

## NT-MT46

10.29.17

Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew by St. Augustine <sup>1</sup>

I know, beloved, how well fed you are every day by the exhortations of Holy Scripture, and what nourishment your hearts find in the word of God. Nevertheless the affection we have for one another compels me to say something to you, beloved, about love. To speak about love there is no need to select some special passage from Scripture to serve as a text for the homily; open the Bible at any page and you will find it extolling love. We know this is so from the Lord himself, as the gospel reminds us, for when asked what were the most important commandments of the law, he answered: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.* And then, just in case you might be tempted to search further through the pages of Holy Scripture for some commandments other than these two, he added: *The entire law and the prophets also depend upon these two commandments.* If the entire law and the prophets depend upon these two commandments, how much more must the gospel do so?

People are renewed by love. As sinful desire ages them, so love rejuvenates them. Enmeshed in the toils of his desires the psalmist laments: *I have grown old surrounded by my enemies.* Love, on the other hand, is the sign of our renewal from the Lord's own words: *I give you a new commandment – love one another.*

Even in former times there were people who loved God without thought of reward, and whose hearts were purified by their chaste longing for him. They drew back the veils obscuring the ancient promises, and caught a glimpse through these figures of a new covenant to come. They saw that all the precepts and promises of the old covenant, geared to the capacities of an unregenerate people, prefigured a new covenant which the Lord would bring to fulfilment in the last age. The Apostle says this quite clearly: *The things that happened to them were symbolic, and were recorded for us who are living in the last age.* When the time for it came the new covenant began to be openly proclaimed, and these ancient figures were expounded

and explained so that all might understand that the old covenant promises were pointed to the new covenant.

And so love was present under the old covenant just as it is under the new, though then it was more hidden and fear was more apparent, whereas now love is more clearly seen and fear is diminished. For as love grows stronger we feel more secure, and when our feeling of security is complete fear vanishes, since, as the apostle John declares: *Perfect love casts out fear.*

1Journey with the Fathers -Year A – New City Press – NY – 199 – pg 136

**OT-JON04**

**10/30/17**

The Prophecy of Jonah from a book by Dom Damasus Winzen <sup>1</sup>

The harsh judgment over apostasy is followed by a message of hope through repentance for the heathen who have never come in contact with the true faith. Jonah's prophecy shows that God's will to save is not limited to the chosen people, but extends to the vast masses of heathen nations. The name Jonah, which means dove, reminds us of the message of reconciliation which at the end of the flood brought the olive branch to Noah. The way in which the reconciliation of the gentiles will come about is indicated in the "sig of Jonah". As his experience with the whale made Jonah a preacher of repentance to Nineveh, so her exile, being swallowed up in the belly of the pagan world, made Israel a light of revelation for the heathen. Only in Jesus Christ, however, is the sign of Jonah fulfilled, because through his death and resurrection the whole world receives the Spirit of Pentecost.

<sup>1</sup>Pathways in Scripture – Damasus Winzen – Word of Life – Ann Arbor, MI – 1976 – pg 232

**The sign of Jonah – From a Commentary by St. Ambrose**<sup>1</sup>

See for yourselves the differences between the gospel narrative and what we have read about Jonah; he is lying asleep in the interior of the ship, in which he prefigured a type of the Lord in his passion. For just as Jonah was plunged into a deep sleep within the ship, without a thought of being woken up, so did our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the mystery of his death provided the antitype of that Old Testament figure, sleep soundly during his lifetime, as the gospel tells us, in a boat. And just as Jonah passed three days and nights in the belly of a whale, so did the son of Man spend three days in the heart of the earth after his death. But after he was raised from the dead and roused his body from its sleep for the salvation of all, he visited his disciples.

Christ, then, is the true Jonah, who gave his life for our redemption. For this reason he was taken up on deck and cast overboard into the sea in order to be swallowed up by the whale. Job had this to say about the whale: *He holds in captivity a huge sea monster*. And what kind of beast is this meant to be? You will know when you read that our Lord Jesus Christ *took captivity captive*. Once our adversary and bitter enemy had been subdued, we, who had been under his dominion, began to enjoy our liberty, thanks to Christ.

The prayer itself of holy Jonah throws some light upon the mystery of the Lord's passion, for he said, *I have cried out to the Lord in my affliction, and my voice has reached him from the depths of Sheol* – not, you will notice, from the depths of the whale's belly. For it was into Hades that the Lord went down, not in any whale, so that he might loose those detained there from their everlasting bonds.

Now, who was it that offered to the Lord God his sacrifice with praise and thanksgiving if not our great High Priest himself, who made his vows and paid them on behalf of all of us? For he alone could make his sacrifice effective. Just as Jonah, by being cast into the sea, was able to allay its fury,

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<sup>1</sup> A Word in Season – vol. VIII – Augustinian Press – 1999 – pg 18

so did our Lord Jesus Christ, by coming into the world, win it for himself, and through his blood he established it everywhere – in heaven and on earth. By his coming he redeemed all men and women, and by his deeds he brought them all to love and worship God; he raised the dead and healed the sick, implanting in people's souls a reverence for God. He it was who offered to the Father a sacrifice of atonement on our behalf, presenting God with an oblation capable of justifying us, He it was who slept and woke again.

**11SN 0103**

**11.01.17**

**A Sermon by St. Aelred of Rievaulx <sup>1</sup>**

My brothers, if we are not qualified to speak of one of God's saints and proclaim her glory, how qualified are we to give a sermon of all of the saints? It is all the more necessary that we bear ourselves in a way enabling us to come to share their glory. What then must we do? How can we attain these heights? Accordingly, brothers, let us listen to some wholesome advice. For whom should we be more ready to believe than someone who has already attained that glory? He certainly knows the way by which he went up. Let us listen then to one of the great friends of Jesus telling us: *Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand that he may raise you up.*

You know how today throughout the entire world everyone is praising God's saints – the angels and archangels, the apostles, the martyrs, confessors, virgins. In their honor today in our holy Church there are canticles, hymns, torches and all the rest that goes with a feast. The canticles connote the everlasting celebration in which the saints live because of the inexpressible joy which is theirs in God. The hymns connote the inexpressible praise by which they are always praising God. So it is the Psalmist says: *Blessed are those who dwell in your house, O Lord; they will praise you through all ages.* The torches connote the everlasting light in which God's saints live. This is why this past night you sang: *Around you, Lord, is a light that will never fail where the souls of the saints find rest.* Now brothers, ponder, if you can, how exalted in heaven are those who can be exalted and honored in this way on earth. Surely, brothers, if we could behold all the glory of the world and all the praise of the world and all the joy of the world at the same time, in comparison with their joy it is nothing but absolute misery.

Therefore, brothers, you ought to know that we celebrate these feasts with torches, canticles and so on for only two reasons. (These things do not profit God's saints. They take no delight from this earthly singing, nor do they glory in this earthly torches and trifles. Their praise is Christ and he is their light, *who enlightens every person coming into this world.*)

The first reason for these things is that by these reminders we may rouse ourselves to greater devotion; then the second, because of the connotations of which we have already spoken. We ought, then, to do as much as is adequate to these two reasons. They do not celebrate these feasts well who by excessive pomp and ceremony pursue these external glories and splendours – with the result that the outer self becomes so intent on the canticles, the ornaments, the torches and such lovely trappings that the mind is scarcely able to conceive of anything but what it sees with the eyes, hears with the ears, or perceives with the other senses.

As for us, brothers, who do not see these things, let us ponder and delight in the true loveliness in which the saints live free of corruption; in those spiritual ornaments that the saints possess in righteousness and holiness: in the hymns and praises with which they praise God without weariness; and in that light which they see in the face of God. And let us keep our feasts in such a way that our mind is not turned back to those earthly and perishable delights but rather is roused to those that are spiritual and eternal. And so let us reflect on their glory and exaltation. To enable us to reach this exaltation, let us listen to the advice of the Apostle: *Humble yourselves beneath the mighty hand of God*. The Apostle was very aware of the reason why we are cast down, why we have lost that exaltation in which we were created, why we were driven out into this unhappiness. What is this reason, brothers, if not pride? Therefore, to counteract this pride he taught humility. *Humble yourselves*, he says. But because he knew that not all those who humble themselves humble themselves wisely, he therefore added: *under the mighty hand of God*.

Now let us notice who they are who are humbled beneath the glorious hand of God. They are the good angels who, after the blessed Mary Mother of God, are the focus of this feast. They doubtless humble themselves beneath the glorious hand of God for they look for nothing from his hand but his glory in which they are happy without end, each one according to the rank in which they were created.

Therefore, brother, let us humble ourselves *beneath God's mighty hand that he may lift us up at the time of his visitation*. MAY he lift us up through good deeds and through holy desires, so that when he comes at that great visitation when he will demand from everyone an account of what they

have done in this life, he may lift us up totally and we may hear that endearing voice saying: *Come, you blessed of my Father. Receive the kingdom that has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world.*

1Aelred of Rievaulx – The Liturgical Sermons – Cistercian Fathers Series - #58 – Cistercian Publications – Kalamazoo – 2001 – pg 346



## 11SN0206

### 11.02.17

From Purgation and Purgatory by St. Catherine of Genoa <sup>1</sup>

The souls in purgatory cannot think, "I am here, and justly so because of my sins," or "I wish I had never committed such sins for now I would be in paradise," or "That person there is leaving before me," or "I will leave before that one." They cannot remember the good or evil in their past nor that of others.

Such is their joy in God's will, in his pleasure, that they have no concern for themselves but dwell only in their joy in God's ordinance. They see only the goodness of God, his mercy toward all. Should they be aware of other good or evil, theirs would not be perfect charity. Only once do they understand the reason for their purgatory: the moment in which they leave this life. After this moment, that knowledge disappears. Immersed in charity, incapable of deviating from it, they can only will or desire pure love. There is no joy save that in paradise to be compared with the joy of the souls in purgatory.

As the rust of sin is consumed the soul is more and more open to God's love. Just as a covered object left out in the sun cannot be penetrated by the sun's rays, in the same way, once the covering of the soul is removed, the soul opens itself fully to the rays of the sun. Having become one with God's will, these souls, to the extent that he grants it to them, see into God.

Joy in God, oneness with him, is the end of these souls, an instinct implanted in them at their creation. All that I have said is nothing compared to what I feel within, the witnessed correspondence of love between God and the soul; for when God sees the soul pure as it was in its origins, he tugs at it with a glance, draws it and binds it to himself with a fiery love. God so transforms the soul into himself that it knows nothing other than God. He will not cease until he has brought the soul to its perfection.

That is why the soul seeks to cast off any and all impediments, so that it can be lifted up to God; and such impediments are the cause of the suffering of

the souls in purgatory. Not that the souls dwell on their suffering; they dwell rather on the resistance they feel within themselves against the will of God, against his intense and pure love bent on nothing but drawing them up to him. And I see rays of lightning darting from that divine love to the creature, so intense and fiery as to annihilate not the body alone but, were it possible, the soul. The soul becomes like gold that becomes purer as it is fired, all dross being cast out.

The last stage of love is that which does its work without human doing. If humans were to be aware of the many hidden flaws in them, they would despair. These flaws are burned away in the last stage of love. God shows the soul its weakness, so that the soul may see the workings of God. If we are to become perfect, the change must be brought about in us and without us; that is, the change is to be the work not of human beings but of God.

This, the last stage of love, is the pure and intense love of God alone. The overwhelming love of God gives the soul a joy beyond words. In purgatory great joy and great suffering do not exclude one another.

[1](#)A Word in Season – vol. IV – Sanctoral – Augustinian Press – 1991 – pg 215

11sn0301  
11.03.2017

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**A reading about the early life of St. Martin de Porres, from a book by J. C. Kearns. 1**

Martin de Porres was born in the royal city of Lima, Peru, South America, on December 9th, 1579. His father was a Spanish nobleman, a native of Burgos and a knight of the Order of Alcántara, who like so many of the *conquistadores* had come to America to advance his fortunes, spurred on by the almost unbelievable stories of the fabulous wealth of the Indies. His name was Don Juan, and in his travels in the New World he had met a beautiful Negro woman in Panama, names Ana Velázquez. She was the mother of Martin. The child definitely inherited the dark skin and features of his mother=s race, which quickly displeased the Spanish cavalier, Y and the proud father felt that the dignity of his family had been impaired and he lost much of the affection he had entertained for the child=s mother. YDon Juan finally deserted Ana after the birth of another child, a daughter named JuanaY.

Little Martin endured all the pangs and sorrows of being an unwanted childY and he was little given to play or to a manifestation of interest in childish trifles. He was deeply religious, finding a refuge from the unfavorable environment of his childhood at devotions in the neighboring church. The boy was especially generous to the poor, often distributing to beggars the basket of provisions which he had purchased in the market for his mother. When he returned home with an empty basket, his mother would scold and chastise him, but soon this unique little boy became the object of admiration in the section of the city where he dwelt.

At the age of twelve he was apprenticed to a barber. In those days a barber did much more than cut hair and trim beards. He was also a surgeon, a physician, a druggist. Little Martin was delighted, for now he could learn to

be of real service to his beloved friends, the poor. He learned with great eagerness how to bind up wounds, to allay fevers, how to brew soothing drugs from herbs, how to set broken limbs, to make poultices, and generally, all the medical knowledge of that era for the relief of the diseases and ailments of humanity.

Martin was deeply appreciative of the helpful interest which the barber-surgeon who was his teacher manifested towards him, and his teacher in turn seemed to realize the great good that his young apprentice was destined to accomplish in the future. Through study and practical experience Martin learned from him all about the *materia medica* of those days. In his charity, the young man practiced his profession gratuitously; any fees which were voluntarily given to him he soon distributed to the indigent. His own needs were very few; he led a life of unselfish zeal in behalf of his beloved poor and sick.

The fame of this youthful doctor soon became a topic of conversation throughout all Lima. His skill as a physician, his evident self-forgetfulness, his intense interest in the welfare of his patients, the all-encompassing nature of his charity, his patent personal holiness, and manifold miraculous cures gave him a reputation from which in his modesty he naturally shrank. However, Martin's success made him all the more grateful to Almighty God for thus giving him the opportunity of doing good to so many. Yet he sensed the need of a higher sanction for the program of his Christian social service, which he was [eventually] to find in all its fullness as a member of the Order founded by St. Dominic.

**11sn0401**  
**11.04.2017**

**A reading about St. Charles Borromeo, from a homily by Ronald Knox.** <sup>1</sup>

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When our Lord's apostles came to look back upon that terrible night in the Lake of Galilee, when they strained every nerve against the tempest while their Master lay sleeping in the boat, they found in it an allegory of their own situation, as they launched out the frail bark of his Church upon waves so troubled, with prospects so uncertain. And in every age the Church has looked back to that picture and taken comfort from it in times of adversity. [With great confidence], the Church of God, which is Peter's boat, has breasted the waves all through her troubled history. It is not upon the captain's judgment or the pilot's experience, not human wisdom or human prudence, that she depends for her safe voyage: she rests secure in the presence of her inviolable passenger. Yet we should do ill if we grudged recognition and gratitude to those servants of his who at various times have steered our course for us through difficult waters, and especially to the saints of the Counter-Reformation — that remarkable group of saints whom God raised up at the time of Europe's apostasy, by whose influence, humanly speaking, the faith survived that terrible ordeal. And not the least, nor the least prominent, of these is [St. Charles Borromeo], who ruled the Church of Milan in the latter part of the sixteenth century.

Say what you will, Italy breeds the genius for government.... Anybody, in naming the world's great men, will give you almost at once the names of two Italians, Julius Caesar and Napoleon. And, whatever verdict history may pass on our own times, it is in Italy that the anarchical tendencies of the last half-century have provoked the first reaction in favor of efficient government. St. Charles came from a ruling family among that ruling race. Personal humility shone out in him as in the other saints; but there was something Latin all the same about the resolute competence with which he governed his diocese. Men called him a second St. Ambrose; and St.

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<sup>1</sup> from *Occasional Sermons of Ronald Knox*, ed. by Philip Caraman, S.J., New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960, pp. 79-82.

Ambrose, his predecessor in the See of Milan, was a civil magistrate before he was ever a bishop. It was not idle title to call St. Charles a prince of the Church.

Whatever be the rights and wrongs of all the controversies we hear about the medieval Church, this at least is clear, that in the days of the Council of Trent its organization needed reform. And reform needs more than mere legislation to decree it; it needs administration to execute it. That is St. Charles's characteristic legacy to the Church: it was the influence of his example, in great measure, that molded her organization on the new model which Trent had decreed. The bishop has got to be the center of everything in his diocese, and the clergy of the diocese are to be *his* clergy — a family of which he is to be the father, a guild of which he is to be the master. See how fond St. Charles was of synods: the whole of his comparatively short episcopate is a long record of the synods he gathered amongst his clergy. See how enthusiastic he is for the seminary idea; the bishop, henceforth, is not merely to ordain people, he is to know whom he is ordaining. And above all what was characteristic of St. Charles was the institute which he left behind him — a body of secular priests, putting themselves at the disposal of the bishop as absolutely as the religious puts himself at the disposal of his superior. Yes, there is much about St. Charles's life which is more exciting, and much which is more attractive, than all this; his boundless generosity to the poor, the relentless mortification that regulated his busy, competent life. But what makes him stand out among the saints more than either is his intense devotion even to the most uninspiring details of diocesan routine.