

SERMON 1

On the glorious name of Mary, namely, her title ‘star of the sea’

The virgin’s name was Mary as in Luke 1:27 and today’s Gospel. Grant me, glorious Virgin, the strength, ability and words to be able to preach the glory of your name to those who are faithful and devoted to you. Not for the sake of announcing its greatness nor nature, but that I, your little one, may proclaim even a fraction of your immense praises for your glory, my devotion and the comfort of all who read or hear me.

Indeed, the name of Mary in its interpretation touches on enlightenment, bitterness and domination. Rightly, there is, in my opinion, more than one interpretation of the name for one name would be unable to express the glory of the Virgin; for this reason, perhaps, the Angel did not name her in today’s Gospel, wishing rather to show reverence in silence to something that could not be spoken/. Indeed it is a mark of reverence at times not to refer to a person by using a proper name but to refer to the person in a roundabout way. He states only the proper name of the person, not the circumstances of dignity or status. Therefore, Mary has not only one but many meanings; and so, just as we name God not by one single name but by many to indicate the incomprehensibility of God; so we refer to the glorious Virgin by many names, now as light, now as the sun, and such like. We do this to reach some slight knowledge of her grandeur.

▪ The immensity of her glory exceeds the poverty of human speech. Hence, Anselm, in his book *De ortu Virginis*,¹ expounding her praise, says: ‘Lady, what more can we say? The mind is inadequate, the tongue too weak for anyone who wants to contemplate the immensity of your grace and glory’. Therefore, in so far as we are able, we put forward three meanings in this one blessed name.

- Firstly, Mary implies enlightenment, for it is interpreted as ‘star of the sea’, because she is enlightened and enlightens.
- Secondly, it implies bitterness, because it is interpreted as ‘bitter sea’.
- Thirdly, however, it implies domination because it is interpreted as ‘lady’.

She was indeed a star of the sea in her birth because of her sanctification or preservation in the womb; she was a bitter sea in her way of life because her way of life was in poverty; she was a lady in her death by her assumption in glory. Or she was a star of the sea in her virginal integrity; a Lady in conjugal honour and reverence; a bitter sea in her care as a widow. She was a star because she was enlightened by God by whom she sheds light; she was a bitter sea from tasting bitterness and being incited to bitterness out of compassion; she was a Lady as perfected and perfecting.

For now, reference will be made only to the first point, namely, that the blessed Virgin is compared to a star. She can be compared to a star in three ways: firstly, to a star in the sky; secondly, to the polar star; thirdly, to a star of the sea.

ARTICLE 1

That the blessed Virgin is compared to a star in the sky, and this for three particular reasons

Firstly, I say, she is compared to a star in the sky especially for three reasons: firstly, because of her name; secondly, because of her dignity or place; thirdly, because of what she does.

CHAPTER 1

That the blessed Virgin is called a star especially because of her double stability

Firstly, the blessed Virgin is compared to a star in the sky because of her name; a star is so named from the verb to stand because it remains fixed in the sky. Therefore, it points to Mary as fixed in her sky as she remained without moving in her Son. She did this, firstly, in her life by irradiating a light of all the virtues and, secondly, in her death by suffering death. On the first point the Prophet says: *The queen*, that is, Mary, *stood on your right hand in gilded clothing* [Ps 44:10 (45:9)]. On the second point John 19:25 says: She stood *by the cross of Jesus*. She stood without moving like a star in the sky, that is, in her Son, because as the other stars, that is, the Apostles, fell from heaven, she alone stood, according to what is said in Habakkuk 3:11: *The sun and the moon*, that is, Christ and Mary, *stood still in their habitation*; or, according to another translation²: *The sun rose*, that is, Christ on the cross, *and the moon*, that is, the blessed Virgin, *stood still in their habitation*. But this was a place of mourning, full of sorrow. Therefore, Augustine³ brings the human race to Christ as it says: Laughing to myself, Eve rejoices, weeping over you, Mary suffers with you. Indeed,

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as the Son of God says in Isaiah 63:3: *I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me*, namely, but you alone, Mary, who truly suffered with me.

CHAPTER 2

On the double height of the perfection of the blessed Virgin

Secondly, the blessed Virgin is compared to a star in the sky because of her dignity or position. A star by its position is high in that it is placed high in the firmament; hence Sirach 43:1 says: *The firmament on high is his beauty*. So the blessed Virgin is most high in that her Son is more eminent than all others. But it is clear that Mary was most humble and so most high. Accordingly, in Sirach 24:7 she says: *I dwell in the highest places*. Indeed, she is the person of whom John is speaking in Revelation 12:1: *A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet*. The woman between the sun and the moon is the blessed Virgin between Christ and the Church. So Sirach 40:19 says: *The building of a city, the Church, shall establish a name, she shall firmly believe in Christ; and above this, the city, an immaculate woman, Mary, shall be counted*.

It is clear that she is highest of all creatures. Indeed, a creature is higher in dignity when it is higher in a degree of goodness; therefore, the best of all creatures is the highest. But this is the blessed Virgin because her degree of goodness is in accord with her level of love. Hence, to enquire how good a person is, is to enquire into how much the person loves, according to Augustine.⁴ But it is sure that she exceeds every creature in the measure of both natural and freely given love; natural, because she exceeded humans and angels in this; humans because a cause of natural love is likeness and closeness. Hence, there is written in Sirach 13:19 [13:15]: *Every beast loves its like, so also everyone loves the one him nearest to oneself*. Surely, between no son and his mother was there such closeness and likeness, because he was wholly from the substance of his mother; accordingly, between no others was there such great love. She also exceeded the angels in this for no angel had the Son of God as a natural son as did the blessed Virgin; because *nowhere does he take hold of the angels, but of the seed of Abraham he takes hold* [Heb 2:16].

That she exceeded both in freely given love is evident because the measure of freely given love is in accord with the measure of grace; but above all creatures she was *full of grace*; hence she was overflowing with love. Of this fullness, blessed Ignatius says in his *Epistola ad beatum Ioannem*⁵: 'They speak of Mary as abounding in all graces and fruitful in all virtues'. And so in love 'she exceeds every creature' as Anselm⁶ says: 'Indeed, the greatness of the love of the Virgin for her son and the immensity of her delight in him exceeds the loves and delights of all creatures'.

Truly, then, her dignity is the highest as befits her utmost goodness. This is prefigured mystically in the tree in Daniel 4:7 of which is said: *Behold a tree in the midst of the earth*, that is, Mary in the midst of every creature; *the height thereof was exceedingly great* because it is incomprehensible to any mere creature.

CHAPTER 3

On the seven workings of a star that were present spiritually in the blessed Virgin

Thirdly, the blessed Virgin is compared to a star in the sky because of the way it works. A star works in seven ways: firstly, it gives a signal; secondly, it illuminates; thirdly, it purifies; fourthly, it gives life; fifthly, it regulates; sixthly, it adorns; seventhly, it arranges.

Firstly, it gives a signal. In Genesis 1:14 there is written of the stars: *Let them be for signs*. Therefore, Albumasar⁷ says in the beginning: Praise to God who created the stars and placed them as an ornament and as lights to give signs so as to serve as a guide to rational creatures. By reason of this way of working the name of star is suitable for Mary because she was a sign as is written of her in Isaiah 11:10: *O root of Jesse who stands as a sign for the people. A sign* is something that presents itself to the senses but leaves something else in the mind. Mary presented the incarnate God to the senses, because *he was seen upon earth and conversed with men*, as stated in Baruch 3:38. But she left something else in the mind because by showing the Son of God visible in his flesh, she laid open his divinity to the mind through faith. Therefore, she was truly a sign as the Lord said to Ahaz in Isaiah 7:11-14: *Ask you a sign of the Lord your God*. And there is added: *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel*. In Revelation 12:1-2 there is written of this sign: *And a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars, and being with child*. Rightly is it said that she was with child because she did not draw male seed into her womb but conceived by the working of the Holy Spirit.

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Secondly, a star lights up the darkness of night; so also the blessed Virgin. In fact, before the coming of this Virgin the darkness of sin gripped the whole world so that no one was able to see the light of truth. All people were like *clouds tossed with whirlwinds*, as said in 2 Peter 2:17; hence they dwelt in darkness. In Nahum 1:8 it is rightly written of such: *darkness shall pursue his enemies*. Finally, the blessed Virgin arose like a bright star putting darkness to flight, so that Sirach 50:6 can be applied to her: *As the morning star in the midst of a cloud*. Bernard, *Super Missus est*,⁸ says: 'She is the noble star risen from Jacob, whose ray lights up the whole universe whose splendour shines above and penetrates the depths'. Therefore, Sirach 24:45, speaking for her, says: *I will penetrate to all the lower parts of the earth*, namely, to where it is cold and obscure, and I will look with eyes of mercy on *all that sleep*, that is, on the blind and the negligent, *and will enlighten all that hope in the Lord*, that is, by my enlightenment I will arrange it so that they may know the Lord and hope in him.

Thirdly, a star purifies the night; by its rays it clears the thickness of the cold of night and purifies by thinning it. Mary does this; before the coming of this star there was darkness in the whole earth, as is written in Isaiah 60:2: *Behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people*. On this mystery Exodus 10:22 says: *there came horrible darkness upon the whole land of Egypt*. Finally, there rose a star out of Jacob,⁹ namely, Mary who purified and cleared this darkness. Indeed, she is *a certain pure emanation of the Almighty God*, as stated in Wisdom 7:25. So Bernard¹⁰ says of her: 'Take away this sun-like body that illuminates the world that it might become day. Take away Mary, the star of the great and broad sea, and what are left other than an enveloping obscurity, the shadow of death and thickest darkness?'

Fourthly, a star gives life, as the Philosopher¹¹ states; therefore, the first sky has many stars because it is the main cause of life in things below. For this reason also, Mary is a star; indeed *death reigned from Adam*, according to the Apostle in Romans 5:14; so much so that it is said in 2 Samuel 14:14: *We all die*, and Psalm 88:49: *Who is the person that shall live and not see death?* But with the coming of that star everything dead is restored to life. Indeed she is the *tree of life* offering blessed fruit [Gen 2:9] by which one tasting death shall not taste it forever but *shall live forever*, as John 6:52 says. She it is who offers the *bread of life*,¹² Jesus, as said above.

Fifthly, a star regulates or controls, namely, the globe of the earth; indeed a star regulates the icy cold of night, and so fosters and controls what is born from the earth. For this reason also Mary is a star. The malice of this world is cold; hence, in Jeremiah 6:7 the Lord says: *As a cistern makes its waters cold*, namely, the world, she makes *its wickedness cold*. At the time when the blessed Virgin came forth, the wickedness of the human race was complete, according to Isaiah 40:2: *her evil is come to an end*, and so there was great cold in the world; John 18:18: *It was cold*, and so Peter warmed himself; since *the cold north wind*, that is, the devil, *blew and the water is congealed into crystal* [Sir 43:22]. Zechariah 14:6 had foretold this: *In that day there shall be no light but cold and frost*. But Mary came forth as a star warming and shining and consequently fostering. So Bernard, *Super Missus est*, hom. 1,¹³ says: 'She is a noble star crossing the world, warming minds rather than bodies, fostering virtues, purifying vices'. She is the valiant woman of whom Proverbs 31:21 says: *She shall not fear* for herself on a cold day; all her domestics are clothed with double garments, namely, with the love of God and neighbour, or because they have *the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come* [1 Tim 4:8]. These are very good as when Rebecca clothed her son Jacob so that he might be able to get the blessing of his father [Gen 27:15-27].

Sixthly, a star adorns, namely, the sky; hence, Sirach 43:10 says: *The glory of the stars is the beauty of heaven, enlightening the world*. Mary is a most splendid adornment of the heavens, for she regulates what is below and adorns what is above. Hence, in Sirach 26:21, speaking of her under a general title, there is written: *As the sun when it rises to the world in the high places of God, so is the beauty of a good wife for the ornament of her house*. Also, if we call the higher world an angelic creature, it is clear that she adorned the higher world because she refashioned it completely and in this way adorned the broken stones and inaccessible rocks of the number of angels. This indeed was foretold in Isaiah 60:13, for he says: *The glory of Lebanon*, that is, the blessed Virgin Mary, *shall come to you to beautify the place of my sanctuary*.

Sevently, a star arranges and unites, namely, the universe; she raises up the lower world and, as far as it is capable, unites it to a higher power and in this way reconciles it to some extent. So this Lady and Queen of the world reconciled the Church militant, as the lower world, with the Church triumphant in the higher world, and announced peace to those who are near and peace to those who are far away, that is, to the Church triumphant and militant. Indeed, she is the ark of the eternal covenant placed in the clouds of the sky lest *all flesh* be killed [Gen 9:11]. For she gave birth for us to him *who made both one, making peace, to reconcile both in one body* [Eph 2:14-16].

ARTICLE 2

That the blessed Virgin is likened to the polar star, especially under three headings

Secondly, the blessed Virgin is compared to the polar star, especially under three headings; firstly, because this star is closest to the pole; secondly, because she is descriptive of the pole; thirdly, because among the stars of the pole she is primary or first.

CHAPTER 1

On the fourfold closeness the blessed Virgin had to her Son

Firstly, the blessed Virgin is compared to the polar star because this star is closest to the pole or pivotal point of the sky. To understand what has to be said, it must be noted that there is a double pole in this world: one is invisible, namely, the southern; the other is visible, namely, the north; and both are immovable for on their immobility the whole world depends in its circular movement. Therefore, rightly is the double pole understood of the Son of God and the Word of the Father who is the beginning of everything in relation to one, and the goal of everything in relation to the other; the one in the south, that is, in the brightness of his majesty, is completely invisible to us, but the one in the north has been made visible in our humanity; so in Revelation 22:3 he says: *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. Show me where you lie down in the midday.*¹⁴ Of the north, Job 37:22 says: *Gold comes out of the north*, because the brightness of wisdom comes from the incarnate Christ. He indeed is immobile for on his immobility everything is based in its movement, 'immobile and remaining still he gives all things movement'.¹⁵ This star, namely Mary, was closest to this pole especially in four things: firstly, in the incarnation; secondly, in her way of life; thirdly, in compassion, fourthly, in her assumption.

Firstly, I say, she was closest to him in the incarnation, namely, through an identity of flesh; because the same flesh that belonged to the Virgin Mother, was made the flesh of the Son of the Father in a unity of person entered into by God. Therefore, he was so close to her that he was at the one time with her and in her. Rightly, then, on the basis of this unity was it said to her: *The Lord is with you* [Lk 1:28].

Secondly, she was closest to Christ in her way of life by her management. She was mystically prefigured by Noemi in Ruth 4:16 of whom is said there that she took *the child* born and *she laid it her bosom and she carried it and was a nurse to it*. She it was who could not bear his absence for, sorrowing, she searched for and found him *in the temple* [Lk 2:43-48]. She it was who, standing *outside* with his brothers, asked for *him*, as stated in Mark 3:31 towards the end.

Thirdly, she was closest to him by her compassion in his suffering; because when the disciples ran away she did not leave; John 19:25: *There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother.*

Fourthly, she was closest to him in her assumption by receiving glory. That she has been exalted above all the choirs of angels is certain and it is unlawful to doubt it, as Bernard¹⁶ says. For if *incorruption brings near to God*, as Wisdom 6:20 says, she is most incorrupt, because she is the mother of incorruption; she is closest to the pole, that is, to her Son. Those who have the same nature, also are in the same place, but she and the Son have the same nature, therefore they will be in the one place. Accordingly, by merit and place she will be closest to her Son, that is, to her pole.

CHAPTER 2

On the multiple intelligible sphere and that the blessed Virgin is nearer to Christ than all other creatures

Secondly, the blessed Virgin is compared to the polar star because this star is descriptive of the pole since its circuit around the pole is the shortest. We should reflect on how this is possible. The whole world represents a certain intelligible sphere of which the centre is Jesus, the Son of God, since he is like the centre in a circle from which all the lines go out, that is, all creatures, as blessed Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus*, chapter 4,¹⁷ shows. But this sphere has within it many circles arranged one with another. So a circle is shorter the closer it is to the centre. The largest circles around this intelligible centre are bodily substances, whether they are heavenly or earthly and they all complete their circle according to a greater or less distance and link with the first. As a result, living vegetable matter completes another circle, living sensitive matter another, and living intellectual matter a third. Among all these the shortest circle is made by the blessed Virgin Mary who by her devotion of mind held him more closely and enclosed and carried him within her blessed womb

so that she became as it were a universe, as the Prophet indicates when he said: *your lightnings enlightened the world* [Ps 76:19 (77:18)], that is, of Mary who was made the universe of the Son of God who is earth that remains forever [Sir 1:4]. Sirach 24:8, when speaking for this person, says: *I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven.*

CHAPTER III

That the blessed Virgin exceeds all other creatures in glory

Thirdly, she is compared to the polar star because this star is the primary or first of the stars. Stars may be now always visible as they go around the North Pole, or always hidden as are those in the lower south, or they may be at one time visible and at another hidden as those that are situated in the middle. But the blessed Virgin is primary or first in relation to the greatness of glory and the height of dignity. She is first among all lower bodies that are visible, or among all rational bodies that are invisible, or also among those heavenly lights that are in the middle because they share substance with the first and eternity with the others.

In relation to the first she is the first, as written in Wisdom 7:9: *Neither did I compare unto her any precious stone for all gold in comparison of her is as a little sand and silver in respect of her shall be counted as clay.* And these are the more precious among things that are visible.

In relation to the others, that is, to rational and invisible matter, she is first since she transcends all spirits in excellence; hence, in Sirach 24:11, she says: *By my power I have trodden under my feet the hearts of all the high and low,*¹⁸ or of the sublime.

In relation to the others, namely, to the heavenly lights, she is the first as is clear in what Wisdom 7:29 says: because *compared with the light she is found before it.*

This can be distinguished in another way, namely, that stars always hidden may be contemplatives who always wait on God and stars always visible may be active people always concerned with what they are doing. Bodies at one time visible and another time invisible, middle or mixed, are people who sometimes contemplate and sometimes work.

In relation to all these the blessed Virgin is first and so Sirach 24:9-10 says: *In every people and in every nation I have had the chief rule.*

Therefore, this star must be admired. Rightly, then, does the Holy Spirit say of her at the end of Wisdom 7:29: *She is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars, being compared with the light, she is found before it.*

ARTICLE 3

On the triple nature of the star of the sea that is proven to suit the blessed Virgin

Thirdly, the blessed Virgin is compared to a star of the sea. This star has three properties that are proven to suit in an excellent way the blessed Virgin: firstly, it moderates cold; secondly, directs navigators in danger; thirdly, points out or leads to and accompanies into harbour.

CHAPTER 1

That the blessed Virgin is a star illuminating and warming the world

Firstly, the star of the sea tempers the deepest cold; its gaze is always over the sea by the direction of its rays and consequently by emitting warmth. In this way, the gaze of Mary is always over the world by the shining of eternal splendour, namely, of her Son, and consequently by communicating the warmth of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, she is the way by which *light is spread and heat divided upon the earth* [Job 38:24]. For eternal light is dispersed, that is, made present, through her upon the dark world. Indeed, she is the one through whom *to the Jews*, that is to those professing, *a new light seemed to rise, joy, honour, and dancing* [Esther 8:16]. And so *heat is divided upon the earth* that is, the warmth of the love of the Holy Spirit is distributed, *and there is no one who can hide himself from this heat* [Ps 18:7 (19:6)], and indeed no heart is so hard and stone-like that it is not melted by his heat. In Job 28:2 is written: *Stone melted with heat is turned into brass*, that is, anyone who was hard and obstinate before is softened by the sweetness of Mary. Rightly, therefore, does this name, star of the sea, belong to her.

CHAPTER 2

That the faithful in the dangers of this world are guided by the blessed Virgin

Secondly, a star of the sea directs navigators in dangers. By it sailors know to where they are sailing, to the north, south, west or east, because it is located in the north. In this way also through Mary all dangers and hazards are avoided, all journeys made safe. So Bernard, *Super Missus est*, hom. 2¹⁹ says:

Whoever among you feel driven by the flow of this world between storms and tempests rather than walking on the earth, do not take your eyes off the brightness of this star, if you do not want to be overwhelmed by the storms. If attacks of wind rise up, if you run into dangers from storms, look at the star, call on Mary.

It is appropriate that the position of this star, since it is in the north, suits Mary. Indeed, persecution or trouble is usually represented as being in the north on account of the force of the winds and storms. So the position of Mary is in the north, so that through her the severity of a hostile persecution might be tempered and lessened.

A sinner is usually represented by the north. So Jeremiah 1:14: *From the north shall all²⁰ evil break forth.* Therefore, it is fitting that a northern position is given to her and she is placed midway between sinners and her Son so that on one hand his anger is softened and on the other he wipes out sin. According to Alexander of Hales, *Super Psalterium*,²¹ the blessed Virgin should be represented on the left of Christ who, fixed on the cross, turned his face to the east; and so to the left, that is, to the north, the blessed Virgin stood to pray for sinners who are on the left side of Christ. So the Prophet, speaking for Christ hanging on the cross, says: *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, and there was no one that would know me* [Ps 141:5 (142:4)]; because the Virgin was not there as she was on the left side most perfectly knowing Christ. Accordingly, it is said to her by a sinner in Song 4:16 at the end: *Arise, O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow.* When Mary rises up by pious intercession, the south wind comes, that is, the Holy Spirit through an outpouring of grace, and flows through the garden by receiving sweetness, and the aromatical spices flow from the receiving of multiple gifts. Of this north and south wind, Isaiah 43:6 says: *I will say to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back;* that is, I will ask Mary to give from her grace; and to the north wind, that is, to the Holy Spirit, do not keep back, but rather send out gifts through her more abundantly. This is the rod of Moses with which he struck the waters of the Red Sea, and so divided them that the people of God crossing between the waves entered the desert [Ex 14:16].

CHAPTER 3

That the blessed Mary is a star pointing out the harbour of eternal salvation

Thirdly, the star of the sea points the way to harbour; because Mary quells many disturbances and acts as guide to the land of promise. Hence Bernard, *Super Missus est*, hom. 2,²² says:

Following her you do not go astray, asking her help you are not desperate, thinking on her you do not err, holding on to her you do not fall, with her protection you are not afraid, with her as leader you do not tire, when she is gracious you arrive; and so in yourself you experience what was rightly said: *the name of the Virgin is Mary.*

In the night of this life she shines with the light of virtues so that she might show the way of truth and lead to the harbour of salvation. Indeed, she is the gate of heaven, as stated in Genesis 28:17: *This, namely, Mary, is no other but the house of God and the gate of heaven.* She is the ladder of Jacob, Genesis 28:12, of which the top reached heaven, and so leads to him, and on it the angels ascend and descend, because through her the angelic spirits descend for our protection and through her holy people ascend to receive the glory of heaven. And, so that I may use the words of Bernard,²³ it is necessary for all Christians navigating in the turbulence of this world to pay attention to this star of the sea who is close to the supreme point, that is, to God, and by example directs the course of life. Whoever does this, will not be tossed about by wind, nor broken by the rocks of adversaries, nor will they be dragged under by the Scyllan whirlpool of pleasures, but will arrive favourably in the harbour of eternal quiet, so that together with the glorious Virgin they will enjoy

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the eternal delights of her Son, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is the glorious reward of the blessed Virgin herself and of her devout followers through infinite ages of ages. Amen.

NOTES

- ¹ Rather, Eadmerus Cantuariensis, *De excellentia Virginis Mariae*, c. 8 (PL 159, 573).
- ² Namely, in the Septuagint.
- ³ The reference has not been found.
- ⁴ See *Epist. 137*, c. 5, n. 17 (PL 33, 524); *Epist. 155*, c. 4, n. 13 (PL 33, 671ff.); *Enarr. 2 in Ps. 26*, n. 9 (PL 36, 203); *In Ioann.*, tract. 87, n. 1 (PL 35, 1852ff.).
- ⁵ Pseudo-Ignatius, *Epist. ad Ioan. Apost. et Evang.* (PG 5, 942).
- ⁶ Rather Eadmerus Cant., *De excellentia V. M.*, c. 4 (PL 159, 565).
- ⁷ See *Introductorium in astronomiam Albumasaris*, I, c. 1 (Venice 1506, without page numbers).
- ⁸ Hom. 2, n. 17 (PL 183, 70).
- ⁹ Numbers 24:17.
- ¹⁰ *Sermo in Nativit. B. M. V.*, n. 6 (PL 183, 441).
- ¹¹ See *De plantis*, II, c. 4 (IV, 34).
- ¹² John 6:48.
- ¹³ Rather hom. 2, n. 17 (PL 183, 70).
- ¹⁴ In Latin the one word means both midday and south.
- ¹⁵ Boethius, *De consolazione phil.*, III, metrum 9 (PL 63, 758).
- ¹⁶ *Epist. 174*, n. 3 (PL 182, 333); *In Assump. B. M. V.*, sermo 1, in all its parts (PL 183, 415).
- ¹⁷ Paragr. 4 (PG 3, 698).
- ¹⁸ See Hugo de S. Charo, *Postilla*, on this text (III, f. 411b).
- ¹⁹ Num. 17 (PL 183, 70).
- ²⁰ See *Biblia maxima versionum*, on this text (X, Lutetiae Parisiorum 1660, 7b).
- ²¹ The editors note that they do not know the work to which Bernardine is referring.
- ²² Num. 17 (PL 183, 71).
- ²³ See *Super Missus est*, hom. 2, n. 17 (PL 183, 70ff.).

SERMON 2

On the glorious name of Mary and that it means 'a bitter sea'

The text, *the Virgin's name was Mary*, is taken from Luke 1:27 and from today's Gospel. Most dear Brothers, as long as human ability lives in this mortal body it cannot reach fully the praise of the glorious Virgin, the Mother of God, who surpasses every person and voice and overpowers the mind. Which mortal, unless enlightened by a divine oracle, would presume to utter anything slight or grand of the only Mother of God and man. Rather who would not fear to speak in this way with polluted lips of her whom *God, the Father of mercies, before all ages predestined* [see 1 Cor 1:7; 2 Cor 1:3] as the most worthy Virgin forever, whom the Son chose as his Mother and the Holy Spirit prepared as a dwelling of new grace? What praises could a human servant bring to the Queen of angels? What commendations could a limited mortal pronounce or what services could he or she offer to her for whom they prepare what is heavenly and pledge allegiance? With what praises will human applause on earth be worthy of her whom the companies of blessed spirits in heaven continually venerate? But because we are not able to praise her as she deserves, we can at least manage to extol her name.

We said in the previous sermon that the name of Mary means 'a star of the sea'; now we add why it is understood as 'a bitter sea'. Literally, the strong heat of the sun cause the bitterness of the sea by lifting up and drawing out its finer parts, scorching the earthly parts that remain and so making it bitter. Hence, in the bitterness of the sea three things can be noted: firstly, the separation of sweet from bitter; secondly, the burning of what remains; thirdly, the intermingling of what was burnt. Accordingly, the blessed Virgin was a bitter sea in the passion of her Son, because that was the drawing out of the sweetest Son, the burning of what was left, the mixture of all that is bitter.

ARTICLE 1

That, for four reasons, separation from her Son at the time of the passion was most bitter to the blessed Virgin

Firstly, there is indeed in the sea a separation of sweet from bitter. In the same way in the passion of the Lord there was a distancing and separation of the blessed Virgin, since it was for her the taking away of her most loved Son. This was most bitter to her for four reasons: firstly, from the condition; secondly, from knowledge; thirdly, from love; fourthly, from delight. Step by step, these are interconnected and follow one another.

CHAPTER 1

That the separation of her Son in the passion was bitter for the blessed Virgin because of his condition

Firstly, in the passion of the Lord the separation and taking away of her most loved Son was bitter for the blessed Virgin because of his condition, namely, as her Son. It is surprising that the worst bitterness was when her Son was completely sweet and *all lovely*, as stated in Song 5:16. Also the Prophet says: *The Lord is sweet and righteous* [Ps 24:8 (25:8)]. Because of this taking away the same Prophet says in the name of the Virgin: *My heart is troubled within me¹, my strength left me, and the light of my eyes itself is not with me* [Ps 37:11 (38:10)]. Or, according to another translation², she says more clearly: *My heart wavered, my courage left me, and also even the light of my eyes*. Indeed, her Son was her strength and courage in all difficulties, the light of her eyes and the joy of her heart in every success.

So her sorrow was extreme in intensity, extension and visible.

Firstly, it was extreme in intensity because it penetrated to her soul, as Simeon had predicted to her, Luke 2:35, when he said: *Your own soul a sword shall pierce*; this text on the two souls of Christ and the Virgin, when reflected on by looking forward and backwards, indicates a wonderful sharing and transformation of sorrow, as if he had said: *A sword shall pierce his and your soul or your own soul*.

Secondly, it was extreme in extension because it lasted through four continuous days. Her sorrow began in an extreme way on Wednesday because then the death of Christ was discussed and confirmed; it continued on Thursday in that he was captured, struck and mocked on that night; it increased into Friday

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because then her Son was crucified; but it extended until Saturday because then her Son was enclosed in the tomb.

Thirdly, it was extreme in how it was seen in that she showed and made her sorrow obvious by sobbing, by an abundance of tears, by lamenting in a loud voice, by striking her breast and clapping her hands. Indeed, her bitterness was extreme in that the taking away of her Son happened to her by a most shameful death.

CHAPTER 2

That his separation was most bitter to the Virgin on account of her knowledge

Secondly, the separation from her sweet Son was bitter to the blessed Virgin because of her knowledge. Three things contribute to compassion in one suffering with another for whom one feels compassion: firstly, the vehemence of the suffering; secondly, knowing how vehement it is in the one suffering; thirdly, the love and friendship in the one who is compassionate.

Firstly, I say, it is the vehemence of the suffering. The harshness of the passion of Christ was such that it cannot be expressed by any angelic or human tongue; it exceeds the ability of every mere creature, as Jeremiah indicates in Lamentations 1:12 when he says: *O all you who pass by the way, attend, and see if there is any sorrow like to my sorrow!*

Secondly, the pious mother was fully aware of this suffering because she stood by her dying Son whom she knew to be the Son of God. So John 19:25 says: *There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother.*

Thirdly, there was love and friendship for the one suffering because the intensity of suffering is proportionate to the intensity of love as will be stated below. Hence, she suffered intensely because she loved him intensely. Indeed, she would not have been so afflicted had she not seen his torment; but when, as Anselm³ says, 'she would hear the sentence passed on him; when she saw the cross on which she was to be hung, which he, with grief, had to carry on his shoulders', and even more when she saw him hanging on the cross already black and blue, scourged, wounded, bloody, 'is there anyone, I ask, who can see the depth of sorrow in her heart?' So she could say: *What, O my beloved, what, O beloved of my womb, what, O the beloved of my vows [Prov 31:2]? What, O my beloved, do you not gaze on your friend, your daughter standing by you at this very moment, as you are collapsing and suffering from grief? What, O beloved of my womb, do you not look at your mother weeping, sorrowing and fainting from distress at this very moment? What, O beloved of my womb, do you not notice your handmaid and carer who followed you to the cross with laments, sighs, shedding most bitter tears and at this very moment is close to dying of sadness? Do you allow most wicked hands to treat you in this way, to raise you on a cross with all your limbs extended, to expose to view all your inner organs so that in this way a sword might pierce my heart?*

Truly, Mary was a bitter sea so that Lamentations 1:4 can be applied to her: *She is oppressed with bitterness*, that is, she had been.

CHAPTER 3

That especially for five reasons the blessed Virgin loved Jesus and for these reasons separation was most bitter

Thirdly, however, the separation was bitter for the Virgin because of her love. As has been stated above⁴, the intensity of sorrow depends on the intensity of love: hence, in John 11:36 the Jews realized the love of Jesus for Lazarus from his sorrow and weeping; and so they said of him: *Behold how he loved him*. But Christ was loved most perfectly by his Mother; therefore, his separation was extreme bitterness for her. Indeed likeness is a cause of love. So Sirach 13:19 says: *Every beast loves its like, so also everyone his or her neighbour*. Christ was most like the blessed Virgin because he was born totally from the substance of his Mother. For this reason, he was loved most perfectly by her.

As a result there were in her all the reasons why a mother loves a child, and she had these most fully. The Lord Jesus Christ was more powerful, wiser, nobler, more handsome and better than all others. These are the reasons why mothers love their children so much.

Firstly, indeed, he was more powerful than others; 2 Maccabees 15:4: *There is one Lord, he is mighty in heaven*. The Prophet also says: *The Lord is strong and mighty [Ps 23:8 (24:8)]*. And Joshua 24:19: *The Lord is holy and mighty*.

Secondly, he was wiser than others. In a mystical sense he is *David sitting in the chair*, that is, on the cross, *the wisest*, as stated in 2 Samuel 23:8.

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Thirdly, he was nobler than others, because as stated in Isaiah 53:8: *Who shall declare his generation?* Fourthly, he was more handsome than others because as the Prophet says: *You are beautiful above the sons of men* [Ps 44:3 (45:2)].

Fifthly, he was better than others because as Wisdom 7:14 says: *He is an infinite treasure to men.*

Because of all these and similar things the love of the Mother was most intense and consequently her sorrow was most intense. So, Anselm⁵, setting out her love, says:

Let the one who is able, weigh such great love, with what sorrows, what laments, what sighs was she tormented when he was taken from her by the hands of cruel people, when he was led away for condemnation, when she saw him stand in the tribunal to be condemned to death by the sentence of a wicked judge.

CHAPTER 4

That because of the delight the Virgin had from Christ, separation for her was most bitter

Fourthly moreover, the separation of her beloved Son was bitter because of delight. For the greater the joy from the presence of another, that much the greater is the sorrow in an absence. Anselm, *De ortu Virginis*⁶: ‘Who could understand with what joy her soul was filled when she was eating with him whom she loved with all her heart, whom she knew to be the Creator and Lord of all things, and whom she had taught with a sweet word as she saw fit?’ For this reason her separation was most bitter and sorrowful, so that the text of Ruth 1:20 can be used: *Call me not Noemi, that is, beautiful, but call me Mara, that is, bitter, for the Almighty has quite filled me with bitterness.*

ARTICLE 2

On the four affections or passions from which the blessed Virgin suffered the utmost bitterness over the death of her Son

Secondly, in the sea the remaining material is burnt. Being burnt by the sun represents a burning and scorching completion or torment, according to a text of the Prophet: *The sun shall not burn you by day* [Ps 120:6 (121:6)].

In the blessed Virgin, besides this bitterness that came from the separation from her Son, there was a most intense bitterness on account of her state of mind or the burning of her sufferings. Seeing her only child and the only begotten of God made to suffer undeservedly so much and so severely, she was afflicted interiorly with a vehement scorching and, as a result, was much burnt and so made bitter without limit. But, so that this be more clearly understood, we should ponder the kind of suffering over the death of a friend. There are four sentiments or passions that arise from the death of a friend, according to what Augustine, drawing from his experience, says in Book IV, *Confessions*⁷: the first is a darkening of the heart; the second, the appearance of death; the third, adverting to or reflecting on what is troubling; the fourth, the wavering between death and life. These four can fittingly be applied to the blessed Virgin at the death and suffering of her Son.

CHAPTER 1

That the heart of the Virgin was darkened in a wonderful way at the death of her Son and so she was made bitter

The first feeling or suffering at the death of a friend is a darkening of the heart, as Augustine⁸ says about the death of his friend: ‘My heart is darkened’. If this happened over a social love, how much more in a maternal, natural, freely given and social love? In fact the blessed Virgin was united to her Son by a mother’s love, linked to him by a natural love, joined to him most strongly by a freely given love and lived with him for thirty years in social love. Therefore, when she saw him hanging between two thieves, lacerated and pierced by so many blows, would not her heart have been darkened? Hence the verse of the Prophet says aptly: *My heart is troubled within me* [Ps 37:11 (38:10)], as has been said above in the first chapter of the present sermon⁹. And so where there is such darkness in the heart, bitterness is extreme, and so it was rightly said in Lamentations 1:20: *My heart is turned within me, for I am full of bitterness.*

CHAPTER 2

That in everything the blessed Virgin saw of the death of Christ, she experienced bitterness

The second feeling or suffering, following the death of a friend, is the appearance of death; for when one is sorrowing at the death of a friend, whatever one sees about the person dying and of the cause of death looks like death to the one looking, according to Augustine in *IV Confessions*¹⁰. For he says:

Whatsoever I saw was death. If, then, between friends, where communication comes only from their closeness and yet death makes such an impact, how much more would it have happened in the blessed Virgin and her beloved Son, between whom such a close friendship was shared in birth, education, caring and most tender love? The strongest impact of death on her would have been from what she saw in his death, and consequently she experienced extreme bitterness of heart.

Truly, then, the voice of lamentation in Sirach 41:1 is particularly applicable to her: *O death, how bitter is your remembrance?* And that of 1 Samuel 15:32: *Does bitter death separate in this manner?*

CHAPTER 3

That the sight, reflection on and memory of what afflicted Christ, caused extreme bitterness in the Virgin

The third suffering is the finding or reflection or memory of what caused the torment; whatever is remembered is an affliction. So Augustine, as above¹¹, says: 'My homeland was for me a distress and my family home a strange unhappiness; and whatever I used to eat with him, without him was changed into torment'. If this was what happened in a love for a mere man, how much more was it in the love of God and humans, and not only of a companion but of an only begotten Son? For whatever the glorious Virgin saw, it became torment and torture, especially when she looked at her friend and Son killed with such cruelty. If *Rachel bewailing her children would not be comforted*, as said in Matthew 2:18, how much more the Virgin Mary? So the text of Jeremiah 6:26 can be applied to Christ as he was being lifted up on the cross: *Make the mourning of an only son, a bitter mourning.*

CHAPTER 4

That the love of the Virgin for her Son was so great that she would have wanted to die for him unendingly

The fourth suffering is a wavering between life and death. Augustine says in the same *IV Confessions*¹²: 'I do not know if I would want to do for him what is said of Orestes and Pylades, if they would want to die for one another or at the same time; because death was worse than not being alive at the same time'. All who love in this way want to die for one another. There is no doubt that this type of love was in the blessed Virgin so that, were it possible, she would have died for her son unendingly. If David wanted to do this for his son, how much more would she have done it for her Son. So that the text of 2 Samuel 18:33 is more fitting for her: *Who can allow me to die for you, my son?* Indeed, she *loved him as her own soul* [1 Samuel 18:1].

Question. Why, then, did the blessed Virgin not die if she was filled with such sorrow? Indeed, we have heard this of the wife of Phinehas in 1 Samuel 4:19-20; at the capture of the ark and the death of her husband she died from sorrow.

Anselm¹³ gives an answer to this, namely, that she would have died had the Holy Spirit not comforted her. So he says:

Pious Lady, I could not have believed that you could have in any way sustained the torment of such suffering without dying unless the very Spirit of life, the Spirit of consolation, the Spirit of sweetness of your Son for whom you were so tortured, had comforted you, consoled you, that the Spirit might teach you he was not dead but was being taken up, rather he was triumphant from subjecting all things to himself, that you saw happening in him as he was about to die before you.

So it is clear what effect the death of her Son had on Mary, effects that filled her with such bitterness. This was prefigured in the Shunammite, 2 Kings 4:27, of whom, at the death of her son, Elisha said: *Let her alone for her soul is in bitterness.*

ARTICLE 3

Of the four things mixed together from which extreme bitterness was caused in the Virgin

Thirdly, in the sea the burnt remnants are mixed one with another; and so in the passion of the Lord extreme bitterness was caused in the blessed Virgin by the mixture of the causes of sorrow. There were four factors, as from a particular mixture, that gave rise to the great bitterness in the blessed Virgin: firstly, what she saw in her Son; secondly, what she saw about her Son in his friends running away; thirdly, what she saw about her Son in the enemies who persecuted him; fourthly, on what she reflected in these events. These were in her and were seen as intermingled: the first, concerning her Son; the second, concerning the friends; the third, concerning the enemies; the fourth, concerning herself.

CHAPTER 1

The many amazing things that she saw in her Son were a cause of bitterness in the Virgin

Firstly, those things she saw in her Son were a cause of bitterness and sorrow in the Virgin. For she saw the price of the world torn apart for a paltry price; the fortitude of ages reduced to agony; he who was handsome *above the sons of men* [Ps 44:3 (45:2)], in a sweat of blood; the Lord of the world taken as a thief; the power of the heavens bound by restraining bonds; he who makes the pillars of heaven shake bound to a pillar; the founder of the earth bloody from blows; he who held life and death in his hand broken and lacerated from scourging; the judge of the world brought for judgement before wicked people; he who is glorified and honoured in heaven, scorned by most evil people; the King of heaven mocked by the wicked; the first of all princes and powers, struck with a reed so that he was bloody from flows of blood, from being crowned with thorns, and finally condemned to death by an unjust judge. She saw the highest, brought low in contempt; the most pleasant, afflicted with punishment; the wealthiest, surrounded with poverty; the clearest light, hidden in darkness; the most honoured, disordered in dishonour; the most lovable, grieved from taunts. Moreover, she saw clearly his naked chest, his side reddened with blood, that the inner organs are stretched and stand out, that bright lights grow dim, that the royal light pales, that the long arms become stiff, that the legs hang like marble, that a flow of blood wets the darkened feet.

Truly, then, the soul of Mary was in bitterness as she watched and pondered these things, so that she could utter the verse of Lamentations 3:15: *He has filled me with bitterness and inebriated me with wormwood.*

CHAPTER 2

What she saw in the disciples and friends of Christ at the time of his passion caused great bitterness in the blessed Virgin

Secondly, the things she saw about her Son when his friends ran away were a cause of bitterness and sorrow in the Virgin. This was so when the disciples, Peter and the others chosen for the apostolate, knowing his secrets and made his companions in everything, took to flight at the moment of the passion; and he, for whom shortly before they had promised to die themselves, left him alone with only his mother. Therefore, Anselm¹⁴ represents her as saying:

You go as one atoning to be immolated for all. Peter who said: I will die for you [Mt 26:35], does not meet you; Thomas who said: *We all may die with him* [Jn 11:16] abandoned you; and none of these other than yourself alone will lead, you who kept me chaste, my Son and my God.

But you will say, that it was much comfort to her that John received her into his care. But what is the consolation in this when there is an exchange between eternal for temporal? O unwelcome exchange! For the eternal and incommunicable God, she receives a mere mortal man; for a natural and only Son, she accepts another as son. O Lady, who, I ask, thought this would happen to you, namely, that you would hear from him whom you loved above all, that such an unspeakable exchange would happen to you. Truly, *a sword of great sorrow pierced your soul.*

Therefore, ponder what great bitterness was in the heart of the blessed Virgin.

CHAPTER 3

That great bitterness was caused in the blessed Virgin by what she saw done by those persecuting Christ

Thirdly, however, the things she saw in the persecuting enemy were a cause of bitterness and sorrow to the Virgin. There was deep bitterness in the Virgin when she saw the impious Jews attacking her only Son with evil threats, affronting him with most criminal abuse, slapping with blows him *on whom the angels desire to look* [1 Peter 1:12], spitting upon him with the dirtiest filth, binding, scourging, blindfolding the blessed eyes and mocking with the ugliest words, crowning with a crown of thorns, crucifying, piercing the hands and feet, hanging him between thieves; and this on a solemn day, in the royal city, in a frequent meeting place of people and in a place for the condemned. She saw that he was between the laments of those nearby, between the weeping of neighbours, between the insults of his accusers, between the scoffing of his mockers, between the abuses of those cursing.

CHAPTER 4

That because the blessed Virgin was present at the passion of her Son, with no one able to help or support her in any way, she was severely tormented

Fourthly, moreover, the things on which she pondered in the events were a cause of bitterness and sorrow for the Virgin. She pondered in a particular way three things in those events and these increased her bitterness and sorrow: the first, her presence; the second, her powerlessness; the third, her ignorance.

The first was her presence because she was present to see that before her eyes her Son was to be crucified and torn. Indeed, the Mother was sorrowful when she hears her son is to die a horrible death, but even more is she tortured when before her eyes she sees her son wounded and killed. With what sorrow the blessed Virgin was tortured when she saw her Son dead from such confusion and torture, and this before her very eyes!

The second was her powerlessness because she was powerless to help. It is deeply consoling for a mother when she assists a dying son and is able to support him in some way, but the blessed Virgin was unable to support him in any way. She heard that he was thirsty but was unable to give him a drink. She saw his body torn from wounds but was unable to bind up the wounds and apply some remedy. She saw his bleeding body but was unable to wipe and care for it with a linen cloth. She pondered that he could hardly hold his head up and she was unable to support him. She watched him weeping on the cross but was unable to wipe away his tears. She looked at his blood flowing onto the ground and was unable to gather it up. She watched as he died and was unable to kiss and embrace him. So she could say what is written in 1 Samuel 1:15: *I am an exceedingly unhappy woman*.

The third is ignorance, because she did not know to whom she could turn for help or advice. All the disciples had run away and there was no one present of whom she could ask advice or help, and she and her Son found no helper in such torment; hence, Sirach 51:10 says in the person of the Lord or the Virgin: *I looked for the succour of men, and there was none*; he had no companion when suffering, and the Prophet also, speaking in the person of the Lord, says of this: *I looked for one who would comfort me and I found none* [Ps 68:21 (69:20)]. And what is more surprising is that she had no one to console her; so the text continues: *I looked for one that would grieve with me, but there was none*. Further, she had no companion, so Job 9:14 says in the person of Christ: *My kinsmen have forsaken me, and they that knew me, have forgotten me*. And again the Prophet speaking in the person of the benumbed Christ, says to the Father: *Friend and neighbour you have put far from me* [Ps 87:19 (88:18)], that is, you have allowed them to be put far, O Father, ah *misery*, as if it were the interjection of one astonished; or *from misery*, that is, from an intrusive misery, namely, friend and neighbour are put far *from me*.

Therefore, when the blessed Virgin saw all these things and joined all these together in herself, would she not have felt extreme bitterness? Truly, then, Mary was a bitter sea into which so many streams and rivers entered. The single details of the passion are like a single river of sorrow and so of bitterness. Therefore, the text of Lamentations 2:13 can correctly be applied to her: *Great as the sea is your destruction*. And this sea was not driven back by unwillingness to suffer, but all these rivers were absorbed in her by her endurance, as Ecclesiastes 1:7 wrote with a mystical meaning: *All the rivers run into the sea*, that is, into Mary, *yet the sea does not overflow*, namely, by unwillingness to suffer. However, it flows back into us through her from the sea of divine bounty, because *of his fullness we all have received* [Jn 1:16], grace now and glory in the future. May he mercifully grant these to us, he who is her most pleasant and beloved Son, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit is the glory of all the blessed forever and ever. Amen.

- ¹ See *Biblia Sacra iuxta latinam Vulgatam versionem ad codicum fidem*, on this text (X, Rome 1953, 109b).
- ² Namely, Jerome, on this text (PL 28, 1156).
- ³ Rather Eadmerus Cant., *De excellentia V. M.*, c. 5 (PL 159, 566).
- ⁴ Above on this page.
- ⁵ Rather Eadmerus Cant., *De excellentia V.M.*, c. 5 (PL 159, 566).

- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Chapters 4-6, nn. 7-11 (PL 32, 696ff.).
- ⁸ Chapter 4, n. 9 (PL 32, 697).
- ⁹ See above page 17.
- ¹⁰ Chapter 4, n. 9 (PL 32, 697).
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid., ch. 6, n. 11 (PL 32, 697).
- ¹³ Rather Eadmerus Cant., *De excellentia V.M.*, c. 5 (PL 159, 567).
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 566ff.

SERMON 3

Further, on the glorious name of Mary and how Mary means ‘Lady’

The name of the Virgin was Mary, again Luke 1:27. God is the witness of my conscience that when, from an outpouring of heavenly grace and being free from external cares, I am able to be busy all the time or for a short time with the praises of the Virgin, I am struck by such joy of spirit, inspired by such interior sweetness that, spurning all the vanities and desires of the world, I prefer or desire nothing other than with a spirit of joy, should it be given, to go immediately to the Lord before the spiritual joy is taken away, cares again return and moved by the memory of the delights, the *harp is turned for me to mourning* [Job 30:1], and, unfortunately, the song of joy *into lamentation* [1 Macc 9:41].

In heaven, the Mother of God and the blessed Virgin surrounded by the ranks of angels, accompanied by the choirs of virgins, presides on the throne of her dignity. So, see how great is the happiness and glory when one is able to reflect on that face, now revealed with a totally full appearance of graces, and that once lived in the mean condition of flesh while she remained in the mire of the world. The contemplation of her name makes one so joyful that the name of Mary is to be contemplated again, and it is a pleasure to go to it again and again.

Enough has been said above on the meaning of the name Mary as ‘star of the sea’ and ‘a bitter sea’; now it is a pleasure to move to the third meaning of the name according to which Mary means ‘Lady’. We should reflect on three things in this matter: firstly, the definition or property of sovereignty; secondly, the extent of her sovereignty; thirdly, the numbers under her sovereignty.

ARTICLE 1

On the true definition of sovereignty that is shown to belong to the blessed Virgin

Firstly, indeed, we should reflect on the definition or property of sovereignty. A true sovereignty is one that is not subject to any authority, does not rely on the help of anyone, does not need subjection to anyone, and is for all people most abundant or profuse in sharing its goodness. Since, therefore, these properties are found firstly and per se in God alone, as a result they are found in Mary. That this may be made clear we are to treat of them singly.

CHAPTER 1

That the sovereignty of the blessed Virgin, or the blessed Virgin herself, is subject to no mere creature

Firstly, sovereignty is true when it is not under any authority; such was the blessed Virgin who was not under the authority of any mere creature. How could she be subject to any creature when she was made the Mother of the Creator? More, she is the Mother of the Lord of every creature and so was made Mother of all creatures. Hence the text of Genesis 16:9 can be spoken to any creature: *Return to your mistress and humble yourself under her hand*. Literally, this was spoken to Agar by Sarai. But Mary is the true Sarai, which means ‘princess’,¹ who gave birth to the true Jacob, namely, the Son of God, in whose seed all people are blessed and through whom she received authority over every creature. So Sirach 24:9-10, while speaking in the person of the Virgin, says: *In every people and in every nation I have had the chief rule*. Indeed, if it is lawful to say it, she became not only the Lady of every Creature but also of the Creator, as is written in Luke 2:51: *And he was subject to them*. Hence, this is true: every creature is subject to God and to the blessed Virgin; every creature and God are subject to the blessed Virgin. Hence, Bernard, *Super Missus est*, hom. 1², says: ‘God whom the empires serve and the powers obey, *was subject to Mary*, and not only to Mary, but to Joseph on account of Mary. This is humility without equal, a dignity like no other’. Truly, therefore, the blessed Virgin is named ‘Lady’.

CHAPTER 2

That the rule of the glorious Virgin needs no help from any creature

Secondly, the blessed Virgin does not rely on the assistance or help of anyone. On whom would she rely, she who is supported by the eternal King, the Son of God? In a mystical sense, she is Esther, to whom the king leaps *from his throne*, that is, the Son of God from heaven, *holding her up in his arms* [Esther 15:11].³ Esther means raised up among the people and she rightly signifies the blessed Virgin, the Lady of all people. Moreover, on whose help would the blessed Virgin rely, other than on her Beloved in whom is the abundance of all consolations, a richness of all goods, the delight of all and an affluence of sweetness? Hence, in Song 8:5, the angels admire and say: *Who is this that comes up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?* Hence, Bernard, in his sermon on the Vigil of the Nativity,⁴ says: ‘She is full of graces, full of heavenly dew, *leaning upon her beloved, flowing with delights*, a young woman prepared and chosen by the most high Son’. Justly, then, is she called Lady.

CHAPTER 3

That the sovereignty of the glorious Virgin has no need of subjection to anyone

Thirdly, the blessed Virgin has no need of subjection to anyone for she has a Son in whom *are all things* according to the Apostle [Rom 11:36]. Therefore, she who has all things in her Son, how could she need anything else? In a mystical sense, this is Anna who can say with complete truth with Joseph the words of Tobit 10:5: *We having all things together in you alone, ought not to have let you go from us*, when, namely, after coming back from Jerusalem in a day’s journey and *sorrowing* looked for him [Lk 2:44-48]. Moreover, all need comes from getting something not already possessed or from guarding what is possessed. But what does the Lady of the world not have, she who was named by the Angel as *full of grace* [Lk 1:28]? She is the Mother of all things [Wisdom 7:11-12 and so needs nothing. What protection does she need who felt the Holy Spirit coming down on her, the power of the Most High overshadowing her, the Son of God being born from her, and later being assumed and seated at his right hand? Indeed, *a throne was set for the king’s mother, who sat on his right hand*, as expressed in 1 Kings 2:19 in the mystical sense about the blessed Virgin. Rightly, therefore, is she named Lady.

CHAPTER 4

That the blessed Virgin distributes gifts and kindnesses most generously

Fourthly, the glorious Virgin Mary is most plentiful in her most affluent and generous goodness towards all. This belongs to sovereignty or pre-eminence, namely, an abundant holding of gifts or kindnesses; hence, Esther 2:18 said of King Ahasuerus that *he bestowed gifts according to princely magnificence*. And so the blessed Virgin is most generous. Bernard⁵ says: She comes to all who invoke her. ‘Finally, she *became all things to all* [1 Cor 9:22], she opens the hiding place of mercy, so that all might receive from her fullness [Jn 1:16]’. If some do not find this, then the blockage is in the recipients; it is not a fault in her generosity. With the help of her Son, as long as people bring *vessels* she fills them with the oil of gladness and mercy, as stated in a mystical sense in 2 Kings 4:5. This is the queen of Sheba who brought precious spices, that is, gifts of power, to Jerusalem, that is, to the holy Church. Hence, in a mystical sense, 1 Kings 10:10 has: *There was no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon*. Truly, therefore, she is called Lady.

ARTICLE 2

On the extent of the sovereignty of the blessed Virgin and that in her four kingdoms she is seen as great

Secondly, we should reflect on the extent of the sovereignty of the Virgin. A lord is as much greater as his sovereignty is greater. Speaking in her person, Sirach 24:8-10 says of the extent of her sovereignty: *I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven, and have penetrated into the bottom of the deep, and have walked in the waves of the sea. I have stood in all the earth, and in every people and in every nation I have had the chief rule*. It expresses in these words the extent of her sovereignty, namely, because she rules in four kingdoms: firstly, in heaven; secondly, in hell; thirdly, in purgatory; fourthly, in the world.

CHAPTER 1

That the blessed Virgin is the Queen and Lady of heaven and is above all the blessed in glory

Firstly, she says she rules in the kingdom of heaven and so she states: *I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven*. As Lady she compassed the heaven and everywhere took her sovereignty. Or she is said to compass the *circuit of heaven*, because she compasses all the saints and circuits and excels them in everlasting glory; she is the Mother of God.

It is greater to be the Mother of God than to be the Lady of the creatures of God. The title Lady depends on the title Mother of God as a branch depends on the root. It is to be held as certain that she is exalted in glory above every pure creature, since she fulfils and constitutes a complete and total category to which by right reason it is not fitting for another person to be added, because this state of its very nature admits one only. Just as it is in no way fitting that there be several Christs nor that God became many humans, so in no way is it fitting for the Son of God to have more than the one natural Mother.

Natural reason directly and openly dictates from the law of favour that the mother of a king of all is to have the throne of queen, seated above all the orders of ministers and soldiers. Because Mary was chosen as Mother, she has been chosen for this dignity that is above all the dignities of ministers and servants. By reason of the motherly love which she bears for God as her real Son, no one else apart from her can share in this dignity on the basis of any kind of affection which is not in reality that of the Mother of God.

Likewise, the soul of Christ, and Christ in so far as he is a man, transcend every order of pure creature. The rank of Mary is conformable to Christ the man, whose human reality transcends the whole order of the first creation to the extent that it is completely outside and above the whole order of the universe. Therefore, she could not be held within the universe. The dignity of the motherhood of God is so connected to the work of the incarnation that the incarnation could not have happened without it.⁶

Hence the Church⁷ says to the Virgin: 'Heaven itself cannot contain the One whom you bore in your womb'. Rightly, therefore, does the blessed Virgin say: *I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven*. On this, Bernard crying out said in a sermon⁸: O womb more spacious than the heavens, wider than the earth, more extensive than the elements, that was able to contain him whom the whole world was unable to enclose *and who with three fingers poised the bulk of the earth* [Isa 40:12]. Therefore, her sovereignty is great and she is rightly named Lady by antomasia. This is treated more fully in almost the whole of the Lenten sermon, *De christiana religione*, sermon 61, art. 3, a.⁹

CHAPTER 2

That the blessed Virgin rules over all the demons of hell

Secondly, she rules over the kingdom of hell and so she says: *I have penetrated into the bottom of the deep*. She rules not only over the demons who are on the surface of this hell, nor only over the middle demons, that is, those who are, as it were, in the middle, but also and especially over those who are in the depths. So she does not say: I have penetrated the surface or the middle, but *the bottom of the deep*. Hence, the etymology of this name applies to her for, according to *Catholicon*¹⁰ and Papias,¹¹ 'lord' or 'lady' means 'a controlling hand' because she controls the hands of the demons and powers. So, in a mystical sense, Genesis 3:15 says: *She shall crush your head*. And she says in Sirach 24:11: *By my power I have trodden under my feet the hearts of all the high and low*.

Just as the serpent overcame the human race through the sin of Eve who led Adam to eat the forbidden fruit and the destruction was complete when Adam ate; so through the merit of the Virgin, drawing God to assume her flesh, there began the crushing of Satan and our restoration that was completed by the incarnate God.¹²

In a mystical sense, Revelation 12:1-3 says: *a woman clothed with the sun*, that is, with the deity, with the solar wisdom and love of Christ, having *the moon under her feet*, that is, everything temporal and created, and standing *in heaven*, that is, firmly fixed on the heavenly in her mind and in contemplation, *being with child*, that is, with the Son of God and the whole mystical Christ in her mother's womb, with the head and the whole body of the elect, and victorious over *the red dragon with its seven heads and ten horns*, that is, victorious over the devil who is the beginning of every poisonous malice. All the capital vices and every violation of the commandments of God took their beginning from him.

CHAPTER 3

That the blessed Virgin rules also over those who are in purgatory

Thirdly, she adds that she has sovereignty in the realm of purgatory and so she says: *And I have walked in the waves of the sea*. The punishment of purgatory is called a wave because it passes; but she adds *of the sea*, because it is bitter. Hence, on distinction 25, of the canon *Qui in aliud saeculum*, Augustine¹³ says: ‘Who at another time produces the fruit of conversion, will be first cleansed by the fire of purgation’. Even though this fire is not eternal it is severe in a strange way for it overcomes any pain that anyone has incurred in this life or that can be suffered. The same is found in *De poenitentia*, last distinction¹⁴, towards the end, where is added: ‘Such pain is never found in this life, even though the martyrs suffered extraordinary torments and often in misery many endured so many tortures’. The blessed Virgin frees from these torments, especially her devotees. And this is what she says: *I have walked in the waves of the sea*, namely, visiting and coming to help her devotees in their needs and torments; in fact, she comes to all who live here, because they are her children since they are children of grace, confirmed in grace and made sure of glory.

CHAPTER 4

That the blessed Virgin rules over all the ranks of souls in the world

Fourthly, she adds that she rules over the kingdom of the world. Of this she says: *I have stood in all the earth, and in every people and in every nation I have had the chief rule*. There are three kinds of people found in the world: the first are carnal; the second, spiritual; the third, animal; or the first are fearful; the second, fervent; the third, careless; or some are evil, some good, and some lukewarm.

Firstly, she rules over the wicked and earthly *who mind earthly things* [see Phil 3:19], by leading them back to penitence; so she says: *I have stood in all the earth*, because among sinners who are earth or earthly, she does not lie down nor sit but stands upright to help, protect and draw them back from vice. Sinner, listen to Bernard, in one of his sermons¹⁵ say:

If you are troubled by the vastness of sins, if confused by foulness of conscience, if frightened by the horror of judgment, if caught up in a depth of despair, think on Mary, invoke Mary; do not let her name depart from your heart, nor depart from your mouth. Thinking on her you do not make mistakes, following her you do not go astray, speaking to her you do not despair, holding on to her you do not stumble; under her protection you do not fear; under her leadership you do not get tired; when she is kind you endure. In this way you will be able to experience in yourself how rightly it is said: *And the Virgin's name was Mary*.

Secondly, she rules over the good by increasing and preserving them in grace, and so she says: *and in every people*; the word people comes from ‘polis’ that means a city. For, according to *Cathlicon*,¹⁶ ‘a people is a large group of humans bound together by an agreement on law and by a mutual harmonious sharing.’ It represents good people among whom there is a union of wills. Among such the blessed Virgin has *the chief rule* and fosters them by the grace of God.

Thirdly, she rules the lukewarm by making them advance in fervour of love, and so she adds: *and in every nation I have had the chief rule*. The word nation comes from the word ‘to give birth or someone born’ because they exist as people born; indeed a person is born through baptism. Hence, in 1 Corinthians 4:15, the Apostle says to the Corinthians: *In Christ Jesus, by the gospel, I have begotten you*. There are individuals who make no progress in good and acquire no virtue but, as people not born in innocence, they live in carelessness and idleness. In Revelation 3:15-16, the Lord says to such: *I would that you were cold or hot! Hot from love, or cold from fear; but because you are lukewarm, that is, sluggish in good work, neither hot nor cold, that is, neither diligent nor fearing, like an infant newly baptised, I will begin to vomit you out of my mouth*. Such people, by divine judgment, become hateful to God and to the world. Over such the blessed Virgin holds the chief rule because she cares for and leads them to love or fear.

ARTICLE 3

On the size of the sovereignty of the blessed Virgin and on the fourfold number of her subjects

Thirdly, we should reflect on the size of the sovereignty of the Virgin. The larger the number of subjects, the more excellent is the sovereignty. Mary has many subjects over whom she rules nobly. These can be divided into four groups: the first are servants; the second, friends; the third, children; the fourth, however, are enemies. Song 6:9, in its mystical sense, describes this: *Who is she that comes forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?*

CHAPTER 1

That, by the merits of the blessed Virgin, sinners are reconverted to the Lord

Firstly, she rules over servants, that is, over people reconverted to God. In this she is like *the morning rising*, putting to flight and driving out of them all the darkness of past sin and bringing to them the light of kindly grace. Hence, the Lord said to the blessed Virgin on the day of her Assumption in the words of Song 4:8: *Come from Lebanon, my spouse, come from Lebanon, come. You shall be crowned from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of the leopards.* For he says: *Come from Lebanon.*

Lebanon means 'whiteness',¹⁷ and represents the world in the brightness of its vanity. Hence, Isaiah 10:34 says of the vanity of the world: *Lebanon with its high ones shall fall*; and Nahum 1:4: *The flower of Lebanon fades away.*¹⁸

Promising glory to her from the conversion of sinners, various mountains of Palestine are named, and they represent those converted from sin by the merits of the blessed Virgin. Hence, he says: *You shall be crowned from the top of Amana.*

Amana means¹⁹ 'an imposed union' and represents those who oppress others with violence. *Senir* means 'a nocturnal bird' and represents those who offend from ignorance. *Hermon* means 'the curse of mourning and sadness'²⁰ and represents all who offend in success and pleasures. By the dens of *lions* are understood robbers and the violent. The mountains of *the leopards* represent deceivers, traitors and cheats. A leopard is a spotted animal with many spots of various colours on its pelt.

So, it aptly represents the preceding.

CHAPTER 2

That no grace comes down from heaven to souls unless it is distributed by the Virgin

Secondly, she rules over friends, that is, over the spiritual and devout, and in this she is *fair as the moon* because she distributes the light of divine wisdom and the dew of heavenly grace to them. Hence Bernard²¹ says: 'No grace comes down from heaven to earth unless it passes through the hands of Mary'. Jerome says in a sermon on the Assumption²²: There was a fullness of grace in Christ, as in the head from which it flows; it was in Mary as in a mountain down which it flows. So, in Song 7:4, Solomon has the Virgin say to Christ: *Your neck as a tower of ivory*; for just as vital powers flow from the head through the body as coming down a mountain, so through the Virgin the vital graces from Christ the head flow into his mystical body, and they are continuously transferred more particularly into friends and devout. This is the hierarchical order for the flow of heavenly graces, so that they flow first from God into a blessed soul, because as said in James 1:17: *Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.* Then it flows into the soul of the Virgin, then into the seraphim, then into the cherubim and so successively through the other orders of angels and saints; finally into the Church militant, and especially into the friends of God and of the glorious Virgin.

CHAPTER 3

That the blessed Virgin is the Lady of the angels and is incomparably higher in glory than the whole body of the blessed

Thirdly, she rules over her children, that is, the angels. In this she is *bright as the sun*, namely, to shine on the whole body of blessed spirits. Since the blessed Virgin is the Queen of heaven and the Mother of the Son of God, she has as many servants as her children who carry out the ministry. But, according to Hugo de S. Victore on chapter 14, *De angelica hierarchia*,²³ 'only divine knowledge that knows everything knows the number of the heavenly powers, it alone sees and knows them fully'. Hence, according to some,²⁴ the number of Angels alone is more than the particles flying in the air. If, then, the number of angels is so great how many more will there be of the other higher spirits, since, according to some, for each angel there are ten archangels, for each archangel there are ten principalities, and so on going up through each rank? The

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reason for this opinion, according to the Apostle in Romans 1:20, is that *the invisible things of God²⁵ from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*. But according to students of nature, water is ten times larger than land, air is ten times larger than water, and fire is ten times larger than air. And, according to some,²⁶ it is the same for the single elements up to the highest heaven. From these visible things, by the rule of the Apostle, it can be concluded that there are ten times more archangels than angels, ten times more principalities than archangels and so on for all the others. Accordingly, all the angelic spirits are ministers and servants of the glorious Virgin. How could they not be her servants when the restoration of their full number was made through her Son; through him they were purified, enlightened and perfected in the perfection of attained glory?

Truly, she can be called Lady and rightly should all heavenly spirits confess and say the words of 2 Kings 10:5: *We are your servants, whatever you shall command us we will do*. Rightly does the etymology of the name apply to her because, according to Papias,²⁷ ‘lord’ or ‘lady’ means ‘the one who presides over the house’; indeed, she presides over the house of God, that is, the highest heaven, as Sirach 26:21 testifies when it says of her: *As the sun when it rises to the world in the high places of God, so is the beauty of a good wife for the ornament of her house*.

CHAPTER 4

That the blessed Virgin terrifies all the demons by her power

Fourthly, she rules over adversaries and enemies. According to Papias,²⁸ from etymology the words ‘lord’ and ‘lady’ mean much the same as ‘giving threats’; therefore Solomon adds: *terrible as an army set in array*. Those practised in warlike matters have known how much armed lines of battle ready for attack are of great beauty and fearsome to see, how much the equipment delights and the armour terrifies. When you see in open fields lines of strong warriors arranged in order from different directions, banners conspicuous, shields of various kinds and colours, red helmets and decorated styles of iron, fighting spears for casting and long arrows for shooting, sharp swords ready to be dripping with blood, the din of arms, the neighing of horses announcing the coming of war by prancing and snorting, individuals fearful but making signs of courage; others making the attack, others blocking those running, others instructing the troops, others forcing those separated into a group; all waiting on the sign and face of the leader, hoping without concern for either victory or death: who can see this without pleasure, and pass through without fear? In this way the Virgin Mary, filled with the gift of graces and to be feared for her various powers, delights the members of her household of faith with a type of piety and terrifies the enemy by her authority of power. She was the first to declare war on vices. She was the first to arrange the fighting lines of the powers against the attacks of the flesh, when she chose virginity and secured it with the guard of humility by which she struck terror in the devil and to the saints ‘she became beautiful and sweet’.²⁹ For *when a strong armed man guards a court* in quiet, and by a tyrannical law would capture a person subject to sins, when this person feels the customary vices are resisted by a new power, the person is immediately dismayed:

He says, I see wars against me, wars are prepared.

There where the enemy is fearful, the faithful are given joy. The one woman appeared *terrible and beautiful* at one and the same time for diverse effects, for when she gave birth to the One who is strong in battle against the enemy, for us he is a peaceful leader. Hence she is said to be *beautiful and sweet* [Song 6:3; Ps 23:8 (24:8)], because while by reason of chastity she *surpassed them all* [Prov 31:29], so that she might give birth to the Lord of majesty in the form of a servant, she took the utmost care in her spirit to protect humility, lest from some pride over others it be seized, when threatened, for it was to be taken by the angels.

We have seen the property, extent and size of the sovereignty of the Virgin. So, most dear brothers, let us ask our Lady, the blessed Virgin who merited to be the Mother of the Judge of ages, that she, as an advocate, might make amends to her Son for our sins. What danger could there be in this when she pleads on our behalf and has before God what she may presume to ask for the children of the world because she is the Mother of God, and he is able to forgive us kindly *because he is the Son of God* [Jn 5:27]? Certainly, both feel compassion for human needs: the Mother by excusing mortals lest they perish; the Son by forgiving

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sinner so that they might rise again. Therefore, all of us who pray most devoutly to his Mother should amend our lives and habits, by common decision, with equal desire, asking with a strong affection, that she might lift up her Church, accept our ministry, guard our land, protect our city, multiply the faithful, drive enemies away, and protect her family. All who invoke and adore the triumphant name of Jesus and of his Mother Mary, should pray that she might always direct and keep us in Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit is eternally worthy of blessing, is blessed, glorious and who lives and reigns for infinite ages of ages. Amen. Amen. Amen.

NOTES

- ¹ Jerome, *De nominibus hebraicis* (PL 23, 784).
- ² Num 7 (PL 183, 60).
- ³ See Bonaventure, *De Assumptione B.M.V.*, serm. 4 (IX, 695b).
- ⁴ Rather *Sermo in dom. infra Oct. Assump. B. M. V.*, n. 15 (PL 183, 438).
- ⁵ *Loc. cit.*, n. 2 (PL 183, 430).
- ⁶ Olivi, *Quaestiones quatuor de Dmmina*, q. 3 (*Bibl. Franc. Ascet. Medii Aevi*, VIII, 44-47), with some changes and additions. Cf. *De christ. relig.*, sermo. 61, a.2, c. 4 (II, 386).
- ⁷ *Brev. Rom.*, Commune B.M.V., ad 1m, res. 1m.
- ⁸ Rather Nicolaus Claravallensis, *Sermo de Annunt. B.M.V.* (in the works of Peter Damian, PL 144, 558); see *De christ. relig.*, serm. 61, a. 2, c. 6 (II, 387, note 3).
- ⁹ *Opera*, II, 391ff.
- ¹⁰ Ioannes Balbi, *Dictionarius vulgo Catholicon nuncupatus*, under *Dominus*.
- ¹¹ This etymology is not found in the Vocabularium of Papias but see the preceding note.
- ¹² Olivi, *Quaestiones quatuor de Dmmina*, q. 2 (VIII, 40), et pp. 33-34 textus sequens.
- ¹³ *Decretum*, c. 5 (I, 94); from Pseudo-Augustine, *De vera et falsa poenitentia*, c. 18, n. 34 (PL 40, 1128).
- ¹⁴ *Decretum*, d. 7, c. 6 (I, 1247).
- ¹⁵ *Super Missus est*, hom. 2, n. 17 (PL 183, 70ff.).
- ¹⁶ Under *Populus*, without page numbers.
- ¹⁷ See *Glossa Ordinaria*, on this text in Lyranus (III, f. 361b); Hugo de S. Caro, *Postilla*, on this text (III, f. 125d).
- ¹⁸ From John Pecham, *In Cantica*, c. 4 (Senis, *Bibl. Commun.*, cod. U. V. 2, f. 42v), and f. 42r for the text quoted further on with some changes and additions.
- ¹⁹ See Hugo de S. Charo, *Postilla*, on this text (III, f. 126a).
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*; *Glossa interlinearis*, on this text in Lyranus (III, f. 361).
- ²¹ *In Vigilia Nativ. Domini*, serm. 3, n. 10 (PL 183, 100).
- ²² The words that follow are not from Pseudo-Jerome, but from Ubertinus, *Arbor vitae*, I, c. 8 (f. 15d). See *De Christ. relig.*, serm. 61, a. 1, c. 8 (II, 378, note 2).
- ²³ *Expos. in hierar. caelestem*, IX, c. 14 (PL 175, 1131).
- ²⁴ See Pseudo-Dionysius, *De cael. hierar.*, c. 14 (PG 3, 322); Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses*, XI, c. 11 and XV, c. 24 (PG 33, 705 and 903); Chrysostom, *De incomprehensibili natura*, sermo 2, n. 4 (PG 48, 714); Gregory, *Moralium*, XII, c. 13, n. 18 (PL 76, 20); Thomas, *Summa*, I, q. 50, a. 3, under Respondeo (V, 8b); Bonaventure, *De sanctis angelis*, sermo 5 (IX, 623ff.); and also *De christ. relig.*, sermo 60, a. 1, c. 2 (II, 355) where Bernardine of Siena treats the same question using almost the same words.
- ²⁵ For *him*. See *Biblia maxima versionum*, on this text (XV, 23a).
- ²⁶ For the theories about astronomy of the ancients and the scholastic scholars see P. Duhem, *Le système du monde*, Paris 1913-1915, and *De chist. relig.*, sermo 51, a. 1, c. 2 (II, 142).
- ²⁷ Papias Grammaticus, *Vocabularium*, under the word *Dominus*, without page numbers.
- ²⁸ *Loc. cit.*
- ²⁹ See *Brev. Rom.*, Commune B.M.V., antiph. as Vesperas.

SERMON 4

On feasts of the blessed virgin and especially on the feasts of her conception, birth and annunciation [On the admirable graces of the blessed Virgin]

As the sun when it rises in the world [Sir 26:21]. The mystery of the glorious virgin, the Mother of God, is put before us today, most beloved, as a mystery to be revered for its high dignity, to be celebrated with the utmost devotion, and to be contemplated in its sweetness. Indeed, this day is glorious for it brings to us the brightness of sunlight; it announces to us that the Virgin, the Mother of God is conceived or born or addressed. We should then lift up every feeling of piety, lift up our mind and concentrate it with all our strength on her. In her sweetness, vigour and splendour she arouses every pious mind, enlightens as she arouses, strengthens as she enlightens, so that they may know, want and be able to imitate the footprints of her Son; because, as Sirach stated, she is spiritually like *the sun when it rises in the world*.

In these words the wisdom of God describes the highly regarded triple state of the blessed Virgin: firstly, of her conception; secondly, of her birth; thirdly, of the annunciation.

Firstly, her conception is said to be like the sun, as if her Son was behind the mountains at dawn being still closed within the womb of his mother from the time of her conception. Of this state of the Virgin the Angels say in Song 6:9: *Who is this that comes forth as the morning rising?*

Her second state is her birth described as the sun rising, namely, when it ascends from the mountains of the east and lights up the world in its rising. Of these two states, the Prophet says to the Lord: *You have made the morning light and the sun* [Ps 73:16 (74:16)], that is, the blessed Virgin in her conception and birth.

The third state is her annunciation and the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, in which she is said to be like the sun in the world, that is, in the height of heaven, since she ascended above our hemisphere in the highest glow of heat. Such was the blessed Virgin in the conception of the Son of God.

ARTICLE 1

Of the four admirable graces with which the blessed Virgin was filled in her conception

The first state of the blessed Virgin was her conception, and in this the blessed Virgin was like the *morning rising*. In this state, among other things, we should contemplate her four splendours: the first is called holiness; the second, clarity or brightness; the third, love; the fourth, tranquillity.

CHAPTER 1

On the triple sanctification of things to be sanctified, and on the admirable sanctification of the blessed Virgin in her conception

Her first splendour can be called holiness. Setting aside the arguments among the Scholastics over the virginal conception, we are to discuss now a triple sanctification.

The first is a general sanctification.

This is the sanctification by which people are sanctified in the Church sacraments, especially in baptism. This sanctification has two good effects in a person: firstly, it removes sin; secondly, it gives grace. It does not remove a third thing for there remains the passion or inclination for sinning,¹

because a person so sanctified can sin both venially and mortally.

The second is:

a special sanctification offered by the grace of the Holy Spirit. This holiness puts a soul in a state of perfect justice and does three things in it, firstly, it removes sin, secondly, it confers grace, and thirdly, it also removes any inclination that could lead a person to be stained mortally.

Since all are conceived in sin, we do not read of anyone ever being sanctified in the mother's womb from mortal sins, apart from Jeremiah and John the Baptist, although about the blessed Virgin there is no ambiguity,² as stated below. 'The sanctification of John was far greater than the sanctification of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was sanctified in his mother's womb', as written in Jeremiah 1:5 where it says: *Before I formed you in the bowels of your mother, I knew you, and before you came out of the womb, I sanctified you.* 'But John

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is said to have been full of the Holy Spirit'. Hence, in Luke 1:15, the angel says of John to Zechariah: *He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb.*

It is more excellent to be filled with the Holy Spirit than to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification refers to a cleansing, but being filled refers to more than that, namely, to an inundation of grace. But the Apostles, who with their *hands handled of the word of life* [1 Jn 1:1], were, as stated in John 20:22, to receive the Holy Spirit being sent by the Saviour. They ascended to this grade only forty days from the day of the resurrection when it would be said of them in Acts 2:4: *They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.* And although the Holy Spirit in a fuller gift filled then the hearts of the believers, we read that John reached in the womb what the apostolic dignity merited to obtain at length by a fuller promise.

Although 'the Apostles were then strengthened by a strong presence of the Holy Spirit, so that they could easily avoid every mortal sin and even frequent venial sins, I do not believe that it was made impossible for them to sin';³ and I believe that it is to be held firmly 'that the twelve athletes, true conquerors of the world, were endowed with so much grace that it would have been most difficult for them to fall into mortal sin'. However, it has to be stated firmly that they never sinned mortally.

The third sanctification is maternal, and this 'removes original sin, confers grace and removes an inclination to sin either venially or mortally. And this was in the Virgin'⁴ Mother.

For sure, just as the eternal God created all things in his wonderful wisdom, in the same way God also made and sanctified in time his blessed Virgin Mother with the holiness she was chosen to have for her eternity. And God made the Mother with such nobility of nature and perfection of grace as was fitting for her to have in her most glorious majesty, because God had to take in her and from her what would be joined to God for eternity in a unity of person from whom the price of all redemption, justification and human blessedness would go out.⁵

Anselm, in his book *De conceptu virginali*,⁶ says this: 'It was fitting that his conception should be from a most pure Mother with purity than which no greater under God could be conceived'. And he adds the reason for this when he says:

To her, God the Father was ready to give the only Son, whom he bore from his heart equal to himself, in such a way that naturally he would be one and the same Son both of God the Father and of the Virgin. The Son chose to make her substantially his mother, the Holy Spirit worked in her so that she might conceive and give birth to him from whom he proceeded',

and because of this it was fitting that the conception of that man, namely, Christ, should be from a mother of such purity than which no greater could be thought of under God.

CHAPTER 2

With how much light the Virgin was enlightened even in the womb of her mother

The second splendour of the Virgin is called clarity or brightness, for in the first sanctification such clarity of wisdom for her mind and understanding was infused into her by God - Mary means 'enlightened'⁷ - that, according to some,⁸ she understood perfectly the following seven matters: first, non rational created nature; second, rational created nature; third, spiritual created nature; fourth, divine uncreated nature; fifth, everything to be avoided and despised; sixth, everything to be followed and embraced; seventh, in what way and to what degree all things are to be hated or loved. This distinction includes within it knowledge of the Creator and of all things created, also of all things evil and good. The first three and the last three come from the fourth, namely, knowledge of the Creator, as the Prophet testifies when he says: *In your light we shall see light* [Ps 35:10 (36:9)]. We attribute the last three also to those who have acquired much divine wisdom in its ultimate degree.

From what has been said, it follows that the blessed Virgin even while in the womb of her mother had the use of free will and perfect light in her mind and reasoning. Hence, according to some,⁹ she was at that time in a higher state of contemplation than ever reached by any other fully developed person. And although, like other infants she slept in the womb of her mother, nevertheless:

the sleep that puts down and buries the use of reason and of free will in us and, consequently, an act of merit, I do not believe that such was operative in her, but her soul freely and meritoriously actually moved towards God'.¹⁰

Hence, during that time ‘while awake, she was more perfect in contemplation than ever happened in anyone else’. So in Song 5:2 she says: *I sleep and my heart watches*, namely, in perfect contemplation not weakened by any action. However, according to others,¹¹ this happened after her second sanctification and this, perhaps, is more accurate.

Nor should anyone wonder, if the Mother of God had the use of reason before maturity and shone with such light in her mind, when many other saints in their childhood, before maturity, had virtue, grace and light. An example of virtue is found in Saint Nicholas who drank from the breast only once on Wednesdays and Fridays.¹² An example of grace is evident in Saint Benedict who as a child began to be famous because of miracles.¹³ And there is most clear proof of the light in Saint John.¹⁴

Hence Ambrose¹⁵ says: Truly, John recognized Christ, not by nature but by grace. And he says also in *Super Lucam*¹⁶: ‘Nor did John experience the age of infancy when the *measure* of the perfect *age of the fullness of Christ* began in the womb of his mother beyond nature, beyond age’ [see Eph 4:13]. These things indeed:

could not be true in any way if bodily infancy prevented the free use of reason. That he says, moreover, that the *measure* of the perfect *age of the fullness of Christ* began, is verified not from a power, perfection or strength of the body, because he was still a child, but from a fullness of merit, and by an act and use of free will so that in this he might be joined to Christ who was sanctifying him and in the womb of the Virgin he was given a full use of free will.¹⁷

From the words of Ambrose it can be deduced that not only for then did he not experience the limits of infancy in the use of reason, but also that he never felt them thereafter. This would seem to be sufficiently reasonable because the merciful God does not withdraw graces given to a person unless there is sin.

This indeed clearly appears in the actions of John since it is said of him that at the age of seven years he fled the world and entered the desert.¹⁸ Nor should it be thought that he went there to stay permanently without previous reflection.¹⁹

Therefore, if such things are to be believed about the life of blessed John, how much more must one feel about the Virgin Mother?

CHAPTER 3

On the fervour of love the blessed Virgin felt for God and neighbour while still in the womb of her mother

The third splendour of the Virgin is love, namely, that divine love was infused in such fullness into her will that she would not want to infer anything not shown her beforehand by the wisdom of God. Hence, enlightened by this wisdom, she loved only God in so far as she understood God was to be loved by her. Who could express with what fervour she loved God *with her whole heart*, that is, more than everything temporal of the world, *with her whole soul*, that is, more than her own body and flesh, and *with her whole mind* [Mt 22:27; Mk 12:30], that is, more than all higher things such as spiritual and heavenly realities? The Prophet says speaking for her: *My heart has been inflamed, and I have been changed inwardly* [Ps 72:21 (73:21)], namely, by the transformation of divine love.

From the ardour of love for human salvation she desired the incarnation of the Son of God with all her affection. For:

the whole force of the first sanctification drove the mind of the most holy Virgin to desire this for the salvation of all the elect. Therefore, all the virtues of her most fervent mind enkindled her soul with every effort towards what was later done in her. She was the happy conclusion of all the expectations and desires for the coming of the Son of God in whom as in a cone, that is, in a corner, all the desires of the elect and saints before her were realized and completed. It is completely impossible for us to express the fervent desire and sigh of feeble prayer by which she called on God to deign to send the Son to assume our nature. Nor is it to be believed that she regarded herself as worthy to receive him in her flesh. By grace of the aforementioned sanctification that filled her with every virtue, her mind was grounded from the first in an abyss of humility so that just as no other creature after the Son rose to such a dignity of grace, so no other descended into such an abyss of deep humility.

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Moreover, it was given to no other mere creature in this world to taste so keenly the nothingness of a creature, nor to humiliate and annihilate itself so much under the will of the divine majesty,²⁰

as did the blessed Virgin.

Rightly, then does Bernard say in a sermon²¹:

Those in heaven, those who live in hell, those who have gone before us, we who still live, those who are to follow us, children of those who are born and those who will be born from them, look at the Virgin as at a mid point, as at a secret of God, as at the cause of things, as at the planning of the centuries; those in heaven look to be renewed, those in hell to be delivered, those who have gone before us *that your prophets may be found faithful* [Sir 36:18], and those to follow that they may be glorified.

So Bernard. And the same author²² says further:

Who, O blessed one, could be able to examine the length, breadth, depth and height of your mercy? For its length reaches until the last day to all who come invoking her, its breadth fills the world so that the earth is filled with your mercy. And so its height of the heavenly city is restored, and its depth obtains redemption for those sitting *in darkness and in the shadow of death* [Ps 106:10 (107:16); Lk 1:79].

Further, the same writer²³ says:

Mary has been made all things to all. Out of her most abundant love she made herself a debtor to the wise and to the stupid, she opens the hiding place of mercy for all, so that *from her fullness* [Jn 1:16] all receive: the captive, freedom; the sick, a healing; the sinner, pardon; the just, grace; an angel, joy; and the whole Trinity, glory; the person of the Son, substance of human flesh, so that *there is no one who can hide from her heat* [Ps 18:7 (19:6)].

CHAPTER 4

On the tranquillity of the flesh of the blessed Virgin under the control of reason

The fourth splendour of the blessed Virgin is tranquillity, something that always flows from the preceding. In her faculties of understanding and feeling there was as much tranquillity as the three preceding were abundant, and in such a case deceptive disturbances of the imagination are taken away. From this, her feelings were subjected to the control of her will so completely, that she was not able to be driven in any direction against the control of her will and mind, nor other than in a way her will and reason commanded to be followed or avoided. This indeed is also seen in just people. Depending on whether they are more or less just, they restrain their feelings and this to such an extent that people in rapture so restrain their feelings that it is impossible for them, at least while they are in such high contemplation, to be inclined towards a fall in any way by their feelings. The book *De anima simplici atque de anima libera*²⁴ refers to this state and time, although many useless, dangerous and wrong things, able to deceive many, dangerous are contained in that book, as is clear in Extra, *De haereticis*, in the single chapter, I *Clementinis*.²⁵

This indeed could have happened in the blessed Virgin in her first sanctification, in that she was able by such wisdom and love to avoid every actual sin either mortal or venial; in this way her enduring grace made her incapable of sin. And so, since the feelings mentioned above were in full harmony, the lower feelings were in full agreement with higher desires, and the higher feelings in full obedience to God; from this her *place is in peace and her abode in Zion* [Ps 75:3 (76:2)].

Moreover, because venial sin sometimes occurs from deception, namely, that some disordered movement of concupiscence or passion arises and hinders reason, they are called sins because of the first movement. Consequently, the blessed Virgin Mary never sinned venially because she did not experience disorder in movements of passion. However, such disordered movements of passion arise from the fact that the ability to feel, the source of these passions, is not subjected to reason but sometimes is moved to something beyond the direction of reason, sometimes even against reason, and the movement of sin consists in this. But in the blessed Virgin the ability to feel was subjected to reason by sanctifying grace, so that she was never able to act against reason.

But she was able,

according to Thomas²⁶:

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to experience some feelings not controlled by reason. On the other hand, there was more in the Lord Jesus Christ; the lower feelings in him were so controlled by reason that they could only move towards something as controlled by reason, that is, as reason decided or allowed a lower feeling to desire for itself. This belonged to the integrity of the first state in which lower passions were subjected completely to reason. This subjection was taken away because of the sin of the first parent, not only from him but also from others who inherit original sin from him. But even in those from whom later original sin is cleansed by the Sacrament of grace, there remains a rebellion or disobedience of the lower faculties against reason, and this is called the inclination to sin, something that in no way existed in Christ. But in the blessed Virgin the lower faculties were not totally subject to reason and so she could experience feelings not controlled by reason; however, they were so restrained by the power of grace, that in no way could they influence her against the decision of reason. For this reason, it is usually said that there remained in the blessed Virgin after her first sanctification an actual inclination to sin but it was bound.

So Thomas.

ARTICLE 2

On the other four graces with which the blessed Virgin was filled from her birth until the conception of the Son of God

The second state of the blessed Virgin was her birth and her way of life because in these she was truly like the *morning rising*. From this sun four rays went out in the world to enlighten and illumine minds. The first was beauty; the second, purity or immunity; the third, sweetness; the fourth, a model.

CHAPTER 1

That the blessed Virgin, while shining with admirable beauty, not only did not provoke wantonness, but rather restrained the passion for pleasure in others

The first is called a ray of beauty; hence, in Song 4:7, the bridegroom says to her: *You are all fair, O my love and there is no spot in you*, namely, bodily or spiritual. For, according to Alexander of Hales, in III²⁷:

The first sanctification removed from the Virgin everything that could incline to sin and any other carnal feelings that like serpents creep in human flesh. This sanctification was so great that it reached out to her other faculties and extinguished in them all concupiscence of the flesh. So in Sirach 24:17 she says: *I was exalted like a cedar in Lebanon*. Because, just as a cedar kills serpents by its odour, so her first sanctification reaches out to others and extinguishes in them all carnal serpents, all movements of concupiscence in the flesh. In this it is also like myrrh, as is clear in Sirach 24:20, where she says: *I yielded a sweet odour like the best of myrrh*. For just as myrrh kills worms, so her holiness killed the worms of concupiscence of the flesh.

According to Bonaventure,²⁸ the Jews also report ‘that the Virgin Mary was most beautiful and yet could not ever be desired’. The reason for this was because the virtue of her holiness and chastity extinguished all carnal feelings in those who looked at her. The blessed Virgin had this privilege more than all the saints and holy virgins because their holiness did not extinguish concupiscence and feelings in others, nor was it passed on to others in this way.

Beyond what has been said before, as can be seen in the words of blessed Bernard,²⁹ this could happen from four reasons or from one or other of them: firstly, because of an impression; secondly, from a way of life; thirdly, from concealment; fourthly, from illumination.

Firstly, indeed, this could have happened from an impression by which on all who were inclined to desire her, she did not appear desirable in a carnal sense; just as a very beautiful woman, because of an injury inflicted by her husband, is not able to be seen by him as desirable. Similarly, God can do good by grace.

Secondly, this could have happened from a way of life that displays an admirable uprightness and seriousness in actions and in gestures of the face and the whole body; these visible signs make it evident to those who look at her that in no way could she be attracted to anything unseemly; rather, that she was totally consecrated to God and was made a most singular dwelling of God, as could happen with a most holy woman who was continuously in a kind of rapture.

Thirdly, this could have happened from concealment, that is, of her beauty from all who might want to desire her, just as the brightness of the body of Christ was concealed from the disciples after the resurrection.

Fourthly, this could have happened from illumination. According to Bernard,³⁰ because of the brightness and illumination coming from her face, Joseph hardly dared to look her in the face. Also a Gloss³¹ on

Matthew, chapter 1, says: 'that Joseph was not able to see Mary face to face for the Holy Spirit had fully filled her from the moment of conception'. And so he did not see her face to face until she gave birth.

CHAPTER 2

With what purity and immunity from every sin the blessed Virgin Mary shone after the first sanctification

Her second ray is called purity or immunity. The blessed Virgin by a grace of preservation or sanctification was kept free from every actual sin, venial as well as mortal. Otherwise, the inclination to sin would not have been silenced in her or, according to others,³² perfectly restrained. Hence Augustine, in his book *De natura et gratia*,³³ says of the holy Virgin Mary: 'Out of honour for the Lord, when there is question of sin I do not want there to be any question about the Virgin'. By the first sanctification she was chaste in her flesh, and so was immaculate in her mind from every sin whether venial or mortal. This is especially so for three reasons: firstly, because of the suppression of an inclination to sin; secondly, by an influence of grace; thirdly, by the protection of divine grace.

Firstly, I say, because of the suppression of an inclination to sin. The inclination to sin was so suppressed in her first sanctification that in no way was she attracted to evil.

Secondly, however, by an influence of grace, because there was so much grace in her that although her free will was not yet confirmed in its final goal, it always inclined her to good as will be clear below.

Thirdly, by the protection of divine grace, for divine providence, just as it protected people in the state of innocence, so it protected the blessed Virgin from every actual sin. Hence, Bernard, *Ad Lugdunenses*,³⁴ 'I think a more copious grace of sanctification came down on her that it sanctified not only her birth but thereafter it also kept her immune from every sin'.

Moreover, of no other soul can the text of Song 4:7: *You are all fair, O my love and there is no spot in you*, be spoken more fittingly than of the blessed Virgin; where there is a spot of actual sin, either venial or mortal, this can in no way be said of her. That she should be so immaculate is fitting for three reasons, according to Bonaventure in III, dist. 3³⁵: firstly, to confuse the devil; secondly, for our intercession; thirdly, because of the divine betrothal.

Firstly, I say, to confuse the devil because it was fitting that the blessed Virgin Mary who was taking away from us any reproach, should also overcome and conquer the devil; she would do this by not giving in to him even for a moment. Both Augustine³⁶ and Bernard³⁷ explain the text of Genesis 3:15: *She shall crush your head*, in this same way. So, if suggestion is the head of the devil, no suggestion found its way into the mind of the Virgin; and so she was immune from both mortal and venial sin.

Secondly, it was fitting for our intercession because the advocate of the human race should shine with such purity that there would not be in her any sin that might disturb her conscience.

Thirdly, it was also fitting because of the divine betrothal. It was indeed fitting that she who so pleased almighty God that God would make her the bride and Mother of the only begotten Son, would be as immaculate in mind as she was chaste in her flesh. Therefore, the glorious Virgin Mary is to such a degree the advocate of sinners, the glory and crown of the just, the spouse of God, the resting place of the whole Trinity and the most special place of rest for the Son of God that, by a special grace of God, sin had no place in her.

CHAPTER 3

With how much sweetness all the spiritual senses and affections of the blessed Virgin were delighted in God

The third ray of the lovable Virgin Mary is named sweetness. There are five senses in a human soul, as in a human body, all of which in the blessed Virgin were closed to the world and its dangers but open and ready for God; just as on the contrary those open to the world are closed to God.

Firstly, her hearing was open to God so that she could accept most promptly every breath of God. So the Prophet says speaking for her: *I will hear what the Lord God will speak to me* [Ps 84:9 (85:8)].

Secondly, her sense of taste was open to savour the wonderful delights of God and when inebriated with their taste she said: *How sweet are our words to my palate, more than honey to my mouth* [Ps 118:103 (119:103)].

Thirdly, her eye and mental ability were open when, from experience in affection and mind, already filled with God she invited others to the text: *Taste and see that the Lord is sweet* [Ps 33:9 (34:8)].

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Fourthly, the sense of smell in the soul of the Virgin was open when in the words of Song 1:3 she begged the Lord saying: *Draw me, we will run after you to the odour of your ointments.*

Fifthly, her sense of touch was also open so that she could embrace the Lord closely and sweetly, often visiting him. Because she did this continually, she would say with the Prophet: *It is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God* [Ps 72:28 (73:28)]. The Prophet says of these five gates: *The Lord loves the gates of Zion above all the tabernacles of Jacob* [Ps 86:2 (87:2)].

Zion was the most prominent and safest place in Jerusalem. In the same way, the blessed Virgin is the highest and safest from vices on account of the eminence of her virtues. Therefore, *the Lord loves the gates of Zion*, that is, the five senses of the blessed Virgin, *above all the tabernacles of Jacob*, that is, more than the bodies of other virgins. For bodies are called *tabernacles* as the Lord testifies in 1 Peter 1³⁸ saying: *The laying aside of my tabernacle is at hand.* Virgins are rightly called *Jacob* because they struggled with and have overthrown the inclination to sin³⁹

that in the blessed Virgin was 'bound and quietened'.⁴⁰

There are also four elements from which a human body is not only made up, but also fed and nourished through the five senses. Four human affections nourish the soul through its five spiritual senses, as the Lord says in Matthew 4:4: *Not in bread alone does man live, but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*

Sinners nourish their souls with these four affections for what is transitory and earthly, while the just for what is heavenly and divine. But some are now found in whom the mental and bodily powers are daily and more increasingly trained. In such people perfect states of mind have been achieved by most regular contemplation as well as having, through divine help, a definite and long experience of the spirit of the higher senses; by these they have produced in many ways admirable effects. They experience at times the sweetest and painful fervour; sometimes from an admirable inebriation of spirit they shed bitter tears; sometimes, lamenting from the heart, they break out with wonderful sounds, standing in a kind of spiritual sleep, the body awake, yet in some way they are mentally changed; sometimes while the mental states are partially unbalanced, the soul is somehow drawn out from the body by some spiritual object; sometimes while the whole human being is raised up in ecstasy, the soul is set free in divine love; at times sudden and prolonged raptures occur from which the whole soul is taken up into God. Sometimes it happens that a soul through penetrating changes of love enters the inner chamber of heavenly secrets; many inspirations of wonderful inspirations of truths excite the soul by spiritual consolation; in the divine splendour there come also most clear and open revelations; the highest visions are not lacking and in these the soul experiences itself to be in the deep and infinite abyss of God, as if it had been changed in its substance. It also happens that by a certain non-rational but most fervent act of love, a spiritual marriage is entered into with Christ in a short time but gloriously. So great and such is the genuine nobility of a soul that through spiritual delight it is made as if glorified, something *not granted to man to utter* [2 Cor 12:4].

Therefore, if we see such high and sublime events in poor, and in a way unworthy, persons, how much more sublime, worthier and to us completely incomprehensible are the things done to her and that are to be believed about her who already was full of grace [Lk 1:28], predestined from eternity to be the Mother of God, chosen *out of thousands* [Song 5:10], raised up in everything and to be exalted in heaven even above all the angels!

CHAPTER 4

On the admirable and exemplary life of the Virgin Mother of God

The fourth ray is that she was a model. Her whole behaviour and life shone with every grace and virtue. So Ambrose, in II liber *De virginitate*,⁴¹ says:

What is nobler than the Mother of God? What is brighter than her whom brightness chose? What is purer than she who gave birth to a body without bodily infection? And so that I may be silent over her other virtues, I say she was a virgin not only in body but also in her mind. Humble in heart, serious in words, prudent in mind, speaking few words but more attentive to reading; not in doubt over riches but putting her hope in the prayer of the poor; concentrated when working, modest in speech, the judgment of her mind searching for God not

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humans, offending no one, wishing well for all, standing up for elders, not envying equals, shunning boasting, following reason, loving virtue. When did she disdain a humble person? When did she laugh at a weak person? When did she avoid the needy or a person with a fierce look? Never bold in words, never immodest in actions, not weaker in gesture, not a more unhindered walking, not a voice more impatient, so that the very exterior of her body was an image of her mind, an image of uprightness. The Evangelist portrayed her in this way, the angel found her like this, the Holy Spirit chose her as such [Lk 1:26-38]. Why should I delay over details when she was worthy for the Son of God to be born from her.

Jerome⁴² says further: 'If you examine closely, there is no virtue, no brightness, no grace and no beauty that does not shine in the glorious Virgin'.

Those who want to reign with Christ must always look to the Virgin as to a mirror and model of Christian life. So Bernard⁴³ says: All Christians, sailing through the waves of this world, should look to this star of the sea that is near to the highest pole, that is, to God; and direct the course of their life by her example. Anyone who does this will not be tossed about by the wind of vain glory, smash on the rocks of enemies, nor drawn in by the Scyllan whirlpool of pleasures but will favourably reach the port of eternal quiet. The same Bernard⁴⁴ says:

If disturbed by the vastness of sins, if confused by the ugliness of conscience, if terrified by the horror of judgment, if involved in an abyss of conscience, think of Mary, call on Mary; do not let her name be far from your heart, nor depart from your mouth. For thinking on her you do not err, asking her help you are not desperate, following her you do not go astray, holding on to her you do not fall, with her protection you are not afraid, with her favourable to you, you succeed. And so you will experience in yourself how rightly it is said: *The virgin's name was Mary* [Lk 1:27],

that is, a star of the sea. Rightly does Ambrose say in his book *De virginitate*⁴⁵: 'Mary was such that the life of her on its own is a lesson to all'.

ARTICLE 3

On the four flames of love with which the Mother of God was on fire after the conception of her Son

The third state of the blessed Virgin was her annunciation in which, like the midday brightness and heat, this shining sun poured out four flames: the first is called abundance; the second, freedom from sin; the third is unity; and the fourth can be called safety.

Chapter 1

That the blessed Virgin in the conception of the Son of God was filled with new and incomprehensible virtues

The first flame is called abundance. In the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit by which the blessed Virgin conceived the Son of God, she received as large an abundance and bounty of the Holy Spirit as it was possible to receive by a creature still on earth and not joined to God in a personal union.

For, according to Jerome in the sermon *De Assumptione*,⁴⁶ 'the whole fullness of grace that is in Christ came into Mary although in a different way'. And this was right because it was in Christ as in a human personally deified, and in Mary as in a temple singularly dedicated to the Word. It was in Christ as in the head, the source, but in Mary as in the neck passing it on to the whole body of the Church. It was in Christ as in an existing subject and the light of grace flowed out from this universal source of all good; but it was in Mary as she received most happily all these things both in mind and flesh.⁴⁷

Who could adequately understand of what kind was that fire sent down from heaven, refreshment given, comfort infused both in the mind and the flesh of the most holy Virgin! She is then in fact *a woman clothed with the sun*, as stated in Revelation 12:1, because she was filled with that divine wisdom by which God from all eternity had decided to reconcile the world to God. She knew this beforehand not only by divine revelation but she also knew from clear experience all that was associated with the mysteries of the incarnate Word of God. For this reason she is said to have *the moon under her feet*, because she trod on not only transitory goods by the print of her holy feet but also made little of knowing creatures in comparison with a supereminent knowledge of Christ. Hence, she is crowned *with a crown of twelve stars* because, by a most singular privilege, she surpassed the merits of all the virtues and graces of all rational and spiritual creatures.

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Because of this it happened that she could not only conceive Christ in her heart by faith and love, but also that her superabundant fire of divine love, without a male partner, could form and develop his flesh in her virginal womb from her most pure blood.

The serpent overcame the human race through the sin of Eve who led Adam to eat the forbidden fruit and the destruction was complete when Adam ate; so through the merit of the Virgin drawing God to assume her flesh there began the crushing of Satan and our restoration that was completed by the incarnate God. Then in truth she was the ark of God, Hebrews 9:4, containing within her the whole Law written by the finger of God on two solid tablets, that is, in the two natures of the Son of God, the first of which he received from his Mother, the second from the whole most holy Trinity⁴⁸.

But if anyone were to reflect on this, he or she:

would understand that the consent of the Virgin is clear from considering the final goal of this consent. This goal was every dignity and perfection that comes from being the Mother of God both in body and mind. Certainly, this transcends anything else that can be thought of or uttered, apart from being the God-man. Therefore, if the wonderful goal was proportionate to her merit it follows that the meritorious perfection of this consent was equally proportionate to its goal.⁴⁹

From this it can be seen that the blessed Virgin in her consent to the conception of the Son of God merited more than all creatures, whether angels or humans, in all her actions, feelings and thoughts. For all who merited could merit nothing other than eternal glory in its various states and grades. But, in her admirable consent, this Virgin merited the full suppression of the inclination to sin, dominion and primacy over the whole world, the fullness of all graces, all virtues, all gifts, all blessings, all the fruits of the Spirit, of all knowledge, of the interpretation of words, of the spirit of prophecy, of discernment of spirits, of the working of virtues. She merited fertility in virginity, the motherhood of the Son of God. She merited to be the star of the sea, the gate of heaven and, above all, to be called the queen of mercy and what came from such a name.⁵⁰ Hence, Solomon in Proverbs 31:29 says of the blessed Virgin: *Many daughters have gathered together riches, you have surpassed them all.*

Finally, as Bernard says in the sermon *De nativitate Virginis*⁵¹:

God placed in Mary the whole price for the redemption of the world. Look higher to know with what affection of devotion God wanted us to honour Mary, God who placed the fullness of good in Mary so that whatever hope is in us, whatever grace, whatever salvation, we will know it has overflowed from her.

So Bernard. Therefore, such was her perfection that she kept herself to be known only by God, according to Sirach 1:9: *He created her in the Holy Spirit, and saw her, and measured her*, namely, God alone.

However, it should be known that even though she had every kind of grace, as has been said, she did not have this for any purpose whatsoever but for a higher and nobler purpose, as was rightly fitting for this woman. As, for example, she had the gift of knowledge not so as to teach or preach publicly, as the Apostle says in 1 Timothy 2:12: *I suffer not a woman to teach*; she had it for a higher purpose, namely, to savour and contemplate on what is divine. And so, even though she did not have some gifts for any use whatever, what she had was for a higher and nobler purpose.

CHAPTER 2

On the multiple reasons and armour why the blessed Virgin could not sin

The second flame of the Virgin is called her inability to sin. Although, as is clear from what has been said, the blessed Virgin had received a strong restriction on the inclination to sin so that she could not be led into any sin, there still remained in her essence an inclination to sin. But her second sanctification in the conception of the Son of God added to her a total wiping away and eradication of the inclination to sin and a confirmation in good; so that while before she was not able to sin, now she could not sin. The Angel expresses these two effects in Luke 1:28-35 when he says firstly: *Hail full of grace*, and secondly: *The Holy Spirit shall come upon you*; these apply to the first effect. For the second effect he adds: *and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you*.

According to Bonaventure, in III, dist. 3⁵²:

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The inclination to sin is seated in the flesh and rises up to the soul. In the first sanctification of the Virgin such a grace of perfection was given to her that it flowed over into her sensuality in such grace that it could repress the inclination to sin taking from it any effectiveness or enticement. But in the second sanctification the Holy Spirit came down not only into her soul but also into her flesh. The Spirit worked in a wonderful way on her flesh, by rendering that flesh without stain, thereby leaving her flesh immaculate by wiping from it both the inclination and every desire to sin, so that she was not able to sin. This is the opinion of Bernard,⁵³ Magister Sententiarum,⁵⁴ and Damascene.⁵⁵

For if the blessed Virgin could have sinned after the conception of the Son of God many incongruities would have ensued: firstly, it would have been a reproach against the child if his mother was a sinner; secondly, it would have been detrimental to the mother because she could then be damned; thirdly, it would have been a loss for the human race; fourthly, it would have inflicted harm on the whole divine plan because, with reason, it could have caused distrust in the work of the incarnation. Therefore, it must be accepted that in the conception of the Son of God, as has been said above, she was so perfected that her will could not afterwards be turned to evil, not because free will had been taken away nor because of a loss of some power, but because of the perfection and confirmation by grace of her free will and the taking away of the weakness.

But how this was done is difficult to see. It has to be understood that the human will is always free and can always be drawn to good and evil, to what is better and what is worse, to the best and to the worst, unless such an object is put before it in which it may find every aspect of what is good, pleasant and tasteful, to the end that it desires nothing other than what is good and desirable. This happens only in the blessed who are drawn delightfully to every pleasing aspect of anything pleasing; and this is why the contrary is not possible. But this was not the case in the blessed Virgin in that she was not among the blessed. And so for her to be fully perfected five things were necessary to dispose her interiorly like five interior weapons, and five to protect her externally like visible weapons.

Five interior shields: Firstly, there were interior weapons: firstly, fervour of love; secondly, mortification of sensuality; thirdly, the experience of a mother; fourthly, the presence of divinity; and fifthly, a sense of nothingness.

Firstly, the fervour of love was in her to such an extent that her mind was continuously held fast in the fervour of love. For God was present to her mind in a most wonderful manner and, although in a different way than in the blessed, all her lower powers were held captive beneath the rule of reason. Therefore, the Prophet says, speaking for her: *My heart has been inflamed and I have been changed inwardly* [Ps 72:21 (73:21)].

Secondly, there was a mortification of sensuality because she mortified the sensual appetite and submitted it to the higher faculty by mortification of the sensual affection and by submitting it to reason. Hence, she said to her higher reason when speaking for her body: *I am become like a beast before you, and I am always with you* [Ps 72:23 (73:22)].

Thirdly, she had an experience of motherhood. She had an actual and personal sense of the sonship of God, from reflecting within herself and savouring that she was the Mother of so great a Son and how much she owed to God because God had chosen her rather than others as Mother; she did this rightly just as would a poor lowly woman chosen by a king to be his wife or mother.

Fourthly, the divinity was present to her for she was continuously attentive to the wishes of God, always ready to carry out what was in the divine mind. So the Prophet, speaking for her, says: *I set the Lord always in my sight* [Ps 15:8 (16:8)]. In individual details she thought: This pleases God and I accept it; this does not please God and so I set it aside.

Fifthly, she had a sense of her own nothingness for she was always conscious of her relationship to the divine majesty and of her own nothingness. So the Prophet, speaking as her mind, says: *I am brought to nothing* [Ps 72:22 (73:22)].

Five external shields: Secondly, for her protection she had also five external weapons. There was present for her, firstly, a protection of angels; secondly, a driving away of devils; thirdly, a practice of virtues; fourthly, a horror of sins; fifthly, a disregard for what is worldly.

Firstly, she had a protection of angels. Numberless multitudes of angels assisted her for her protection. And concerning this the Prophet says to the Virgin: *He has given his angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways* [Ps 90:11 (91:11)]. It is my pious belief that she was guarded and protected by many legions of angels, just as Elisha had a multitude of angels to protect him, as is written in 2 Kings 6:16-17.

Secondly, she drove demons away. Just as a large fire drives flies away, so the demons were driven away by her most fervent soul and her strongly enkindled flesh, to the extent that they did not dare to look on her soul even briefly nor approach her from a great distance. For if we read this of some of the saints, how much more is it to be believed of the Mother of the Lord who always triumphed over them in everything?

Thirdly, she practised virtue. All external misfortune and adversity were brought on her for one reason and no other than as occasions for exercising virtue. For if the Apostle in Romans 8:28 says: *To them that love God, all things work together for good*, namely, whether it be good or misfortune, how much more in her who loved God more than all others?

Fourthly, she hated sin to the extent that everything pleasing to the senses but holding her back from God, were seen by her as hateful to God to whose will she tried with all her strength to conform herself. She was most fully conscious in the divine light of how mortal sin separates one eternally from God, deforms the image of God in the soul, deprives one of eternal glory and binds one to the punishments of hell for eternity.

Fifthly, she also despised what is worldly. Whatever was offered to her, unless something divine was offered, she rejected and the more enticing it was to her the more she despised it. This is similar to a very beautiful woman who, on account of some offence, is always displeasing to her husband; but if the devil can work this evil, how much more strongly can God do this for good? For these reasons it was impossible for her to sin. The same applies to anyone as long as these reasons are present.

But perhaps someone will object saying that every habit of grace, no matter how great, exists in freedom; but what is in freedom, as something held freely, can be freely set aside. But that it can be set aside, is insufficient to render immobile what makes a person mobile.

To this it has to be said that it is true that such inability to sin in the Virgin could not have come from a habit no matter how great; but it came in the way stated above.

If anyone insists, secondly, by saying that a power unable to choose between two opposites, is not free because, as stated in II *Perihermeneias*, that is, *De interpretatione*,⁵⁶ rational powers are towards opposites; but if she were confirmed, she would not be facing opposites; therefore, this would be neither rational nor free.

It has to be said to this that a will is not free because it can do evil, but because it makes an act of the will freely. In the blessed, both the angelic and human, freedom continues in their wills. It must be noted, however, that although God made the Mother of God perfectly and preserved her from all sin, nevertheless, all the passions that follow from nature without sin and are material for the practice of virtue remained in a fuller way in her both with respect to herself and to her Son. So there were in her love, fear, honour, wonder and such passions as anyone can have without sin. Hence, I believe that she regarded it a great honour to herself that she was the Mother of so great a Son. Moreover, I believe that these and similar things were known and they were all in her without sin.

CHAPTER 3

How closely the blessed Virgin was united to God in contemplation and action

The third flame is called unity, and of this in Song 4:9 the eternal Bridegroom says to his holiest Bride, that is, to the blessed Virgin: *You have wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, you have wounded my heart with one of your eyes and with one hair of your neck*. A Gloss⁵⁷ on this says: 'For love of you I took flesh, and you have wounded my heart as the first wounds of the cross'. For the firstborn of the Redeemer, of her Son Jesus, was the blessed Virgin; he came more to redeem her than for any other creature. To show the admirable unity that he had with her, he says he *has been wounded with one of her eyes and with one hair of her neck*. Here he shows a double unity with her: the first was a unity of contemplation, the second was a unity of action.

The first was a unity of contemplation that preceded action in Mary since she began her perfect contemplation in the womb of the mother, as is stated above in Article 1, Chapter 2.⁵⁸ The Bridegroom says of the state of contemplation: *You have wounded my heart with one of your eyes*. That is, 'in the clearest contemplation in that you are so united by the uniting attention of all your contemplative glances that unite you to me by love, that I am not able to deny you when you have decided to ask for the remission of the sins of anyone'.⁵⁹ Hence, in Luke 10:38 there is stated in a mystical sense: *Jesus entered into a certain town, and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house*. Two things are necessary for the protection of a town: firstly, an outer wall, namely, virginity of the body; secondly, an inner tower, namely, humility of heart. Also two things are need to guard it: firstly, a lookout for contemplation; secondly, a soldier to be on duty. So in the town of Mary there lived two sisters who guard the town, namely, Martha and Mary. Martha

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works and is on duty lest the town be captured from ignorance. Ignorance begets error, negligence of the heart gives rise to laziness in work. By an error of the heart we fail in what is to be believed, by laziness we fail in doing our work.

The contemplation of Mary: The perfect and highest contemplation of the blessed Virgin is added, when it says, speaking literally of Magdalene but mystically of the blessed Virgin, *Martha had a sister called Mary, who sitting even at the Lord's feet heard his word* [Lk 10:39-42]. Four things are made clear in these words in which the perfect contemplation of the blessed Virgin is implied: the first is tranquillity, the second, humility; the third, capacity; the fourth, can be called excellence.

The first is tranquillity. Of this is said: *who sitting even*. This shows:

the most tranquil quiet of the state of virginity. But on what this tranquillity rests is implied in the following virtue of the Virgin.

The second is humility. Hence there is added: *at the Lord's feet*. From this humility and her deepest nothingness at the feet of Jesus Christ resulted the aforementioned tranquillity, in that she was most happy to subject herself to her Son and to put herself under her Son.

The third is capacity and this follows from the two preceding. For just as no creature on earth ever had such tranquillity of mind nor such an abyss of deep humility, so no other ever heard the Word of God so attentively in tranquil contemplation nor understood the Word so excellently.

The fourth is excellence. The Lord, wanting to express in the best way possible this contemplation of Mary, added further on: *Mary has chosen the better part*. The best is above what is nothing; and in a mere creature no state is conceivable above the blessed Virgin. Because such a state has been given to the blessed Virgin, there was given to her beforehand most abundant gifts, and hence she could merit this excellent state and choose for herself as she might wish. So, the Lord wanting to express such dignity due to her merits, said: *Mary has chosen for herself, rather than: it was given to her*. She truly *chose the better part*, above all others in clarity of vision, quality of fertility, closeness of place, excellence of honouring, universality of ownership and abundance of generosity; and these *shall not ever be taken away from her*.⁶⁰

The activity of Mary: The second union of the Virgin with the Bridegroom, her Son Christ, was a unity of action in that:

just as no one was ever like her in contemplation, so no one was ever her like in ministry. This can be shown in many ways.

First, others clothe the poor with sheep's wool; she clothes the richest person from her most pure blood.

Second, others clothe with cloth; she from her own body.

Third, others feed the poor with external bread; she fed God made man with her own milk.

Fourth, others shelter a poor person in a hut; she took the great God into her heart and body, for whom she became a loving dwelling on God's earthly journey.

Fifth, others care for the sick for the sake of God; but Mary served Jesus God most carefully in his poor body when he was sick, washing him, wrapping him in bands, placing him in the crib, and carrying him in her arms.

Sixth, others console people as they weep; Mary consoled most sweetly and soothed with pleasant speech the small God when crying and Jesus weeping most affectionately in his compassionate small heart.

Seventh, others are concerned so that nothing be lacking to the needy; Mary was a careful attendant and worked with her hands to support the God-man for the sake of the salvation needed by all.

Eighth, others visit those in prison and the wounded and are compassionate towards them while they live and they bury the dead; Mary was afflicted with such great sorrow for the God-man captured and bound for us, for his harsh imprisonment, his being nailed to the wood of the Cross, and torn with wounds, that it could not be expressed even in the language of angels. In all this just mentioned, the Virgin Mary is represented in Martha, a name that means 'provoking' or 'irritating' or 'dominating';⁶¹ because by her most strenuous actions she provoked the devil to attack and, irritated to the point of scandal, she set herself to triumph so that Luke rightly adds: *Martha, Martha, you are careful and are troubled about many things*.

Ninth, because she stood beside the cross in the strength of her sorrow and never gave in to impatience, he adds: *Who stood and said*.

Tenth, because contemplation of the Godhead takes away nothing from the sorrows but rather increases them, a lamentation is introduced: *Lord, have you no care that my sister has left me alone to serve?*

Eleventh, because, from going over all the sufferings of Jesus and of those who were around him, she was completely wounded by sorrows, something clearly known to Jesus who acknowledged this most graciously and said to her: *Martha, Martha, you are careful and are troubled about many things*. Only Jesus could say this for he alone was able to measure the Mother's sorrows.

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Twelfth, he concludes: *But one thing is necessary*, he says, namely for me, your Son, to die horribly and for you, my Mother, to die with me and freely to redeem the world.

CHAPTER 4

On the joy that the Mother of Christ had with her final salvation and glorification

The fourth flame of Mary can be called safety. It cannot be doubted that the blessed Virgin was most sure of her perseverance and salvation. In fact, Peter was assured of his salvation when, in John 21:18-19, the Lord said to him:

When you were younger, you girded yourself, and walked where you would. But when you shall be old, you shall stretch forth your hands, and another shall gird you, and lead you whither you would not. And this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God.

Similarly, John the Evangelist to whom, also in John 21:22, the Lord said: *So I will have him to remain*. The same has to be held about Mary Magdalene of whom, in Luke 10:42, the Lord said: *Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her*. This should be affirmed much more of the blessed Virgin who experienced the certainty of sanctification in her mother's womb, her sanctification with the coming of the Holy Spirit in the conception of her Son, and also in the third sanctification when she became a dwelling during nine months for the Son of God? With what joy, do you imagine, her soul was filled, when in faith she contemplated the glory she awaited with full certitude, namely, that at the right hand of her Son she would possess a glory of a kind above all the angels.

Indeed, the great grace and virtue of the virgin Mother of God are conspicuous. They are even so great that we can say with Jerome,⁶² and yet more than Jerome:

What can we small ones, what can we who are weak in what we do, bring to praise her? Even if all our limbs were changed into tongues, this would not suffice to praise her. She of whom we speak is higher than the sky, she whose praises we try to utter is deeper than an abyss. If I say I will call you the sky, you are higher; if the mother of peoples, you surpass this; if I call you the form of God, you stand out as worthy; if the Lady of the angels, you are shown to be for all things. Therefore, what can I say that is worthy?

Augustine⁶³ also says of her: Mary is the flower and door of paradise, the glory of the human race, the throne and room of the eternal King, the love of God, the light of the world, the stairway to heaven, the Queen of angels, the terror of demons, refuge of sinners, image and mirror of purity, example and rule for upright living, source and dwelling of grace, mountain and school of virtues, ark of heavenly treasures, consolation of the poor, restraining of riches, building up of the humble, confusion of the proud, comfort of the elect, leader of pilgrims, harbour for the shipwrecked, wall for those under siege, rest for the troubled, mother of orphans, protection of widows, shield of soldiers, sweetness of contemplatives, teacher of preachers, strength of labourers, advocate of penitents, medicine for the sick, form of the just, hope and praise of believers and the title of honour for Catholics.

From what has been said it is clear that in her first sanctification the blessed Virgin:

progressed *like the dawn*, as stated in Song 6:10, because she fled from the terrible darkness of night, namely, the original stain and the bodily company of the human race, and all the visible glory of the world. But in her second way of life she became *fair as the moon*, namely, filled with the light of the heavenly Sun, although some trace of the natural darkness was still in her as it is in the moon. In her third perfection by the incarnation of the Son of God she ascended to such light of truth and fervour of love, that she was *bright as the sun*; and ten to all her enemies she became most *terrible as an army with banners*.⁶⁴

And this text can be the theme of the present solemnity: 'Worthily does the Church sing of her⁶⁵: "You alone have destroyed all heresies", namely, when she conceived the whole truth of God and became the Mother of truth itself'.

And to use a text of devout Anselm⁶⁶: Glorious Virgin and Mother, Queen of mercy and source of all sweetness and piety, what shall we say? With what vocal instrument or with what rejoicing of heart shall we say 'as much as we should?' Whatever we shall have offered is less and almost nothing to what we should

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offer to you. You were planned in the mind of God *before all creatures* [Sir 24:5], so that you, the dearest of all women, should procreate from your flesh God made true man, that you, made glorious, might reign as the Queen of heaven before all after your Son, and that you might restore to a lost world the entrance to and prepare the blessing of eternal life; by your virginal birth you lead back to its first state the human race naked without the glory of eternity; you have overthrown the prince of death; through you, those who are to arrive, will arrive. Whatever is good in us, or whatever we can do or have, comes through you. After God you are our highest and singular consolation; you are the leader to the kingdom of heaven and our help. We ask you to be our welcome and everlasting joy, you who, with your beloved Son, Christ, reign together as the glorious Queen of heaven, the Lady of the world forever and ever. Amen.

NOTES

- ¹ From Hugo Argentinensis, *Compendium theologiae veritatis* (in the works of Albert the Great, ed. A Borgnet, XXXIV) Paris 1895, 124a; the following quotation with some changes also comes from here.
- ² From an anonymous sermon *De S. Ioanne Baptista* (cod. Sen. U. V. 6, f. 325cd), and the four following quotations come from here.
- ³ From Ubertinus, *Arbor vitae*, IV, c. 34 (f. 183b), and the following quotation is from f. 183c.
- ⁴ From Hugo Argentinensis, loc. cit.
- ⁵ From Ubertinus, *Arbor vitae*, I, c. 6 (f. 8d).
- ⁶ Cap. 18 (PL 158, 451).
- ⁷ Jerome, *De nominibus hebraicis* (PL 3, 789, 842, 848 and 851).
- ⁸ Among others Hugo Pantiera, *Tractati*, tr. I, c. 10 (f. 18v) who suggested the following to Bernardine.
- ⁹ Among whom is Hugo Pantiera, loc. cit., who suggested this opinion to Bernardine.
- ¹⁰ From Ubertinus, *Arbor vitae*, I, c. 8 (f. 15c) with a few changes; see H. Pantiera, loc. cit., whose words are in the next quotation.
- ¹¹ Among whom is Ubertinus, loc. cit. (f. 15bc).
- ¹² See *Vita S. Nicolai Myrensis episcopi*, # 2 (in L. Surium, *Historiae seu vitae sanctorum*, XII, 165); *Brev. Rom.*, 6 dec., lectio 4; B. Mombritius, *Sanctuarium*, II, 297.
- ¹³ See Gregory, *Dialogues*, II, c. 1 (PL 66, 128).
- ¹⁴ From Hugo Pantiera, loc. cit. (f. 19r).
- ¹⁵ See *Expositio in Lucam*, I, n. 33 (PL 15, 128); *De virginibus*, II, c. 2, n. 12; *De fide*, IV, c. 9, nn. 113-114 (PL 16, 210 and 639); *Sermo* 50, nn. 3 and 7 (PL 17, 707).
- ¹⁶ Liber II, c. 1, n. 30 (PL 15, 1563).
- ¹⁷ From Ubertinus, *Arbor vitae*, I, c. 10 (f. 23c).
- ¹⁸ See Luke 1:80; *Sermo 23* (in the works of Peter Damian, PL 144, 631), attributed to Nicholaus Claravallensis.
- ¹⁹ From Hugo Pantiera, loc. cit. (f. 19r).
- ²⁰ From Ubertinus, *Arbor vitae*, I, c. 6 (f. 8d-9a).
- ²¹ *In festo Pentecostes*, sermo 2, n. 4 (PL 183, 328).
- ²² *In Assumptione B.M.V.*, sermo 4, n. 8 (PL 183, 429).
- ²³ *Sermo in Dom. infra Octavam Assumptionis B.M.V.*, n. 2 (PL 183, 430).
- ²⁴ On the treatise, *De anima simpliciter* etc. see above, sermo 6, a. 2, c. 2 (III, 109, note 1).
- ²⁵ *Constitutiones clementinae*, V, tit. 3, more correctly, c. 3 (II, 1183ff.).
- ²⁶ *Compendium theologiae ad fr. Reginaldum*, c. 224 (XVI, 66a), and both the preceding and following quotations are from here with a few changes.
- ²⁷ *Summa*, III, n. 80 (IV, 122).
- ²⁸ III *Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 2, q. 3, under *Respondeo* (III, 77b).
- ²⁹ The author seems to refer, at least in general, to the words of Bernard quoted above, or better to the whole text of his sermons (PL 183, 438).
- ³⁰ See *Sermo in Dominicam infra Octavam Assumptionis B.M.V.*, n. 3 (PL 183, 430ff.), but implicitly.
- ³¹ *Ordinaria* on Matthew 1:25, in Strabo (PL 114, 72).
- ³² Among whom Olivi, *Quaestiones quatuor de Domina*, q. 2 (*Bibl. francis. ascetica. M. Aevi*, VIII, 37sq); *Quaestiones in II Sent.*, q. 111 (*Bibl. francis. schol. M. Aevi*, VI, 285).
- ³³ Cap. 36, n. 42 (PL 44, 267).
- ³⁴ *Epistola 174*, n. 5 (PL 182, 334).
- ³⁵ III *Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 2, q. 1, under *Respondeo* (III, 73).
- ³⁶ See *De natura et gratia*, c. 36, n. 42 (PL 44, 267); *Sermo 123*, n. 2 (in the works of Augustine, PL 39, 1991; *De assumptione B.M.V.*, c. 4 (in the works of Augustine, PL 40, 1144ff.)).
- ³⁷ See *Super Missus est*, hom. 2, n. 4 (PL 183, 63).
- ³⁸ Rather 2 Peter 1:14.
- ³⁹ From Hugo de S. Charo, *Postilla in Ps. 86: 2* (II, f. 226b).

- ⁴⁰ From Olivi, *Quaestiones quatuor de Domina*, q. 2 (VIII, 37).
- ⁴¹ Rather, *De virginibus*, II, c. 2, nn. 7 and 10 (PL 16, 209ff).
- ⁴² *Epistola ad Paulam et Eustochium, De assumptione B.M.V.*, c. 15 (in the works of Jerome, PL 30, 138).
- ⁴³ *Tractatus ad laudem gloriosae Virginis Mariae* (in the works of Bernard, PL 182, 1142ff); *Super Missus est*, hom. 2, n. 17 (PL 183, 70).
- ⁴⁴ *Super Missus est*, hom. 2, n. 17 (PL 183, 70ff).
- ⁴⁵ *De virginibus*, II, c. 2, n. 15 (PL 16, 210); on this and on the preceding article see Hugo Argentinensis, *Compendium theologiae veritatis*, IV, c. 4 (XXXIV, 124a-126a).
- ⁴⁶ *Epistola 9*, n. 5 (in the works of Jerome, PL 30, 127).
- ⁴⁷ From Ubertinus, *Arbor vitae*, I, c. 8 (f. 15d).
- ⁴⁸ From Olivi, *Quaestiones quatuor de Domina*, q. 2 (p. 39).
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, q. 1 (p.20).
- ⁵⁰ See *De christiana religione*, sermo 61, a. 1, c. 3 (II, 374).
- ⁵¹ Num. 6 (PL 183, 441).
- ⁵² III *Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, a. 2, q. 2, under *Respondeo* (III, 75b).
- ⁵³ *Super Missus est*, hom. 3, n. 1 (PL 183, 71).
- ⁵⁴ Peter Lombard, III *Sent.*, d. 3, c. 1 (II, 558).
- ⁵⁵ *De fide orthodoxa*, III, c. 2 (PG 94, 987).
- ⁵⁶ Aristotle, rather *Metaphysica*, VIII, c. 2, n. 2 (II, 565).
- ⁵⁷ *Interlinearis*, on this text, in Lyranus (III, f. 361r).
- ⁵⁸ Above, pages 50-52.
- ⁵⁹ From Ubertinus, *Arbor vitae*, IV, c. 38 (f. 361a), with many changes and additions.
- ⁶⁰ From Ubertinus, loc. cit., (f. 199bc) and f. 199c for the text quoted further on with many changes and additions.
- ⁶¹ Jerome, *De nominibus hebraicis* (PL 23, 844).
- ⁶² Rather Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermo 208*, nn. 4-5 (in the works of Augustine, PL 39, 2130ff).
- ⁶³ See *Sermo 123*, n. 2; *195*, n. 1 and *208*, nn. 4-5 and 10 (in the works of Augustine, PL 39, 1991, 2107, 2131 and 2133).
- ⁶⁴ From Olivi, *Quaestiones quatuor de Domina*, q. 2 (VIII 38sq.), and the other text below with some changes.
- ⁶⁵ *Brev. Rom., Commune festorum B. Mariae V.*, 3 noct., ant. 1.
- ⁶⁶ Not found; see *Oratio 52* (PL 158, 957), where the words marked are found.

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