delighted. Now, when the churches are filled, are the Jews delighted, do you suppose? Churches are being built, dedicated, filled; how can they be delighted? Not only are they not delighted, but they are also put to confusion; and the words of the exultant singer are fulfilled: *I will exalt you, Lord, since you have upheld me, and have not delighted my enemies over me*. You have not delighted them over me; if they come to believe me, you will delight them in me.

*Christ's humanity the sacking from which, when it was torn up,
the price of our redemption was spilled out*

4. To stop me talking too much, let us come now to the words we have been singing. How is it that Christ says, *You have torn up my sacking, and have girded me with joy* (Ps 30:11)? His sacking was *the likeness of the flesh of sin* (Rom 8:3). Don't regard his talking about *my sacking*¹⁰ as cheap stuff; that's where your price was being kept. *You have torn up my sacking*. It's to this sacking that we have fled for refuge. *You have torn up my sacking*. It was in his passion that the sack was torn open. So how can it be said to God the Father, *You have torn up my sacking*? Do you want to hear how this can be said to the Father? *You have torn up my sacking, because he did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for us all* (Rom 8:32). Through the Jews, you see, who were quite unaware of it, he achieved what would redeem them when they were fully aware of it, and would confound them when they denied it. I mean, they are quite unaware of the good they wrought for us by their evil act.

The sack was hung up, and it's as though the godless rejoiced. The persecutor tore open the sack with his lance, and the redeemer poured out the price he paid for us. Let Christ the redeemer sing, let Judas the seller groan, let the Jews, the buyers, blush for shame. Look, there you are; Judas sold him, the Jews bought him, they made a bad bargain, both lost out on it, both seller and buyers ruined themselves by it. You wanted to be buyers; how much better to have been bought and redeemed! He sold, they bought; a truly luckless transaction. They didn't have the price, and he didn't have Christ. To him I say, "Where is the money you received?" To them I say, "Where are the goods you bought?" To him I

say, "When you sold, you cheated yourself." Jump for joy, Christian, at the deal struck by your enemies; you are the one who gained by it. What that man sold and they bought, you, yes you, have acquired.

The psalm adapted to Christ the head and to us his members

5. Let our head, then, say, let the head slain for the body, dedicated for the body, say; let him say, let us listen: *You have torn up my sacking, and girded me with joy*; that is, you have torn up my mortality and girded me with immortality and imperishability. *So that my glory may sing to you, and I may not be pierced* (Ps 30:11-12). What's the meaning of *that I may not be pierced*? May the persecutor no longer raise his lance against me, so that I am pierced; *for Christ rising from the dead dies now no more, death does not lord it over him any further; for in that he died, he died once to sin; but in that he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, he says, we too should think of ourselves as being dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Rom 6:9-11). So we are singing in him, in him we have been dedicated.¹¹ Where the head has gone before, after all, we hope the members too are going to follow. *For it is in hope that we have been saved; but a hope that can be seen is not hope; for why should anyone hope for what he can see? If, however, we hope for what we cannot see, we wait for it with patience* (Rom 8:24-25).

Perhaps, though, our voice too is to be heard there, if we pay close attention, if we look really carefully, if we keep our eyes skinned; not in the way blind lovers of bodies are used to doing. So if we fix our spiritual eyes on the psalm, in the very words of our Lord Jesus Christ we can also find ourselves. It's not for nothing, after all, that the apostle said, *Knowing that our old self has been crucified together with him, so that the body of sin may be brought to nothing, so that we may be slaves to sin no further* (Rom 6:6). Recognize your own voice in these words: *So that my glory may sing to you, and I may not be pierced*. For the time being, you see, while we are toting these burdens of the mortal body, there is no lack of things for us to be pierced by. I mean, if the heart isn't pierced with compunction,¹² why is the breast beaten? So when the time comes for our bodies too to be dedicated, which has already happened in the model case of the Lord, that's when we shall not be pierced with compunction. The compunction, you see, that we feel about sin, was signified by the persecutor's lance.

Then again, since it is written, *From a woman came the beginning of sin, and through her all die* (Sir 25:24), recall what member she was made from,¹³ and see where the Lord was pierced with the lance. Recall, I repeat, call to mind our original fashioning; because it's not for nothing, as I said, that *our old self has been crucified together with him, so that the body of sin may be brought to nothing, so that we may be slaves to sin no further*. So then Eve, from whom came the beginning of sin,¹⁴ was taken from the side of the man to be formed. That man was lying asleep when it was done; this man was hanging dead when it was done. They are close relations, sleep and death, that man's side and this man's side.¹⁵ But from that side was made Eve, who would subject us to death

by sinning; from this side was made the Church, who would bring us to life by giving us birth.¹⁶

NOTES

1. The church being dedicated is called in the first sentence a “house of prayer.” It was in all probability what we would nowadays call a chapel of ease, or in the missions an outstation, not a basilica. And it was preached at the actual dedication of the building, not on the anniversary of that event, which was not kept in those days, it would seem, at least not in the African Church.

It was almost certainly preached in Augustine’s own diocese, but probably not in the city of Hippo Regius itself. From the style I would date it fairly late, as late even as 420 to 425.

2. See Is 56:7 and Mk 11:17.

3. I wonder if this word, *formare*, wasn’t sometimes used to refer to confirmation. I doubt if it was ever employed then to mean moral or spiritual formation, as it commonly is nowadays.

4. The word “new” is not in the text here. I supply it, because the point he is making seems to require it. It could easily have been omitted by a stenographer’s or copyist’s oversight.

5. Another one besides the one they had been singing, which was Ps 30. In the Septuagint and Vulgate Ps 96 also has a title referring to the dedication of the temple: *A song for David himself, when the house was being built after the exile.*

6. This is Augustine himself including both sexes.

7. See 1 Jn 4:10.19; presumably this text had occurred in one of the readings.

8. In the title of the psalm.

9. See Acts 2:37; also Rom 9:18.

10. The Latin *saccus* means both a sack or bag and sackcloth. I translate “sacking,” in the faint hope of conveying both senses.

11. That is, in his interpretation, we have participated in the resurrection of Christ.

12. The Latin for “pierce” is *compungere*, which comes through to English, in the noun derived from it, only in its metaphorical moral sense.

13. See Gn 2:21-22.

14. *A qua facta est initium peccati*; a glaring grammatical error, since the neuter *initium* must be the subject of the feminine participle *facta est*. It is probably due to the stenographer nodding, since in fact the sound of the two phrases, given the nasalization of the final m in Latin, and its elision before a vowel, must have been almost identical.

15. Here I omit a phrase, *compunctus est Dominus in loco peccatorum*; the Lord was pierced in the place of sinners. It is inserted rather ungrammatically into the preceding sentence, and constitutes a pointless interruption of the flow of thought. I treat it as a pious marginal reflection that eventually found its way into the text.

16. Probably not the end of the sermon; but section 6, which the Maurists print, is generally agreed, by the Maurists too among others, to be spurious.

SERMON 337

AT THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

Date: 391-395¹

*The Lord will repay the faithful who have so devoutly
and generously contributed to the building of this church*

1. When the good works of the faithful, performed with their temporal and earthly means, are deposited in the heavenly bank, this is something that can be seen by faith, which has its loving and religious eyes in the heart. Thus it is, that when with the eyes of flesh it beholds this edifice, which is being raised² to house religious gatherings, it praises inwardly what it observes outwardly, and by this visible light is given a view of what it can enjoy by the invisible light of truth. Faith, you see, is not concerned to observe how beautiful are the various parts of this dwelling,³ but from what manifold beauties of the inner self this work of love proceeds. So the Lord will repay his faithful followers who are so lovingly, so cheerfully, so devotedly carrying out these works, to the effect that he includes them in the construction of his own building, into which they hasten to fit as *living stones* (1 Pt 2:5), fashioned by faith, made solidly firm by hope, cemented together by charity.

This is the building in which that *wise architect* the apostle placed Christ Jesus as *the foundation* (1 Cor 3:10-11), also as the supreme *cornerstone* (Is 28:16); one which, as Peter also reminds us from the prophetic scripture, was *rejected indeed by men, but chosen and honored by God* (1 Pt 2:4; Ps 118:22). By adhering to this stone we are joined peaceably together; by resting on it we are fixed firmly in place. You see, he is at one and the same time the foundation stone, because he is the one who regulates us,⁴ and the cornerstone, because it is he that joins us together. He⁵ is the rock on which the wise man builds his house, and thus continues in utter security against all the trials and temptations of this world, neither collapsing when the rain pours down, nor being swept away when the river floods, nor overthrown when the winds blow.⁶

He is also our peace, who has made the two of us one (Eph 2:14); because in him *neither circumcision is of any avail, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation* (Gal 6:15). These two,⁷ you see, coming from different directions like

two walls, were far away from each other until they were extended to him as to a corner, and in him were coupled to each other.

Constructing a building involves hard labor, dedicating it means joy

2. Hence, just as this visible building has been made for us to gather in physically, so that building which we ourselves are is being constructed for God to live in spiritually. *For the temple of God, says the apostle, which is what you yourselves are, is holy* (1 Cor 3:17). Just as we are constructing this one with earthly materials, so we should be erecting that one with lives that are well adapted to it. This one, you see, is being dedicated now when we have come to visit you;⁹ that one will be dedicated when the Lord comes at the end of the age, when *this perishable thing of ours puts on imperishability, and this mortal thing of ours puts on immortality* (1 Cor 15:53); because he is going to *conform our lowly body to his own glorious body* (Phil 3:21). Notice, I mean, what he says in the psalm of dedication: *You have turned my mourning into rejoicing; you have torn up my sacking and have girded me with joy, so that my glory may sing to you, and I may not be pierced* (Ps 30:11-12).

While we are being built, you see, our lowliness is sighing to him; but when we are dedicated, our glory will sing to him, because constructing a building means hard labor, while dedicating it means joy. As long as stones are being hewn from the mountains and logs from the forests, while they are being shaped and chiseled and fitted together, there is a lot of hard work and worry. But when the dedicating of the completed building is celebrated, there is rejoicing and carefree satisfaction to replace the worries and the hard work. In the same way too,⁹ while people are being switched from a life of unbelief to faith, while whatever in them is twisted and not good is being pruned and cut, while tight fitting, peaceful and mutually respectful joins are being made,¹⁰ how many trials and temptations there are to be feared, how many tribulations to be endured!

But when the day comes for the dedication of the eternal house, when we are told, *Come, blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world* (Mt 25:34), what exultant joy that will be, what carefree satisfaction! Glory will sing, and weakness will not be pierced. When the one who loved us and handed himself over for our sakes¹¹ shows himself to us; and the one, who was manifested to humanity as what he was made in his mother, is manifested to them as God the maker which he was in the Father; when that eternal inhabitant himself enters his home now complete and furnished, established in unity, decked out with immortality; then he will fill all things, he will shine out in them all, *so that God may be everything for everyone* (1 Cor 15:28).

Those who dwell in the house of God are themselves also the house of God

3. There was somebody who begged for this one vision from the Lord; and we ourselves, if we so wish, are that somebody. It was out of his desire for this

that he toiled away in his groaning, that he washed his couch every night with his tears, and watered his bedding with them.¹² It was on this account, you see, that his tears were his bread day and night, while they said to him day after day, *Where is your God?* (Ps 42:3). He it is, finally, who said, *One thing I have begged from the Lord, this will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord throughout all the days of my life, that I may contemplate the delight of the Lord, and may be protected as his temple* (Ps 27:4). He himself dwells in those who are his own, and is himself¹³ their dwelling. Those, you see, who dwell in the house of God are themselves also the house of God; the house that contemplates his delight and is protected as his temple, and is hidden in the hiding place of his countenance.¹⁴ This is the hope that we cling to, the reality we cannot yet see. *But if we hope for what we cannot see, we wait for it with patience* (Rom 8:25), and it is with patience that we are being built.

Christ our foundation is up above, so that we may let ourselves be built upward to him

4. So come on then, brothers and sisters; *if you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at God's right hand; have a taste for the things that are above, not the things that are on earth* (Col 3:1-2). The reason, you see, that Christ our foundation is placed up there, is that we should let ourselves be built upward to him. I mean, just as for buildings to be constructed of earthly materials, whose heavy mass, of course, makes them gravitate to the lowest level, the foundations are placed down below; so too for us, on the contrary, that foundation stone has been placed up above, in order to whirl us upward by the gravitational pull of charity.¹⁵

So then, be eager to *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who is at work in you to will and to work with good will. Do everything without grumbling* (Phil 2:12-14). *And like living stones be built up together into the temple of God* (1 Pt 2:5); and like beams that cannot rot¹⁶ make of yourselves a house for God. Let yourselves be squared off together, be chipped and chiseled, by toil, by need, in going without sleep, in being kept constantly busy; be prepared for every good work;¹⁷ so that you may deserve to find rest in eternal life, as in the well constructed company of the angels.

We are made into a dwelling place for God by good works

5. This place, after all, has been built in time, and is not going to last forever; just as, too, our very bodies, for whose needs it has been constructed by works of mercy, are not of course everlasting, but time-bound and mortal. However, *we have a dwelling from God, a house not made by hands, eternal in the heavens* (2 Cor 5:1); where our very bodies too are going to be heavenly and everlasting, thanks to the change wrought by the resurrection. And even now, though not yet by sight, as he will be when we are *face to face* (1 Cor 13:12), still by faith God is dwelling in us; and for him dwelling in us like that, we are made into a dwelling place by good works, which are not indeed eternal works, but they lead

to eternal life. Among them is this work, by which this basilica has been constructed; after all, we shall not be working at such constructions there. No place is being built there that is going to fall into ruin, into which any inhabitant who is going to die will enter.

Now for the time being, however, let your time-bound work be good, so that your reward may be eternal. Now for the time being, I say, construct a house of faith and hope with spiritual love in every good work, for which there will be no room then, because there will be no indigence or need. So then, let the admonitions of the apostles and prophets sink into your hearts like foundations, lay down your humility on top of them as an even floor with nothing to trip people up. Secure the sound and salutary teaching in your hearts with prayers and sermons as with strong walls. Shed light on them¹⁸ with the divine oracles as lamps, hold up the weak like columns, protect the needy like roofs, so that the Lord our God may pay you back eternal good things for temporal ones, and take possession of you forever as his perfected and dedicated dwelling.

NOTES

1. Earlier sixteenth century editors questioned the authenticity of this sermon, but purely and simply, so the Maurists inform us, on the grounds of style. Such suspicions fall to the ground, the Maurists counter, if we assign the sermon to the earliest years of Augustine's ministry after his ordination. They suggest comparison with Sermon 216, which is generally reckoned to be perhaps the first sermon, the first surviving sermon at least, which Augustine ever preached. So they seem to have in mind his ordination as priest in 391. However, see note 8 below for reason to suppose that Augustine was already ordained bishop when he preached this sermon. So we may provisionally date it to some time between 395 and 397. But on the other hand, we have records of a basilica being built in Hippo Regius (and in section 5 he calls this church a basilica; it is no humble "house of prayer") about 30 years later by the generosity of Heraclius and other clergy, and no doubt lay people, of the city. So the sermon could, not unreasonably, be dated instead to about 425.

2. His use of the present tense indicates that the church was not quite completely finished when it was dedicated.

3. *Habitationis*. The implication would seem to be that it is a dwelling for God, or perhaps for Christ in his body, the Church.

4. *Regit nos*. I suppose foundations may be said to regulate or rule a building, rather as fundamental, foundational laws, like the American Constitution, regulate or rule the life of a state.

5. Reading *ipse* instead of the text's *ipsa*; this is the rock.

6. See Mt 7:24-25.

7. That is, the two peoples, the circumcised Jews and the uncircumcised Gentiles.

8. This is surely the bishop speaking of himself and his entourage. Later on he will refer to the building as a basilica (section 5), so it was clearly a church of some consequence in the city, whose dedication could hardly have been left to a mere presbyter.

9. Here I leave out a sentence which I think must have crept into the text from a marginal comment, because it is a *non sequitur* which interrupts the comparison. It runs: "In the same way too the spiritual house, whose inhabitant is God, will last not for a time but forever."

10. He is here, so to say, reversing the direction of the metaphor, and applying moral categories

to the business of constructing a building. "Mutually respectful" is a clumsy translation of that untranslatable word, *pius*.

11. See Gal 2:20.

12. See Ps 6:6.

13. Reading *ipse habitatio* instead of the text's *ipsi habitatio*, which could only mean "they are his dwelling," a totally pointless tautology.

14. See Ps 31:20. For Augustine it is the same "somebody" speaking in all the psalms, namely David, and Christ through the mouth of David.

15. Echoing his famous dictum, *amor meus pondus meum*, my love is my weight.

16. The allusion is to Noah's ark, constructed, according to the Septuagint, of imputrescent timbers.

17. See 2 Cor 6:5; 11:27; 2 Tm 2:21.

18. Not the walls, but the people imagined inside them, whom he has not yet mentioned. He is changing tack without noticing it or warning us.

SERMON 338

AT THE DEDICATION OF A CHURCH

Date: 412¹

*It is right to perform good works openly, in order to set a good example;
but not in order to be admired for them*

1. When good works, even those performed for God's sake, are publicly advertised to people at large, it is not human praise that is being sought when they are done by good and religious persons, but an example that is being put forward for imitation. You see, there is a twofold kindness being shown in any good work, material kindness and spiritual. It is a material kindness to come to the relief of the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, of strangers.² When the same works, though, are publicly advertised, and thus challenge other people to imitate them, spirits and minds are also being fed. One person is being fed by the actual good work, another by the good example; both, you see, are hungry. The first wants to receive some nourishment, the second wants to see something to imitate.

The lamp on the lampstand

2. *Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a tub, but upon the lampstand, to shine upon all who are in the house* (Mt 5:14). That reading occurs very suitably at the dedication of lampstands,³ to advise the person who does good to be the lamp placed on the lampstand. The lamp, you see, is the person who does good works. But what is the lampstand? *Far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Gal 6:14). So any who perform them in line with Christ, and perform them for the sake of Christ, so that they don't boast except in Christ, are the lampstand.⁴ Let this lampstand shine upon all, so that they may see what to imitate; they mustn't be slow to do so, nor spiritless. Let them profit from what they see; don't let them be capable of seeing with the eyes, and blind in their hearts.

Two apparently contradictory injunctions of the Lord's

3. But it may perhaps occur to someone that the Lord seems to tell us to conceal our good works, when he says, *Beware of performing your justice before men, in order to be seen by them; else you will not get a reward with your Father who is in heaven* (Mt 6:1); so this problem has to be solved, so that we may know how we should submit to the Lord. And we can't submit to him, when we hear him giving contradictory commands.⁵ Here he says, *Let your good works shine before men, so that they may see your good deeds* (Mt 5:16); there he says, *Beware of performing your justice before men, in order to be seen by them*. Do you want to know how this problem is to be solved—and unless it is solved it will be a constant irritant, if it remains unsolved. Some people do good, and are afraid of being seen; and they take great pains, as far as they can, to cover up their good works. They seize the moment when they can't see anyone;⁶ that's when they hand something out, terrified of offending against that precept, in which it says, *Beware of performing your justice before men, in order to be seen by them*.

However, the Lord did not give orders for good works to be concealed, but for human praise not to be a consideration in the doing of good works. In any case, when he said, *Beware of performing your justice before men*, how did he finish? *In order to be seen by them*. To do them for the very purpose of being seen by men; to seek that precise return from the good work, to obtain that return; to look for nothing else, to have no desire for any higher and heavenly dividend. But it's if the only reason you do it is in order to be praised; that's what the Lord forbade. *Beware of performing*. How? *In order to be seen by them*. Beware of getting only this return on your investment, that people see you.

*It's one thing in your good works to seek praise for yourself,
another to seek praise for God*

4. But he does give orders for our works to be seen, and he says, *Nobody lights a lamp and puts it under a tub, but on the lampstand, to shine on all who are in the house*. And, *So let your good works shine before men, that they may see*, he says, *your good deeds*. And he didn't stop there, but added, *that they may glorify your Father who is in heaven* (Mt 5:15-16). It's one thing in your good works to seek praise for yourself, another thing in your good works to seek praise for God. When you seek your own praise, you have remained simply in the sight of men; when you seek God's praise, you have acquired eternal glory. So let us act in such a way that we are not seen by men; that is, let us act in such a way that we do not seek to be seen by men as our reward. But let us act in such a way that we seek God's glory from those who see and imitate us—knowing full well that if he did not make us such people as that, we would be just nothing at all.

NOTES

1. So Fischer and Kunzelmann. There is little indication of where the church being dedicated was. Presumably it was in Augustine's own diocese of Hippo Regius.
2. See Mt 25:35-36.
3. I suppose a dedication of the church lamps was part of the whole ceremony of dedicating a church.
4. One expected him to say, as he does elsewhere, that the cross of Christ is the lampstand.
5. An odd sentence, with one negative too many: *Nec obtemperare illi non possimus*. Perhaps the *non* is a mistake for *nos*. Anyway, I omit it in translation, and treat the subjunctive *possimus* as if it were the indicative *possumus*.
6. *Quando neminem videant*. One expected him to say, *quando nemo videat*, when nobody can see them; or *quando a nemine videantur*, when they can't be seen by anybody.

SERMON 339

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ORDINATION

Date: 425¹

The burden and the dangers of being a bishop

1. This particular day, brothers and sisters, is a serious warning to me to think very carefully about the burden I carry. Even if I have to think about the weight of it day and night, still this anniversary somehow or other thrusts it on my consciousness in such a way that I am absolutely unable to avoid reflecting on it. And the more the years increase, or rather decrease,² and bring me nearer to my last day, which of course is undoubtedly going to come some time or other, the sharper my thoughts become, and ever more full of needles, about what sort of account I can give for you to the Lord our God. This, you see, is the difference between each one of you and me, that you, practically speaking, are only going to render an account for yourselves alone, while I shall be giving one both for myself and for you. That's why the burden is so much greater; but carried well it wins greater glory, while if it is handled unfaithfully, it hurls one down into the most appalling punishment.

So what am I to do above all else today, but present you with the danger I am in, so that you may be my joy? Now my danger is this: if I pay attention to how you praise me, and take no notice of the sort of lives you lead. But he knows, the one under whose gaze I speak, under whose gaze, indeed, I think, that I am not so much delighted by praise and popularity, as vexed and troubled about what sort of lives are led by those who praise me. As for being praised by those who lead bad lives, I don't want it, I shudder at it, detest it, it causes me pain, not pleasure. While as for being praised by those who lead good lives, if I say I don't want it, I will be lying; if I say I do want it, I'm afraid I may be more bent on vanity than on the solid good. So what am I to say? I don't completely want it, and I don't completely not want it. I don't completely want it, in case I should be imperiled by human praise; I don't completely not want it, in case it should mean that those to whom I preach are ungrateful.

The bishop is meant to be a watchman or lookout, to warn his people of dangers to their salvation

2. My burden, though, is the one you heard about just now when the prophet Ezekiel was being read. It's little enough, after all, that the very day is a reminder to me to think about this burden; in addition, such a reading as that is chanted, to strike great fear into my heart, and make me think about what I am carrying; because unless the one who placed it on my shoulders carries it with me himself, I am bound to fail. Here's what you heard: *The land, he says, over which I will have brought the sword, and which has provided itself with a lookout, who is to see the sword coming down on it, and to speak and announce it; but if the sword comes, that lookout keeps quiet, and the sword coming down upon the sinner kills him; the sinner indeed will die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require from the hand of the lookout. But if he sees the sword coming down and blows the trumpet and announces it, and the one to whom he announces it pays no attention, he indeed will die in his iniquity, but the lookout will deliver his own soul. And as for you, son of man, I have set you as a lookout for the children of Israel (Ez 33:2-7).*

He explained what he meant by the sword, he explained what he meant by the lookout, he explained what sort of death he meant; he has not allowed us to make the obscurity of the passage an excuse for our negligence. *I have set you, he says, as a lookout. If I say to the sinner, "Dying you shall die," and you just keep quiet, and he dies in his sin, he indeed shall die in his sin rightly and justly, but³ his blood I will require at your hand. But if you tell the sinner, "Dying you shall die," and he pays no attention to himself, he shall die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your soul (Ez 33:7-9).*⁴ And he added words which he wanted to have passed on to the people of Israel: *And so you shall say to the children of Israel, What is this that you are saying among yourselves: "Our iniquities overwhelm us, we are wasting away in our sins, how can we go on living?" Thus says the Lord: that I do not desire the death of the godless, so much as that the godless should turn back from his crooked way and live (Ez 33:10-11).*

That is what he has wished me to declare to you. If I don't declare it, I am going to have a bad account to render of my tour as lookout. But if I do declare it, I have done my part. It's over to you now; as for me, I'm reassured. But how can I be reassured, if you are in peril, and are going to die? I have no wish for my glory to be accompanied by your punishment. Yes indeed, I have been given my reassurance, but charity makes me anxious. Look, I'm saying it, and you know I've always said it, you know I've never kept quiet: *This is what God says: I do not desire the death of the godless, so much as that the godless should turn back from his very evil way and live.* What is it the godless were saying? He told us the words of the godless and the wicked: *Our iniquities overwhelm us, we are wasting away in our sins, how can we go on living?* The sick are despairing, but the doctor is promising hope. Mere man has said *How can we go on living?*; God says, "You can go on living." If *every man a liar*, let God *who alone is truthful* (Rom 3:4; Ps 116:11) delete what man has said and write what God has said. Don't despair, you can go on living, not on your evil deeds of the past, but

on your good deeds of the future; you will delete the evil deeds, if you *depart from evil* (Ps 34:14). Everything, whether good or bad, is deleted by change. From a good life you turned aside to a bad one, you deleted the good one. Notice what you are directing your attention to, what you get for it; two deposit boxes have been prepared for you;⁵ what you put in is what you will find. God is a faithful bank manager, he will pay you back in your own coin what you have done.

Besides those who perish by despairing, there are others who perish by presuming

3. There are other people, though, who don't perish by despairing; they don't say to themselves, *Our iniquities overwhelm us, we are wasting away in our sins, how shall we be able to go on living?* (Ez 33:10). But they deceive themselves in another way; they beguile themselves with God's being exceedingly merciful, so that they never bother to correct themselves. This, you see, is the sort of thing they say: "Even if we do evil, even if we commit injustices, even if we lead lives of vicious self-indulgence, even if we ignore the poor, even if we conduct ourselves with pride and arrogance, even if we feel no prickings of conscience for our evil deeds, is God going to throw away such a vast multitude, and deliver only a few?"

So there are two dangers; one which we heard of just now from the prophet, the other about which the apostle does not keep silent. Because against those who die in despair, like gladiators who, being destined to the sword, have an insatiable appetite for vile pleasures, thinking nothing, it seems, of their souls⁶ as being already forfeit, the prophet tells us what they say to themselves: *Our iniquities overwhelm us, we are wasting away in our sins, how shall we be able to go on living?* While the other case is the one of which the apostle says, *Or do you make light of the riches of his goodness and mercy and forbearance?* Against those who say, "God is good, God is merciful, he won't throw away such a vast multitude of sinners and deliver only a few. Because of course, if he didn't want them to exist, they wouldn't even be alive. Seeing that they do such evil things and go on living, if this were displeasing to God, he would immediately remove them from the earth." Against them the apostle says, *Are you unaware that the patience of God is prompting you to repentance? You, however, according to the hardness of your heart, and your unrepentant heart are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and the revelation of the just judgment of God, who will repay each person according to his works* (Rom 2:4-6).

Who is he saying this to? To those who say, "God is good, he won't pay back." He most certainly will pay back each person according to his works. As for you, what are you doing? Storing up. What? Wrath. Add wrath upon wrath, increase the deposit; what you deposit will be paid back to you, the one you entrust it to doesn't cheat you. If on the other hand you put good works into the other deposit box, the fruits of justice, or continence, or virginity, or the chastity of marriage; if you are a stranger to fraud, to murder, to crime; if you remember the needy, because you yourself are also in need; if you remember the poor,

because you yourself are also poor, whatever the abundance of your wealth, you are clothed in the rags of the flesh; if with such thoughts as these, and such actions as these you contribute to the good deposit box against the day of judgment, the one who cheats nobody, and will repay each person according to his works, will say to you, "Take what you have deposited, because there is plenty of it. When you were depositing it, you couldn't see it; but I was keeping it, just as I was going to repay it."

Because indeed, brothers and sisters, everyone who puts something into a savings box knows that he is putting it in, and cannot see it when he has done so. Suppose a savings chest buried in the earth, with one opening or small chink by which you put money into it. Little by little you put in what you have won, and you can't see it. If the earth is keeping for you what you have put in and can't see, will the one who made heaven and earth not keep it for you too?

To preach, to rebuke, to refute, to build up, to manage for everyone, is a labor he would gladly run away from; but the gospel terrifies him

4. So then,⁷ brothers and sisters, lighten my burden for me, lighten it, please, and carry it with me; lead good lives. We have our fellow poor to feed today,⁸ and we have to show them humanity and share with them; the rations I provide for you, though, are these words. I quite lack the means to feed everyone with visible, tangible bread. I feed you on what I am fed on myself.⁹ I am just a waiter, I am not the master of the house; I set food before you from the pantry which I too live on, from the Lord's storerooms, from the banquet of that householder who *for our sakes became poor, though he was rich, in order to enrich us from his poverty* (2 Cor 8:9). If I were to set bread before you, when the bread was broken you would each just carry away a scrap; even if I provided a great quantity, very little indeed would arrive in the hands of each one of you. Now, however, all of you get everything I say, and each and every one of you gets it all. You haven't, I mean to say, divided the syllables of my words among yourselves, have you? You haven't taken away, have you, one word each from my drawn-out sermon? Each of you has heard the whole of it.

But see to it how you have heard, because I am the one who pays out, not the one who collects the debts. If I didn't pay out, and kept the money, the gospel terrifies me. I could easily say, you see, "What business is it of mine to be wearisome to people; to say to the wicked, 'Don't act wickedly,¹⁰ act like this, stop acting like that'? What business is it of mine to be burdensome to people? I've received instructions how I should live; let me live as I've been told to, as I've been commanded. Let me sign for what I have received; why should I give an account for others?" The gospel terrifies me; because nobody could outdo me in enjoying such anxiety-free leisure. There's nothing better, nothing more pleasant than to search through the divine treasure chest¹¹ with nobody making a commotion; it's pleasant, it's good. But to preach, to refute, to rebuke, to build up, to manage for everybody, that's a great burden, a great weight, a great labor. Who wouldn't run away from this labor? But the gospel terrifies me.

There was a servant, who stepped forward and said to his master, *I knew that you, a harsh man, reap where you have not sown*; I have kept your money, I did not wish to invest it. Take what is your own; judge if it is any less; if it is all there, do not be harsh with me.

But he said to him, *Wicked servant, out of your own mouth I condemn you.*

Why so?

Since you have called me grasping, why did you neglect my profit?

But I was afraid to pay it out, in case I lost it.

Is that what you say?¹² I'm frequently told, you see, "Why take him to task? What you say is lost on him; he doesn't listen to you."

And I, says that man, didn't want to pay out, in case I lost your money.

He answered him, *You should have laid out my money, and I, when I came, would have collected it with interest* (Lk 19:21-23). I gave you the post, he is saying, of an investor, not a collector; you should have done the job of investing, and left the collecting to me.

So with this debt collection to fear, we should all see to it how we receive. If I, engaged in investing the money, am afraid, should those who receive it be free from all anxiety? Let those who were bad yesterday be good today. That's my investment: let those who were bad yesterday be good today. They were bad yesterday, and are not dead; if they had died being bad, they would have gone where there's no returning from. They were bad yesterday, they are still alive today; let the fact of being alive turn to their advantage, let them stop leading bad lives. So why do they want to add a bad today to a bad yesterday? You want to have a long life, don't you want it to be a good one? Who could bear even a long, bad dinner? Has mental blindness grown so inveterate, is the inner man so utterly deaf, that he wants to have everything good, except himself?

Do you want to have a country cottage? I refuse to believe you want a bad one. You want to get a wife, but only a good one, a home, but only a good one. Why should I run through everything one by one? You don't want to have a bad shoe, and you want to have a bad life? As though a bad shoe can do you more harm than a bad life! When a bad, ill-fitting shoe starts hurting you, you sit down, take it off, throw it away or put it right or change it, in order not to damage a toe.¹³ A bad life, which can lose you your soul, you don't care to put right. But I can see clearly enough where you delude yourself; a hurtful shoe causes pain, a hurtful life causes pleasure. The first indeed hurts, the second pleases. But what pleases for a time, later on brings much worse pain, while what brings salutary pain for a time, later on brings endless pleasure and abundant, joyful happiness.¹⁴

The servant's business is to lay out the money, the master's to require an account

5. Notice the one having a good time, the one having a bad time; that rich man having a good time and that poor man having a bad time.¹⁵ The first was wining and dining, the second suffering agonies; the first being treated with respect in the midst of his household, the second being licked by dogs; the first

getting indigestion from his banquet, the second not even getting his fill of the scraps. Pleasure came to an end, need came to an end; the rich man's good things passed away, and the poor man's bad things; there followed bad things for the rich man, good things for the poor man. The things that passed away could not be recalled; the things that followed could never be diminished. The rich man was burning in hell, the poor man was enjoying himself in Abraham's bosom. Earlier on the poor man had longed for a scrap from the rich man's table, later on the rich man longed for a drop from the poor man's finger. The want of the one terminated in final satisfaction, the pleasure of the other culminated in the endless pain that followed it. Thirst succeeded to surfeit, pain to pleasure, fire to the wearing of purple.

Here, on the other hand, is the dinner¹⁶ which Lazarus seems to have had in Abraham's bosom; this is what I wish all of you to enjoy, this is what I wish all of us to enjoy together. I mean to say, what would the dinner be like that I could provide for you, if I invited you all, and this church was filled with tables for people to feast at? Such things don't last, they're soon over. Think about what I am saying, so that you may come to the feast which you can never get to the end of. There, you see, nobody gets indigestion from feasting; nor are the very dishes such that they feed us by disappearing, and provide refreshment by being consumed. They will remain entire, and at the same time provide us with all the refreshment we want. If our eyes feed on light, and the light is not consumed, what will that banquet be like, which consists in the contemplation of the truth, in the vision of eternity, in the praises of God; with the assurance of happiness, with untroubled peace of mind, an immortal body, our flesh never withering with old age, our soul never fainting with hunger? There nobody grows bigger, nobody grows smaller. There nobody is born, because nobody dies; there you are not even compelled to do any of the good works which I am urging you to practice now.

The reward God has prepared for our doing good here is nothing less than his own Son

6. Just now, you see, you heard the Lord saying, he said it to all of us: *When you make a feast, do not invite your friends*—he is showing you where you should be open-handed; don't bring your relations along, who have the means to recompense you—but *invite the poor, the disabled, the blind, the lame*, those in need, who have no means of paying you back. And will you lose by it? *You shall be recompensed in the recompensing of the just* (Lk 14:12-14). You just spend, he is saying, I'm the one who receives, makes a note of it, pays it back. God said that, and thereby urged us to do such things ourselves, so that he can pay us back. When he pays us back, who is going to take it away from us? *If God is for us, who is against us?* (Rom 8:31). We were busy sinning, and he made a gift to us of Christ's death; we are now living justly, and will he disappoint us? Christ, after all, did not die for the just, but *for the ungodly* (Rom 5:6). If he made a gift to the wicked of the death of his Son, what can he be keeping for the just? What is he keeping for them? He has nothing better to keep

for them than what he gave for them. What did he give for them? *He did not spare his own Son* (Rom 5:6). What is he keeping for them? The same Son, but now as God to be enjoyed, not as man to die.

There you have where God is inviting you to. But just as you pay close attention to where to, please also pay attention to which way, please also pay attention to how. But clearly, when you get there, you won't have this sort of thing said to you, will you: *Break your bread to the hungry; if you see someone naked, clothe him* (Is 58:7)? This passage is not going to be quoted to you, is it: *When you make a feast, invite the lame, the blind, the needy, the destitute*? There won't be anyone destitute there, any lame people there, any blind, any disabled, anyone needing hospitality, anyone naked; they will all be healthy, all robust, all well supplied, all clothed in everlasting light. Who can you see there as a stranger or foreigner? That's our home country, here we are all strangers and foreigners, we should be longing to get home. Let us carry out what we have been ordered to, so that we may demand what we have been promised, and take what is given us over and above that. If we demand it, I mean, as though God were unwilling to give . . . ;¹⁷ of course he will give it, he won't cheat anyone.

Just consider this point, my brothers and sisters; notice how many good things the Lord our God gives to the bad: light, life, health, springs, the fruits of the earth, offspring; frequently also honors, high positions, places of authority. These are all good things which he gives to both good and bad alike. Are we to suppose that there is nothing which he keeps for the good, seeing that he gives so many good things even to the bad? None of us should entertain such a thought in our hearts. My brothers and sisters, God is keeping great goods for the good, but they are *what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it come up into the heart of man* (1 Cor 2:9). You can't conceive it before you receive it. You can see it when you receive it; to have some conception of it before you receive it, that you cannot do. What is it you want to see? . . . ¹⁸ It's not a guitar, not a flute, not a sound, which brings pleasure to the ears. What is it you wish to have some conception of? *It has not come up into the heart of man.*

And what am I to do? I can't see, can't hear, can't have any conception of it. What am I to do?

Believe. Faith is a great hold-all,¹⁹ a great jar in which you can receive a great gift. Get a jar ready for yourself, because you have to approach a great spring. What does that mean, get it ready? Let your faith grow, let it be enlarged, let it become strong; don't let your faith be slimy and muddy; let your faith be fired, not shattered, by the tribulations of this world.

But when you do this and have faith, like a suitable jar, capacious and strong, God will fill it. I mean, he won't say to you, as people say to someone who comes with a request, and says, "Please give me some wine, I beg you"; and the other says, "I'll give you some; come and I'll do it." He brings along a cask, and says, "I've come as you told me to." And the other answers, "I thought you would bring just one bottle; what's this you've brought, or where do you suppose you've come to? I haven't got enough to give so much. Take back the bigger receptacle you've brought, and bring something small; bring me something my

poverty may be able to supply.” That’s not what God says; he’s full, and you will be full when he has filled you up, and he will still have as much as he had before he filled you. God’s gifts are lavish and plentiful, you can’t find any such on earth. Believe, and you will prove the truth of this—but not now.

“And when?” you will ask.

Wait for the Lord, do manfully, and let your heart take courage (Ps 27:14); so that when you receive it, you can say, You have given joy to my heart (Ps 4:7).

Wait patiently

7. *Wait²⁰ for the Lord, do manfully, and let your heart be strengthened, and wait for the Lord.* What does *Wait for the Lord* mean? Receive only when he gives, don’t demand whenever you want. It’s not yet the time for giving. He has waited for you, now wait for him. What’s that I’ve just said, he has waited for you, now you wait for him? If you are now leading an upright life, if you have already turned back to him, if you are displeased with what you have done in the past, if you have now determined to choose a good new way of life—then don’t be in a hurry to make demands of him. He waited patiently for you to change your bad way of life; now you just wait patiently for him to give you the prize for a good way of life. After all, if he hadn’t waited patiently too, there wouldn’t be anybody for him to give it to. So wait patiently, because you have been patiently waited for.

You though, who don’t want to straighten yourself out, anyone there who still doesn’t want to straighten yourself out—as though there were only one of you! I should rather have said, Whoever of you doesn’t want to straighten himself out. You, though, standing there, having made no decision to put yourself right—let me speak like this as though to a single person.²¹ Whoever you are, you don’t want to put yourself right; what are you promising yourself?

Are you perishing of despair or of hope? If you’re perishing of despair, this is what you say to yourself: “My iniquity is overwhelming me, I’m wasting away in my sins. What hope have I got of living?” Listen to the prophet saying, *I have no wish for the death of the ungodly; only let the ungodly turn from his very evil way and live (Ez 33:11).* If you’re perishing of hope, this²² is what you say to yourself: “God is good, God is merciful. God forgives everything, he doesn’t pay back evil for evil.” Listen to the apostle saying, *Do you not know that God’s patience is drawing you to repentance? (Rom 2:4).*

So where are we? If I’ve made any impression on you,²³ if what I’ve said has struck home, I see how you are going to answer me: “It’s true, I’m not despairing, and so perishing of despair; nor am I hoping in a bad way so as to perish of hope. I don’t say to myself, ‘My iniquity is overwhelming me, I haven’t any hope any more.’ Nor do I say to myself, ‘God is good, he doesn’t pay back evil to anyone.’ The prophet carries weight with me, so does the apostle.”

So what do you say next? “I’ve still got a little time left to live how I like. These people are such a bore—so many of them, always pestering us.²⁴ I’ve still got a little time to live as I like; later, when I’ve put myself straight, what the

prophet said will of course be true: *I have no wish for the death of the ungodly, so much as that the ungodly may turn from his very evil way and live. When I have been converted, he will wipe out all my evil deeds. Why shouldn't I add something to my pleasure, and live how I like as much as I like, and turn back to God later on?"*

Why do you say this, brother?

"Why? Because God has promised me pardon if I change my ways."

I'm well aware, I know God has promised pardon. He promises this through the holy prophet, and he promises it through me, the least of his servants. It's perfectly true that he promises it, he has promised it through his only Son. But why do you want to pile evil days on evil days? *Sufficient unto the day be the evil thereof* (Mt 6:34). Yesterday a bad day, today as well a bad day, tomorrow too a bad day. Or do you think they are good days when you pander to your pleasures, when you pamper your heart with dissipation, when you set traps for another person's virtue, when you grieve your neighbor by cheating him, when you refuse to give back what has been entrusted to you, when you perjure yourself for cash? When you've indulged yourself in a good dinner, is that sufficient reason for thinking you've had a good day? Can the day possibly turn out good when the person spending it is bad? So you do want to pile bad days on bad days, don't you?

"I'm only asking," he says, "to be allowed a little more time."

Why?

"Because God has promised me pardon."

But no one has promised you that you are going to be alive tomorrow. Or else, just as you have read in the prophet, the gospel, the apostle that when you have turned back to him God will blot out all your iniquities, read out to me where a tomorrow is promised you, and then live in an evil way tomorrow.

Though of course, my brother or sister, I shouldn't really have said that to you. Perhaps you have a long life ahead of you. If it's a long one, let it be a good one. Why do you want to have a long, and bad, life? Either it won't be a long one, and you should be taking delight in that other long one which has no end; or else it will be a long one—and what harm will it do you to have lived a long life well? Do you really want to live a long life badly, don't you want to live it well? And for all that, nobody has promised you tomorrow.

Put yourself straight, listen to the scripture:²⁵ *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord* (Sir 5:8). Those aren't my words—though yes, they are my words too. If I love they are mine. You try loving too, and they are yours. This sermon I'm now preaching comes from holy scripture. If you ignore it, it becomes your adversary. But now listen to the Lord saying, *Come to terms with your adversary quickly* (Mt 5:25).

What's the point of this terrifying sermon? You've come along to a joyful celebration, it's called the bishop's birthday today;²⁶ should I be providing any fare to distress you? On the contrary, I'm providing something to give joy to the lover of God, and to annoy the one who ignores him; it's better for me to cause distress to the one who ignores God than to cheat the one who believes in him.

Be afraid with me, in order to rejoice with me

8. Let it be heard by all of you—I'm reciting the words of God's scripture. You in particular, you bad procrastinator with your bad longing for tomorrow, listen to the Lord speaking, listen to holy scripture preaching. I from this place of mine am only playing the part of a lookout. *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day.* See if he hasn't marked those people, see if he hasn't observed those people who say, "Tomorrow I'll live a good life, today let me live a bad one." And when tomorrow comes, you'll say the same thing again. *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day. For suddenly his wrath will come, and at the time for vengeance he will destroy you* (Sir 5:7).

Did I write that? Can I cross it out? If I cross it out, I'm afraid of being crossed out myself. I could keep quiet about it. I'm afraid of being kept quiet about! I'm compelled to preach it, in terror I aim to terrify. Be afraid with me, in order to rejoice with me. *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord.*

Lord, please note that I'm saying it. Lord, you know how you frightened me when your prophet was read.²⁷ Here I am, saying it: *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day. For suddenly his wrath will come, and at the time for vengeance he will destroy you.* But I don't want him to destroy you. Nor do I want you to say to me, "I want to perish," because I, Augustine, don't want it. So my "I don't want it" is better than your "I do."

If your old father in your care had gone down with sleeping sickness, and you, a young man, were there with the sick old man, and the doctor said, "Your father's dangerously ill; this sleepiness is a mortal heaviness. Watch him, don't let him go to sleep. If you see him nodding off, shake him; if shaking's not enough, pinch him; and if even pinching's not enough, poke him, or your father may die." There you would be, a young man extremely troublesome to the old man. He would be relaxing and sinking into his pleasant disease; his eyes would be heavy with it, and he would close them. And you on the other hand would be shouting at your father, "Don't sleep!" But he would say, "Leave me alone. I want to sleep." And you would tell him, "But the doctor said, if he wants to sleep, don't let him." And he would say, "Please leave me alone; I want to die." "But I don't want it," says the son to his father. To whom? Clearly, to someone choosing to die. And still you want to postpone your father's death, and to live just a little longer with your old father, who is going to die soon anyway.

Well, the Lord is shouting at you, "Don't go to sleep, or you may sleep for ever. Wake up, to live with me, and to have a Father you will never have to carry to the grave." You hear—and you remain deaf.

Pray for the fulfillment of justice and the hallowing of God's name

9. So what have I been doing as a lookout? I'm free, I'm not really being a burden to you.²⁸ I know what some of you are going to say: "What did he want to tell us? He scared us, coming down on us like a ton of bricks, making us guilty." On the contrary, I've been wanting to set you free from guilt. It's

disgraceful, it's dishonorable—I won't say it's *wrong*, I won't say it's *dangerous*, I won't say it's *deadly*²⁹—it's dishonorable for me to deceive you, if God doesn't deceive me. It's the Lord who threatens the godless, the evildoers with death, cheats, rogues, scoundrels, adulterers, pleasure seekers, those who ignore him, who complain about the times and don't mend their ways; it's the Lord who threatens them with death, threatens them with hell, threatens them with everlasting destruction. What do they want? Me to promise them what he doesn't promise? Look here; an attorney gives you a guarantee; what use is it to you if his principal doesn't honor it? I'm just an attorney, just a servant. Do you want me to say to you, "Live how you like, the Lord won't destroy you"? The attorney has given you a guarantee; the attorney's guarantee is worthless. If only the Lord were giving it himself, and I were just trying to get you worried! After all, the Lord's guarantee would be worth something, even if I were against it; mine's worth nothing at all, if he's against it.

But what guarantee is there for any of us, brothers and sisters, for me or for you, except to listen seriously and carefully to the Lord's commands, and trustingly to wait for his promises? We grow tired of this, of course, being human; let us implore his help, let us send up our sighs to plead with him. We should not be praying for passing, worldly things, things that are come and gone and vanish like smoke. What we should be praying for is the fulfillment of justice, and the hallowing of God's name, not for getting the better of the person next door, but for getting the better of the lust and the greed inside; not for the healing of the flesh, but for the taming of avarice. That's what our prayers should be about; helping us in our inner struggles, till they crown us in our final victory.

NOTES

1. This is a very problematic text altogether. Is it, in fact, one sermon or several? I am inclined to see it as several. The last part of it, in fact, sections 7-9, has already appeared in this series as Sermon 40, because that is where the Maurists placed it, finding it, no doubt, in a separate manuscript. I think they were right to do so; but Frangipane, on the strength of a manuscript the Maurists did not know about, treats it as one sermon; see note 27 below. Thus the manuscript tradition speaks with many voices. In brief, I suspect we have here three sermons—or pieces of three sermons; first, the one printed as 339 by the Maurists, which consists of section 1, the first half of section 2, and then section 4, with an addition not in this text, that will be given in the appropriate note; secondly, the second half of section 2 and section 3—certainly not a complete sermon; thirdly, sections 7-9, which have already appeared as Sermon 40. That was dated early, 396-400. In following Lambot and dating this to 425 or later, I am only considering the first of these three sermons. But if Frangipane is right, and it really is one sermon, then I would withdraw that early dating of Sermon 40, and date the whole sermon to this later time.

2. A favorite theme—the older you get, you don't add years to your life, but rather subtract them; you have fewer left. This remark surely supports Lambot in dating this sermon to the last years of Augustine's ministry, rather than to twenty-five to thirty years earlier, as other scholars do.

3. From "he indeed . . ." is contained in the text of the Maurists, but omitted by the Frangipane edition.

4. Here the Maurist text stops, resuming again at section 4.

5. One for good deeds, one for bad.

6. *Animas*, meaning also their lives.

7. This is where the Maurist text resumes again.

8. It seems that bishops—or at least this bishop—regularly gave a feast to the poor on the anniversary of their ordination. But the Maurists read: “The birthday of the Lord is very near; we have our fellow poor to feed.” Perler, however, argues very exhaustively that Augustine was not ordained bishop shortly before Christmas, but in May or June, 395. See *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, pp. 164-175.

9. The word of God.

10. Omitting, with the Maurists, *sic vivite*, live like this.

11. The scriptures.

12. This is now Augustine chipping in to the conversation between servant and master.

13. I here omit a phrase, *et calceas te*, and put on shoes.

14. The Maurists here conclude the sermon with the following alternative ending:

“... according to the text, *Those who sow in tears shall reap with joy* (Ps 26:5); and that other one, *Blessed are those who mourn, because they shall be comforted* (Mt 5:5).

“So let us pay more careful attention to all this, and give a thought to what is written about luxury and pleasure: *For a time*, it says, *she sweetens the gullet, but later on is found to be more bitter than gall* (Prv 5:3-4). And because our life in this age is acknowledged to be a sort of road, it is our business to proceed from toil to rest, rather than from rest to toil. And it is better for us to toil away on the road for a short time, so that we may later on happily arrive at eternal joy in the home country; this being granted us by our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father, etc.”

It all smacks slightly to me of the touch of Caesarius of Arles.

15. See Lk 16:19-31.

16. *Hoc est prandium*; literally, “This is the dinner.” But what does “this” refer to? Frangipane, in Migne’s supplement to Augustine’s works (PL 46, 966), infers that something has dropped out of the text. I prefer to construe *Hoc* as referring forward to what the preacher is about to describe. At first sight, however, it does look as if Augustine is saying that Lazarus’ dinner consists in the sight of the rich man’s torments.

17. The figure of speech known, I believe, as aposiopesis; or leaving unsaid what you intend to be understood. Though here it is not very clear what he did intend to be understood.

18. The answer to the question has evidently dropped out; as also, no doubt, the next question, “What is it you want to hear?” which in fact he now proceeds to answer. See Sermon 331, 3: “Eye hasn’t seen it, because it isn’t a color.”

19. This is not, perhaps, quite what *compendium* means; but it fits very well the figure which he goes on to employ.

20. From here to the end we just have a repetition of Sermon 40.

21. So the Maurists in Sermon 40. From “I should rather have said,” the Frangipane text runs as follows: “I should rather have said, Whoever you are, standing here, if indeed you are here, who have decided to put yourself right; still, let me speak like this as though to a single person.”

22. So the Maurists; Frangipane reads, “Are you perishing of hope? What does it mean, perishing of hope? This . . .”

23. So the Maurists; Frangipane reads, “As though you have done something, if . . .”

24. This sentence in the Maurists’ text is omitted by Frangipane.

25. Frangipane adds, “Don’t shrug me aside as a man having a birthday party; I’m speaking to you from scripture.”

26. The day he was “born” as bishop by being ordained; but so called, I imagine, on analogy with the custom of calling the anniversaries of martyrdoms the birthdays of the martyrs. This final little paragraph is missing from the text of Sermon 40.

27. When the passage from Ezekiel was read. Here Frangipane points out, in Migne’s supplement to Augustine’s works (PL 46, 970), that in Sermon 40 there had been no mention of a reading from Ezekiel, whereas here, in the earlier part of Sermon 339, there had been. From this he concludes

that the two properly go together as one sermon, as in the manuscript he was editing. It is a fair argument, but not, I think, absolutely compelling.

28. Like Ezekiel, he has done his duty, so he is free from his responsibility, he has "delivered (freed) his soul." He isn't being a burden to them; that is, it isn't his intention to be so. He is merely an instrument of the Lord's.

29. Of course, he means it is all these things. The Frangipane text omits this whole parenthesis.

SERMON 340

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS ORDINATION

Date: uncertain¹

*For you I am a bishop, with you I am a Christian;
the first means danger, the second salvation.*

1. From the moment this burden, about which such a difficult account has to be rendered, was placed on my shoulders, anxiety about the honor shown me has always indeed been haunting me. But this sort of consideration² troubles me much more when the anniversary brings back afresh the old memory of that day, and sets it before my very eyes in such a way, that I feel as though I were coming up today to receive what I have already received all that time ago. What, though, is to be dreaded in this office, if not that I may take more pleasure, which is so dangerous, in the honor shown me, than in what bears fruit in your salvation? Let me therefore have the assistance of your prayers, that the one who did not disdain to bear with me may also deign to bear my burden with me. When you pray like that, you are also praying for yourselves.³ This burden of mine, you see, about which I am now speaking, what else is it, after all, but you? Pray for strength for me, just as I pray that you may not be too heavy.

I mean, the Lord Jesus wouldn't have called his burden light,⁴ if he wasn't going to carry it together with its porter. But you too must all support me, so that according to the apostle's instructions we may *carry one another's burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ* (Gal 6:2). If he doesn't carry it with us, we collapse; if he doesn't carry us, we keel over and die.⁵ Where I'm terrified by what I am for you, I am given comfort by what I am with you. For you I am a bishop, with you, after all, I am a Christian. The first is the name of an office undertaken, the second a name of grace; that one means danger, this one salvation.⁶ Finally, as if in the open sea, I am being tossed about by the stormy activity involved in that one; but as I recall by whose blood I have been redeemed, I enter a safe harbor in the tranquil recollection of this one; and thus while toiling away at my own proper office, I take my rest in the marvelous benefit conferred on all of us in common.

So I hope the fact that I have been bought together with you gives me more pleasure than my having been placed at your head; then, as the Lord has

commanded, I will be more effectively your servant, and be preserved from ingratitude for the price by which I was bought to be, not too unworthily, your fellow servant.

How he can love freely, and still look for a reward

2. I am certainly obliged to love the redeemer, and I know what he said to Peter: *Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep* (Jn 21:16). This was said once, said again, said a third time. Love was being questioned, and toil commanded, because where the love is greater, the toil is less. *What shall I pay back to the Lord for all that he has paid back for me?* (Ps 116:12). If I say that what I am paying back is my herding his sheep, even here it is *not I who am doing it, but the grace of God with me* (1 Cor 15:10). So when can I be found to be paying him back, since he gets in first every time? And yet, because we⁷ love freely, because we are herding his sheep, we look for a reward.

How shall this be? How can “I love freely and that’s why I’m herding sheep” be consistent with “I request a reward, because I’m herding sheep”? This couldn’t possibly happen, in no way at all could a reward be sought from one who is loved freely, unless the reward were the very one who is being loved. I mean, if what we are paying back for his having redeemed us is our herding his sheep, what are we paying back for his having made us shepherds? Being bad shepherds, you see—which God preserve us from—is something we are by our own badness; whereas good shepherds—which God grant we may be⁸—is something we can only be by his grace.

The faithful asked to help him in his duties by prayer and obedience

3. So it is, my brothers and sisters, that *commanding we implore you not to receive the grace of God in vain* (2 Cor 6:1). Make my ministry fruitful. *You are God’s agriculture* (1 Cor 3:9); from the outside receive the work of the planter and the waterer; from the inside, though, that of the one who makes you grow.⁹ The turbulent have to be corrected, the faint-hearted cheered up, the weak supported;¹⁰ the gospel’s opponents need to be refuted, its insidious enemies guarded against; the unlearned need to be taught, the indolent stirred up, the argumentative checked; the proud must be put in their place, the desperate set on their feet, those engaged in quarrels reconciled; the needy have to be helped, the oppressed to be liberated, the good to be given your backing, the bad to be tolerated; all must be loved.

In all the vast and varied activity involved in fulfilling such manifold responsibilities, please give me your help by both your prayers and your obedience. In this way I will find pleasure not so much in being in charge of you as in being of use to you.¹¹

The bishop and the faithful should be praying for each other

4. Just as it is very proper for me to pray earnestly for God's mercy to bring you to salvation, so it is right that you too should be pouring out prayers to God for me. Nor should we judge this to be unsuitable, since we know that the apostle did it; so much indeed did he long to be recommended to God by their prayers, that he himself made his plea to every community with the words *Pray for us* (1 Th 5:25; 2 Th 3:1; Rom 15:30; Col 4:3). And that's why I should indeed be saying this, being able in this way both to encourage myself and instruct all of you. Just as I, you see, have to give thought with great fear and anxiety to how I may blamelessly carry out my duties as bishop; so you for your part must make a point of showing a humble and eager obedience to everything that is commanded you.

So let us pray together, dearly beloved, that my tenure as bishop may be of profit both to me and to you. It will profit me, if I tell you what has to be done; and you, if you do what you hear. You see, if we all pray tirelessly, I for you and you for me, with the perfect love of charity, we shall all happily attain, with the Lord's help, to eternal bliss. May he be graciously pleased to grant us this, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

NOTES

1. There is no indication of date. My instinct is to date it well on during Augustine's episcopate, to about 415.
2. Reading *hujusmodi consideratione* with the Maurists. A later edition reads *hujus molis consideratione*, by consideration of this load.
3. Reading *pro vobis* with the Maurists, instead of the *pro nobis*, for me, of the later edition; a meaningless tautology.
4. See Mt 11:30. The later edition leaves out the word "light."
5. A not very striking contrast is being made: *nobiscum si non portat, succumbimus; si nos non portat, occumbimus*.
6. A text quoted in Vatican II's document on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 32; in the chapter on the laity, curiously enough, not in that on the hierarchy and the bishops, where one would have thought it belongs.
7. He and Peter, and all bishops and priests, ideally speaking.
8. A contrast in the Latin between *quod a nobis absit* in the first parenthesis and *quod ab illo nobis adsit* in the second.
9. See 1 Cor 3:6.
10. See 1 Thes 5:14. These are things Paul is telling the Thessalonians to do; so Augustine is reminding his people that they have to share his pastoral burden of doing all these things as needed, for their fellow sheep.
11. *Vobis non tam praeesse quam prodesse*.

SERMON 340A

AT THE ORDINATION OF A BISHOP

Date: 411¹

A bishop should be the servant of his people, and ought above all to shun the sin of pride

1. Today my third sermon, since God was pleased to bring us to visit your graces, is being paid to you. But what you have heard during the last two days has been chiefly what directly concerns you. Today, on the other hand, by God's merciful gift a bishop is being ordained for you; and so what I am obliged to speak about is something by which I can give both encouragement to myself, and sound advice to him, and sound doctrine to you.

The man, you see, who presides over the people ought first of all to understand that he is the servant of many masters. And let him not disdain this role; let him not, I repeat, disdain to be the servant of many people, because the Lord of lords did not disdain to serve us. You will remember that from the dregs of the flesh a certain appetite for superiority, for being top dog, had crept in among the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, our apostles, and the fumes of conceit had begun to obscure their vision. As we can read in the gospel, in fact, *there arose a dispute among them, about which of them was to be the greatest* (Lk 9:46). The Lord, however, present as the doctor, lanced this tumor of theirs. When he saw what vice this dispute arose from, he said to them, placing small children in front of himself, *Unless a person becomes like this child, he shall not enter the kingdom of heaven* (Mt 18:3).² What he was drawing their attention to in the child was humility.

Not that he wanted his followers to have the sort of minds children have, seeing that the apostle says in another place, *Do not become children in mind. But be babies in vice, in such a way that you are adults in sense* (1 Cor 14:20). Now pride is a great vice, and the first of vices, the beginning, origin and cause of all sins. It's what cast down an angel and made him into the devil. Pride was the cup, which on being cast down he gave the man, still standing up, to drink. He hoisted up into pride one who had been created to the image of God;³ already unworthy to be so, precisely because he was proud. He envied him, and persuaded him to ignore the law of God, and enjoy his very own power. And how did he persuade him? *If you eat*, he said, *you shall be like gods* (Gn 3:5). He had

been made a man, he wished to be a god. He grabbed at what he wasn't, lost what he was. Not that he lost human nature, but he lost both present and future bliss. He lost the place he was to be elevated to, deceived by the one who had been cast down from there.

The reading from 1 Timothy: "Not a new convert, in case being lifted up in pride he should fall into the judgment of the devil"

2. That's why the apostle Paul, after mentioning, among other things in the reading we heard when it was read just now, the virtues required of a bishop, also added this: *Not a new convert, in case being lifted up in pride he should fall into the judgment of the devil* (1 Tm 3:6). What's into the judgment of the devil? It doesn't mean he is to be judged by the devil, but that he is to be condemned with the devil. The devil, after all, won't be our judge; but because he himself fell through pride, and because the one who has become godless on account of pride will be condemned to everlasting fire. He⁴ is to consider carefully, he is saying, to whom a position of eminence is given in the Church, in case the person being lifted up in pride should fall into the judgment into which the devil fell.

So when the Lord was addressing the apostles, and confirming them in holy humility, after setting the example of the child before them he said, *Whoever wishes to be the greater among you will be your servant* (Mk 10:44). There you are, that's why I didn't do my brother, your future bishop, any wrong when I desired and admonished him to be your servant. Well, if I did do him wrong, I did it to myself first; I mean, I'm not just anyone talking about being a bishop, I'm a bishop talking about it; and the advice and warning I'm giving him I am also afraid of myself, and I call to mind what the holy apostle said about himself: *I do not run as though uncertain where to; I do not fight as though beating the air; but I chastise my body, and bring it into servitude, in case by any chance, while preaching to others, I myself should be found to be disqualified* (1 Cor 9:26-27).

In what ways the bishop, being set over the people, is their servant

3. So, to put it in a nutshell, we are your servants; your servants, but also your fellow servants. We are your servants, but all of us here have one Lord and master. We are your servants, but in Jesus, as the apostle says: *ourselves, though, your servants through Jesus* (2 Cor 4:5). Through him we are servants, slaves, and through him we are also free; he said himself, after all, to those who believed in him, *If the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed* (Jn 8:36). So shall I hesitate to become a slave through him, seeing that unless I had become a free man through him, I would have remained in a hopeless slavery? We have been put in charge, and we are slaves; we are in authority, but only if we are of use.⁵

So let us see in what way the bishop who has been put in charge is a servant. In the same way as the Lord himself. Because when he said to his apostles,

Whoever wishes to be the greater among you shall be your servant, he immediately reassured them, in case human pride should be indignant at being branded with the name of slave, and offered himself as an example, to encourage them to accept his orders. *Whoever among you wishes to be the greater shall be your servant*. But notice how: *just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve* (Mk 10:44-45).

Let's inquire what service he performed. If we look at material services, we notice that his disciples served him; in fact he used to send them to buy food, to prepare food. At any rate, it's written in the gospel, when the day of his passion was approaching, his disciples said to him, *Lord, where do you wish us to prepare for you to eat the passover?* (Mk 14:12). And he tells them where to prepare it; and off they go, and prepare and serve it. So what does he mean when he says, *just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve?* Listen to what follows: *He did not come*, he says, *to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a redemption for many* (Mk 10:45).

There you have how the Lord served; there you have the sort of servants he commanded us to be. He gave his life as a redemption for many. He redeemed us. Which of us is fit to redeem anybody? It is indeed by his blood, by his death that we have been redeemed from death, by his humility that when we were flat on our backs we have been set on our feet. But we too for our part ought to do our little bit for his members, because we have become his members; he the head, we are the body. Finally, the apostle John urges us in his letter to follow the example of the Lord, who had said, *Whoever wishes to be the greater among you shall be your servant; just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a redemption for many*; he says, then, *Christ laid down his life for us; in the same way we too ought to lay down our lives for the brethren* (1 Jn 3:16).

The Lord himself too, speaking after the resurrection, said, *Peter, do you love me? He answered, I do*. This he said three times, this was the answer the other gave three times; and all three times the Lord added, *Feed my sheep* (Jn 21:15-17). How will you show me that you love me, except by feeding my sheep? What benefit are you going to bestow on me by loving me, seeing that you look for everything from me? So then you have something you can do out of love for me: *Feed my sheep*. This once, and yet again, and a third time. *Do you love me? I do. Feed my sheep*. Three times, you see, he had denied out of fear; three times he confessed his love. Next, after the Lord had commended his sheep to him for a third time, as he answered with a confession of his love, thus condemning and blotting out his fear, he went on straightaway to add, *When you were a young man, you used to gird yourself and go where you liked; but when you have grown older, another will gird you and carry you where you do not like. Now he said this to signify by what death he was going to glorify God* (Jn 21:18-19). He prophesied his cross to him, he foretold to him his passion. So it was pointing in that direction that the Lord said, *Feed my sheep*: suffer for my sheep.

A bishop only in name is not really a bishop

4. That's what a good bishop should be like; if he isn't like that, he won't be a bishop.⁶ What good does it do a miserable man, being called Felix, or Lucky? If you notice some unfortunate man begging, who's called Lucky, and you say to him, "Come here, Lucky; go away, Lucky; get up, Lucky; sit down, Lucky"; and he with all these words whirling round him remains always unlucky—it's something similar to that when he's called a bishop, and isn't one really. What does the honor of the name confer on him, but an aggravation of his crime? But who's the sort of bishop who's called one, and isn't one really? The one who enjoys his status more than the welfare and salvation of God's flock, who at this pinnacle of the ministry *seeks his own advantage, not that of Jesus Christ* (Phil 2:21). He's called a bishop, but he isn't a bishop; it's an empty name for him.

And you can see people constantly using no other word. Have you seen the bishop? Have you greeted the bishop? Where do you come from? From the bishop's. Where are you going? To the bishop's. So in order for him to be what he's called, let him listen, not to me, but with me. Let us both listen together, as fellow pupils in the same school let us learn from the one master, Christ, whose professorial chair is in heaven, precisely because his cross was first of all on earth. He it was who taught us the way of humility; coming down from heaven to go up again later; visiting those who were laid low in the depths, and raising up those who were willing to join him.

Can you drink the cup of humiliation which I am going to drink?

5. Finally, get the message in the clearest possible terms. Two of his disciples, the brothers, the sons of Zebedee, John and James, longed even more than the others to enjoy his sublime position, and they said to him through their mother, because they were ashamed to ask themselves; they sent her along to express their desires: *Lord, she said, arrange that in your kingdom one son of mine may sit on your right, the other on your left. And the Lord said to them—not to her—You do not know what you are asking for. And he added, Can you drink the cup which I am going to drink?* (Mt 20:21-22). Which cup, if not the one about which he says as he draws near to his passion, *Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me* (Mt 26:39). *Can you*, he says, *drink the cup which I am going to drink?* And straightaway, greedy for the glory, forgetting their feebleness, they say, *We can. And he said, My cup indeed you shall drink; but to sit at my right hand or my left is not mine to give you; it has been prepared for others by my Father* (Mt 20:23).

For whom has it been prepared, if it hasn't been prepared for the disciples? Who will be sitting there, if the apostles won't be?⁷ It has been prepared for others, not for you; for others, not for the proud. And he gave them a good example of humility himself, when he said, *It has been prepared for others by my Father*; while he was preparing it himself, of course, he said it was prepared by his Father, to avoid even here any appearance of arrogance, and of not building them up toward humility, which was the reason he was saying all this.

I mean, the Father doesn't prepare anything that the Son doesn't prepare, nor does the Son prepare anything the Father doesn't prepare; seeing that he says himself, *I and the Father are one* (Jn 10:30); that he also says, *Whatever the Father does, that the Son also does likewise* (Jn 5:19).

A teacher of humility both by word and deed. By word, in fact, from the beginning of creation he never kept quiet about it, teaching the human race humility by angels, by prophets. He also deigned to teach it by his own example. Our creator came humbly, to be created among us; the one who made us, who was himself made for our sakes; God before all time, man in time, in order to set man free from time. The great doctor came to heal our swollen condition. From the east as far as the west the human race was lying there like one great big invalid, and was requiring a great physician. This physician first sent his lads, and came himself later on, when some were despaired of. Just as a doctor too sends his lads, when there's something simple to be done; when there's great danger, he comes himself. In the same sort of way the human race was very dangerously ill, caught up in all sorts of vices, especially the one flowing from the source of pride; and that's why he came to cure this pride by his own example.

Be ashamed, man, of still continuing to be proud, you on whose account God humbled himself. God would have humbled himself very considerably if he had only been born for your sake; he was prepared even to die for you. So there he was on the cross, as a man, when his Jewish persecutors were wagging their heads in front of the cross, and saying, *If he is the Son of God, let him come down from the cross, and we can believe in him* (Mk 15:29-32). But he was keeping hold of his humility; that's why he didn't come down. He hadn't lost his power, but he was giving a demonstration of patience. I mean, just think about his effectiveness and his might, and see how easily he could have come down from the cross, seeing that he was able to rise from the grave. But if you were not to be given a demonstration of humility, of patience, then you should not be given a command about them; if however, you were to be given a command about them in words, then they were also to be demonstrated and commended to you by example.

This then is what we should pay attention to in the Lord; let us mark his humility, let us drink the cup of his humiliation, let us constrict ourselves to his limits, let us meditate on him. It's easy enough to think about grandeur, easy enough to enjoy honors, easy enough to give our ears to yes-men and flatterers. To put up with abuse, to listen patiently to reproaches, to pray for the insolent, that is the Lord's cup, that is sharing the Lord's table. *Have you been invited by a greater personage? Consider that you are obliged to prepare the same kind of thing* (Prv 32:1, LXX).

What desiring the good work of being a bishop really means

6. When the apostle was describing the ideal bishop, this is what he put first: *Whoever desires the office of bishop, is setting his heart on a good work* (1 Tm

3:1). Now what is this? Is it as if he was inflaming everyone with a desire for the office of bishop, and does it mean that the more ambitious will be better than the modest, and those who claim for themselves even what is not their due with a kind of arrogance, will be better than those who shrink even from what is their due with trepidation? Perish the thought, that's not what it is; that's not what he taught, that we should scheme ambitiously to get a bishopric. But pay close attention to what he did say, if I can explain what I think. The apostle's meaning is lucidly clear to people of good sense, foggy and obscure to the proud and ambitious.

So this is what the apostle said: *Whoever desires the office of bishop, is setting his heart on a good work.* Desiring the office of bishop is not desiring the office of bishop; it is setting your heart on a good work.

But doesn't he want to be a bishop, the one who doesn't do a good work, but his own work?

This man doesn't desire the office of bishop. It's what I was saying a moment ago; he's seeking the name, not the real thing.

"I want to be a bishop; oh, if only I were a bishop!"

Would that you were! Are you seeking the name, or the real thing? If it's the real thing you're seeking, you are setting your heart on a good work. If it's the name you're seeking, you can have it even with a bad work, but with a worse punishment.

So what shall we say? Are there bad bishops? Perish the thought, there aren't any; yes, I have the nerve, the gall to say, there are no bad bishops; because if they are bad, they aren't bishops. You are calling me back again to the name, and saying, "He is a bishop, because he is seated on the bishop's throne." And a straw scarecrow is guarding the vineyard.

Better for a bishop to have neither wife nor children

7. He also said among other things, *the husband of one wife* (1 Tm 3:2); but how much better if of none!⁸ Progress has to be made, he said, to the extent of not more than one; but it would be much better if he didn't even have one wife. *Having children who are compliant*; that is, if he has any, that he should have compliant ones; not that he should make an effort to have children if he hasn't got any. You see, he was recommending discipline over the children, for the good management of the household: *Since how will a man, who does not know how to control his own household, have the necessary concern for the Church of God?* (1 Tm 3:4-5). They are the apostle's words.

And how will a bishop be without children, if he is a good bishop? In any event, your bishop in the name of Christ, assisted by the grace of Christ, has decided not to have children according to the flesh,⁹ in order to have children according to the spirit. So it is your business to comply properly with his wishes, properly to obey him, to serve him with appropriate service; and then he will have children who are compliant—so many for just a few, heavenly ones for earthly ones, and instead of heirs, fellow heirs with him.

*Those who fawn on the bishop are a greater menace
than those who curse him and speak ill of him*

8. We have been speaking about good bishops and about bad bishops; we have said what we ought to be, and what we should avoid. But what about you, my dear people of God? There's something for you to think about too. It is our dearest wish, after all, that you should be built on the rock, to rise as a temple for God, fit to receive God; that your hope should not waver in uncertainty, but be placed firmly on a solid foundation. Whatever sort of bishops we may be, you ought to be without anxiety. Yes of course it's good for us that as good leaders we ought really to be, and not merely be called, bishops; that's good for us, because a great reward is promised to such leaders. But if we are not like that, but are bad bishops (which God forbid), and have sought our dignity and honor for our own sakes, and neglected God's commandments, and have never cared tuppence for your salvation, greater punishments await us than the rewards which have been promised. But God preserve us from this, and you must pray for us; the loftier our station, you see, the greater our peril.

I'm thinking more, you see, about the account we shall have to give about the compliance and respect people show us, than about the slanders they smear us with. Many people fawn on us, many speak ill of us and revile us. The ones who fawn on us put us in greater danger than the ones who revile us. The bowing and scraping of people, after all, tickles our pride, while their slanders and abuse give our patience exercise; on the one side I fear a fall, on the other I am strengthened and fortified. *Do not dread*, says one of God's servants to me, *the insults of men* (Is 51:7); and the Lord Jesus Christ says, *Blessed shall you be, when people curse you, and speak every kind of evil against you, falsely, on my account*—because if any speak evil and speak the truth, they are not in fact speaking evil, because they are speaking the truth; but they speak evil when they speak falsely. But what did the Lord promise us? *Rejoice and exult, because your reward is abundant in heaven* (Mt 5:11-12). The person who speaks ill of me increases my wages; the one who flatters me is trying to reduce my wages. But what am I to say, brothers and sisters? In order to get an increase in our wages, ought we to opt for you all to speak ill of us? We certainly don't want our wages to be increased as a result of any evil on your part. Speak well of us, comply with our wishes; let us be put in peril, provided you do not suffer a cut in wages.

So, what if the people get involved with a bad bishop? The Lord, and bishop of bishops,¹⁰ has given you security, so that your hope should not rest in man. Look, I'm speaking to you as a bishop in the name of the Lord; what I'm really like, I don't know; how much less do you! Well, what I may be at the present moment, I can, after a fashion, perceive; what I'm going to be some time or other, how can I know that? Rather as Peter was too sure of himself, and Peter was shown up to himself; the sick man was unaware of himself, but he didn't escape the doctor's notice. He said—he was so sure of himself, he even dared to make a promise—*I am with you to the death* (Lk 22:33); *I will lay down my life for you* (Jn 13:37). And that doctor, taking his pulse, *You will lay down*, said

he, your life for me? Amen I tell you, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times (Jn 13:38).

Do what they say; do not do what they do

9. And so may the Lord grant, with your prayers assisting us, that we may be, and may persevere to the end in being, what you wish us to be, all those of you who wish us well, and what he wishes us to be, the one who called us and appointed us; may he help us to be what he appointed us to be. But whatever we may be, don't let your hope rest on us. I readily disparage myself, to speak like this as a bishop; I want to rejoice over you, not to be puffed up over you. Absolutely, if I find any people placing their hope in me, I don't congratulate them for it; they are to be corrected, not confirmed in their attitude; to be changed, not fixed in it. If I can't warn them off it, I grieve about it; but if I can warn them off, I no longer grieve about it. Just as now I am speaking in the name of Christ to the people of God, speaking in the Church of God, speaking as whatever kind of servant I may be of God; don't let your hopes rest on us, don't let your hopes rest on men. We are good, we are ministers; we are bad, we are ministers. But if we are good, we are faithful ministers, really and truly ministers.

Pay attention to what we administer; if you're all hungry, and don't wish to be ungrateful, notice from whose pantry you are provided for. If you are eagerly longing to eat it, don't let it bother you what sort of dish it is set before you in. *In the great house of a gentleman, there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of earthenware* (2 Tm 2:20). It's a silver vessel, a golden vessel, an earthenware vessel; what you have to consider is whether it contains bread, and whose bread this is, by whose gift it is being served you. He's the one you must fix your attention on, the one I'm talking about, the one by whose gift this bread is being served to you. He himself is the bread; *I am the living bread, who have come down from heaven* (Jn 6:51).

So we are ministering Christ to you for Christ's sake, ministering him under him, so that he may reach you, and he may be the judge of our ministry. If the bishop's a thief, you're never going to be told from this apse,¹¹ "Commit theft"; but the only thing you are going to be told is "Do not commit theft." That, you see, is what he receives from the Lord's pantry. If he wants to say anything else, you will reject him and say, "This doesn't come from the Lord's pantry; you're saying to me what is your own; *The one who speaks a lie is speaking from what is his own* (Jn 8:44).¹² So let him tell you, in accordance with God, "Don't commit theft, or adultery, or murder"; let him tell you in accordance with God to fear, not to be conceited, to turn away from love of the world, to place your hope in the Lord. Let him tell you these things in accordance with God. If he doesn't practice them himself, what's that to you? Christ is the Lord your God, he has given you reassurance: *The scribes, he said, and the Pharisees, representing those in authority, have taken their seat on the chair of Moses; whatever they say, do; but what they do, do not do; for they say, and do not do* (Mt 23:3).

What are you going to say to that? How are you going to excuse yourself at the judgment of Christ? Are you going to say, "The reason I acted badly was that I saw my bishop not leading a good life"?

You will get the answer, "You have chosen for yourself someone to be condemned with, not someone to be set free with. You have imitated him leading a bad life; why did you prefer to imitate him, rather than to listen to me through him? After all, hadn't I said to you in my gospel, that when you see bad people in authority, you should do what they say, but not do what they do? You should listen to me through them, and then you wouldn't perish through them."

Explanation of the text, "Do they gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?"

10. So if bad men too can say good things, let us now again answer Christ, and say, for the sake of learning, not just to pick holes or find fault: "Lord, if bad men can say good things, which is why you have warned and commanded us with the words, *What they say, do, but what they do, do not do*; so if bad people can say good things, how is it that you say in another place, *Hypocrites, you cannot speak good things, since you are bad* (Mt 12:34)?" Observe the knot, until with his help you can perceive how to untie it. Let me put the problem again. Christ says, *What they say, do; but what they do, do not do; for they say and do not do*. So why, if not because they say good things and do bad things? And that's why we ought to do what they say; what they do we ought not to do. Elsewhere, *Do they gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Every tree is known by its fruit* (Mt 7:16; Lk 6:44).

So where are we, how are we to comply? How are we to understand? Look, they're brambles, they're thorns.

"Granted."

You are bidding me gather grapes from thorns; in one place you bid me do it, in another you forbid me; how am I to comply?

"Listen, understand. When I say, *What they say, do; but what they do, do not do*, pay attention to what I say first: *They have taken their seat on the chair of Moses*, I said. When they say good things, it's not themselves saying it, but the chair of Moses." He put chair for doctrine; not that it's the chair speaking, but the doctrine of Moses; it's in their memory, not in their works. But when they say something, when they speak for themselves, that is, when they speak from what is their own, what do they hear? *How can you speak good things, since you are bad?*

Because here's another comparison for you to consider. Don't gather grapes from thorns; after all it's impossible for grapes to be produced from thorns. But haven't you noticed a vine shoot getting into a hedge as it grows, and entwining itself in the thorns, and putting forth buds among the thorns, and producing bunches of grapes? You're hungry, and you're walking past, and you see a bunch hanging among the thorns; you don't do anything, you don't pick it. You're hungry and you want to pick it. Pick it then; stretch out your hand carefully and attentively; beware of the thorns, pick the fruit. In the same way too, when a

bad or worthless man speaks the teaching of Christ to you, listen to it, accept it, don't ignore it. If he's a bad man, the thorns are his; if he says good things, it's that bunch hanging among the thorns, it isn't growing from the thorns.

So then, if you're hungry, pick it, but watch out for the thorns. You see, if you begin to imitate his deeds while gladly listening to him, you have been careless in stretching out your hand; you've encountered the thorns before reaching the fruit. You emerge wounded, you emerge scratched and torn. The fruit coming from the grape is now no use to you, but the thorns, springing from their own proper root, are doing you damage. Notice, I mean, to avoid being misled, where you've picked the fruit from; it's a vine branch. Keep your eyes on the branch, and see how it belongs to the vine, comes from the vine, proceeds from the vine, but encounters the thorns. So the vine doesn't have to draw back its branches, does it? In the same way too the doctrine of Christ, as it has grown and made progress, has entwined itself with good trees, entwined itself with bad thorns. It is spoken by the good, spoken by the bad. It's for you to notice where the fruit comes from, where what feeds you springs from, and where what pricks you springs from. They are mixed together in public appearance, but distinct from each other in their roots.

The error of the Donatists arose from precisely this sort of situation

11. But now, my brothers and sisters, please pay particular attention to this point, as I say something too about the cause of our keener sorrow; pay attention to the reason why our brothers¹³ separated themselves from us. Let them tell us why.

“There were bad bishops.”

They were seated in their chairs of office, seated on the chairs of Christ, they were in the unity of Christ. They themselves were bad;¹⁴ what you should do is what the Lord commanded: *Do what they say, but do not do what they do* (Mt 23:3). Why have you separated yourself from the chair of Christ? If a pestilential man has been seated in it, you should listen through him, not imitate him. All the same, can you prove it, when you say a pestilential man was sitting there? I, on the other hand, can prove that you are a pestilential man, seeing you have abandoned the chair of Christ. What you say is hidden; what I say I can prove.

Your separation condemns you, your division condemns you.¹⁵ We were all bought together, one price was paid to acquire us; the register of the price paid for us is constantly recited, the instrument of our purchase is the holy gospel. I open it, I read. What do I open? What do I read? Where we were bought, where we are brothers and fellow servants, where we have been established in unity. Christ, you see, did not keep quiet about what he bought, in case anybody should take his possession away from him, and substitute a strange one for it. He certainly didn't keep quiet about what he bought. Open the register, read; instruments were drawn up, he didn't make a purchase without having it in writing, he foresaw the pettifogging objections that would be raised in the future; what can be read is to be trusted. Well now, it's being read; notice who it's

written by, notice who's speaking, who's taking it down. He was the one speaking, it was the apostles taking it down. They left it to us all written down. So let us read the instrument of purchase, brothers;¹⁶ why should we quarrel? What if the register of our Lord, our purchaser, should relieve us of all grounds for quarrelling? You say the Church of Christ is to be found among Africans and in Africa;¹⁷ I say the Church of Christ is to be found spread throughout all nations. There you have the essence of the question, there you have what the dispute between brothers is about. You are suing for a part; you are suing in order to stay with that part. I am opposing you, so that you may possess the whole.

Try to understand what a harmonious lawsuit is like, accept the idea of a lawsuit of charity. I'm not saying to you, "You've been beaten; clear out." From the very beginning, after all, our Lord Jesus Christ has disapproved of people dividing the inheritance. You remember, when he was proclaiming the truth among all sorts of people, someone from the crowd said, *Lord, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.* And the Lord, who had no wish to ratify division, who had come to establish unity—we heard, after all, just this moment in the gospel about that unity: *I have other sheep who are not of this sheepfold; I must bring them along too, so that there may be one flock and one shepherd* (Jn 10:16)—so the Lord, who loved unity, hated division, said to that man, *Tell me, man, who set me up as a divider of the inheritance between you? What I say to you is, beware of every kind of greed* (Lk 12:13-15). He had no wish to be a divider of the inheritance; he had come to gather Unity¹⁸ together, to give us one inheritance throughout all countries.

Let the instruments of his inheritance be read; let them be read, as I had started to say. He rose from the dead, he showed himself to his disciples, not only to be seen, but even to be touched and handled. *Feel*, he said, *and see that a spirit does not have bones and flesh as you can see that I have.* They had thought he was a spirit, you see, not a body; a phantom, not the reality. *And since they were still wondering for joy, he said to them, Did you not know that while I was still with you I told you these things, that it was necessary for all the things to be fulfilled that have been written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms about me?* (Lk 24:39-44).

"What's that? What has been written about him in the law and the prophets and the psalms?"

Listen. *That it was necessary for the Christ to suffer* (Lk 24:46).

"I believe that," he says.

And very properly so, brothers and sisters. Pay attention to the rest. I'm reading the Lord's register, the instrument, or rather the testament of our inheritance; let's read, let's understand; why are we in dispute? Look, I'll read it; listen to the rest. *It was necessary for the Christ to suffer.* Do you believe that along with me?

"I do," he says.

And to rise again from the dead on the third day. Do you believe that along with me?

“I certainly do.”

Believe the rest too, and there’s an end to discord.

“What’s left in the rest?”

And for repentance and the forgiveness of sins to be preached in his name throughout all nations, with you beginning from Jerusalem (Lk 24:47).

There you have what I read; that’s the Church of Christ. *Throughout all nations, with you beginning from Jerusalem.* Hold on to her along with me, and you will eliminate all discord. If you are not in her, you will be in a part. It’s to your own loss that you win the lawsuit, to your own gain that you lose it. Acknowledge that you have lost it, and along with me you will hold her, spread throughout all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. The Lord’s register is read, the Lord’s gospel speaks. Why object against me that I burnt this register?¹⁹ Who ought really to be considered to have burnt it; the one who obeyed it, or the one who ignored it? Whoever it was that burnt it, from wherever it was that it was handed over, let us read it, listen to it, put it into practice; let us come to a settlement; let us leave the past to the past; let us leave passing things to those who have passed away.

An incident at the conference between Catholic and Donatist bishops in Carthage in June, 411

12. Their spokesman, their defender, in the middle of our conference cried out in his difficulties, “Cause cannot prejudice cause, nor person person.” Caecilian sinned; or rather, Caecilian didn’t sin, but just suppose that Caecilian did sin.²⁰ Now listen carefully to your defender: “Neither cause nor person can prejudice cause or person.” A single person wouldn’t prejudice a single person; and he will prejudice the ends of the earth? He will prejudice the inheritance of Christ reaching out through all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem? Caecilian sinned; does that mean that Christ lied? And yet in fact Caecilian did not sin; you, though, do not wish to be a good Christian.

What have I got to do with a man? This is the point I was talking to you about, the point I was trying to make for your benefit. My hope doesn’t rest in Caecilian, I haven’t placed my hope in a man. If Caecilian was a good man, I congratulate a good brother; if he was a bad man, I certainly am not the judge of a brother’s hidden faults. So putting aside for a moment, with all due respect, Caecilian and his memory, I appeal to my Lord, I appeal to Christ against my brother.²¹ Not like that other man; I don’t say to him, *Lord, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me* (Lk 12:13). What I say is, “Lord, tell my brother to keep the inheritance with me.” So my appeal to the Lord against my brother is not in fact against my brother but for my brother. I don’t want him disinherited, I don’t want to possess the inheritance alone. You see, I know that what I possess will not become a negligible quantity if many others possess it with me. What I possess is called charity,²² which expands all the more, the greater the number of its possessors.

NOTES

1. This date has been fixed by Morin and Kunzelmann. Perler dates it even more precisely to the end of the year. Morin has established the particular occasion and place—though not to the satisfaction of Lambot, it seems, who considers that the sermon was preached, at this time indeed, at Bizerta—Hippo Diarrhytus. But Dom Morin argues that it was preached at the ordination of a certain Antony (or Antoninus) as bishop of Fussala; and thus marks the beginning of a long and sad story. For the details of it, see F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, 230-231, and O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, 303, 370-373.

In brief, Fussala was a small town or large village, a *castellum*, in Augustine's diocese of Hippo Regius, recently won back from Donatism, where Augustine wished to install a Punic-speaking bishop. The man he had chosen backed down at the last minute; and as the senior bishop of the province of Numidia had already arrived for the ordination, Augustine put forward a young lector of his, this same Antony or Antoninus, who was, he thought, well qualified.

Unfortunately, it turned out that he wasn't; not, at least, as regards his morals. He behaved abominably, rather like Jeroboam the son of Solomon. A local synod in Hippo Regius deposed him, but he appealed to the Holy See, and was at first successful. Augustine gives a full account of the sorry affair in Letter 209, written some eleven years later. So in reading this sermon, one is constantly struck by the ghastly irony of so much that the preacher is saying.

2. Here I am more convinced than ever that Augustine and his Church—or some of the churches in his diocese—were using a harmony of the gospels. The quotation from Matthew caps one from Luke, and is quoted in a form differing from Matthew's actual text, a form influenced by the parallel passages in Mark and Luke.

3. See Gn 1:26-28.

4. Timothy.

5. *Praesumus, sed si prosumus*.

6. The meaning of the word *episcopus*, though Greek, was doubtless more immediately obvious to Augustine's hearers than that of the word "bishop" is to us; it means a supervisor, superintendent, one who watches over people; a guardian, therefore.

7. See Mt 19:28.

8. Clerical celibacy was not yet the rule in the Churches of the West; but what Augustine says here shows how strong the movement, the pressure toward it already was.

9. This, because the lector Antonius was a member of Augustine's little monastic community of clergy in Hippo Regius.

10. For a similar expression see 1 Pt 2:25.

11. *De exedra ista*; one would have expected *de cathedra ista*, from this chair. But Augustine, of course, not being any longer the local bishop, wouldn't have been seated in the *cathedra*. *Exedra* in Greek originally seems to have meant a place where you sit outside—a veranda, porch, or stoop; then any place with seats in it for sitting and talking; so in this context the apse, where the clergy were seated round the bishop.

12. In the text quoted Jesus is in fact talking about the devil, not making a general statement.

13. The Donatists.

14. He is granting this, simply for the sake of argument. He certainly did not admit it about the bishops, Caecilian of Carthage and others, against whom the Donatists leveled their main charge.

15. *Te punit* in each case. To translate this as "condemns you" instead of "punishes you" is to take something of a liberty, unsupported by Messrs. Lewis & Short; but one which seems called for by the context.

16. He is still addressing the (absent) Donatists.

17. Not the whole continent, but its northwest corner and the inhabitants of that region, roughly from Tripolitania westward.

18. Here, I think, being used as a name for the Catholic Church.

19. He is now speaking in the name of the Church, and referring to the original Donatist accu-

sation that some Catholic bishops had handed over the sacred books—the gospels above all—to the persecuting authorities in the great persecution of 303-313; that they had as good as burnt them themselves by handing them over to be burnt. The lawsuit between Catholics and Donatists he is talking about is primarily the one being brought before the judgment seat of Christ, in which Augustine is putting the Catholic case from scripture. But there is presumably a clear undertone of reference to the great conference at Carthage, presided over by the imperial commissioner Marcellinus, which had ended only a few months before, with the judgment going, of course, in favor of the Catholics.

20. Caecilian was the original Catholic bishop of Carthage, elected in 310, whose alleged sin the Donatists made the excuse for their schism. Now about 90 years later a kind of sub-schism broke out within their ranks, so that for several years there were two rival Donatist bishops of Carthage. But the party of the principal one, Primian, was quite willing to receive back any erring sheep from the other party, that of Maximian, without any question of the rebaptism they insisted on bestowing on any Catholics who joined them. It was this "cause," and these "personalities" that Augustine was casting in their teeth at the 411 Conference. See F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, 85-86.

21. The Donatist brother this time.

22. Yet another of his names for the Church.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Abbreviations of Names

(B)	Anne Marie La Bonnardière	(M)	Christine Mohrmann
(Ba)	Tarcisius van Bavel	(Maur)	Maurists
(Be)	Bonifatius Fischer (Beuron)	(Me)	Frits van der Meer
(D)	Michel Denis	(Mo)	Paul Monceau
(DB)	Donatien De Bruyne	(Mor)	Germain Morin
(Ét)	Raymond Étaix	(P)	Othmar Perler
(F)	Georges Folliet	(Po)	Suzanne Poque
(K)	Adalbert Kunzelmann	(V)	Pierre-Patrick Verbraken
(L)	Cyrille Lambot	(W)	André Wilmart

Abbreviations of Works

CCL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout-Paris, 1953)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna, 1866)
MA	<i>Miscellanea Agostiniana</i> (2 vols.; Rome, 1930-31). The first volume is <i>Sermones post Maurinos reperti</i> , ed. G. Morin
NBA	Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice)
PL	Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1878-90)
PLS	Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum, ed. A. Hamann (Paris, 1957)
PW	<i>Paulys Realencyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , new ed. by G. Wissowa et al. (Stuttgart, 1893).
RB	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i> (Maredsous, 1884).
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SPM	Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia 1 (= C. Lambot, <i>S. Aurelii Augustini Sermones selecti duodeviginti</i>) (Utrecht, 1950).

Short Titles of Frequently Cited Works

Borgomeo	<i>L'Eglise P. Borgomeo, L'Eglise de ce temps dans la prédication de saint Augustin</i> (Paris, 1972)
Mohrmann	<i>Études C. Mohrmann, Études sur le latin des chrétiens I</i> (Rome, 1958); II (Rome, 1961)
Mohrmann	<i>Sondersprache C. Mohrmann, Die altchristliche Sondersprache in den Sermones des hl. Augustinus I. Einführung, Lexikologie, Wortbildung</i> (Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva 3; Nijmegen, 1932)
Pontet	<i>L'exégèse M. Pontet, L'exégèse de saint Augustin prédicateur</i> (Théologie 7; Paris, 1946)
Poque	<i>Augustin d'Hippone S. Poque (ed.), Augustin d'Hippone. Sermons pour la Paque</i> (SC 116; Paris, 1966)
Verbraken	<i>Études P.-P. Verbraken, Études critiques sur les sermons authentiques de saint Augustin</i> (Instrumenta Patristica 12; Steenbrugge-The Hague, 1976)

Nr.	Theme	Date	Edition
306	Martyrs of Massa Candida	August 18	PL 38:1400-1405
306/A	Martyrs of Massa Candida	August 18, 405/411	Morin 14 MA 1:645-646 PLS 2:693-694
306/B	St. Quadratus Rom 6:19	August 21 c. 399 (K, Be)	Denis 18 MA 1:90-97
306/C	St. Quadratus Mt 16:25	August 21 c. 396/397	Morin 15 MA 1:646-653 PLS 2:694-700
306/D	St. Quadratus Ps 25:7-8	August 21	Lambot 8 RB 50 (1938) 16-20 PLS 2:785-788
307	Beheading of John the Baptist	August 29 or December 27 c. 414-415	PL 38:1406-1407
308	Beheading of John the Baptist	August 29 or December 27	PL 38:1408-1410
308/A	Saint Cyprian Ps 131:17-18	September 13, 397/400	Denis 11 MA 1:43-50
309	Saint Cyprian	September 14	PL 38:1410-1412
310	Saint Cyprian	September 14	PL 38:1412-1414
311	Saint Cyprian	September 14, 401/405	PL 38:1414-1420
312	Saint Cyprian	September 14 c. 417 (K, Be, P)	PL 38:1420-1423
313	Saint Cyprian	September 14	PL 38:1423-1425
313/A	Saint Cyprian	September 14 c. 400/401	Denis 14 MA 1:65-70
313/B	Saint Cyprian	September 14 c. 400/401	Denis 15 MA 1:70-74
313/C	Saint Cyprian	September 14, 396/397 403 (P)	Guelfer. 26 MA 1:529-531 PLS 2:609-611
313/D	Saint Cyprian	September 14	Guelfer. 27 MA 1:531-535 PLS 2:611-615
313/E	Saint Cyprian	September 14, 410 (K)	Guelfer. 28 MA 1:535-543 PLS 2:615-622
313/F	Saint Cyprian Ps 51:10	September 14, 397/400	Denis 22 MA 1:133-135
313/G	Saint Eulalia	December 10, 410/412	Morin 2 MA 1:594-595 PLS 2:660-662
314	St. Stephen	December 26 before 425 (K, Be)	PL 38:1425-1426
315	St. Stephen	Easter Season 416-417 (K) December 26 (L) 416-417 (Be)	PL 38:1426-1431
316	St. Stephen	December 26 (L) Easter Season c. 425 (K)	PL 38:1431-1434
317	St. Stephen	424-425	Maur + Wilmart 21 - Casinen. I, 144-146 PL 38:1435-1437 RB 44 (1932) 204-205
318	St. Stephen	425	PL 38:1437-1440

Nr.	Theme	Date	Edition
319	St. Stephen	425	PL 38:1440-1442
319/A	St. Stephen(?)		RB 84 (1974) 265-266 PL 39:2142 PL 38:1442
320	A miracle by St. Stephen	Easter April 19, 425/426 after 412 (Po)	PL 38:1443
321	A miracul. healing by Saint Stephen	Monday after Easter April 20, 425/426 after 412 (Po)	PL 38:1443
322	A miracul. healing	Tuesday after Easter from 412 (Po) April 21, 421 426 (L, Pe)	PL 38:1443-1445
323	A miracul. healing	Tuesday after Easter 425/426 from 412 (P)	PL 38:1445-1446
324	A miracul. healing	Wednesday after Easter 425/426 from 412 (P)	PL 38:1446-1447
325	Feast of Martyrs	November 15, 405/411	PL 38:1447-1449
326	Feast of Martyrs	November 15	PL 38:1449-1450
327	Feast of Martyrs	405-411	PL 38:1450-1451
328	Feast of Martyrs	405-411	Lambot 13 RB 51 (1939) 15-20 PL 38:1451-1454 PLS 2:800-801 PL 38:1454-1456 PL 38:1456-1459
329	Feast of Martyrs	410-412	PL 38:1459-1461
330	Feast of Martyrs of Massa Candida	August 18, 397	PL 38:1461-1463 PL 38:1463-1467 CCL 104:892-897 PL 38:1467-1469 PL 38:1470-1471 Frangipane 6 MA 1:219-221
331	Feast of Martyrs	410-412	PL 38:1467-1469
332	Feast of Martyrs	410-412	PL 38:1461-1463
333	Feast of Martyrs	410-412	PL 38:1463-1467 CCL 104:892-897 PL 38:1467-1469 PL 38:1470-1471 Frangipane 6 MA 1:219-221
334	Feast of Martyrs	August 6? (L)	PL 38:1467-1469
335	Feast of Martyrs	410-412 (K, Be)	PL 38:1470-1471
335/A	Saints Primus, Victoria and Perpetua	before 401 (K)	Frangipane 6 MA 1:219-221
335/B	Feast of Martyrs	410-412 (K, Be)	Guelfer. 31 MA 1:557-562 PLS 2:632-637 Lambot 2 RB 46 (1934) 399-406 PLS 2:750-755 Lambot 6 RB 50 (1938) 3-8 PLS 2:777-780
335/C	Feast of Martyrs	405-411 (L)	Lambot 2 RB 46 (1934) 399-406 PLS 2:750-755 Lambot 6 RB 50 (1938) 3-8 PLS 2:777-780
335/D	Feast of Martyrs	405-411 (L)	Lambot 2 RB 46 (1934) 399-406 PLS 2:750-755 Lambot 6 RB 50 (1938) 3-8 PLS 2:777-780
335/E	Feast of Martyrs	July 17 (B)	Lambot 7 RB 50 (1938) 10-15 PLS 2:781-785 Lambot 14 RB 51 (1939) 21-23 PLS 2:802-803
335/F	Feast of Martyrs Ps 123:1-3		Lambot 14 RB 51 (1939) 21-23 PLS 2:802-803

Nr.	Theme	Date	Edition
335/G	Feast of Martyrs		Lambot 15 RB 51 (1939) 23-24 PLS 2:803-805
335/H	Feast of Martyrs	Lent (Po)	Lambot 26 RB 62 (1952) 101-103 PLS 2:830-831
335/I	Feast of Martyrs		Lambot 27 RB 62 (1952) 104-107 PLS 2:832-834
335/J	Feast of Martyrs		Lambot 29 RB 68 (1958) 197-199 PLS 2:839-840
335/K	Feast of a Confessor		Lambot 21 RB 59 (1942) 69-73 PLS 2:817-821
335/L	Feast of a Confessor		Lambot 22 RB 59 (1949) 74-76 PLS 2:821-822
335/M	Feast of a Confessor	[St.Dominian's feast]	Lambot 23 RB 59 (1949) 78-80
336	Dedication of a church		PL 38, 1471-1475
337	Dedication of a church	Early ministry (Maur)	PL 38, 1475-1478
338	Dedication of a church	412 (K, Be)	PL 38, 1478-1479
339	Episcopal Ministry	Augustine's ordination anniversary c. 395-400	Maur 339 + 40= Frangipane 2 SPM 1, 112-122 PL 38, 1480-1482; 244-247
340	Episcopal Ministry	Augustine's ordination anniversary	PL 38, 1482-1484 CCL 104, 919-921
340/A	Episcopal Ministry	410-412	Guelfer. 32 MA 1:563-575 PLS 2:637-649

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE

(prepared by Matthew Dolan)

(The numbers after the scriptural reference refer to the particular sermon and its section)

Old Testament			
Genesis		16:10	336,3
1:27	335C,12	17:4	306,10
3:4	335B,1	17:13-14	313,4
3:5	340A,1	18:1	335E,6
3:19	335B,5	18:32	317,5
22:15-18	307,3	19:9	335G,1
49:27	333,3;333,3	22:26	332,2
Leviticus		25:15	306C,5
19:18	319,4	27:4	337,3
Deuteronomy		27:12	335A,1
6:16	313E,4	27:14	339,6
32:39	312,3	30:1	336,3
1 Samuel		30:3	336,3
17:43	335K,5	30:11	326,1; 336,4
17:45	335K,6	30:11-12	336,3; 336,5; 337,2
Job		32:5	323,4
7:1	318,2	32:11	335,1
22:29	313A,4	33:13	315,5
Psalms		33:20	306A
2:1-2	334,1	34:1	306C,3
3:8	335B,4; 335B,4	34:2	312,1; 313A,5; 313C,1
4:7	339,6	34:5	306B,6; 336,2
5:12	313,4	34:14	339,2
11:5	336,2	34:20	313C,2
12:2	308A,7	35:1-3	313,3
16:2	331,2	36:6	335D,3
16:4	335I,4; 335I,4	36:6-7	306D,2
16:5	334,3	36:7	306D,2; 306D,4; 335D,3
		36:7-9	335D,3
		36:8	335D,1
		36:8-9	306A
		36:9	306,5; 306,6
		37:11	312,1
		37:39	335D,3; 335D,4
		39:6-7	335C,7
		40:17	306A
		42:3	337,3
		43:1	325,2; 327,1; 327,2; 335,2;
			335G,2; 335G,2
		44:22	331,2; 331,5; 335C,5
		45:2	306B,5

52:8 313F,1
 54:4 334,1
 57:5.11 335E,2; 335E,2
 57:7 333,1
 58:4 315,5
 58:4-5 316,2
 60:11 306A, 306D,2
 62:5 333,1; 335E,6
 62:6 313,2
 68:4 310,2
 71:5 335E,6
 78:30 306C,7
 72:11 313B,3
 80:7 313,2
 84:4 306C,5; 335B,2
 87:3 313B,3
 91:2-3 306C,5
 91:11-12 313E,4
 96:1 311,7; 336,1
 97:10 336,2
 103:10 333,2
 103:12 333,3
 104:15 333,1
 104:28 306C,8
 110:3 308A,3
 110:4 307,3
 112:6-7 328,5; 335L,1
 115:1 335K,6
 115:2 326,2
 116:10 306D,1
 116:11 335E,3; 335M,2; 339,2
 116:12 329,2; 335M,4; 340,2
 116:12-13 333,4
 116:15 306,1; 310,3; 313A,5; 318,1;
 321; 328,1; 329,1; 335E,2;
 335I,1; 335I,4
 116:15.11 328,2
 116:16 335E,3
 118:22 337,1
 119:108 313,1
 119:135 313,2
 119:164 306C,3
 120:6-7 313E,3
 121:1-2 313A,2
 122:1 326,1
 124:1-3 335F,2
 124:6 313B,1
 124:7 313A,2
 124:8 313A,1; 313B,3
 126:2 306B,1
 126:5-6 313D,3
 126:6 335A,3
 127:1 333,5
 132:17-18 308A,1
 132:18 308A,4; 308A,5; 308A,6;
 308A,6; 308A,8; 308A,8
 139:17,LXX 316,1
 140:5 306,2
 142:5 312,1; 313,3; 313,3

146:2 335B,2; 335B,3
 146:3 335B,4
 146:4 335B,4
 146:5 335B,5; 335B,5

Proverbs

8:35,LXX 333,1
 16:32 315,10
 19:5 328,2
 23:1 332,2
 23:1-2 329,1
 24:15-16 306C,3
 24:16 306C,3
 31:10 313G,3
 32:1,LXX 340A,5

Song of Songs

1:3 313G,3
 1:13 312,3; 313C,2
 4:2 313B,3
 6:6 313B,3

Wisdom

1:11 330,3
 3:2 306,1
 3:2-5 306,1
 3:8 306,7
 4:7 335M,1

Sirach

3:9 323,1
 5:7 339,8
 5:8 339,7
 25:24 318,2; 336,5
 31:8.10.9 311,10
 31:10.8 311,9

Isaiah

51:7 340A, 8
 53:7 315,3; 340A,8
 53:12 309,3
 58:7 339,6
 58:9 306C,7
 66:24 335F,2

Jeremiah

1:10 312,3
 3:15 313,2
 17:5 335B,5
 17:13 313,2
 31:33 331,4

Ezekial

3:17 313E,7
 33:2-7 339,2
 33:7-9 339,2
 33:10 339,3
 33:10-11 339,2
 33:11 339,7

Malachi

3:1 308A,1
 4:2 308A,1

New Testament**Matthew**

3:17 308A,5
 4:6 313E,4; 313E,4
 4:10.7 313E,4
 5:3-10 306A
 5:4 312,1
 5:10 325,2; 335G,2; 335G,2
 5:11 306C,5
 5:11-12 340A,8
 5:12 306C,5
 5:14 338,2
 5:15 317,4
 5:15-16 338,4
 5:16 317,4; 338,3
 5:25 339,7
 5:33-37 307,2
 5:37 308,3
 5:44 306,8
 5:44-45 317,1
 6:1 338,3
 6:9.12 315,10
 6:10 308A,6
 6:11 335E,6
 6:12 335M,4
 6:19-21 311,15
 6:34 339,7
 7:16 340A,10
 7:22-23 308A,6
 8:13 313E,2
 9:29 313E,2
 10:17 335A,3
 10:19-20 328,3
 10:20 335E,5
 10:27 306B,5; 315,3
 10:27-28 306B,5
 10:28 313E,7; 335F,2
 10:33.32 306B,7
 10:34 306B,4; 313,4
 10:39 331,1; 331,2; 335F,2
 11:11 308A,3

11:12 326,1
 11:17 311,5
 11:25 312,4
 11:30 335K,3
 12:34 340A,10
 16:13 306D,3
 16:15 306D,3
 16:16 306D,3
 16:16-17 335E,5
 16:21-23 335E,5
 16:22 330,4
 16:23 330,4
 16:24 330,1
 16:25 306C,1
 16:26 330,3
 18:3 340A,1
 19:17 306,6; 306,7
 19:29 326,2
 20:21-22 340A,5
 20:22 329,2
 20:23 340A,5
 22:29-30 335L,2
 22:37.39-40 313B,3
 23:3 312,6; 340A,9; 340A,11
 23:13 317,5
 25:21 319,2
 25:31-33.34.41 335L,3
 25:34 337,2
 25:34.41 328,5
 26:28 306D,5
 26:39 329,2
 26:39 340A,5
 27:4 313E,4
 28:20 309,2

Mark

6:18 307,1
 8:36 311,2
 10:17 306,6
 10:44 340A,2
 10:44-45 340A,3
 10:45 340A,3
 12:23 335L,2
 12:31 319,4
 14:12 340A,3
 14:34 313D,3; 335B,3
 14:58 315,2
 15:28 309,3
 15:29-32 340A,5

Luke

1:33 306,7
 2:14 306B,5; 306C,6
 3:16 308A,2
 6:44 340A,10
 7:9 313E,2
 9:46 340A,1

12:4 335B,2
 12:7 334,1
 12:13 340A,12
 12:13-15 340A,11
 12:20 306,6
 12:33 335C,8
 13:25-26 308A,6
 14:12-14 339,6
 15:17-19 330,3
 16:9 335C,8
 19:21-23 339,4
 20:2 308A,7
 20:2-4 308A,7
 20:5-7 308A,7
 20:8 308A,7
 20:9-14 308A,6
 20:24-25 308A,7
 20:36 319,7
 21:14-15 335E,5
 21:15 313,2
 21:16.18-19 335A,3
 21:18 333,1
 21:19 333,1
 21:19 335E,6
 22:33 335E,3
 22:33 340A,8
 22:57 335E,3
 22:62 335E,3
 23:24 313E,4
 23:34 313B,4; 315,8; 316,3; 317,2;
 317,3; 317,5; 317,6; 319,4; 319,5;
 23:39-41 327,2
 23:39-42 328,7
 23:39-44 340A,11
 23:42 327,2; 328,1
 23:42-43 335C,12
 23:43 327,2
 23:46 316,3; 319,5
 24:39-44 340A, 11
 24:46 340A, 11
 24:47 340A,11

John

1:1-2 334,2
 1:1.3-5 335K,4
 1:10 313A,2
 1:12 306,2
 1:14 325,1; 334,2; 335I,1; 335K,4
 1:16 308A,2
 1:19-22 308A,2
 1:23 308A,2
 1:29 306D,5
 1:33-34 308A,4
 2:19.21 315,2
 3:2 316,3
 3:27 332,3; 333,6
 3:29 308A,2
 3:30 307,1

5:14 335I,3
 5:19 340A,5
 5:28-29 306,5; 306,5; 335K,2
 5:29 306,6; 335F,2
 5:35 308A,1; 308A,6; 308A,7
 5:36 308A,1; 308A,8
 6:41.51 333,1
 6:44 333,6
 6:51 340A,9
 8:36 340A,3
 8:44 340A,9
 10:16 340A,11
 10:18 313E,5
 10:30 340A,5
 11:51 315,2
 12:24 335E,2
 12:24-25 329,1
 12:25 330,2
 12:26 319,3
 13:27 313E,4
 13:34 336,1
 13:37 340A,8
 13:38 340A,8
 14:6 306,2; 306,10
 14:8 331,4; 334,3
 14:27 313E,3
 15:1-2.6 313E,6
 15:5 333,6
 15:5.4 333,6
 15:12 332,1
 15:13 332,2; 332,3
 15:18-19 313G,1
 15:19 313G,1
 16:2 313G,3
 16:15 335E,5
 16:33 329,2
 17:24 306B,3; 319,3
 19:6 335D,3
 19:10-11 313D,4
 21:15-17 340A,3
 21:16 309,4; 340,2
 21:18 335B,3
 21:18-19 340A,3

Acts of the Apostles

2:37-38 316,3
 4:32 308A,7
 4:34-35 313B,3
 6:8 316,1
 7:1 319,1
 7:51.52 315,5
 7:51-52 317,5
 7:51.54 316,2
 7:55 314,1; 316,2; 319,2
 7:56 315,5
 7:58 315,6; 316,3; 319,2; 319,3
 7:58-59 315,5
 7:59 315,7; 316,3; 319,4; 319,5

7:59-60 314,2; 317,5
 7:60 317,6; 319,5
 9:1-4 316,4; 317,6
 9:4 316,5
 9:15 332,4; 333,3
 10:13 313B,3

Romans

1:1 316,5
 1:17 335M,5
 2:4 339,7
 2:4-6 339,3
 2:5 315,7
 3:4 335E,4; 339,2
 5:6 339,6; 339,6
 5:6.8 335I,1
 5:20 313E,1; 335I,4
 6:6 336,5
 6:9 335H,1
 6:9-11 336,5
 6:13 306B,4
 6:19 306B,4
 8:3 317,3; 336,4
 8:13 335J,2; 335J,4
 8:14 335J,4
 8:18 306,1
 8:24 336,2
 8:24-25 306B,1; 313F,1; 336,5
 8:25 337,3
 8:30 306B,3
 8:31 334,1; 339,6
 8:31-32 334,2
 8:32 313E,5; 336,4
 8:35-37 335,1
 8:36 335,2
 8:37 313,2
 9:16 333,5
 10:10 306D,1
 11:1 333,3
 12:12 306B,1
 14:9.8 335M,3
 15:30 340,4

1 Corinthians

1:1 316,5
 1:31 319A; 335,1; 335E,5
 2:6 333,3
 2:9 328,6; 331,3; 331,3; 339,6
 2:12 333,6; 333,6; 335E,6
 3:2 333,3
 3:9 340,3
 3:10-11 337,1
 3:17 332,4; 337,2
 4:5 306,8
 4:7 332,3; 333,1; 333,6; 333,6; 335E,6
 4:16 306B,2
 6:9-11 335I,4

7:4 332,4
 9:24 326,1
 9:26-27 340A,2
 10:4 317,5
 10:20 335D,3
 11:29 308A,6
 13:1 306B,7
 13:12 337,5
 14:20 340A,1
 15:9 315,6; 315,7
 15:10 306B,2; 306B,2; 315,6; 333,5;
 340,2
 15:21-22 335B,1
 15:28 334,3; 337,2
 15:43-44 335L,3
 15:53 337,2

2 Corinthians

1:1 316,5
 2:15.14 313C,2
 2:15-16 312,3
 4:5 340A,3
 4:13 306D,1
 5:1 337,5
 5:19 325,1
 5:10 309,5
 6:1 340,3
 6:10 326,1; 335C,10
 8:9 339,4
 12:7 306C,7; 306C,7
 12:8-9 306C,7
 12:10 335D,5

Galatians

2:20 313E,5; 330,4
 6:2 340,1
 6:3 333,6
 6:14 317,4; 330,4; 338,2

Ephesians

2:2 309,5; 335D,4; 335D, 4
 2:8-9 333,6
 2:14 337,1
 5:8 312,2; 335E,5; 336,2
 6:12 335D,3; 335D,4; 335D, 4
 6:14-17 313,3

Philippians

1:6 333,6
 1:22-24 335K,2
 1:29 333,6
 2:9 336,3
 2:12-14 337,4
 2:13 335J,4; 335J,4
 2:21 340A,4

3:12 306B,2
 3:13 306B,2
 3:13-14 306B,2
 3:15 306B,2
 3:21 337,2
 4:1 319A

Colossians

2:3 335C,12
 3:1-2 337,4
 4:3 340, 4

1 Timothy

1:13 333,2; 333,4
 1:17 312,6
 2:2 306C,8
 3:1 340A,6
 3:2 340A,7
 3:4-5 340A,7
 3:6 340A,2
 4:8 319A

2 Timothy

2:20 340A,9
 3:1-2 330,3
 4:6-8 315,6
 4:7-8 333,2
 4:7 333,5; 333,5

Titus

3:4 312,2
 3:5 335H,3

Hebrews

1:2-4 318,2

2:4 335M,5
 12:4 306B,3

James

1:17 333,6
 4:6 313A,4

1 Peter

2:4 337,1
 2:5 306C,1; 337,1; 337,4
 2:21 319,4; 325,1
 2:22 335B,5
 3:6 332,4
 3:13 335C,5
 4:8 335E,4
 5:4 309,4
 5:5 313A,4
 5:8 328,8

1 John

2:15-16 313A,2; 335B,4
 2:15-17 306C,6; 311,6
 2:17 335C,13
 3:16 329,1; 332,2; 332,2; 340A,3
 4:18 335G,1
 5:20 313C,1

Revelation

2:11 306,5
 3:7 314,1
 7:14 306D,5
 14:5 335E,3; 335E,4
 19:10 319,7
 20:6 306,5
 22:8-9 319,7

INDEX

(prepared by Joseph Sprug)

A

Abraham:
 God's oath to, 307:3
 Lazarus on bosom of (parable), 339:5
Acts of the Apostles:
 reading starts on Easter Sunday, 315:1
Adam and Eve:
 Adam the deserter: to dust you shall
 go, 335B:5
 Eve, beginning of sin, 336:5
 human; not sons of men, 306D:3
 serpent took away belief in death,
 335B:1,2
 threatened with death, 318:2
adders: brought out by charmer, 316:2
adultery:
 fear of detection, 306B:5
 heart denying the truth, 318:2
 Susanna's struggle, 318:2
Africa: Christ's Church in, 340A:11
almsgiving: Cyprian on, 313C:2
ambition: worldly pride, 313A:2,4
Amen: said to pledge every day, 334:2
Ancona: miracles at, 322:2; 323:1,2; 324
angel(s):
 desire for power of (but not justice
 of), 335H:1
 devil's use in tempting, 313E:4
 John (in Revelations), 319:7
 martyrs triumphing among, 335C:11
 wisdom, 335K:4
anger:
 conquering, 315:10
 dangerous enemy, 315:9,10
 God listening to prayers, 306C:7
Apocalypse: glory of martyrs in, 335E:3

apostasy: fear for the body, not the soul,
 335F:2
apostles: prepared to suffer, by belief in
 Christ, 311:2
ark:
 built of squared planks, 306B:3;
 306C:2; 335E:1
armor: weapons used by martyrs, 313:3-5
Ascension: let hope go ahead; lift up your
 hearts, 330:2
Augustine, Saint:
 anniversary of ordination as bishop,
 339:1-9; 340:1-4
 apology for his sermon, 313:1
 apparition; miraculous cures, 322:2;
 323:2
 bishop's labors, 339:4
 habit of swearing gotten rid of by,
 307:5
 lookout (bishop's role), 339:9
 See also bishop
authority: bishops, 340A:3
avarice:
 loving/hoarding money; mean,
 335C:3,7
 troubled in vain, 335C:7

B

Babylon, 313B:2,3
baptism:
 flock come up from the washing,
 313B:3
 See also catechumens
beasts: salvation of, 306D:2
beatitudes: martyrdom and, 306A
beauty: love what is good, 335C:13
Benjamin: a ravenous wolf, 333:3
birthday: celebration of, 313D:1

- bishop:**
 admonished to be a servant, 340A:2
 bad bishops; if bad, they are not
 bishops, 340A:6,8
 better to have neither wife nor
 children, 340A:7
 burden and dangers of office, 339:1
 burden: his subjects, 340:1
 called bishop, but not really one. . . ,
 340A:4
 children according to the spirit, 340A:7
 desiring the good work of, 340A:6
 do what they say. . . , 340A:9
 duties; Augustine's experience, 339:4
 fawning on; vs cursing, 340A:8
 good shepherd, 340:2
 good; bad, 340A:8
 help by prayer and obedience, 340:3
 humble and eager obedience, 340:3
 leaders, 340A:8
 lighten my burden: lead good lives,
 339:4
 listen to Christ; humility, 340A:4
 ministering Christ, for Christ's sake,
 340A:9
 name of an office undertaken, 340:1
 ordination of, 340A:1-12
 patience, 340A:8
 pray for each other: bishop and the
 faithful, 340:3
 pride to be avoided, 340A:1
 responsible for self and subjects,
 339:1
 seeking the name, or the real thing,
 340A:6
 servant of the people, 340A:1,3
 true ministers, 340A:9
 watchman, or lookout; concern for
 salvation, 339:2
 blessings: choose, cherish, gather, 306C:8
 blood: robes made white in blood of the
 Lamb, 306D:5
 body and soul:
 God the upholder, 335F:2
 invisible soul; visible flesh, 335K:1
See also flesh; soul
 branch: belongs to the vine, 340A:10
 bread:
 eternal in the Father; daily in time,
 333:1
 give us this day. . . , 335E:6
 strengthens the heart of man, 333:1
 bride: adorned with virtues, 332:4
 burden: carry one another's burden, 340:1
- C**
- Caecilian, Bishop of Carthage, 340A:12
 Caesar: pay to Caesar. . . , 308A:7
 Caiaphas, 315:2
 Carthage:
 Donatist/Catholic conference (411),
 340A:12
 martyrs, 313B:2
 Saint Cyprian, 310:2,3
 catechumens: exhortation to enroll for
 baptism, 335H:3
 cause:
 Lord, distinguish my cause . . . , 325:2
 martyrdom and, 306A
 martyrs: distinguish my cause, 335:2
 suffering for a just cause, 306:2
 White Mass (martyrs), 306:2
 change: by living good lives you will
 change the times, 311:8
 chapel: place to honor martyr; worship
 God, 318:3
 charity:
 cement making house of God, 336:1
 city that came down from heaven, 332:4
 common delight in wisdom, 335C:2
 courage of true charity, 335C:4
 covers multitude of sins (lies), 335E:4
 expands, the greater the number
 possessing it, 340A:12
 lay down one's life for one's friend,
 332:3
 love of living rightly, 335C:2
 perfect charity casts out fear, 335G:1
 prefer Christ to the world, 335:2
 restless, not slothful, 313F:1
 who will separate us from charity of
 Christ, 335:1
 chastity:
 love of, 332:4
 should be found in faith and mind,
 318:2
 children:
 bishops; compliant; discipline,
 340A:7

- respect for parents, 323:1
 children of God:
 led by the Spirit of God, 335J:4
 power to become, 306:2
 Christ, *See* Jesus Christ.
 Christian combat:
 invisible foe; see with eyes of faith,
 335K:3
 Christian doctrine:
 entwined itself: good trees, bad
 thorns, 340A:10
 Christian life:
 battle with the flesh, 335J:2
 being put to death all the day long,
 335C:5
 care not to be caught unawares, 309:5
 Christ is nowhere an exile, 309:2
 Christ's athlete; both weak and strong,
 335D:3
 I live now not I . . . , 330:4
 imitate endurance of martyrs, 328:8
 imitate our fellow servants (apostles,
 etc.), 325:1
 joy in those making progress, 319A
 lose temporal life for God's sake,
 313D:2
 servants become friends, 316:1
 struggle with temporal/eternal goods,
 339:9
 taking on the whole world, 313A:2
 walking (analogy), 306B:1,3
 way straight and narrow, 313A:1
 without Christ enemy would swallow
 us alive, 335F:2
 See also martyrs; temple of God; world
 Christianity: God liberating the nations,
 315:4
 Christians:
 Christian, a name of grace, 340:1
 hated by the world, 313G:2
 we ourselves are house of God, 336:1
 Church:
 breaking away from; Judas, 313E:3
 Christ sowing seed; Church springing
 up, 335E:2
 Christ the head; we are his members,
 336:5
 great hope after seeding by martyrs,
 306C:1
 living stones, 306C:1
 made from pierced side of Christ,
 336:5
 multitudes spread far and wide,
 306C:1
 one flock, one shepherd, 340A:11
 pride for eminence given in, 340A:2
 progress; sword representing
 eloquence, 335K:5
 seed: blood of the martyrs, 335E:2
 spread throughout nations, 340A:11
 teeth to rival those of the enemy,
 313B:3
 See also mystical body
 Circumcellions: Cyprian and, 313E:7
 claymore (sword), 313:4,5
 cliff-jumpers, 313E:5,7
 combat: guard against allurements,
 335K:6
 commandments: attaining eternal life,
 306:6,7
 conduct of life:
 battle; God's amphitheater, 335K:3
 deception in, 306:9
 See also Christian life
 conscience: battle over ways of loving,
 335J:4
 consultation: imparting or seeking
 counsel, 309:6
 conversion:
 all evil deeds wiped out, 339:7
 do not be slow to turn. . . , 339:7,8
 of life: denying oneself, 330:3
 Paul on, 312:3
 corruption: possessed by gold, 311:9
 courage: Stephen the martyr, 315:6
 creator: salvation of man and beast,
 306D:2
 creatures:
 cast off your moorings from; to
 creator, 313A:2
 imitate the creator, 315:8
 crime: charges against testimony of
 martyrs, 335A:1
 Crispina, Saint: martyr, 313G:3
 cross:
 judgment seat, 335C:12
 lampstand, 317:4
 Peter's passion foretold, 340A:3
 take up your cross. . . , 330:2
 word as scandal, 330:4

crown: martyrdom; St Stephen, 314:2
 cup: can you drink the cup which. . . ,
 340A:5
 cupidity: dancing in time to, 311:7
 curiosity: lust of the eyes, 313A:2,3
 curse: mother curses son, 322:2
 cypress berry, 313C:2
 Cyprian, Saint:
 altar of God made out of, 313A:5
 birthday of, 312:1-6; 313:1-5;
 313A-313F
 Church rejoices over this martyr,
 309:1
 Circumcellions and, 313E:7
 conversion, 311:7; 312:2-3
 date of birth, 310:1
 despise the world, 311:3
 eloquence, 312:2,4; 313D:1; 335K:5
 exile and return, 309:2
 fame for his sufferings and writings,
 310:4
 final exchange with proconsul, 309:6
 God stood by him, 313:5
 God's handiwork, 313:2
 good odor of Christ. . . , 313C:2
 greatness of his faith, 313E:2
 his martyrdom as just cause, 313D:4
 his soul a claymore in hand of God,
 313:5
 his teaching, living, and dying,
 313C:2
 imitation of Christ in his passion,
 313E:5
 immortal life attained by self-denial,
 313D:1
 judge: take counsel for yourself,
 313D:4
 last words, 309:6; 313D:4
 life before conversion, 312:2
 lived as he taught, 313D:1
 living as one who knew he would
 die, 313E:1
 many persecutors later came to
 believe, 313B:4
 martyr followed in Christ's footsteps,
 309:3
 martyr's glory spread to whole
 Church, 310:3
 meaning of the martyr's "table,"
 310:2

meek and mild person, 312:1
 merits and glory of, 313A:1
 multitudes raging against/praising
 him, 313B:1
 outstanding by his teaching and
 example, 312:6
 praise for, 312:6
 preparing to shed his own blood,
 309:4
 reading of his passion, 313A:3
 remembered his pastor/bishop role,
 309:4
 sent into exile, 313E:6
 sermon on birthday of, 309:1-6;
 310:1-4; 311:1-15
 sermon on eve of birthday, 308A:1-8
 take counsel for yourself, 309:5
 temptations overcome by, 313A:4
 tempted by the devil, 309:5
 tongue insufficient to praise him,
 313:1
 truly to be praised in the Lord,
 313A:4
 verdict: "thanks be to God," 313E:6
 vine branch that has been pruned,
 313E:6
 won God's favor as bishop; as
 martyr, 313E:1
 words and example, 313D:4
 works; writings, 313C:2

D

damnation:
 evil hearing on judgment day, 335L:3
 fear the second death, 335B:5
 dancing: rowdiness in holy places, 311:5,6
 darkness: now light in the Lord, 336:2
 David, King:
 armed with grace (milk can), 335K:5
 five smooth stones, 335K:3
 rash oath broken, rather than commit
 murder, 308:2
 deacon:
 Greek/Latin/English terms, 319:3
 Stephen, the first martyr, 315:1
 where I am, my deacon shall be,
 319:3
 dead: anniversaries of just/holy persons
 celebrated, 335L:1

death:

- attitude to, taught by Christ, 335B:1
- body and soul, 335B:5
- destroyed by the Lamb, Jesus, 311:1
- fear not those who kill the body,
335B:2
- fear of sin, 335B:5
- good for the good; bad for the bad,
335K:1
- greater love has no one than this. . .,
335B:3
- individual laying the body aside,
335K:1
- just man will be at rest, 335M:1,2
- living with awareness of, 313E:1
- making light of, 335B:5
- martyrs discover death by speaking,
306D:1
- no fear if you die for God, 313D:3
- our day of is unknown, 306D:4
- Paul's attitude toward, 335K:2
- Peter, when you are old. . ., 335B:3
- power of a human to decide kind of
end, 306:2
- precious is the death of his saints,
306:1; 313A:5; 318:1; 321;
328:1; 329:1,2; 335E:2; 335I:1,4
- risking for sake of lust, 335B:4
- running/driven to our last day, 306D:4
- separation of invisible soul; visible
flesh, 335K:1
- Tabitha restored to life, 313E:8
- transitory; permanent, 335B:5
- unless the grain of wheat falls. . .,
329:1; 335E:2
- warning to sinners, 339:2
- will to die is abhorrent to nature, 335B:1
- See also* future life; life; martyrs
- deception: no one wants to be deceived,
306:9
- dedication of a church:
 - cemented by charity, 336:1
 - Christ the foundation and
cornerstone, 337:1
 - faith; beauties of the dwelling, 337:1
 - God's Church built and dedicated in
us, 336:1
 - house of our prayers, 336:1
 - joy after hard labor of construction,
337:2

- lampstands, 338:2
- Psalm 30: prophecy of Christ's
passion, 336:3
- three sermons, 336-338
- demon(s):
 - conquered by martyrs, 312:5
 - listened to (went into pigs), 306C:7
 - mother curses son, 322:2
 - sacraments of, 335D:3
- deny yourself, 313D:2
- despair: perishing by/of, 339:3,7
- devil:
 - benefits (martyrs) bestowed on us by,
315:9
 - challenges soul to single combat,
335K:3
 - children of unbelief and, 335D:4
 - Cyprian and, 313D:4
 - escape from, 335A:3
 - fear not, but beware of him, 335D:4
 - God listened to (re Job), 306C:7
 - judgment of the devil, 340A:2
 - martyrs conquer, 335D:3
 - our adversary never sleeps, 328:8
 - prince of the power of this air, 335D:4
 - sick man and, 335D:3
 - struggle against principalities and
powers, 335D:4
 - struggle is not against flesh and
blood, 335D:3
 - suffering, 328:4
 - temptation of Christ, 313E:4
 - tempter of the martyr Cyprian, 309:5
 - unclean spirits try to seduce people,
335D:4
 - witnesses of, 335A:1
- See also* demon; serpent; temptation
- disciples:
 - asking to sit at Christ's right/left
hand, 340A:5
 - chosen from the world, 313G:1
 - dispute: which is to be the greatest,
340A:1
- Domitian, Saint: sermon on a just man,
335M:1-5
- Donatists:
 - bishops in Carthage (411), 340A:12
 - branches that have been cut off,
313E:6
 - Cyprian and, 313E:2,3,4

error; chair of Moses, 340A:11
 tempted by the devil, 313E:5
 drunkenness (holy; spiritual):
 plenty of God's house, 335D:1,3

E

eloquence: Church fighting Goliath,
 335K:5
 end of the world:
 humans will be equal to angels,
 335L:3
 enemy:
 commanded to love, 317:1,3
 gentleness toward, 315:9
 loving one's enemies, 306:8; 314:2
 martyrs' love of their enemies, 317:2
 will not do you any harm, 315:9
 eternal life:
 as "long" as I live. . ., 335B:2
 eager desire for, 335H:1
 feasting as symbol of, 339:5
 good works lead to, 337:5
 happiness factors, 306:7
 holding on to life without end, 331:1
 immortal life attained by martyrs,
 313D:1
 kingdom will have no end, 306:7
 love for the kingdom of God, 332:1
 martyrs trade temporal life for,
 313C:1
 obtaining, 306:6
 parable: workers starting at different
 hours, 335M:5
 pray tirelessly; perfect love of
 charity, 340:3
 preparing for, 311:15
 reward of life well lived in time,
 306:9
 rich man's fear of death, 306:6
 seeking; keep the commandments,
 306:7
 torment; eternal death, 306:5
 whoever loses soul for my sake. . .,
 313C:1; 313D:1
 eucharist: whoever eats and drinks
 unworthily. . ., 308A:6
 Eulalia, Saint: feast of, 313G:1-3
 Eve, *See* Adam and Eve.
 Evodius (bishop), 323:3

example:

follow Christ and St Stephen, 315:8
 imitating one leading a bad life,
 340A:9
 perform good works openly, 338:1
 exile: Christ cannot be forced to leave a
 place, 309:2

F**faith:**

apostles prepared to die for Christ,
 311:2
 church building is made by believing,
 336:1
 dedication of a church, 337:1
 dying without anxiety, 309:6
 freely acknowledging, 306B:7
 God dwelling in us, 337:5
 greatness of Cyprian's faith, 313E:2
 heaven taken violently by storm, 314:1
 imitate faith of martyrs, 306:10
 just man lives by faith, 335M:5
 make light of things that are seen,
 306D:2
 martyrs, 311:1
 outweighs gaining the whole world,
 311:2
 precious death of the Lord's saints,
 306:1
 prepare a great jar; God will fill it,
 339:6
 salvation; grace, 333:6
 faithfulness: show love for martyrs by,
 331:5
 faithlessness: net of the persecutors,
 313B:2
 false witnesses: trial of Jesus, 315:2
 fault-finders: objections against God,
 311:12
 fear:
 abiding forever, 335G:1
 always being afraid, 306:7
 ashamed of Christ before men,
 306B:7
 chaste, 335G:1
 dread of the scoffer, 306B:8
 dying without, 313E:1
 fear for the soul, not for the body,
 335F:2

panic, 335E:3,4
 perfect charity casts out fear, 335G:1
 running away, in the mind, 306B:7
 snare of, 306C:5
 temptation; transformation, 313A:2
 torment of the heart, 306:7
 feasting:
 invitation; symbol of eternal life,
 339:5
 invite the poor, not your friends,
 339:6
 Fidentius (bishop; one of Twenty
 Martyrs), 325:1
 fighting: advice on how not to do battle,
 335K:6
 flesh:
 beauty of, 335C:4,6
 christian battle, 335J:2
 evils arising from appetite for
 pleasure, 313A:2
 godless man is only earth, 335D:3
 put to death the deeds of, 335J:4
 forgiveness:
 Lord's Prayer, 315:10
 Stephen the martyr, 314:2
 forgiveness of sin:
 Christ's blood shed for, 335I:1
 repent, and be baptized. . . , 316:3
 this is my blood which will be
 shed. . . , 306D:5
 fountain of life, 306:5,6; 306A; 335D:3
 free will:
 boasting about good works, 333:6
 fear the things you do willingly,
 335B:5
 friend: love God in your friend, 336:2
 future life:
 choose now where we are going,
 335L:3
 eye has not seen . . . , 328:6
 glory remains hidden, 306:1
 much to be desired, 335H:1
See also heaven

G

gain and loss, 318:2
 Gervase, Saint:
 remains of martyr come to light,
 318:1

gift(s):
 you [God] have no need of my
 goods, 331:2
 gift(s) of God:
 all things received from God, 335M:4
 all we have, we have received, 335E:6
 believe: they are lavish and plentiful,
 339:6
 what eye has not seen. . . , 331:3,4
 glory: martyrdom vs glories of this earth,
 335C:11 God:
 anger/graciousness; listening to
 prayers, 306C:7
 ashamed of being unworthy of God's
 love, 336:2
 Father: lamp prepared for my Christ
 (Psalm 132), 308A:1,6
 fountain of life, 306A
 his works speak; God keeps quiet,
 313D:2
 indifference to human affairs, 311:12
 invisibly beautiful, 335C:13
 look for nothing else from God,
 except God, 331:4
 loved for his own sake, 336:2
 mercy of, extends to saving of beasts,
 306D:2
 oaths sworn by, 307:3
 promise: I am present, 306C:7
 providence, 311:12; 333:5
 reward of the good: himself, 331:4
 unless the Lord were among us. . . ,
 335F:2
 godless: pastures of the just, 306C:4
 gold:
 good in itself; bad if use is bad,
 311:9,11,13
 suffering by lovers of, 331:5; 335:2
 Goliath, killed by David, 335K:5
 good and evil:
 bad use of gold, 311:9,11,13
 cup of salvation; paid back good for
 evil, 333:4
 godless weakened by evil, 306C:3,4
 good things common to good/bad
 people, 311:11-12
 judgment day and the life led, 335K:2
 love of wickedness; hate your own
 soul, 336:2
 malice (the word), 306:1

- objections against God's providence, 311:12
 people are harmed by other people, 311:8
 Stephen and those who stoned him, 317:1
 sun rises on just and unjust, 317:1,2
 use of the tongue (speaking), 311:11
 wanting all to be good, except self, 339:4
 willing slaves for iniquity, 306B:4
 wish to lead long life badly, 339:7
See also world
 good example, *See* example
 Good Thief:
 changed his cause on the cross, 335C:12
 faith of, 328:7
 greatness of, 328:7
 Lord, remember me. . . , 327:2; 328:1
 this man is the Holy One. . . , 328:7
 good works:
 desiring to be a bishop, 340A:6
 gift of capacity for, 333:6
 good use of gold, 311:9,13
 hiding, for fear of being mocked, 306B:6
 house of faith and hope, 337:5
 human praise not to be a consideration, 338:3
 lamp as symbol of the person, 338:2,4
 let your light shine. . . , 338:3,4
 made into dwelling place for God, 337:5
 Paul: keeping the faith, 333:5
 perform openly; for example, not admiration, 338:1
 performing your justice before men. . . , 338:3
 priding yourself on your free will, 333:6
 seeking praise for self; for God, 338:4
 Son of God as reward, 339:6
 store up to repay God, 339:3
 temporal and earthly means, 337:1
 whatever we do comes from God, 335J:4
 goodness:
 all good comes from supreme good, 335E:6
 by living good lives you will change the times, 311:8
 God is keeping great goods for the good, 339:6
 love what is good, 335C:13
 who can harm lovers of. . . , 335C:5
 grace:
 blessed is one whose helper is God, 335B:5
 gift from heaven, 332:3
 good works are God's gifts, 333:5
 law is powerless without, 335K:4
 Saint Paul on, 306B:2
 saved through faith, 333:6
 symbol: five stones in milk can, 335K:5
 without me you can do nothing, 333:6
 grain: crop harvested from seed sown by Christ, 335E:2
 grapes: gather grapes from thorns, 340A:10
 gratitude: for gifts of God, 313B:1
 greatness: whoever wishes to be greater. . . , 340A:2
 greed:
 dancing in time to cupidity, 311:7
 enduring hardships for, 335C:3
 living without, 313E:1
 love of sinning, 335C:2
 making light of death, 335B:4
 preacher's words fall on deaf ears, 335C:10
 snare of, 306C:5
 temptation; transformation, 313A:2
- ## H
- hair:
 not one hair on your head will perish, 333:1
 your hairs are numbered, 334:1
 handicapped: invite the poor to the feast, 339:6
 happiness:
 certainly and assuredly eternal life, 306:7
 common aim of all people, 306:3
 defining the happy or blessed life, 306:4
 eternal life, 339:5

- genuine knowledge of another's heart, 306:9
 life (scriptural usage), 306:5, 6
 truth added to life, 306:9
 harvest: great hope after seeding by Martyrs, 306C:1
 hatred: for Christians, 313G:2
 healing: healer loves what he wants to make well, 335I:5
 health:
 diviners and astrologers, 335D:3
 martyrs' making light of, 306D:4
 precious for rich and poor, 306:4
 precious (in this world), 306A
 seeking not to be blamed, 306D:4
 heart:
 believing unto justice, 306D:1
 compunction, 336:5
 conspiratorial; enemies of Jesus, 308A:7
 happiness: knowledge of another's heart, 306:9
 lift up your heart, 331:3
 showing up the thought of, 306:8
 simple; crafty, 308A:7
 where your treasure is. . ., 311:15
 heaven:
 making music to God. . ., 335B:3
 married will live like angels, 335L:2
 martyrs: having nothing, possessing all, 326:1
 shut against the human race, 314:1
 what we receive from the heavenly city, 332:4
 hell: soul snatched from the underworld, 336:3
 heretics:
 falsely calling themselves Catholic, 313E:4
 hate those in the Church, 313G:2
 not martyrs, 313E:7
 sufferings; not martyrs, 327:1
 Herod, King: John the Baptist and, 307:1-5; 308:1-5
 holiness:
 anniversaries of holy persons celebrated, 335L:1
 example of holy persons to be imitated, 335L:1
 holy places: abuses in celebrations; dancing, 311:5
 Holy Spirit:
 attribute good things to God, 335J:4
 came down on Jesus in form of dove, 308A:4
 given us to know things given by God, 335E:6
 speaking in martyrs, 328:3
 hope:
 crying out to God, 313F:1
 curse, to be without hope, 313F:1
 cursed be everyone placing hope in man, 335B:5
 disappointment with commonplace hope, 313F:2
 for what we cannot see, 313F:1
 free from snares of the hunters, 306C:5
 God; land of the dying, 313F:3
 hope which is seen. . ., 306B:1
 land of the living, 313F:3
 lift up your hearts, 330:2
 martyrs, 335D:1
 natural stages of human hope, 313F:2
 perishing of, 339:7
 reality, 313F:1-3
 rest not on bishops; not on the rest of men, 340A:9
 salvation, 336:2
 shelter of God's wings, 335D:3,4
 under cover of God's wings, 306D:2,4
 wait in patience, 336:5; 337:3
 worldly hopes; entertaining never stops, 313F:2
 house of God, *See* temple of God.
 human acts: responsibility for, 335J:4
 human condition: gifts of God, 331:3
 humans: sons of men distinguished from men, 306D:3
 humiliation: just man falls seven times, 306C:3
 humility:
 bishops, listen to Christ, 340A:4
 drink the cup of humiliation, 340A:5
 Jesus did not come down from the cross, 340A:5
 seating prepared for others by the Father, 340A:5

sharing the Lord's table, 340A:5
 teacher by word and example, 340A:5
 husband and wife:
 authority over wife's body, 332:4

I

idols: Cyprian on, 313E:7
 image of God: vain that he is troubled. . . ,
 335C:7
 imitation:
 Cyprian's teaching and suffering,
 313C:2
 if anyone wishes to come after
 me. . . , 330:1
 lowly should imitate the sublime, 315:8
 martyrs as models, 325:1
 immortality: desire for, shared with the
 godless, 335H:1
 incarnation:
 all found to be His enemies (sinful),
 317:2
 necessary in order to shed blood,
 335I:1
 Word joined man to God, 313E:1
 Word made flesh, 334:2
 inheritance:
 Christ to be our possession, 334:3
 unity in the Church, 340A:11,12

J

Jesus Christ:
 acknowledge him in the presence of
 men, 335F:1
 Adam compared with (re life and
 death), 335B:1
 ashamed of Christ before men,
 306B:7
 authority challenged by Jewish
 enemies, 308A:7
 birth of Stephen compared with,
 317:3
 birthday (feast) of Stephen and, 314:1
 born after John the Baptist, 308A:3
 bread come down from heaven, 333:1
 chose martyrs out of this world,
 313G:1
 crucifixion:
 between two robbers, 327:2; 331:2;
 335:2; 335C:12

many Jews later came to believe,
 313B:4
See also Good Thief
 death, *See below*: passion and death.
 denial of Christ as great sin, 318:2
 denying; fear, 335F:2
 disciples ask to sit at his right/left
 hand, 340A:5
 door; side pierced by the lance, 311:3
 eternal life in following, 313D:1
 everything the Father has is mine,
 335E:5
 example of suffering, 319:4-5
 first appearance and ministry, 335K:5
 foundation and cornerstone of church
 building, 337:1
 good works for the sake of, 338:2
 greater witness than John, 308A:8
 healing the sick, 335I:5
 hidden treasures of wisdom and
 knowledge, 335C:12
 his enemies confused through John
 the Baptist, 308A:2,7
 Holy Spirit bears witness to, 308A:4
 hope of eternal salvation, 313E:1
 humanity: likeness of the flesh of sin,
 336:4
 humility commended; acknowledge
 his divinity, 306D:3
 humility; emphasis, 306D:3
 I am the living bread. . . , 340A:9
 image of God, 308A:7
 imitation proposed, 325:1
 incarnation, *See* Incarnation.
 Lamb who destroyed death, 311:1
 lamp prepared for my Christ (Psalm
 132), 308A:1,6,8
 lesson from his sufferings and
 resurrection, 335H:1
 man (every man a liar?), 335M:3
 martyr of martyrs, 334:2; 335G:2
 martyrs pressed to deny Christ,
 313B:2
 miracles, and his Jewish enemies,
 308A:7
 my soul is sad. . . , 313D:3
 my wish: where I am they also shall
 be, 319:3
 never "of this world," 313G:1
 our way to life and truth, 306:10

passion and death:

blindness (they know not what they do), 317:2
 Christ hung between two robbers, 309:3
 disciples dismayed, 328:1
 enmity of Jews, 308A:7
 false testimony; prophesying truth, 315:2
 get behind me, Satan, 330:4
 heart of Christ pierced, 336:5
 learn from his sufferings, 335H:1
 let him come down from the cross, 340A:5
 like a sheep led to slaughter. . . , 315:3
 love for sinners, 335I:2
 many blood sacrifices of old law and, 335I:4
 necessary for the Christ to suffer, 340A:11
 Peter: far be this from you. . . , 335E:5
 Psalm 30, a prophecy, 336:3
 pull down this temple. . . , 315:2
 Stephen's martyrdom and, 315:2-3
 wish that we be delivered from sin, 335I:3
 you have torn up my sacking. . . , 336:4

portion of my inheritance, 334:3
 rising, dies no more, 336:5

rock on which man builds, 337:1

saint of saints, 335E:2

saved by knowledge of, 335F:2

sets his table before you, namely himself, 332:2

seven last words:
 Father, forgive them, 313E:4; 315:8; 316:3; 317:2,3,5,6; 319:4,5
 Father, into your hands. . . , 316:3
 today you shall be with me. . . , 327:2; 335C:12

sinlessness, 335B:5

sold by Judas, 336:4

Stephen's vision of, *See* Stephen, Saint.

suffered for us, leaving an example, 325:1

teacher of humility, 340A:5

teaching: separation to be avoided, 313E:3

tempted by the devil, 313E:4,5

trial; he remained silent, 315:3

Trinity revealed at baptism of, 308A:5

who do men say that I am. . . , 306D:3

willed to die and rise again, 335H:1

you would have no authority over me. . . , 313D:4

See also Christian life; son of man

Jews:
 hatred of Christians, 313G:2
 liberation of their nation, 315:4
 many who killed Christ later came to believe, 313B:4
 open enemies of Christ, 308A:6,7
 rebuked by Christ, out of love, 317:5
 resurrection of Christ; conversions, 336:3
 Stephen's vision; Jews blocked their ears, 316:2

John the Baptist, Saint:
 authority for baptizing, 308A:7
 beheading of, 307:1-5; 308:1-5
 friend of the bridegroom, 308A:2
 greatness of, 308A:3
 He must grow. . . , 307:1
 held by king to be a holy man, 307:1
 lamp prepared for my Christ (Psalm 132), 308A:1,8
 oath of the king, 307:1-5
 one who is less. . . , 308A:3
 strap of whose sandal. . . , 308A:2,3
 thought to be the Christ, 308A:2
 voice crying in wilderness, 308A:2

Joseph of Egypt: struggle against sin, 318:2

joy:
 meaning of "receive my spirit," 319:2
 travelers, 306B:1

Judas:
 hanged himself, 313E:4
 Satan entered his heart, 313E:4,5
 sold Christ, 336:4
 tolerated to the bitter end, 313E:3

judgment day:
 cannot avoid by being afraid, 335K:2
 Christ, judge of living and dead, 316:1
 come, blessed of my Father. . . , 337:2

fall into judgment with the devil,
340A:2
prepare now for what is to come,
328:5
resurrection of life; -of the judgment,
306:5
sheep and goats, 328:5; 335L:3
souls will burn with body, 335F:2
just man:
anniversaries celebrated, 335L:1
falls seven times, 306C:3,4
held in eternal memory, 335L:3
lives by faith, 335M:5
pastures of the just, 306C:4
justice:
beauty of, 306B:4,5
confronting riches, 335:1
enmity with Christ: leading unjust
life, 308A:6
suffering on account of justice,
335G:2
test of values, 335C:13
will of God abides forever, 335C:13
willing slaves of justice, 306B:4

K

kindness: good works, material and
spiritual, 338:1
kingdom of God (- of heaven):
no deceit; no disappointment, 306:8
not of this world, 306C:6
see/hear St Cyprian in a greater
Church, 310:4
sinners shall not gain possession,
335I:4
unless one becomes as a child. . .,
340A:1
kiss of peace, 313E:3

L

lamb:
Paul and Stephen as, 316:5
robes made white in blood of the
Lamb, 306D:5
lamp:
nobody lights a lamp. . ., 317:4
prepared for my Christ (Psalm 132),
308A:1,6,8
put on lampstand, 338:2,4

Lawrence, Saint: miracle at shrine of,
322:2
Lazarus: resting on Abraham's bosom,
339:5
Lazarus: risen, will die again, 335H:1
lepers: cleansed by Christ, 306A
liar:
every man is a liar, 328:2,3;
335E:3,4,5; 335M:2,3,4; 339:2
lies on account of money, 330:3
panic, 335E:3
life:
Christ the way, 306:10
conversation between persecutor and
martyr, 335B:3
deny God; retain temporal life,
313D:2
die eternally for love of staying alive,
335E:3
elements of, 335B:3
entrusting one's life to creator,
306C:1
full of tears, 313D:3
great variety of modes of, 306:3
happiness implied (in scriptural use),
306:5,6
holding on to, 331:1
however bitter, joy if you could live
forever. . ., 311:14
lose life by saving it; find it by losing
it, 306C:1
love of temporal; -eternal, 335A:2
natural stages of human hope, 313F:2
passing, 313D:2
proper disregard for, 335H:1
wish to lead long life badly, 339:7
See also death; eternal life;
happiness; soul
light: you were once darkness. . ., 336:2
listening: God; demons, 306C:7
long: as long as I live (i.e. forever), 335B:2
Lord's Prayer:
forgive us our debts. . ., 315:10
our daily bread, 333:1
petition for eternal things, 306C:8
loss and gain, 318:2
love:
commandment, 332:1
dedication of a church, 337:1
denying self, 330:2

earthly object, 311:4
 existence wanted for object loved,
 335I:3
 extent of command to love one
 another, 332:2
 Father is not in one who loves the
 world, 313A:2
 greatest unhappiness: duty to love
 life of misery, 311:14
 ignoring self, 330:3
 lay down your life for your friends,
 332:2
 lose soul for loving it, 331:1
 loving freely; looking for reward,
 340:2
 lust for the world, 311:6
 martyrs' love of their enemies, 317:2
 Peter's confession, 340A:3
 praise and, 306C:5
 rescue from ruins of our old selves,
 336:1
 right order of, 335C:13
 run toward God by affections, 306B:1
 spiritual love in good works, 337:5
 two commandments, 313B:3
 two kinds: greedy and dear, 335C:2,3
 value of object loved, 335A:2
 what God has prepared for those who
 love Him, 331:3,4
 when you are evil, you love yourself,
 336:2
 world; things of the world, 306C:6
 love of God:
 making light of death for, 335B:4
 risking death for, requires God's
 help, 335B:4
 lust:
 consent; or fight the desire, 335J:3,4
 flesh, eyes, ambition, 313A:2,3
 in love with uncleanness, 306B:4
 making light of death, 335B:4
 martyrdom of John the Baptist, 307:1
 world; the flesh, 306C:6

M

malice (the word), 306:1
 mammon of iniquity, 335C:8
 man: head of the woman is man, 332:4
 martyrdom:

forbidden to offer one's self, 313E:5
 sick persons and, 328:8
 way smoothed by many walking on
 it, 306:10
 martyrs:
 assurance given to, 333:1; 335F:1
 assurances that God is for us, 334:2
 battle inside, won outside, 335J:1
 benefiting themselves in dying for
 Christ, 331:2
 birthday of, 335-335I
 blood is seed of the Church, 335E:2
 body remains come to light, 318:1
 cause, not punishment, makes a
 martyr, 306:2; 306A; 325:2;
 327:1,2; 328:4; 328:7; 335:2;
 335C:5; 335G:2
 celebrate feasts by imitating virtues,
 311:1
 celebrating festivals of, 311:6
 chain (love of staying alive) burst,
 335E:3
 contests; victory, 335:1
 conversation with persecutor, 335B:3
 Cyprian's exhortations, 309:6
 demons conquered by, 312:5
 deny self to attain immortal life,
 313D:1
 denying oneself, 330:3
 devil conquered by, 335D:3
 dialog with persecutors, 326:2
 die in order not to sin, 318:2
 difficult to imitate sufferings of,
 313A:1
 drunk on plenty of God's house,
 335D:1,3
 due for punishment: receive my
 spirit, 315:6
 dying they discovered life, 335B:1
 earthly feelings removed by God,
 313:4
 Eight; Twenty, and companions,
 313G:3
 every man a liar, 335E:3,4
 exhortation to imitate, 335H:2
 faith proven, 329:1
 farmers/sowers compared with,
 335A:2
 feasts celebrated; imitate their
 example, 325:1

- fixed in our memories, 313C:1
 follow Christ in his passion, 328:1;
 330:1
 following footsteps of martyrs, 306:10
 friends of Christ, 332:1
 glory after the resurrection, 328:6
 glory; book of the Apocalypse,
 335E:3
 glory: first rank in the Church,
 306B:3
 glory ignored by the world, 335C:1
 glory related to bitter death, 335B:3
 God, distinguish my cause. . . , 335:2
 grace to suffer for Christ's sake, 332:3
 Greek/Latin/English terms, 319:3
 heavenly reward, 315:9
 help in the name of the Lord, 313A:1
 Holy Spirit speaking truth in, 328:3
 honored, not worshipped, 335H:2
 hoping for things that last forever,
 306A
 if God is for us. . . , 334:1
 imitate faith in life of, 306:10
 imitation; spectacle, 313A:3
 improper celebrations at shrines of,
 335D:2
 in love with life, 335B:2,4
 judge me, O God. . . , 327:1
 killed after confessing the faith,
 306D:2
 killers "offering a service to God,"
 313G:3
 lie not in their mouths, 335E:3,4
 lose life by saving it; find it by losing
 it, 306C:1
 love for Christ as way and life, 306:10
 love of (eternal) life, 335A:2
 love of their enemies, 317:2
 love the causes of their sufferings,
 335:2
 love them by imitating endurance,
 328:8
 many evils endured by, 327:1; 328:4
 may their merits never be wanting,
 335D:5
 meaning of "birthdays" of, 310:1
 misers and, 331:5; 335:2
 narrow road widened by, 306C:1
 no earthly glory compares with,
 335C:11
 overcame through Christ, 335J:1
 paradoxes, 313C:1
 passion; witnesses of Christ (or
 Satan), 335A:1
 patience tested and proved, 335C:1
 as paving stones, 325:1
 peace earned by endurance, 326:1
 perfect charity casts out fear, 335G:1
 perishable body reaps
 imperishability, 306D:1
 praise them; God is praised, 313:2
 pressed to deny Christ, 313B:2
 quarry to teeth of the enemy,
 313B:1,2,3
 relying on self, not at all, 335:1
 repaid God; cup of salvation, 329:2
 reward loved by: praising God,
 335B:2
 robes made white in blood of the
 Lamb, 306D:5
 seductions of the world, 335:1
 seek the invisible rewards of, 335C:12
 share the merits of, 335D:3
 show love for, by being faithful,
 331:5
 slaves twice over (made and bought),
 335I:5
 sought relief from Christ, 335F:2
 sow in tears, reap in joy, 313D:3
 spread gospel by shedding blood,
 318:1
 squered timbers of which ark was
 made, 335E:1
 strong and brave in the faith, 306D:2
 suffer persecution for sake of justice,
 325:2
 taught by Jesus, not to fear death,
 335B:2
 temporal health made light of by,
 306D:4
 temporal well-being scorned by,
 319A
 temptation to retain temporal life,
 306D:4
 tested, 306C:1
 their bodies too changed to ashes,
 335F:2
 threatened with death, 318:2 torture
 and killing of, 313G:2
 tortures, 334:1

trade temporal life for eternal, 313C:1
 trials and temptations, 328:8
 true way to celebrate feasts of, 317:1
 truthful; but "every man is a liar,"
 328:2,3
 upholder of my soul: the Lord, 334:1
 weapons used to fight, 313:3,5
 will made ready by the Lord, 333:1
 with us, they rejoice in heaven, 325:1
 witnesses; died for truth, 328:2
 worldly delights and terrors, 318:2
See also Stephen, Saint
Massa Candida, *See* White Mass.
 meekness: blessed are the meek. . ., 312:1
 Melchizedek: the Lord has sworn. . .,
 307:3
 mercy:
 guard and increase God's gifts, 333:7
 not dealt with according to our sins,
 333:2
 Paul: I obtained mercy, 333:4
 merit: God is crowning his own gifts,
 333:5
 messiah: witness of the Holy Spirit,
 308A:4
 milk: grace, 335K:4
 miracles:
 blindness cured by prayers of
 Stephen, 320-322
 body trembling cured, 322:2
 cure of Palladia, 323:4
 infant restored to life at Uzalis, 324
 Stephen worked, in name of Christ,
 316:1; 319:1
 misers:
 exhortation to, 335C:10
 martyrs and, 331:5; 335:2
 money:
 deposit with the almighty, 335C:9
 love of, 330:3; 335E:3
 make friends of mammon of iniquity,
 335C:8
 parable: servant "invested" master's
 money, 339:4-5
 test of values, 335C:13
 moneylenders, 335E:3
 morality:
 struggle with temporal/eternal goods,
 339:9

things, to be good, require good
 people, 311:11
 Moses:
 chair of Moses, 340A:10
 Stephen compares M. with Christ,
 315:3
 mother and son:
 he attacks her; she curses him, 322:2
 mother's milk, 335K:4
 mouth: confession unto salvation,
 306D:1,2
 music: I will make music to God. . .,
 335B:2
 mystical body:
 believe in Christ, the head, 308A:8
 chosen from the world, 313G:1
 head and members, 336:5
 living stones, 337:1

N

nakedness: endurance, 335:2
 Nicodemus, 316:3

O

oath(s):
 broken by King David, 308:2
 Christ's teaching on, 307:2,4
 God made witness to, 307:4
 habit, 308:5
 rash, 308:1,5
 swearing falsely, 307:2,4; 308:2,4,5
 swearing when challenged to do so,
 308:3
 occult temptation, 318:3
 Old Law: David's "five smooth stones,"
 335K:3
 original sin:
 death caused by, 335B:1
 enormity of the calamity, 318:2
 heaven shut against the human race,
 314:1
 pride: you shall be like gods, 340A:1

P

pagans: hatred of christians, 313G:2
 pain:
 living in, not to live at all, 306:5,6
 malice (the word), 306:1

Palladia: miraculous cure of, 323:4
 panic: I said in my ecstasy, 335E:3,4
 pardon: promised if I change my ways, 339:7
 parents: due honor to be paid to, 323:1
 pastoral work: planter and waterer, 340:3
 patience:
 Christ on the cross, 340A:5
 gain possession of your souls, 335E:6
 hope for what one can't see, 336:5; 337:3
 martyrs tested and proved, 335C:1
 martyrs, 333:1
 possess your souls in, 335A:3
 repentance; God's prompting, 339:3,7
 wait for the Lord, 339:7
 waiting for the Lord, 306A
 White Mass, 306C:5
Paul, Saint, apostle:
 attitude toward death, 335K:2
 choice of the name ("little"), 315:7
 chosen instrument; he will divide the food, 333:3
 on conversion, 312:3
 due for punishment, 315:6
 example for Christian life, 306B:2
 glory only in the cross, 330:4
 goad in the flesh; headaches, 306C:7
 good works are God's gifts, 333:5
 I have fought the good fight. . . , 333:2,5
 Jacob's blessing on Benjamin, 333:3
 lamp for the world, 317:4
 not listened to, 306C:7
 not worthy to be called apostle. . . , 315:6
 paid back good works by grace of God, 333:4
 servant "by the will of God," 316:5
 true witness instead of false one (Saul), 333:4
 worked harder ("grace of God with me"), 306B:2
See also Saul
peace:
 enemy of; not a disciple of Christ, 313E:3
 my peace I give you. . . , 313E:3
 praying for, 306C:8
 penance: price of pardon, 326:1

Pentecost: Jewish converts, 313B:4
 perfection:
 Saint Paul on, 306B:2
 shedding blood in struggle against sin, 318:2
Perpetua (martyr), 335A
 persecution:
 ceased; temptations continue, 335D:3,5
 quarry to teeth of the enemy, 313B:1,2,3
 suffering on account of justice, 335G:2
 those who denied Christ were freed, 335F:2
 persecution: winnowing at time of, 311:10
Peter, Saint, apostle:
 arise, kill, and eat. . . , 313B:3
 before the cock crows. . . , 340A:8
 blessed are you. . . , 335E:5
 convinced of the truth; ready to die for it, 311:2
 do you love me [asked three times]. . . , 340A:3
 fault (denials) wiped out by weeping, 330:4
 fear of death, 330:4
 fear perished; love conquered, 335E:3
 feed my sheep, 340:2
 feed [i.e. suffer for] my sheep, 340A:3
 get behind me, Satan. . . , 335E:5
 I don't know him. . . , 335E:3
 learned to deny himself, 330:4
 when you are old. . . , 335B:3; 340A:3
 widow restored to life by, 313E:8
 You are the Christ. . . , 306D:3; 335E:5
Pharisees: whatever they say. . . , 340A:9
 pleasure:
 Christian rejection of, 313A:1,2
 love of, 335C:3,4
 lust of the flesh, 313A:2
 theater, 313A:3
Pontius Pilate, 313D:4
 poor:
 contribute to "deposit box" for, 339:3
 despised by the rich, 311:13
 good health as patrimony of, 306:4
 if you have God, you have all, 311:15

invite to the feast, 339:6
 persecution: time of testing, 311:10
 power: benefit; disadvantage, 306C:6
 praise:
 always in my mouth, 306C:3
 because of love, 306C:5
 concern for sort of life of those who
 praise, 339:1
 Donatist bitterness, 313E:6
 God is praised when martyrs are
 praised, 313:2
 motive for good works, 338:3,4
 right order of, 335C:13
 prayer:
 attain eternal bliss: pray tirelessly,
 340:3
 gracious God listens; angry God does
 not, 306C:7
 intercession of Paul and Stephen,
 316:5
 make requests whose granting you do
 not fear, 323:1
 struggle with temporal/eternal goods,
 339:9
 value of saints' prayers, 313E:8
 preacher: words fall on deaf ears (of the
 greedy), 335C:10
 precious in sight of God is the death of his
 saints, 306:1; 313A:5; 318:1; 321;
 328:1; 329:1,2; 335E:2; 335I:1,4
 presumption: perishing by, 339:3
 pride:
 Christ came to cure by example,
 340A:5
 eminence given in the Church,
 340A:2
 good works and, 335J:4
 origin and cause, 340A:1
 shame in continuing to be proud,
 340A:5
 spirit of this world, 333:6
 worldly ambition, 313A:2,4
 Primus (martyr), 335A
 procrastination: slow to turn to the Lord,
 339:8
 prodigal son:
 denying himself, 330:3
 returning to himself. . . , 330:3
 prophecy: Christ proclaimed through all
 nations, 328:5

Protase, Saint: remains of martyr come to
 light, 318:1
 providence:
 objections against ways of God,
 311:12
 unless the Lord guards the city. . . ,
 333:5
 Psalm 30:
 Christ the head; we are his members,
 336:5
 prophecy of Christ's passion, 336:3
 punishment:
 existence in, is not life, 306:6
 malice (the word), 306:1
 martyrdom and, 306A
 martyrs deprived of temporal goods,
 335C:5
 mother's curse, 322:2
 resurrection to the judgment, 335F:2
 wrong cause and, 325:2

Q

Quadratus (martyr), 306B:1-7; 306C:1-8;
 306D:1-5
 significance of the name, "square,"
 306C:2

R

real estate: greed, 335C:8
 reality:
 cause of all realities, 308A:5
 hope and, 313F:1-3
 redemption:
 blood of just one victim, 335I:4
 blood shed for His enemies, 317:2
 Christ's "grand exchange" on the
 cross, 329:1
 gift to sinners: Christ's death, 339:6
 one price was paid to acquire us,
 340A:11
 passion of Christ and, 313E:5
 Son of Man came to serve, 340A:3
 what shall I pay back to the Lord. . . ,
 335M:4; 340:2
 while we were still sinners. . . , 335I:1
 relics:
 bodies of martyrs come to light, 318:1
 place indicated by preceding signs,
 318:1

- repentance:
 Judas: repentance without hope,
 313E:4
 patience of God drawing toward,
 339:3,7
- responsibility:
 for good or evil things we do, 335J:4
 servant "investing" master's money,
 339:4-5
- resurrection (of Jesus):
 disciples thought he was a phantom,
 340A:11
 lesson for us, 335H:1
- resurrection of the body:
 case of seven men with same wife,
 335L:2
 judgment day, 328:5
 married will live like angels, 335L:2
 to life; to judgment, 335F:2
 truth of; Sadducees, 335L:2
- rich and poor:
 Lazarus resting on Abraham's
 bosom, 339:5
- rich men:
 fear of death, 306:6
 good health precious for, 306:4
 if you have God not, what have you
 got? 311:15
 rejoicing in earthly possessions, 306:6
 wealth scorned in time of
 persecution, 311:10
- riches, *See* wealth.
- Rome:
 showpeople in, 313A:3
 tombs, 335C:11
- ruler: let him rule himself, 313A:4
- S**
- sacking: you have torn up my . . . , 336:4
- sacrifice:
 many blood sacrifices in old law;
 new law just one, 335I:4
 you will live; said by both pagans
 and martyrs, 335D:5
- saints:
 looking out for people, 335K:4
 precious is their death . . . , 306:1;
 313A:5; 318:1; 321; 328:1;
 329:1,2; 335E:2; 335I:1,4
- square (quadrated) construction,
 306C:7
 value of prayers of, 313E:8
- salvation:
 common to man and beast, 306D:2
 eager to work; fear and trembling,
 337:4
 eternal, not temporal, 306D:2
 hope in protection of God's wings,
 335D:3,4
 perishing by despair; by presumption,
 339:3
 receive the cup of salvation, 329:2
 saved through faith, by grace, 333:6
 temporal and eternal, 319A
 trust not in the sons of men. . . ,
 335B:4
- sanctification:
 lamp prepared for my Christ (Psalm
 132), 308A:1,8
 upon him my s. shall flower,
 308A:5,8
 willing slaves of justice for, 306B:4
 Saul, King: persecutor of David, 315:7
 Saul (later Paul):
 conversion into Paul, 315:7
 cruelest of persecutors, 333:2
 deserved to be damned; he obtained
 mercy, 333:2
 Paul compared with, 333:3,4
 prayed for by Stephen, 316:4
 ravenous wolf, 333:3
 stoning of Stephen, 315:7; 316:3,5
 why are you persecuting. . . , 316:4,5;
 317:6
See also Paul
- scribes: whatever they say. . . , 340A:9
- self:
 come back to yourself, 330:3
 crucified with Christ, 336:5
 love yourself; deny yourself, 330:2
 right and wrong love of, 330:3
- self-denial:
 denying oneself, 330:3
 don't do your own will, 330:4
- self-examination: Paul's teaching on,
 306B:4
- self-importance, 313A:4
- self-indulgence: spendthrift, 335C:3
- self-knowledge: ignorance of self, 340A:8

- self-love:
 last times; dangerous times, 330:3
 leaving God out of our life, 330:3
 neglecting God, 330:3
 sensuality: lover of, also wishes for wisdom, 335C:4,6
 serpent: sin, you will not die the death. . . , 335B:1,2
 servant:
 bishop as servant of the people, 340A:3
 parable: one who "invested" master's money, 339:4-5
 whoever wishes to be greater. . . , 340A:2,3
 seven times (just man falls), 306C:3,4
 shame:
 ashamed of being ashamed, 306B:6
 unworthy of God's love, 336:2
 shepherd: good only by God's grace, 340:2
 shorn ewes, 313B:3
 showpeople: status in pagan Rome, 313A:3
 shows and spectacles: lust of the eyes, 313A:3
 shrines: improper celebrations at martyrs' shrines, 335D:2
 sick:
 Christ came to make them well, 335I:5
 martyr on his sickbed, 335D:3
 practicing martyrdom, 328:8
 shelter of God's wings, 335D:3
 temptations, 328:8
 unlawful amulets/charms, 335D:3,5
 silence: ashamed of Christ before men, 306B:7
 sin:
 conversion: all evil deeds wiped out, 339:7
 desire; consent, 335J:2,3,4
 evils we do come from ourselves, 335J:4
 fight against, fought by all christians, 335J:2
 greedy love: love of sinning, 335C:2
 inner self killed by, 335B:5
 let us not look back, 335I:2
 loving badly; living badly, 335J:3
 only thing that is really our own, 306B:2
 persuaded to sin; you won't die, 335B:2
 self crucified with Christ, 336:5
 shedding blood in struggle against, 318:2
See also forgiveness of sin; original sin
 singing: lovers sing, 336:1
 sinners:
 Christ's enemies, 308A:6
 gift of Christ's death, 339:6
 God threatens the godless, 339:9
 Jesus died for, 335I:2
 precious for price paid for them, 335I:1
 shall not gain possession of the kingdom, 335I:4
 warning: dying you shall die, 339:2
 slander: blessed shall you be. . . , 340A:8
 slaves:
 of justice; of iniquity, 306B:4
 martyrs as, 335I:5
 Son of Man:
 came not to be served but to serve, 340A:3
 Jesus' preference, 306D:3
 sons of men: distinction between men and, 306D:3
 soul:
 chains (worldly values) binding the soul, 335E:3
 death of; and death of the body, 335B:5
 love it; lose it, 313D:2
 one who finds his soul will lose it, 335F:2
 snatched from the underworld, 336:3
 subject to God, 335E:6
 suffering the loss of, 330:3
 whoever has lost, will find it, 331:2
 whoever loves his soul will lose it. . . , 313C:1; 313D:1; 331:1; 330:2
See also body and soul
 sowers: martyrs and, 335A:2
 spectacles and shows: lust of the eyes, 313A:3
 spiritual life:
 God will satisfy all desire, 334:3
 nothing but God is enough for us, 334:3

- seek martyr's invisible rewards,
 335C:12
See also christian life; soul square:
 Quadratus, 306B:3
 square block: overthrowing, 306C:2,4
 squared timbers, 335E:1
 Stephen, Saint:
 acts of, in canonical scripture, 315:1
 birth compared with that of Jesus,
 317:3
 birthday compared with 25
 December, 314:1
 chosen by the apostles, 316:1
 conciliatory to his audience, 319:1
 discovery of his body (remains),
 319:6; 323:2
 do not hold this sin against them,
 315:5,7; 319:5
 fellow servant, 319:7
 followed example of Christ, 315:8
 good lamb followed the Lamb, 319:4
 imitated Christ in suffering, 319:5
 joined to Christ by dying, 314:1
 kneeling, he prayed for his killers,
 316:3; 319z:4
 lamp for the world, 317:4
 legend of stone which struck sailor's
 elbow (*ankon*), 323:2
 love him in Christ, 316:1
 love of his enemies, 317:6
 martyr follows his Master, 317:6
 merit of his faith, 317:1
 miracle at Uzalis, 324
 miracles at Ancona; 323:1,2
 miracles in name of Christ, 316:1;
 319:1,6
 miraculous cure of blind man,
 320-322
 ordained deacon, 315:1
 palm of martyrdom from mother
 Church, 317:6
 passion of Christ and, 315:2-3patient
 in death, 317:5
 place (chapel) to honor Stephen;
 worship God, 318:3
 power of his prayers, 319:6
 prayed for those stoning him, 319:4
 preceded his ordainers to martyrdom,
 316:1
 proclaiming from the rooftops, 315:3
 rebuke of the Jews, 317:5
 receive my spirit. . ., 315:5,6,7;
 316:3; 319:2
 relics, 317:1; 318:1
 Saul at stoning of Stephen, 316:3
 sermons on the martyr Stephen,
 314-324
 sleep of peace (his death), 317:5
 spoke at length at his trial, 315:3
 standing, while praying for himself,
 315:6,7; 316:3; 319:4
 stone tablets; teaching the law, 315:5
 vision of Christ, 314:1; 315:5; 316:2;
 317:5; 319:2
 where Christ received his spirit, 319:3
 stones: five smooth stones (David),
 335K:3
 suffering:
 being put to death all the day long,
 335C:5
 Christian endurance of, 313A:1,2
 cup of salvationion, 329:2
 devil; boasting, 328:4
 just cause, 306:2
 keeping to hard ways, 306:10
 Paul's "god in the flesh," 306C:7
 they will come back with
 exultation. . ., 335A:3
 suicide: mother who cursed her son, 322:2
 Susanna: struggle against sin, 318:2
 swearing, *See* oath.
 sword: understanding God's weapons,
 313:4
- T**
- Tabitha (widow), 313E:8
 table: Cyprian's place of martyrdom,
 310:2
 teeth: flock of shorn sheep, 313B:3
 temple of God:
 bishop as, 340A:8
 Christ, our foundation, 337:4
 Christians as, 337:2
 dwellers in the house of God, 337:3
 house not made by hands, 337:5
 living stones, 337:4
 purity in, 332:4temporal goods:
 bad people; God's providence,
 311:12,13

beg God to grant what is best for us,
 306C:8
 frequently we sin against God, 334:3
 given to bad and good alike, 339:6
 loss of all possessions, 318:2
 love of earthly things, 311:4
 martyrs deprived of, 335C:5
 temptation(s):
 ceaseless, 335D:3,5
 contests with, never lacking, 306C:5
 just man falls/rises seven times,
 306C:4
 persuaded to sin; you won't die,
 335B:2
 struggle against sin, 318:2
 when persecution no longer rages,
 318:3
 testing: persecution as time of, 311:10
 thanksgiving:
 for God's mercy; guarding and
 increasing his gifts, 333:7
 theater: shows and spectacles, 313A:3
 thorns: gather grapes from thorns,
 340A:10
 time:
 asking for more time; piling bad days
 on bad days, 339:7
 creation: Father, Son and Spirit,
 308A:4
 time does not harm people, 311:8
 tongue: bad use of (blasphemy), 311:11
 torment: eternal death, 306:5
 travelers:
 joy, 306B:1
 perfection on the, 306B:3
 treasure:
 where no thief can approach: heaven,
 335C:8
 where your heart is. . . , 311:15
 Trinity:
 from what moment is the Father. . . ,
 308A:4
 persons; brightness of a fire
 (analogy), 308A:4
 procession of persons, 308A:4
 revealed at Christ's baptism, 308A:5
 what Father does, Son does. . . ,
 340A:5
 truth:
 Christ the way to, 306:10

denial is adultery of the heart, 318:2
 dying for wrong cause, 325:2
 martyrs as witnesses, 328:2
 paid as reward of truthfulness, 306:9
 prophesying without knowing it, 315:2
 Tutuslymeni, 308:5
 Twenty Martyrs: birthday of, 325-326

U

uncleanness: love of, 306B:5
 unity:
 cherished, 313E:3
 Cyprian and, 312:6
 one inheritance, 340A:11,12
 Utica: martyrs of, 306:1; 311:10
 Uzalis: miracles reported at, 322:2; 324

V

Valeriana, Saint, 325:1
 values:
 defeat the delights of the world, 335:1
 God is teaching you to desire better
 things, 311:13
 lose better things by loving the
 inferior, 335C:4
 right order of love, 335C:13
 victims: people are harmed by other
 people, 311:8
 Victoria (martyr), 335A
 Victoria, Saint, 325:1
 vigils: abuses in celebrations; dancing,
 311:5
 vine and branch, 340A:10
 virtue:
 good things only to be found in the
 good, 311:11
 imitate martyrs, 311:1
 vision: Jews envious of Stephen, 316:2
 vocation: disciples chosen from the world,
 313G:1
 vomit, 318:2

W

wages: parable: workers starting at
 different hours, 335M:5
 wait for the Lord, 339:6,7
 walking: analogy; Christian life, 306B:1,3
 wealth:

- because you have asked, you have received. . . , 311:13
 disadvantage to many people, 306C:6
 earthly possessions, 306:6
 facing dangers for acquisition, 335:2
 good/evil related to usage, 311:13
 justice confronting riches, 335:1
 rich people despising the poor, 311:13
 transfer it where you can't lose it, 335C:9
- weapons:
 understanding God's weapons, 313:4
 used by martyrs, 313:3,5
- White Mass (martyrs of Utica), 306; 306A; 306C:1; 311:10
- wicked:
 future life of torment, 306:5
See also sinners
- wickedness, *See* good and evil.
- wife: authority over her body, 332:4 will of God:
 choose justice; it abides forever, 335C:13
 faith in, not questioning, 318:1
 Paul as God's servant, 316:5
- wisdom:
 angels, 335K:4
 beauty of, 306B:4; 335C:4
 dear love; common delight in wisdom, 335C:2
 heaping up treasure, 335C:7
 praise w. by the way you live, 311:4
 sensual pleasure and, 335C:4
- witness bearing:
 keeping quiet out of fear, 313E:7
 testimony of martyrs called crime, 335A:1
- woman: taken from the side of man, 336:5
- Word of God: in the beginning. . . , 334:2; 335K:4
- See also* Jesus Christ; Son of God
- words: rations provided by Augustine the bishop, 339:4
- work: reward: crown of justice, 333:2
- world:
 Christians, despise the world, 311:3
 crucified to me and I to the world. . . , 317:4
 Father is not in one who loves the world, 313A:2
 fear, with view to future life, 335M:1
 gaining the whole world. . . , 311:2
 hatred of christians, 313G:2
 loved in spite of bitterness, 311:14
 made by God; it did not know him, 313A:2
 martyrs and the seductions of, 335:1
 overcome by martyrs, 318:2
 passes away. . . , 311:6
 rulers; people who love the world, 335D:4
 spirit of pride, 333:6
 what does it profit a man. . . , 330:3
 whoever loves the world. . . , 311:6
- worship: God of the martyrs, 335H:2

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



3 9015 03743 9166



