

Saint_Thomas_on_the_Gospel_for_the_12th_Sunday_after_Pentecost.

And turning to his disciples, he said: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying, Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him went away, leaving him half dead. And it chanced, that a certain priest went down the same way: and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him; and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I, at my return, will repay thee. Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among the robbers? But he said: He that shewed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go, and do thou in like manner.

THEOPHYL. Having said above, No one knows who the Father is but the Son, and to whomsoever the Son will reveal him; He pronounces a blessing upon His disciples, to whom the Father was revealed through Him. Hence it is said, And he turned him to his disciples, and said, Blessed &c.

CYRIL; He turns to them indeed, since He rejected the Jews, who were deaf, with their understandings blinded, and not wishing to see, and gives Himself wholly to those who love Him; and He pronounces those eyes blessed which see the things no others had seen before. We must however know this, that seeing does not signify the action of the eyes, but the pleasure which the mind receives from benefits conferred. For instance, if any one should say, He has seen good times, that is, he has rejoiced in good times, according to the Psalm, You shall see the good of Jerusalem. For many Jews have seen Christ performing, divine works, that is to say, with their bodily sight, yet all were not fitted to receive the blessing, for they believed not; but these saw not His glory with their mental sight. Blessed then are our eyes, since we see by faith the Word who is made man for us, shedding upon us the glory of His Godhead, that He may make us like to Him by sanctification and righteousness.

THEOPHYL. Now He blesses them, and all truly who look with faith, because the ancient prophets and kings desired to see and hear God in the flesh, as it follows; For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired, &c.

THEOPHYL; Matthew more clearly calls them prophets, and righteous men. For those are great kings, who have known how, not by yielding to escape from the assaults of temptations, but by mastering to gain the rule over them.

CHRYSTUS. Now from this saying many imagine that the prophets were without the knowledge of Christ. But if they desired to see what the Apostles saw, they knew that He would come to men, and dispense those things which He did. For no one desires what he has no conception of; they therefore knew the Son of God. Hence He does not merely say, They desired to see me, but those things which you see, nor to hear me, but those things which you hear. For they saw Him, but not yet Incarnate, nor thus conversing with men, nor speaking with such authority to them.

THEOPHYL; For those looking afar off saw Him in a glass and darkly, but the Apostles having our Lord present with them, whatever things they wished to learn had no need to be taught by angels or any other kind of vision.

ORIGEN; But why does he say that many prophets desired, and not all? Because it is said of Abraham, That he saw the day of Christ and was glad, which sight not many, but few attained to; but there were other prophets and just men not so great as to reach to Abraham's vision, and the experience of the Apostles, who, He says, saw not, but desired to see.

THEOPHYL; Our Lord had told His disciples above that their names were written in Heaven; from this it seems to me the lawyer took occasion of tempting our Lord, as it is said, And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him.

CYRIL; For there were in fact certain men who then went about the whole country of the Jews bringing charges against Christ, and saying that He spoke of the commands of Moses as useless, and Himself introduced certain strange doctrines. A lawyer then, wishing to entrap Christ into saying something against Moses, comes and tempts Him, calling Him Master, though not bearing to be His disciple.

And because our Lord was as wont to speak to those who came to Him concerning eternal life, the lawyer adopts this kind of language. And since he tempted Him subtly, he receives no other answer than the command given by Moses; for it follows, He said to him, What is written in the law? how read you?

AMBROSE; For he was one of those who think themselves skilled in the law, and who keep the letter of the law, while they know nothing of its spirit. From a part of the law itself our Lord proves them to be ignorant of the law, showing that at the very first the law preached the Father and the Son, and announced the sacraments of the Lord's Incarnation; for it follows, And he answering said, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and, with all your mind.

BASIL; By saying, with all your mind, he does not admit of any division of love to other things, for whatever love you cast on lower things necessarily takes away from the whole. For as a vessel full of liquid, whatever flows therefrom must so much diminish its fullness; so also the soul, whatever love it has wasted upon things unlawful, has so much lessened its love to God.

GREG. NYSS. Now the soul is divided into three faculties; one merely of growth and vegetation, such as is found in plants; another which relates to the senses, which is preserved in the nature of irrational animals; but the perfect faculty of the soul is that of reason, which is seen in human nature. By saying then the heart, He signified the bodily substance, that is, the

vegetative; by the soul the middle, or the sensitive; but by saying the mind, the higher nature, that is, the intellectual or reflective faculty.

THEOPHYL. We must hereby understand that it becomes us to submit every power of the soul to the divine love, and that resolutely, not slackly. Hence it is added, And with all your strength.

MAXIM. To this end then the law commanded a threefold love to God, that it might pluck us away from the threefold fashion of the world, as touching possessions, glory, and pleasure, wherein also Christ was tempted.

BASIL; But if any one ask how the love of God is to be obtained, we are sure that the love of God cannot be taught. For neither did we learn to rejoice in the presence of light, or to embrace life, or to love our parents and children; much less were we taught the love of God, but a certain seminal principle was implanted in us, which has within itself the cause, that man clings to God; which principle the teaching of the divine commands is wont to cultivate diligently, to foster watchfully, and to carry on to the perfection of divine grace. For naturally we love good; we love also what is our own, and akin to us; we likewise of our own accord pour forth all our affections on our benefactors.

If then God is good, but all things desire that good, which is wrought voluntarily, He is by nature inherent in us, and although from His goodness we are far from knowing Him, yet from the very fact that we proceeded forth from Him, we are bound to love Him with exceeding, love, as in truth akin to us; He is likewise also a greater benefactor than all whom by nature we love here. And again. The love of God then is the first and chief command, but the second, as filling up the first and filled up by it, bids us to love our neighbor. Hence it follows, And your neighbor as yourself. But we have an instinct given us by God to perform this command, as who does not know that man is a kind and social animal? For nothing belongs so much to our nature as to communicate with one another, and mutually to need and love our relations. Of those things then of which in the first place He gave us the seed, He afterwards requires the fruits.

CHRYS. Yet observe how, almost to the same extent of obedience he requires the performance of each command. For of God he says, with all your heart. Of our neighbor, as yourself: Which if it were diligently kept, there would be neither slave nor free man, neither conqueror nor conquered, (or rasher, neither prince nor subject,) rich nor poor, nor would the devil be even known, for the chaff would rather stand the touch of fire than the devil the fervor of love; so surpassing all things is the constancy of love.

GREG. But since it is said, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, how is he merciful in taking compassion upon another, who still, by unrighteous living, is unmerciful to himself?

CYRIL; When the lawyer had answered the things contained in the law, Christ, to whom all things were known, cuts to pieces his crafty nets. For it follows, And he said to him, you have answered right: this do, and you shall live.

ORIGEN; From these words it is undoubtingly gathered, that the life which is preached according to God the Creator of the world, and the Scriptures given by Him, is life everlasting. For the Lord Himself bears testimony to the passage from Deuteronomy, You shall love the Lord your God; and from Leviticus, You shall love your neighbor as yourself: But these things

were spoken against the flowers of Valentinus, Basil, and Marcion. For what else did he wish us to do in seeking eternal life, but what is contained in the Law and the Prophets?

CYRIL; The lawyer, when praised by our Savior for having answered right, breaks forth into pride, thinking that he had no neighbor, as though there was no one to be compared to him in righteousness. Hence it is said, But he willing to justify himself said to Jesus, And who is my neighbor? For somehow first one sin and then another takes him captive. From the cunning with which he sought to tempt Christ, he falls into pride. But here when asking, who is my neighbor, he proves himself to be devoid of love for his neighbor, since he did not consider any one to be his neighbor, and consequently of the love of God; for he who loves not his brother whom he sees, cannot love God whom he does not see.

AMBROSE; He answered that he knew not his neighbor, because he believed not on Christ, and he who knows not Christ knows not the law, for being ignorant of the truth, how can he know the law which makes known the truth?

THEOPHYL. Now our Savior defines a neighbor not in respect of actions or honor, but of nature; as if He says, Think not that because you are righteous you have no neighbor, for all who partake of the same nature are your neighbors. Be you also their neighbor, not in place, but in affection and solicitude for them. And in addition to this, he brings forward the Samaritan as an example. As it follows, And Jesus answering him said, A certain man went down, &c.

GREEK EX. He has well used the general term. For He says not, “a certain one went down,” but, a certain man, for his discourse was of the whole human race.

AUG. For that man is taken for Adam himself, representing the race of man; Jerusalem, the city of peace, that heavenly country, from the bliss of which he fell. Jericho is interpreted to be the moon, and signifies our mortality, because it rises, increases, wanes, and sets.

PSEUDO-AUG. Or by Jerusalem, which is by interpretation “the sight of peace,” we mean Paradise, for before man sinned he was in sight of peace, that is, in paradise; whatever he saw was peace, and going thence he descended (as if brought low and made wretched by sin) into Jericho, that is, the world, in which all things that are born die as the moon.

THEOPHYL Now he says not “descended,” but “was descending.” For human nature was ever tending downwards, and not for a time only, but throughout busied about a life liable to suffering.

BASIL; This interpretation corresponds to the places, if any one will examine them. For Jericho lies in the low parts of Palestine, Jerusalem is seated on an eminence, occupying the crest of a mountain. The man then came from the high parts to the low, to fall into the hands of the robbers who infested the desert. As it follows, And he fell among thieves.

CHRYST. First, we must needs pity the ill fortune of the man who fell unarmed and helpless among robbers, and who was so rash and unwise as to choose the road in which he could not escape the attack of robbers. For the unarmed can never escape the armed, the heedless the villain, the unwary the malicious. Since malice is ever armed with guile, fenced round with cruelty, fortified with deceit, and ready for fierce attack.

AMBROSE; But who are those robbers but the Angels of night and darkness, among whom he had not fallen, unless by deviating from the divine command he had placed himself in their way.

CHRYST. At the beginning of the world then the devil accomplished his treacherous attack upon man, against whom he practiced the poison of deceit, and directed all the deadliness of his malice.

AUG. He fell then among robbers, that is, the devil and his angels, who through the disobedience of the first man, stripped the race of mankind of the ornaments of virtue, and wounded him, that is, by ruining the gift of the power of free will. Hence it follows, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, for to that man sinning he gave a wound, but to us many wounds since to one sin which we contract we add many.

AUG. Or they stripped man of his immortality, and wounding him (by persuading to sin) left him half dead; for wherein he is able to understand and know God, man is alive, but wherein he is corrupted and pressed down by sins, he is dead. And this is what is added, leaving him half dead.

PSEUDO-AUG. For the half dead has his vital function (that is, free will) wounded, in that he is not able to return to the eternal life which he has lost. And therefore he lay, because he had not strength of his own sufficient to rise and seek a physician, that is, God, to heal him.

THEOPHYL. Or man after sin is said to be half dead, because his soul is immortal, but his body mortal, so that the half of man is under death. Or, because his human nature hoped to obtain salvation in Christ, so as not altogether to lie under death. But in that Adam had sinned death entered in the world, in the righteousness of Christ death was to be destroyed.

AMBROSE; Or they stripped us of the garments which we have received of spiritual grace, and so are wont to inflict wounds. For if we keep the unspotted garments we have put on, we can not feel the wounds of robbers.

BASIL; Or it may be understood that they stripped us after first inflicting wounds; or wounds precede nakedness, as sin precedes the absence of grace.

THEOPHYL; But sins are called wounds, because the perfectness of human nature is violated by them. And they departed, not by ceasing to lie in wait, but by hiding the craft of their devices.

CHRYST. Here then was man (that is, Adam) lying destitute of the aid of salvation, pierced with the wounds of his sins, whom neither Aaron the high priest passing by could advantage by his sacrifice; for it follows, And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

Nor again could his brother Moses the assist him by the Law, as it follows, And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

AUG. Or by the Priest and the Levite, two times are represented, namely, of the Law and the Prophets. By the Priest the Law is signified, by which the priesthood and sacrifices were appointed; by the Levites the prophecies of the Prophets, in whose times the law of mankind could not heal, because by the Law came the knowledge not the doing away of sin.

THEOPHYL. But He says, passed by, because the Law came and stood till its time foreordained, then, not being able to cure, departed. Mark also that the Law was not given with this previous intention that it should cure man, for man could not from the beginning receive the mystery of Christ. And therefore it is said, And by chance there came a certain priest, which expression we use with respect to those things which happen without forethought.

AUG. Or it is said, passed by, because the man who came down from Jerusalem to Jericho is believed to have been an Israelite, and the priest who came down, certainly his neighbor by birth, passed him by lying on the ground. And a Levite also came by, likewise his neighbor by birth; and he also despised him as he lay.

THEOPHYL. They pitied him, I say, when they thought about him, but afterwards, overcome by selfishness, they went away again. For this is signified by the word, passed him by.

AUG. A Samaritan coming by, far removed by birth, very near in compassion, acted as follows, But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed came where he was, &c. In whom our Lord Jesus Christ would have Himself typified. For Samaritan is interpreted to be keeper and it is said of him, He shall-not slumber nor sleep who keeps Israel; since being raised from the dead he dies no more. Lastly, when it was said to him, You are a Samaritan, and have a devil, He said He had not a devil, for He knew Himself to be the caster out of devils, He did not deny that He was the keeper of the weak.

GREEK EX. Now Christ here fully calls Himself a Samaritan. For in addressing the lawyer who was glorying in the Law, He wished to express that neither Priest nor Levite, nor all they who were conversant with the Law, fulfilled the requirements of the Law, but He came to accomplish the ordinances of the Law.

AMBROSE; Now this Samaritan was also coming down. For who is he that ascended upon into heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven.

THEOPHYL. But He says, journeying, as though He purposely determined this in order to cure us.

AUG. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, therefore near to him, as it were, in likeness.

GREEK EX. Or He came by the way. For He was a true traveler, not a wanderer; and came down to the earth for our sakes.

AMBROSE; Now when He came He was made very near to us by His taking upon Himself our infirmities, He became a neighbor by bestowing compassion. Hence it follows, And when he saw him he was moved with compassion.

PSEUDO-AUG. Seeing him lying down weak and motionless. And therefore was He moved with compassion, because He saw in him nothing to merit a cure, but He Himself for sin condemned sin in the flesh. Hence it follows, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.

AUG. For what so distant, what so far removed, as God from man, the immortal from the mortal, the just from sinners, not in distance of place, but of likeness. Since then He had in Him two good things, righteousness and immortality, and we two evils, that is unrighteousness, and mortality, if He had taken upon Him both our evils He would have been our equal, and with us have had need of a deliverer. That He might be then not what we are, but near us, He was made not a sinner, as you are, but mortal like to you. By taking upon Himself punishment, not taking upon Himself guilt, He destroyed both the punishment and the guilt.

AUG. The binding up of wounds is the checking of sins; oil is the consolation of a good hope, by the pardon given for the reconciliation of man; wine is the incitement to work fervently in spirit.

AMBROSE; Or, he binds up our wounds by a stricter commandment, as by oil he soothes by the remission of sin, as by wine he pricks to the heart by the denunciation of judgment.

GREG. Or in the wine he applies the sharpness of constraint, in the oil the softness of mercy. By wine let the corrupt parts be washed, by oil let the healing parts be assuaged; we must then mix gentleness with severity, and we must so combine the two, that those who are put under us be neither exasperated by our excessive harshness, nor be relaxed by too much kindness.

THEOPHYL. Or else, intercourse with man is the oil, and intercourse with God is the wine which signifies divinity, which no one can endure unmixed unless oil be added, that is, human intercourse. Hence he worked some things humanly, some divinely. He poured then in oil and wine, as having saved us both by His human and His divine nature.

CHRYST. Or, he poured in wine, that is, the blood of His passion, and oil, that is, the anointing of the chrism, that pardon might be granted by His blood, sanctification be conferred by the chrism.

The wounded parts are bound up by the heavenly Physician, and containing a salve within themselves, are by the working of the remedy restored to their former soundness Having poured in wine and oil, he placed him upon His beast, as it follows, and placing him upon his beast, &c.

AUG. His beast is our flesh, in which He has condescended to come to us. To be placed on the beast is to believe in the incarnation of Christ.

AMBROSE; Or, He places us on His beast in that He bears our sins, and is afflicted for us, for man has been made like to the beasts, therefore He placed us on His beast, that we might not be as horse and mule, in order that by taking upon Him our body, He might abolish the weakness of our flesh.

THEOPHYL. Or He placed us on His beast, that is, on His body. For He has made us His members, and partakers of His body. The Law indeed did not take in all the Moabites, and the Ammonites shall not enter into the Church of God; but now in every nation he that fears the Lord is accepted by Him, who is willing to believe and to become part of the Church. Wherefore He says, that he brought him to an inn.

CHRYST. For the Inn is the Church, which receives travelers, who are tired with their journey through the world, and oppressed with the load of their sins; where the wearied traveler casting down the burden of his sins is relieved, and after being refreshed is restored with wholesome food. And this is what is here said, and took care of him. For without is every thing that is conflicting, hurtful and evil, while within the Inn is contained all rest and health.

THEOPHYL; And lightly He brought him placed on His beast, since no one, except he be united to Christ's body by Baptism, shall enter the Church.

AMBROSE; But as the Samaritan had not time to stay longer on the earth, he must needs return to the place whence he descended, as it follows, And on the morrow he took out two pence, &c. What is that morrow, but perchance the day of our Lord's resurrection? of which it was said, This is the day the Lord has made. But the two pence are the two covenants, which bear stamped on them the image of the eternal King, by the price of which our wounds are healed.

AUG. Or the two pence are the two commandments of love, which the Apostles received from the Holy Spirit to preach to others; or the promise of the present life, and that which is to come.

ORIGEN; Or the two pence seem to me to be the knowledge of the sacrament, in what manner the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, which is given as a reward by the

Angel to the Church that she may take more diligent care of the man entrusted to her whom in the shortness of the time He Himself had also cured. And it is promised that whatever she should spend on the cure of the half dead man, should be restored to her again, And whatsoever you spend more, when I come again I will repay you.

AUG. The inn-keeper was the Apostle, who spent more; either in giving counsel, as he says, Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment, or, in working even with his own hands, that he might not trouble any of the weak in the newness of the Gospel, though it was lawful for him to be fed from the Gospel. Much more also did the Apostles spend, but those teachers also in their time have spent more who have interpreted both the Old and New Testament, for which they shall receive their reward.

AMBROSE; Blessed then is that inn-keeper who is able to cure the wounds of another; blessed is he to whom Jesus says, Whatsoever you have spent more, when I come again I will repay you. But when will you return, O Lord, save on the Judgment day? For though you are ever every where, and though standing in the midst of us, are not perceived by us, yet the time will be in which all flesh shall behold You coming again. You will then restore what you owe to the blessed, whose debtor you are. Would that we were confident debtors, that we could pay what we had received!

CYRIL; After what has gone before, our Lord fitly questions the lawyer; Which of these three think you was neighbor to him who fell among thieves?

But he said, He that shows mercy on him. For neither Priest nor Levite became neighbor to the sufferer, but he only who had compassion on him. For vain is the dignity of the Priesthood, and the knowledge of the Law, unless they are confirmed by good works. Hence it follows, And Jesus said to him, Go and do you likewise.

CHRYSTOS. As if He said, If you see any one oppressed, say not, Surely he is wicked; but be he Gentile or Jew and need help, dispute not, he has a claim to your assistance, into whatever evil he has fallen.

AUG. Hereby we understand that he is our neighbor, to whomsoever we must show the duty of compassion if he need it, or would have shown if he had needed it. From which it follows, that even he who must in his turn show us this duty, is our neighbor. For the name of neighbor has relation to something else, nor can any one be a neighbor, save to a neighbor; but that no one is excluded to whom the office of mercy is to be denied, is plain to all; as our Lord says, Do good to them that hate you. Hence it is clear, that in this command by which we are bid to love our neighbor, the holy angels are included, by whom such great offices of mercy are bestowed upon us. Therefore our Lord Himself wished also to be called our neighbor, representing Himself to have assisted the half dead man who lay in the way.

AMBROSE; For relationship does not make a neighbor, but compassion, for compassion is according to nature. For nothing is so natural as to assist one who shares our nature.

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