

ON THE MOST HOLY BODY OF CHRIST

by

Saint Bonaventure

Translated by

Campion Murray OFM

SUMMARY

Introduction	4
Six of our imperfections are indicated	4
Six effects of God are indicated	4
Six themes that prefigure the Eucharist	4
Part I: The first and second themes	5
The first is the theme of dripping	5
First effect	5
The theme points to four remedies	5
Firstly	5
Secondly	6
Thirdly	6
Fourthly	6
Second effect	6
Third effect	6
The second theme, namely, bread	
Four actions of Elijah	7
Firstly	8
Secondly	8
Thirdly	8
Fourthly	8
Four fruits	8
Themes prefiguring the four fruits	9
First fruit	9
Second fruit	9
Third fruit	9
Fourth fruit	9
Part II. The third and fourth themes	10
The third is the theme of honey	10
Four actions of Jonathan	10
Four fruits of the Eucharist	11
First fruit	11
Second fruit	11
Third fruit	11
Fourth fruit	12
The fourth theme, namely, the Paschal Lamb	12
Four qualities needed before his coming	12
First quality	12
Second quality	13
Third quality	13
Fourth quality	13
Four qualities needed in approaching the Sacrament	13
First quality	13
Second quality	13
Third quality	14
Fourth quality	14
Four fruits after receiving the Sacrament	14
First fruit	14
Second fruit	14
Third fruit	15
Fourth fruit	15
Part III. On the fifth and sixth themes	15
Fifth theme: the theme of heavenly treasure	15
Four treasures hidden in the Sacrament	15
First treasure	15
Second treasure	15
Third treasure	16
Fourth treasure	16
Hidden for four reasons	16

First reason	16
Second reason	17
Third reason	17
Fourth reason	17
Sixth theme: Manna	17
Four properties of manna	17
First property	18
Second property	18
Third property	18
Fourth property	18
Example of the Saints	18
Four things to be done	19
First preparation	19
Second preparation	19
Third preparation	19
Fourth preparation	19
Epilogue	20

*Introduction*¹:

1. *Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him and his wonderful works to the children of men. He has satisfied the empty soul, and has filled the hungry soul with good things. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound, in want and in iron* [Psalm 106:8-10].² The Prophet David wrote this text to stimulate us to give thanks when he said: *Let the mercies of the Lord* etc. So, wanting to stimulate our hearts to give thanks, in this text he shows multiple imperfections in our poor condition, but also multiple effects of divine mercy.

Six of our imperfections are indicated:

He says:

- that people are empty,
- that they hunger,
- sit in darkness,
- and lie in the shadow of death,
- bound in want
- and in iron.

Empty, because God does not dwell within them; hungry, because they do not have spiritual refreshment. They sit in darkness, because they lack divine knowledge. They lie in the shadow of death, because they are under a judgment of damnation. They are bound in want, because they do not have works of virtue. They are bound in iron, because they are hard of heart.

Six effects of God are indicated:

Therefore, let them give glory to the Lord, because

- the Lord has filled the empty soul,
- has satisfied the hungry soul,
- enlightened the soul sitting in darkness,
- reconciled the soul lying in the shadow of death,
- enriched the soul in need,
- and softened the hard heart.

They were empty and the Lord gave himself to them by living in them. They were hungry and the Lord gave himself to them as refreshment; they sat in darkness and the Lord God gave himself to them as the enlightenment of their hearts; they lay in the shadow of death and the Lord gave himself to them as an offering of reconciliation. They were bound in want, and the Lord gave himself to them in good works; they were bound in iron, that is, in hardness of heart, and he gave himself to them to soften their hearts. Therefore, give glory to the Lord for he fills the empty, he is the refreshment of the hungry, the light of all who sit in darkness, the reconciliation of those living in the shadow of death, the enrichment of those in want and the softening of hardened hearts.

It is clear that all of these are mentioned in the text chosen for our treatise.

Six themes that prefigure the Eucharist:

2. Corresponding to these six points, the body of Christ is prefigured in Scripture by six themes, namely,

- the theme of marrow or dripping,
- the theme of bread,
- the theme of honey,
- the theme of the paschal lamb,
- the theme of heavenly treasure
- and the theme of manna.

¹ The text of Bonaventure's treatise: *De sanctissimo corpore Christi*, is found in *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, V (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae 1891) 553-566. The headings in the translation are based on the marginal headings added by the editors of the *Opera Omnia*.

² The Bible used in the translation is the Douay Rheims Bible but the names of the books, proper names, and names of places are used as in the New Revised Standard Bible.

On the first theme, because dripping is something penetrating, it is suitable for filling the empty. On the second theme, because bread is strengthening, it is suitable for refreshing the hungry. On the third theme, because honey cleanses the eyes, it is suitable for enlightening those sitting in darkness. On the fourth theme, because the paschal lamb can be offered in sacrifice, it is suitable for reconciling those who lie in the shadow of death. On the fifth theme, because treasure is desirable, it is suitable for enriching the poor. On the sixth theme, because manna can liquefy, it is suitable for softening hardness of hearts. Therefore, *let the mercies of the Lord* etc.

Part I: On the first and second themes:

The first theme, namely, of dripping

3. Firstly, the most holy Body of Christ is rightly prefigured for us by the theme of dripping. The Body of Christ is given to us to preserve divine fervour in our heart and it is preserved in three ways:

- by interior delight,
- by love for a neighbour,
- and by devotion to God.

Interior delight is only experienced through a provision of refreshment; love for a neighbour comes through the Sacrament of communion; devotion to God through the sacrifice of an offering. The Body of Christ is given for these three reasons, namely, for a provision of refreshment¹ to preserve interior delight; for the Sacrament of communion to preserve love for a neighbour; for the sacrifice of an offering to preserve devotion to God. Fatness provides these three: for interior delight it provides delightful foods which it imparts; to preserve love of neighbour, it extends a skin on which it is smeared; to preserve devotion to God it supports a flame which it enkindles.

First effect:

4. Because dripping produces delightful foods, it represents the Body of Christ that produces great interior delight in anyone who eats it with devotion. This is prefigured in Genesis 49:20: *Asher, his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield dainties to kings.* This bread imparts great delights to a person because it takes away all that causes trouble. Four things trouble a person in this life²:

- weakness,
- ignorance,
- malice
- and concupiscence,

four things inflicted on people because of original sin. Psalm 37:9: *I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly* and the cause is added immediately when it says: *my strength has left me*, because of weakness; *and the light of my eyes itself is not with me*, because of ignorance; *my friends and my neighbours have drawn near, and stood against me*, because of concupiscence. He calls his *friends and neighbours* flesh with its concupiscence, and even adversaries because *the flesh lusts against the spirit* (Galatians 5:17). *And they that were near me stood afar off* because of malice.

The theme points to four remedies:

Under the theme of the bread of Asher, that is, abundant bread, bread providing delights, and bread of kings, the Body of Christ is given against the four afflictions in the text quoted from Genesis 49:20.

Firstly:

It is called the bread of kings because it strengthens kings against weakness so that a king, that is, right reason, sitting on the *throne of judgment*, that is, by a correct governing of the soul, *scatters away all evil with his look* as stated in Proverbs 20:8.

¹ For a double reason why the Eucharist is called a provision of refreshment, see IV *Sent.*, d. 8 p. I dub. 3. The teaching of this whole number is found in almost the same words in *Breviloquium*, p. VI c. 9.

² On the fourfold penalty inflicted because of sin see II *Sent.* d. 22 dub. 2; *Breviloquium*, p. III c. 5.

Secondly:

The Body of Christ is called rich bread because it enlightens against ignorance. When placed in a jug or poured into a lamp, dripping provides light.

Thirdly:

It is also called a bread giving delights against concupiscence of the flesh. This is the bread *having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste*, Wisdom 16:20.

Fourthly:

It is called the bread of Asher¹ which means happiness because it gladdens the whole person against all malice. The power of this bread is that it changes humans into Christ who is most blessed from his essence and blesses others by grace. So the Lord said to blessed Augustine²: ‘You will not change me into you as food of your flesh, but you will be changed into me’.

Second effect:

5. Secondly, the Body of Christ is given to us in the Sacrament of communion to preserve love for a neighbour; and so it is well prefigured by dripping, for just as dripping expands a skin on which it is smeared, so the Body of Christ expands a soul that eats it devoutly. It broadens it in every direction, namely, above and below, to the right, to the left, before and behind; for this reason Jeremiah 31:14 says: *I will fill the souls of the priests with fatness*.

The fatness, by which he fills the soul of priests, refers to the Sacrament of the altar by which a soul receiving it worthily is warmed to love. This expands the soul strongly in every direction and so he adds: *and my people shall be filled with my good things*. The word, *people*, stands for the whole Church, both militant and triumphant. After the soul of a priest has been filled by virtue of the Sacrament with the dripping of love, immediately he fills the whole Church with good things. From the abundance of love, the Church is expanded up to heaven by praying to God to the honour of the Saints reigning in heaven; it is expanded below even to purgatory because it prays for the redemption of those abiding there; it is expanded to the right because it prays for the salvation of friends and benefactors; it is expanded to the left because it prays for the salvation of enemies and persecutors; it is expanded behind because it prays for the salvation of its predecessors; before because it prays for the salvation of all the future predestined until the day of judgment.

Third effect:

6. Thirdly, the Body of Christ is given to us for a sacrificial offering to preserve devotion towards God. For this reason it is well represented by dripping because just as dripping poured on a fire raises the flame higher, so the most divine Eucharist, received by a devout soul, raises the soul through devotion to God. So Psalm 62:5-6 says: *In your name I will lift up my hands. Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise you with joyful lips*. Just as a vase filled with marrow and dripping, cannot hold all within and overflows outside, so the Body of Christ, when it has filled a soul with the dripping of devotion, overflows exteriorly with joyful lips.³

In this text there is mention of four things that help to preserve devotion to God, namely,

- a correct intention,
- routine in prayer,

¹ There is a reference to Asher in *Hexaëmeron*, Collatio 23 n. 20: Asher means blessed, namely, rich bread, giving delights to kings.

² *Confessions*, c. 10 n. 16, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 21 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1953). See *Breviloquium*, p. VI c. 9: Through which things one does not change Christ into oneself, but rather one is drawn into his mystical body.

³ For this teaching see IV *Sent.*, d. 12 p. II a. 1 q. 1 a. 2 q. 2 and the treatise *De Praeparatione ad Missam*.

- devotion in communion,
- and subsequent thanksgiving.

One should so order these things that one, firstly, prepares a right intention, afterwards stirs oneself by prayer, then devoutly approaches communion, and finally opens the mouth in thanksgiving.

7. Firstly, a person must have a right intention. One should not offer this sacrifice to please others, or for a personal convenience or for temporal gain. It is to be offered only for the sake of divine honour, for the benefit of a neighbour and to increase one's merit. For this reason the Apostle says: *All whatsoever you do in word or work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* (Colossians 3:17).

One approaching this Sacrament should be ready for prayer; one should not come with a tepid heart because this could cause obstinacy. For this reason the Psalm says: *I will lift up my hands*, namely, in prayer according to the Apostle in 1 Timothy 2:8: *I will therefore that people pray in every place, lifting up pure hands*, namely, to the Lord.

Then thirdly, a devout person should approach communion, and so there is added: *Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness*.

And lastly, fattened by devotion, and inflamed from love, one must break out in thanksgiving. So there is added: *and my mouth shall praise you with joyful lips*.

Therefore, *let the mercies of the Lord give glory*, because his Body is first prefigured for us by the theme of fatness.

The second theme, namely, bread:

8. Secondly, this most holy Body is prefigured for us in the theme of bread, of which John 6:51 says: *I am the living bread which came down from heaven*, and in 6:52: *The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world*.

This is the bread brought by the Angel to Elijah as stated in 1 Kings 19:6: *Elijah looked and behold there was at his head a hearth¹ cake and a vessel of water*. A hearth cake is the Body of Christ that is well called hearth because it is covered with other material.² The hearth implies other material and under this material, namely, ashes, the refreshment of our minds is hidden. The text says also that there was *a vessel of water* there and this is added because of the mystery of the Blood of Christ. That the bread was brought by an angel's ministry signifies that when this Sacrament is consecrated, there is present an army of angels. Gregory in *Dialogues*³:

Who among the faithful doubts that in the very hour of immolation at the voice of a priest the heavens are opened, the lowest is connected to the highest, earth is joined to heaven, and the visible and invisible become one? But when we do this, it is necessary that before God we first, in compunction of heart, offer ourselves on the altar to God.

Four actions of Elijah:

But before Elijah came to the refreshment of this bread, we read that he did four things.

- He left the servant,
- came into the desert,
- sat under a juniper
- and received an angelic awakening.

This signifies that for a person to want to approach this Sacrament worthily four things are necessary.

- Firstly, a person must flee from the consolation of the world,
- enter religion,

¹ In the Latin Bible the word for hearth is *subcinerarius* referring to bread baked in ashes and so covered in ashes.

² The word *accident* refers to anything that is not the inner material. For example, bread cooked on a hearth or on ashes is covered with ashes that are not bread; the bread lies hidden beneath the appearances.

³ Liber IV c. 58, 59. The same text is quoted in IV *Sent.*, d. XI text. Magistri, c. 2 and is explained in Comment. p. I dub. 3.

- remain subject to a superior there,
- and have devotion towards God.

And these are the four things spoken of above.

Firstly:

9. Firstly, it is necessary to flee from the consolation of the world. There is a fullness of spiritual consolation in this Sacrament, something not given to anyone indulging in other consolation, as Bernard says.¹ Hence, it is necessary that whoever wants to receive spiritual consolation has to dismiss carnal delight. This is what is said, namely, that when *he came to Beersheba he left his servant there*. Beersheba means a spring of abundance and it represents Christ in whom is all fullness of graces. Whoever reaches this fullness sets aside every delight of the world; and this is what is added here: *he left his servant there*. What do we get from a servant other than carnal delight? The Apostle teaches us to leave this servant when he says: *Therefore, do not become children in sense, but in malice be perfect* (1 Corinthians 14:20). Therefore, the one who leaves a servant is one who leaves behind the childish ways of the world.

Secondly:

10. Secondly, whoever wants to approach this Sacrament worthily must engage in the religion of an upright life. This is what is said here: *Elijah went into the desert*. The desert represents religious life which is named from deserting² for in it all temporal things are left behind. There, riches are abandoned by the vow of poverty, delights by the vow of chastity, honours and worldly dignities by giving up one's own will. Nothing in the world is as harmful as these three; 1 John 2:16 states: *For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life*. Because the devil captures sinful souls through these three things, so it is that religious souls struggle against these three things. This is implied in Deuteronomy 8:15: *in the desert was the serpent burning with his breath*, that is, the devil tempting through pride; and the *dipsas*³ killing from thirst, that is, the devil tempting through avarice; and the *scorpion* fawning in appearance but stinging with the tail, that is, the devil tempting through concupiscence of the flesh.

Thirdly:

11. Thirdly, it is necessary to be subject to a superior; this is said in the text: *Elijah sat under a juniper tree*. Isidore⁴ says that a juniper is a tree whose ashes conserve fire for a whole year. Therefore, what are we able to see in a juniper other than a good superior? The ash of a juniper is the humility of a superior; this humility serves to preserve a fire of mutual love and warmth of fervent devotion in the hearts of subjects.

Fourthly:

12. Fourthly, it is necessary to maintain devotion for God; this is what the text says here⁵: that *an angel touched him*. What does the Angel represent other than a gift of divine grace? An Angel means messenger. When God sends us grace, then it is as if God is sending an Angel to us. This angel stirs us once and yet again because the gift of divine grace always prompts us in spirit to go forward.

Four fruits:

Whoever approaches this Sacrament worthily does not return empty. And so note that there are four things usually received in this Sacrament when approached worthily.

¹ Bernard or rather Gaufrédus abb. In *Declamat.* ex Bernard. collectis super: Ecce, nos reliquimus omnia etc., # 55 n. 16.

² In the Latin there is a play on the words desert and deserting.

³ A dipsas is a kind of serpent whose bite causes violent thirst.

⁴ *Etymologia*, XVII c. 7 n. 35.

⁵ 1 Kings 19:5.

Themes prefiguring the four fruits:

13. This Sacrament

- comforts for action,
- raises to contemplation,
- disposes to the revelation of divine things,
- animates and enkindles contempt of the world and a desire for heavenly and eternal goods.

This is stated in the text: *Elijah walked in the strength of that food* and reached *the mount of God*, saw divine secrets and stood at the mouth of *a cave*. These are the four things referred to above.

First fruit:

The first fruit drawn by a devout soul from this Sacrament is to be comforted in actions. So it is said: *he walked in the strength of that food for forty days* etc. This food represents the Body of Christ in the strength of which a person works while not ceasing to make progress in the spiritual life. He walks for *forty days*. In the number forty, ten is taken four times. Ten represents the Decalogue to which the whole of the Old Testament can be reduced. Four represents the four Gospels to which the whole of the New Testament can be reduced. So, to walk in the strength of that food for forty days is to progress in the spiritual life throughout all the time we have in such a way that our life is ruled by the New and the Old Testaments.

Second fruit:

14. Secondly, one is raised to contemplation; so the text says: he came *unto the mount of God*. What else can we understand by the mount other than a lifting up of the mind? Moses came to this mount, of which we read in Exodus 3:1ff.: *Moses fed the sheep*, and note here the carrying out of an action. Afterwards, *he drove the flock to the inner parts of the desert*, indicating the leading back of all actions and affections to the inner parts of the heart. And *he came to the mount of God*, in which is noted the raising of the mind to heavenly matters. There, *the Lord appeared to him*, because from then on an act of contemplation occurs in the soul. The Lord appeared to him *in a flame of fire*. Fire warms and illuminates and so indicates that, when a soul reaches the grace of contemplation, the intellect draws the light of knowledge and the affections the glow of love.

Third fruit:

15. Thirdly, one is disposed for the revelation of divine secrets; so the text of 1 Kings 19:11-12 says that the Lord said to Elijah: *Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord, and behold the Lord passes and a great and strong wind before the Lord overthrowing the mountains, and breaking the rocks in pieces; the Lord is not in the wind and after the wind an earthquake; the Lord is not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire; the Lord is not in the fire, and after the fire a whispering of a gentle air*, and the Lord is there. There, it was revealed to Elijah that the Lord is not in a spirit of pride, not in the upset of impatience, nor in a fire of greed or carnal concupiscence, but in the whispering of a gentle air, that is, in the tranquillity of a peaceful conscience. Psalm 75:3 says: *His place is in peace, and his abode in Zion*.

Fourth fruit:

16. Fourthly, one is animated to contempt of the world and to a desire for heavenly goods. So the text says here (1 Kings 19:13) that Elijah *covered his face with his mantle and coming forth stood at the entrance of the cave*. When a soul is lifted up to see the immensity of that beauty and the infinity of divine power, it immediately draws back to its own smallness, *covers its face* with deep humility, *comes forth* from the greed of the world, and *stands at the entrance of the cave*, that is, it longs for eternity. The cave represents a human body and the entrance a desire to leave. For this reason he, as it were, stood at the entrance because he wanted to go out.

Therefore, *let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him*, because his most holy Body is prefigured for us in this second way by the theme of bread.

Part II. The third and fourth themes:

The theme of honey:

17. Thirdly, his most reverent Body is prefigured for us in the theme of honey. So, Proverbs 24:13 says: *Eat honey, my son, because it is good, and the honeycomb most sweet to your throat.* The honeycomb represents the Sacrament of the Lord's Body, and it is well represented by honey because honey delights the taste and, according to doctors purifies eyesight. In the same way, Christ delights the affections and enlightens the mind. Bernard¹: 'Jesus, sweetness of hearts, living fountain, light of minds, surpasses every joy and every desire'. By saying that he is sweetness of hearts, the affections are delighted, and that he is the light of minds, the intellect is enlightened.

Bernard says on the Canticle² that Jesus is honey: 'Jesus is honey in the mouth, a song in the ear, joy in the heart'. And in another text: 'Jesus, angelic glory, a sweet song to the ear, wonderful honey in the mouth, heavenly ornament in the heart'. Our bee, the Virgin Mary, made for us this honey, according to Sirach 11:3: *The bee is small among flying things, but her fruit has the greatest sweetness.*

The blessed Virgin is a bee, an animal described as small, because she is the most humble among all the Saints. Her *fruit has the greatest sweetness*, because the Lord Jesus Christ, the fruit of her womb, was not only sweet like honey but indeed more than honey and the honeycomb. Bernard says: 'Jesus is a presence sweeter than honey and everything else'.

Therefore, just as the Body of Christ is prefigured by the theme of bread and this is for the refreshment of the hungry, so it is prefigured by the theme of honey for the illumination of those sitting in the shadow of death. This is stated in 1 Samuel 14:27, 29: Jonathan tasted the honey and his *eyes were enlightened.*

Four actions of Jonathan:

Four things are necessary for a person who approaches this Sacrament. We read that Jonathan did four things before he came to taste the honeycomb of honey:

- he climbed a difficult track,
- put the whole army of the Philistines to flight,
- held in his hand a rod,
- and brought his hand to his mouth.

This signifies that anyone approaching this Sacrament worthily has to be trying to improve, have victory over temptation, the protection of the blessed Virgin, and the assistance of an enlightened way of acting.

18. Therefore, firstly, one must be trying to improve. So the text says of Jonathan that he *went up creeping on his hands and feet*, to signify that one must always have a strong desire to move forward, to increase and ascend from virtue to virtue, according to Psalm 83:6-8: *Blessed are they whose help is from you, whose heart is disposed to ascend by steps, in the vale of tears, in the place which has been set. For the lawgiver shall give a blessing, they shall go from virtue to virtue; the God of gods shall be seen in Zion.* No one is capable of this other than one who concentrates all the strength of soul and body on all these. For this reason, Jonathan is said to have gone *creeping on his hands and feet*. Bernard³:

This is my daily exercise: I examine my spirit assiduously and with all in you that deserves love, as if with hands and feet and striving with all my strength, I move towards you; but the more strongly I strive, the more severely am I pressed down to the earth; in myself and under myself, and looking at myself, I have come to regard myself as a difficult and tedious question.

19. Secondly, one must have a victory over temptation. For this reason we read of Jonathan that he put the whole army to flight, signifying, that one who wants to approach the Sacrament of the altar worthily must achieve victory over all temptations.

¹ The author of this well known hymn, commonly attributed to Bernard, is not known.

² Sermo 15 n. 6.

³ Or rather Gulielmus, abb. S. Theodoici, in *Tract. de Contemplando Deo*, c. 2. n. 5.

20. Thirdly, one who wishes to taste the sweetness of the honey hidden in the Sacrament of the altar must have the protection of the blessed Virgin. For this reason we read that Jonathan held a rod in his hand before he came to the sweetness similar to honey. In Scripture, the rod represents the Virgin Mary according to the text of Isaiah 11:1: *There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root.* One holds a rod in the hand as long as the memory of the blessed Virgin is held during every activity; honey is got by reaching out with her because it is only by the protection of the blessed Virgin Mary that one reaches the power of this Sacrament. For this reason, just as this most holy Body is given to us through her, so what was given to us and was born from her womb should be offered through her hands and accepted through her hands in the Sacrament. Bernard¹:

Whatever it may be you are preparing to offer remember to entrust it to the hands of the blessed Virgin so that grace may flow back by the same channel to the giver of grace from whom it flowed. Perhaps your hands are either full of blood or stained from gifts in so far as you have not kept them free from every gift.

21. Fourthly, one who wants to approach the mystery of the Body of Christ worthily must have the assistance of an enlightened way of acting. Just as the Apostle says in 2 Thessalonians 3:10: *Anyone who will not work, or who does not work, is not to eat.* This must be observed most faithfully when eating the Body of Christ; no one is worthy to receive this Sacrament other than a person exercised in good works. And so it is said of Jonathan that he brought *his hand to his mouth*. Because we work with our hands, work is indicated in Scripture by hands; but work is also indicated by the mouth and so the word mouth indicates the act of eating.

Four fruits of the Eucharist:

22. But because the gift of grace in one who eats worthily is usually increased, we read that Jonathan received four good effects from tasting the honey; these represent four effects of grace that one receives from approaching the Sacrament worthily.

First fruit:

The mind is enlightened to know the highest truth, and so we read in 1 Samuel 14:27 that after Jonathan tasted the honey: *his eyes were enlightened*. Whoever frequents this Sacrament daily with fervour of devotion advances in enlightenment of mind, and so the text says: *You have seen yourselves that my eyes are enlightened because I tasted a little of this honey.*

Second fruit:

23. Secondly, desire is here incited to seek the highest good; whoever approaches this Sacrament worthily is delighted more and more in its intimacies. This is what is said of Jonathan: *I did but taste a little honey* (1 Samuel 14:43). It is noteworthy that he said: *I did but taste*. Once that sweetness is tasted, the desire to taste is incited and further increased; so because one tastes by tasting, from the taste desire always increases. So Bernard²: 'A spiritual taste is a stirring of love and a prompting of desire'. Also he says: 'Who tastes you still hungers, who drinks you still thirsts, they know of no desire other than Jesus whom they love'. And it adds well *a little honey* because even though an ample taste is given to someone in this life, in comparison with the heavenly fullness, it is only *a little honey*.

Third fruit:

24. Thirdly, an irascible person is strengthened to stamp out all evil. For this reason we read that Jonathan, strengthened by the taste of honey, pursued *the Philistines to Aijalon* (1 Samuel 14:31). The word *Philistines* means double ruin and represents vices

¹ In Nativ. B.M.V. sermo de aquaeductu, n. 18 at the end.

² In festo Omn. Sanct. serm. 1. n. 10: 'A taste of wisdom ... But that taste is nothing more than a stirring of desire and an incentive for love'.

that bring ruin to the soul and eternal death to the body. *Aijalon* means a searching for life and represents the eternal life that we acquire there most perfectly. Temporal life is not called life but rather death, as Gregory¹ says. Therefore, Jonathan, strengthened by the honey, that is, a man made from the Body of Christ, pursued the Philistines to *Aijalon*, that is, he did not cease to stamp out vices until he gained eternal life.

Fourth fruit:

25. Fourthly, a person dies to this world so as to live for God. And this is what is said of Jonathan. After tasting a little honey, he then added: *Behold, I must die* (1 Samuel 14:43), signifying that the sweetness of this Sacrament fills a person and totally destroys this person for the world. This is the desire of the Saints, and so Job 7:15 says: *My soul rather chooses hanging and my bones death*. This death of the external person is the total bringing to life of the inner person. So the Lord said to Moses: *a person shall not see me and live* (Exodus 33:20), because it is only after this death that one reaches the vision of God.² Therefore, because ‘the vision of God is the whole reward’, as Augustine³ says, there is no way to the vision of God except through death. Blessed Augustine desired this death saying:

Make me, Lord, out of desire and love for you, totally dead to this world and make me forget the vanity of all transient things because of the greatness of your love, so that over temporal things may I neither lament nor rejoice nor be corrupted by flattery nor be shaken by adversity.⁴

Therefore, *let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him* because he prefigured his Body for us in the theme of honey.

The fourth theme, namely, the Paschal lamb:

26. Fourthly, his Body is prefigured for us in the theme of the paschal lamb; Exodus 12:3-5: *Let everyone take a lamb by their families and houses. It shall be a lamb without blemish*. This lamb was foreseen by the Prophet and Isaiah 16:1 says: *Send forth, O Lord, the lamb, the ruler of the earth*. This lamb was *without blemish* because it came to take away the sins of the world; John 1:29: *Behold, the Lamb of God*; and: *behold him who takes away the sin of the world*.

This paschal lamb represents the Body of Christ, pointed out to us here as to what kind of man he had to be before he comes, what kind of man in his coming, and what fruits he might receive after his coming.

Four qualities needed before his coming:

27. Before his coming he had to be a man with four qualities:

- he had to have a concern for everyone;
- he had to dispose himself for what was needed;
- he had to be enkindled with love;
- he had to come in the fullness of faith.

First quality:

Firstly, then in coming he had to have a concern for all. He is not a priest for himself, but must offer in the name of all; and this is what is said in Exodus 12:6: *the whole multitude of the children of Israel shall sacrifice it*. He had to offer for the redemption of all the living, those living in purgatory, for all the living and dead to the praise and glory of all the holy Angels and humans reigning in eternal life, and for all to the honour of the holy Trinity.

¹ In Evang. II, homil. 37 n. 1.

² These opinions are taken from Gregor., VIII Moralia c. 35 n. 44. See *The Journey of the Human Person into God*, c. 7 n. 6, in, J. Raischl and A. Cirino, *The Journey into God* (Cincinnati: St Anthony Messenger Press 2002) 402.

³ In Ps. 90, serm. 2. n. 13.

⁴ This text is not in the authentic works of Augustine, but in Oratio 17 that is found in the works of Augustine (Patrologia Latina 158, 895).

Second quality:

Secondly, he had to prepare himself for what was needed; this is what is added in Exodus 12:7: *They shall take of the blood thereof, and put it upon both the side posts, and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.* The two side posts and the upper door post that form the entrance to a house, represent in a soul three things by which God enters into the dwelling of a heart, namely, reason by which God enters as light or brightness; desire by which God enters as sweetness and goodness; anger by which God enters as glory and immensity. These three are touched with blood when they are active in the passion of Christ. Reason is touched with the Blood of the Lamb when it admires the truth of the Sacrament. Desire is touched when, knowing the truth, it experiences bitterness in suffering together with the suffering Christ. Anger is touched when, knowing the suffering Christ, it is stirred to imitation.

Third quality:

Thirdly, he had to be enkindled with love; this is added in Exodus 12:8: *They shall eat the flesh that night roasted at the fire.* That fire represents the love that the Lord ordered to burn always on the altar of the heart. The flesh of the Body of Christ is said to be roasted in this fire because it should only be eaten in love. Whoever comes to the Sacrament without love eats raw flesh. But whoever eats raw flesh puts life at risk; so eating the Body of Christ without love merits eternal damnation.

Fourth quality:

Fourthly, he had to have fullness of faith; this is added in Exodus 12:9: The head represents the Divinity for, as the Apostle says: *The head of Christ is God* (1 Corinthians 11:3). The feet represent humanity. God is everywhere and is not able to move from place to place. God, as it were, took feet and God walked from place to place in the assumed man. When Tobit, that is, Christ, washed these feet in a river, that is, exposed them on the cross, a fish, that is, the devil, wanted to devour them, but he overcame 'by showing its wickedness'. The entrails are what cannot be reached in this Sacrament; a person must devour all these because he or she must believe everything even what cannot be reached by the mind. A person must believe that here is the true Body of Christ, the Body drawn from the blessed Virgin; this Body is here by transubstantiation, the soul is here from a natural bond, the Divinity is here from an inseparable union. The entrails of both natures are here, that is, the inexplicable sacraments. And so whoever is not able to understand the height of this Sacrament by his or her mind must leave this to the power of the Holy Spirit. This is said in Exodus 12:10: *If there be anything left you shall burn it with fire.*¹

Four qualities needed in approaching:

28. A person must have four qualities in approaching the Sacrament, namely,
- continence in the flesh,
 - cleanness in the affections,
 - a memory of the passion in the mind,
 - and a desire for eternal life.

First quality:

Firstly, a person must be continent in the flesh; so it is said in Exodus 12:11: *You shall gird your loins.* The source of lust is in the loins and so one girds the loins when one restrains the flow of passion by continence.

Second quality:

Secondly, one must be clean in the affections; this is added in Exodus 12:11: *You shall have shoes on your feet.* In Scripture, shoes represent the affections because, just as a body is moved by its feet, so a soul is moved by its affections. These feet should wear shoes, that is, be removed from everything earthly; but because nothing so effectively keeps our affections clean as meditation on the Scriptures, the Apostle

¹ On this teaching see IV *Sent.*, d. 11 p. II a. 1 q. 4.

exhorts us to have our *feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace* (Ephesians 6:15).

Third quality:

Thirdly, the text of Exodus 12:11 says: *Having staves in our hands* etc. The cross is represented by a staff. With this staff Jacob, that is, Christ, crossed the Jordan, that is, the flow of the world, and brought two companies with him, that is, many souls gathered from the peoples and the Jews. The person who keeps the memory of the passion of Christ in mind is holding a staff in the hands; the Lord commanded this when he instituted the Sacrament saying: *Do this, as often as you take it, for a commemoration of me* (Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24).

Fourth quality:

Fourthly, one must desire eternal life; this is added in Exodus 12:11: *And you shall eat in haste*, to signify that one who eats this Sacrament should hurry to the summit of its fullness. By a taste of its sweetness one is moved to its fullness; this is what the same text says: *It is the Phase, that is, the Passage, of the Lord*. This Lamb was given as a pre-figuring to the children of Israel in the exodus from Egypt to signify that whoever receives this Sacrament devoutly crosses from this world to God.¹

Four fruits after receiving the Sacrament:

29. Thirdly, it has to be noted that one who approaches this Sacrament worthily receives four fruits. After they ate this paschal lamb the Lord does four things, namely, passes through the land of Egypt, strikes the firstborn, passes judgment on the gods of Egypt, and protects from the plague those marked with blood; these represent that to those who receive the Sacrament worthily the Lord gives

- consolation,
- lessens the inclination to sin of sin,
- takes away love for the world
- and makes them safe on the day of judgment.

First fruit:

Firstly, then he gives consolation as is stated in Exodus 12:12: *I will pass through the land of Egypt*. Egypt means darkness and it represents a human heart not yet perfectly enlightened. The Lord passes through this when the Lord sends consolation; and indeed passes through because the Lord makes no dwelling there, not finding it suitable for a dwelling. The Lord is able to pass through until the Lord will be able to make a dwelling there, according to what is said in the name of the faithful in 2 Kings 4:9-10: *I perceive that this is a holy man of God who often passes by me. Let us, therefore, make him a little chamber*, that is, let us prepare a dwelling for him in the heart; *and put in it for him a candlestick* of correct knowledge, *a table* of inner refreshment, *a stool* of a quiet dwelling, and *a bed* of contemplation, *that when he comes to us he may abide there*.

Second fruit:

Secondly, the Lord lessens inclination to sin, and so there is added in Exodus 12:12: *I will kill every firstborn in the land of Egypt*. What are the firstborn other than vices of the flesh inborn in us from the first parents? The Lord strikes these when the Lord lessens inclination to sin of the flesh; lessens, I say, not takes away completely because, as Bernard² says:

¹ On this crossing see *The Journey of the Human Person into God*, c. 7, 399-402.

² In Cant. serm. 58. n. 10.

As long as you live in this life, you err if you think your flesh is dead, not rather held down: you wish, you do not wish, a Jebusite lives within you; it can be put down but not exterminated.

Third fruit:

Thirdly, the Lord takes away love for the world and this is stated in Exodus 12:12: *Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments.* The gods of Egypt are things of the world that are lovable; Ambrose¹ says ‘that what anyone loves more than other things is his or her God.’ Philippians 3:19 says of carnal people: *Whose God is their belly and whose glory is in their shame.* God passes judgment on these when God causes contempt for the world.

Fourth fruit:

Fourthly, the Lord makes those who receive the Sacrament secure on the day of judgment; this is added in Exodus 12:13: *The blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be; and I shall see the blood and shall pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I shall strike the land of Egypt.* In all in whom on the day of judgment he will see the Blood of his redemption, he will free them from the plague of eternal striking, namely, when *he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.*

Therefore, *let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him* because he prefigured his Body for us in the theme of the paschal lamb.

Part III. On the fifth and sixth themes:

The theme of heavenly treasure:

30. Fifthly, the Lord prefigured his Body for us in the theme of heavenly treasure. The Body of Christ is well compared to a treasure because, just as more precious goods are placed in a treasure, so all the gifts of graces are placed in the Body of Christ. God the Father did this when, waning to console the bride of his Son, holy mother Church, God promised these treasures to it before the coming of Christ, saying in Isaiah 45:3: *I will give you hidden treasures.* These treasures of graces are well said to be hidden because they are enveloped under the visible Sacrament. It is noteworthy that he says in the plural: *I will give you treasures.*

Four treasures hidden in the Sacrament:

There are four treasures hidden under the veil of the Sacrament. In it is

- a treasure of every essence,
- all wisdom,
- all grace
- and all glory.

First treasure:

31. Firstly, in Christ is the treasure of every essence. For all things that are, that were, that will be, or that could be, are *of him and by him and in him* (Romans 11:36). Reflect, therefore, of what kind of treasure this is from whom *heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them* came forth. Hence, there can be applied to Christ the text of Matthew 13:52: *Who brings forth out of his treasure new things and old;* also the text of Psalm 134:7: *He brings forth winds out of his treasures.*²

Second treasure:

Secondly, in Christ is the treasure of all wisdom. Christ knows all things, things that are, things that were, things that will be, and things that could be. He knows not only the things but also the conditions that things have or could have. For he is God ‘to

¹ The author of the quote is not known; some attribute it to Jerome, others to Ambrose; it is found also in Glossa Lombardi ad Ps 80:10.

² See *The Journey of the Human Person into God*, c. 5 n. 8, 392.

whom every heart is open, to whom every person speaks, and from whom there is no secret'.¹ Not only does he know something most perfectly, but for all things that are known he makes the knowledge. He is the light that enlightens all light and keeps it bright; John 8:12: *I am the light of the world*. Colossians 2:3 says of this treasure: *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*.²

Third treasure:

Thirdly, in Christ is the treasure of all grace, for he is *full of grace and truth* (John 1:14). Angels and humans draw from his fullness. He has a primal source of fullness, he who *opens his hand and fills with blessing every rational living creature* (Psalm 144:16).

This treasure is hidden beneath the covering of the Sacrament of the altar; Matthew 13:44: *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field* etc. What is represented here by a field other than the Sacrament of the Body of Christ reaped from a field? In this field we have a hidden treasure because all kinds of graces are hidden there: *Which a person having found, hid it, and for joy thereof goes and sells all that he or she has and buys that field*. Anyone who recognises the fullness of this Sacrament, most willingly interrupts other work so as to be freely busy in the work or devotion of this Sacrament, because he or she knows that the possession of eternal life is drawn from here. The Lord says in John 6:55: *He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life*.

Fourth treasure:

Fourthly, in Christ is the treasure of all glory. Whatever glory belongs to Angels and humans, those to be saved until the day of judgment, draw from his treasure whatever belongs to the garment of the body or the soul.³ He is the one who *lays up the depths in storehouses* (Psalm 32:7), that is, the inexplicable boundaries of this glory. For this reason, he commanded us to hasten to this treasure when he said in Matthew 6:20: *Lay up to yourselves treasure in heaven*. The Saints strongly desire to reach these treasures and, when it is clear to them that they can be reached only through death, *they dig for treasure, and rejoice exceedingly when they have found a grave* (Job 3:21-22).

Hidden for four reasons:

32. This treasure is hidden under the cover of bread and wine for four reasons, and so Isaiah 45:3 says: *I will give you hidden treasures*:

- firstly, because of the merit of faith;
- secondly, because of a suggestion of crudity;
- thirdly, because of the imperfection of our senses;
- fourthly, because of the exclusion of unbelievers.⁴

First reason:

Firstly, this treasure is hidden under the veil of bread and wine because of the merit of faith. A person, believing what this Sacrament means, accumulates great merit in overcoming most strongly seven opponents. These opponents are the five senses all of which sense that the Body of Christ is not here; and imagination is also contrary for in no way can it imagine that the great man, the whole Christ who hung on the cross, could be hidden in such a small host. Reason is also opposed to all this, namely, that the same Body can be at one and the same time in different places, as appears in this Sacrament; that he is most perfectly in heaven, while being nevertheless food on the

¹ These words are taken from the prayer that was recited by priests before going to the altar.

² On the light enlightening all light see Quaestion. disp. de scientia Christi, q. 4. The opinion is from Augustine, see Opera Omnia, note 2 (2, 266).

³ On the double garment, namely, of the soul with three qualities and of the body with four, see *Breviloquium*, p. VII c. 7; *IV Sent.*, d. 33 a. 2 q. 3, and d. 49 p. I and II.

⁴ On these points see *IV Sent.*, d. 11 p. II, dub. 1 d. 12 p. I a. 1 q. 2; *Breviloquium*, p. VI c. 9: It is not fitting for the flesh of Christ to be touched with teeth and because of the horror of crudity etc; see also *IV Sent.*, lit. Magistri, d. XI c. 3.

altar, and not many, but one only and the same Body. Because of this merit of faith the Body of Christ is hidden.¹ Gregory: ‘Faith has no merit when human reason gives a proof’.²

Second reason:

33. Secondly, the Body of Christ is hidden because of a suggestion of crudity. A horror of crudity could hold back many from this Sacrament if they were to think of a living person eating another person and devouring raw flesh. For this reason, this Body is given under a sign and covering associated with eating, namely, under the appearances of bread. The Lord deigned to call himself our bread when he said in John 6:51: *I am the living bread*, so that by eating Christ under the appearances of bread one would not feel a horror of crudity.

Third reason:

34. Thirdly, the Body of Christ is hidden because of the imperfection of our senses. Were he to show himself in the glory of his brightness, just as he is, no mortal could bear the sight of such brightness. Moses, from speaking with the Lord, received such splendour and brightness in his face that he covered his face when speaking with the children of Israel because they were not able to look at him due to the brightness of his face. So too Christ, taking account of our weakness, placed a covering over his brightness.

Fourth reason:

35. Fourthly, the Body of Christ is hidden to exclude unbelievers. He said in Matthew 7:6: *Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine*. What he said in word was done in fact because he hides his face in the Sacrament and so excludes dogs and swine, that is, all who are unworthy of knowledge of this Sacrament.

Therefore, *let the mercies of the Lord give glory to him* because he prefigured his Body for us in the theme of heavenly treasure.

Sixth theme, the manna in Exodus:

36. Sixthly, his Body is prefigured for us by the theme of manna. This is what is said in Exodus 16:4, 15, 31: *The Lord said to Moses: Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you; let the people go forth and gather what is sufficient for every day. When the children of Israel saw it they said to one another manhu, which means, what is it? And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna*. There is written in the book of Wisdom 16:20-21: *You fed your people with the food of angels and gave them bread from heaven prepared without labour, having in it all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste. For your sustenance showed your sweetness to your children, and serving everyone’s will, it was turned to what everyone liked*.

Four properties of manna:

Under the theme of manna the Sacrament of the Body of Christ is described for us as food that is

- most noble,
- most savoury in taste,
- most worthy in what it contains,
- and most wonderful in its efficacy.

¹ The words against reason are to be understood as reason occupied with sensible reality and held down to what is inferior, and the holy Doctor well distinguishes this from a healthy reason enlightened by faith as he explains well in III *Sent.*, d. 23 a. 1 q. 1 ad 4 and II *Sent.*, d. 30 a. 1 q. 1; see also *Breviloquium*, p. V. c. 7.

² Homil. In Evang. 26 n. 1; see above p. 53 note 3 and p. 60 note 4. This passage is explained in III *Sent.*, d. 24 a. 2 q. 2 ad 2.

First property:

37. Firstly, therefore, the Lord's Body is food of a most noble kind; it has been baked by the most blessed Trinity in the oven of the virginal womb by the fire of the Holy Spirit and by the power of the most blessed Trinity it has become the same as material bread. This is what is said: *You gave them bread from heaven prepared without labour*. It was prepared at one time in the virginal womb, but now as he lives in heaven and hides in the Sacrament. It is, therefore, most noble because it comes from a most noble cause.

Moreover, it is most noble because the noblest ones, Angels, eat that bread without the flour of the Sacrament given to us under the covering of a veil. For this reason, the Holy Spirit prompts us to give thanks, saying to us: *You fed your people with the food of angels*.

Second property:

38. Secondly, the Body of Christ under the theme of manna is a food most savoury in taste; the taste of this bread draws the desire of thousands of Angels, but also in this world its smell excites our heart and daily attracts to the reward and the peak of its fullness. John the Evangelist says: Your odour, O Lord, stirs in me eternal desires. This is what is said here of the Body of Christ under the theme of manna that has *all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste*

Third property:

39. Thirdly, this food is most worthy in what it contains. It contains the whole most holy Trinity and so is called the vessel of the Trinity. It contains this, I say, by presence and assistance, not by enclosing. The Trinity 'is within everything but not closed in; outside everything but not excluded; above everything but not exalted; below everything but not cast down¹.' The Son is there by the incarnation, the Father and the Holy Spirit are with him by the indivisible sharing of one substance; and so it is said here to the Father: *your substance showed your sweetness to your children*, as if to say: You, Father, give your substance, that is, your Son, indeed, the Father gives all his substance to the Son, and your sweetness, that is, your Spirit, whom you had from all eternity, you make present in the world under this Sacrament to enlightened minds.

Fourth property:

40. Fourthly, this food in the theme of manna is most wonderful in its efficacy. For this reason, the text says that *servicing everyone's will, it was turned to what everyone liked*. The beneficial effect is reached according to the degree of good will and according to the excellence of life and holiness, as blessed Bernard² says: 'To the degree that you have kept the foot of trust in the goods of the Lord, to that degree will you possess them'.

Example of the Saints:

Because the Saints kept a foot of highest trust firmly in the goods of this Sacrament, they reached its noblest effects. For this reason, it is written of blessed Clare that she feared the One hiding in the Sacrament, the One sitting on the right hand of the Father, and because she had the highest trust in God, she merited to hear the One living in the Sacrament who spoke to her physical ears.³

Therefore, according to what each person reaches in Christ in this Sacrament, to this extent Christ, with the gifts of his grace, will show himself to the person, greatly to the great, moderately to the mediocre, sparingly to the little, poorly to the wicked. For *with the holy you will be holy, and with the perverse you will be perverse* (Psalm 17:26-27). So we read of this Sacrament: *That which could not be destroyed by fire, being warmed with a little sunbeam presently melted away, that is, liquefied* (Wisdom 16:27). The

¹ This is said of God in Isid., 1 *Sent.*, c. 2 n. 3, and the sense in Gregor., II *Moralia*, c. 16 n. 20.

² Rather Guerricus abb., serm. in festo s. Benedicti, in substance.

³ See *The Legend of Saint Clare*, in, *Clare of Assisi: Early Documents*, n. 29 (Saint Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications 1993) 282-283.

matter of manna was hardened in the heat of a fire but melted in the heat of the sun; this represents that one who approaches this Sacrament having within a fire of carnal desire or human greed, merits to be hardened; this Sacrament is hardened in fire. But one who approaches the Sacrament having the heat of the sun, that is, a fervour of charity, merits to be melted, that is, purged by the stronger fire of charity; this Sacrament melts in a ray of the sun, that is, melts the soul by affection so that the text of Canticle 5:6 can be applied: *My soul melted when the beloved spoke*. What is said figuratively of manna is fulfilled in this Sacrament, namely, that it was transformed into all things, and was obedient to your grace that nourishes all, according to the will of them that desired it of God (Wisdom 16:25).

Four things to be done:

41. We read that the children of Israel would not have reached the food of manna unless

- they had first left Egypt,
- crossed the Red Sea,
- gone into the desert,
- and sweetened water by immersing wood.

These signified that whoever wishes to come to the above mentioned noblest effects of this Sacrament, must do four things:

- one must leave the darkness of vice,
- produce a worthy fruit of penance,
- condemn all that is worldly,
- and change the bitterness of the cross into a delight.

First preparation:

Therefore, firstly one must leave the darkness of vice; this is what is meant in saying that the children of Israel had to leave Egypt and later they came to a taste of this food. Egypt means darkness. Therefore, one leaves the darkness of vice who hurries to the sweetness of these graces, so that the words of Ephesians 5:8 can be applied to this person: *You were hitherto darkness but now light in the Lord*.

Second preparation:

Secondly, one must produce a worthy fruit of penance. This is what was said of the children of Israel after they had crossed the Red Sea. The sea represents the bitterness of penance for in it *great as the sea is your destruction* (Lamentations 2:13); in this sea the king of Egypt with his army was submerged, that is, the devil with all his attendants.

Third preparation:

Thirdly, one must abandon all that is worldly. This is what is said of the children of Israel that, before taking this food, they had to come into the desert, that is, abandon all that is worldly. There are three things by which a person is usually tied to the world, namely, love of ownership, carnal pleasure and a greed for honour, according to 1 John 2:16: *All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life*. So Moses said: *We will go three day's journey into the wilderness* (Exodus 3:18). This signifies that by a journey of one day love of ownership is abandoned; by a journey on the second day carnal pleasure is abandoned; by the journey of the third day greed for honour is abandoned.

Fourth preparation:

Fourthly, one must change the bitterness of the cross into a sweet delight, so that the carrying of the cross might delight one as much as the carrying of the cross is necessary for saving one's soul. The Lord says: *The one who does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me* (Matthew 10:38). Therefore, if you wish to change the bitterness of your cross into a delight of sweetness, always hold in your heart the

memory of the Lord's passion. Bernard¹ says: 'Truly, one does not feel one's own wounds when one gazes at the wounds of Christ'. This is what is read of the children of Israel that, after they had reached the sweetest food, they came to Marah, to a most bitter drink; because of its bitterness they were unable to drink it and the Lord commanded that they were to put a piece of wood into the drink; the wood represented the cross and the bitterness was sweetened.

Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to the Lord and his wonderful works to the children of men. He has satisfied the empty soul, and has filled the hungry soul with good things. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound, in want and in iron (Psalm 106:8-10).

Epilogue:

42. Therefore:

- if you feel empty, look for your filling in this Sacrament in the theme of dripping;
- if you feel hungry, seek your refreshment in the theme of bread;
- if you feel blind and seated in darkness, seek your enlightenment in this Sacrament in the theme of honey;
- if you feel you are lying in the shadow of death, seek your reconciliation in this Sacrament in the theme of heavenly treasure;
- if you feel your heart is hard, seek your softening in this Sacrament in the theme of manna.

May Jesus Christ, Son of the most blessed Virgin deign to give this to us. Amen.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My thanks go to Sr Joanne Fitzsimons, OSC, for her proof reading of these pages and for her corrections to the text.

¹ In Cant. serm. 61. n. 8