

SUN 07.14.19

A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke by Origen of Alexandria ¹

To interpret the parable of the Good Samaritan, one of the elders used to say that the man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho was Adam. He said Jerusalem was paradise, Jericho was the world, and the brigands were enemy powers. The priest was the law, the Levite the prophets, and the Samaritan Christ. Adam's wounds were his disobedience, the animal that carried him was the body of the Lord, and the "inn", open to all who wished to enter, was the Church. The two denarii represented the Father and the Son, and the innkeeper was the head of the Church, who was entrusted with its administration. The promised return of the Samaritan was a figure of the second coming of the Savior.

The Samaritan was carrying oil – *oil to make his face shine* as Scripture says, referring surely to the face of the man he cared for. He cleansed the man's wounds with oil to soothe the inflammation and with wine that made them smart, and then placed him on his own mount, that is, on his own body, since he had condescended to assume our humanity. This Samaritan bore our sins and suffered on our behalf; he carried the half dead man to the inn which takes in everyone, denying no one its help; in other words, to the Church. To this inn Jesus invites all when he says: *Come to me, all who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you new strength.*

After bringing in the man half dead the Samaritan did not immediately depart, but remained and dressed his wounds by night as well as by day, showing his concern and doing everything he could for him. In the morning when he wished to set out again he took from his own purse silver coins, from his own sterling money, two denarii to pay the innkeeper – clearly the angel of the Church – and ordered him to nurse with all diligence and restore to health the man whom for a short time he himself had personally tended.

I think the two denarii stand for knowledge of the Father and the Son in the Father. This was given to the angel as a recompense, so that he would care more diligently for the man entrusted to him. He was also promised that whatever he spent of his own in healing him would be repaid.

This guardian of souls *who showed mercy to the man who fell into the hands of robbers* was a better neighbor to him than were either the law or the prophets, and he proved this more by deeds than by words. Now the saying: *Be imitators of me as I am of Christ* makes it clear that we can imitate Christ by showing mercy to those who have fallen into the hands of brigands. We can go to them, bandage their wounds after pouring in oil and wine, place them on our own mount, and bear their burdens. And so the Son of God exhorts us to do these things, in words addressed not only to the teacher of the law but to all of us: *Go and do likewise.* If we do, we shall gain eternal life in Christ Jesus, *to whom belongs glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.*

¹Journey with the Fathers – Year C – New City Press – New York – 2000 – pg. 98

MON 07/15/19

THE LIFE OF ST. BONAVENTURE, from Butler's *Lives of the Saints*¹

Of the youth of this greatest successor of St Francis of Assisi nothing is known beyond the facts that he was born at Bagnorea, near Viterbo, in the year 1221, the son of John Fidanza and Mary Ritella. He was clothed in the order of Friars Minor and studies at the University of Paris under an Englishman, Alexander of Hales, 'the Unanswerable Doctor'; Bonaventure, who was to become known as the Seraphic Doctor, himself taught theology and Holy Scripture there from 1248 to 1257.

Bonaventure was called by his priestly obligation to labor for the salvation of his neighbor, and to this he devoted himself with enthusiasm. He preached to the people with an energy which kindled a flame in the hearts of those that heard him. While at the University of Paris he produced one of the best-known of his written works, the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, which covers the whole field of scholastic theology. The years of his public lecturing at Paris were greatly disturbed, however, by the attack made on the mendicant friars by the other professors at the university. Jealousy of their pastoral and academic success and the standing reproof to worldliness and ease of the friars' lives were in part behind this attempt to get them excluded from the schools. The leader of the secular party was William of Saint-Amour, who made a bitter onslaught on the mendicants in a book called The Perils of the Last Times, and other writings. Bonaventure, who had to suspend lecturing for a time, replied in a treatise on evangelical poverty, named Concerning the Poverty of Christ. The pope, Alexander IV, appointed a commission of cardinals to go into the matter at Anagni, and on their findings ordered Saint-Amour's book to be burnt, vindicated and reinstated the friars, and ordered the offenders to withdraw their attack. A year later, in 1257, St Bonaventure and St Thomas Aquinas received the degree of doctor of theology together.

In 1257 Bonaventure was chosen minister general of the Friars Minor. He was not yet thirty-six years old, and the order was torn by dissensions, some of the friars being for an inflexible severity, others demanding certain mitigation of the rule; between the two extremes were a number of other interpretations. Some of the extreme rigorists, called Spirituals, had even fallen into error and disobedience, and thus given a handle to the friars' opponents in the Paris dispute. The new minister general wrote a letter to his provincials in which he made it clear that he required a disciplined observance of the rule, involving a reformation of the relaxed, but giving no countenance to the excesses of the Spirituals. At Narbonne in 1260, the first of the five general chapters which he held, he produced a set of constitutions on the rule, which were adopted and had a permanent effect on Franciscan life, but they failed to pacify the excessive rigorists. At the request of the friars assembled in this chapter, he undertook to write the life of St Francis, which he compiled with a spirit which shows him to have been filled with the virtues of the founder whose life he wrote. He governed his order for seventeen years and has been justly called its second founder.

¹BUTLER'S LIVES OF THE SAINTS, Concise Edition edited by M. Walsh (Harper San Francisco, 1991) pp. 216-217.

TUES

07.16.19

The Martyrs of Orange – from the Catholic Encyclopedia and other sources

The Martyrs of Orange were a group of 32 beatified religious women martyred at Orange, France, during the French Revolution between July 5 and 26, 1794. Two were Cistercian nuns from Avignon, the others were from Bollene, near Avignon. The others were from Bollene, near Avignon and included 16 Ursulines, 13 Sacramentine nuns and one Benedictine nun. For refusing to take the oath of Liberty of the new regime, the nuns were expelled from their convents, arrested and held in La Cure prison in Orange. These and other nuns formed a kind of religious community, and spent hours in prayer daily and religious exercises until condemned for fanaticism and superstition.

Besides these, many others were imprisoned and died under dire circumstances at this same time. The martyrs of the prison ships or on islands off the shore of La Rochelle who died of starvation or illness off the shore of La Rochelle included over 547. Yet for the cause of beatification, only 64 among these were retained as martyrs, namely, those who were explicitly mentioned in the lists of the deported.

On October 1, 1995, Pope John Paul II beatified three other Cistercians at the same time as 61 other priests and religious of various Congregations. The martyrs of the prison ships of Rochefort died in 1794, the same year as the nuns of Orange, and were declared martyrs in 1925. They were not the only Cistercians who died of starvation or illness in the slave ships or on the islands off the shore of La Rochelle. Our Menology mentions several others. Yet for the cause of beatification, only 64 among the 547 who died, were retained as martyrs, namely, those who were explicitly mentioned in the list of the deported.

The three Cistercians were: Bro, Elias Desgardin, a lay Brother from Sept Fons. He cared for his sick companions. A martyr of charity, he died of typhoid fever at the age of forty-four/ He was buried on the island of Aix. Also Dom Paul Charles, the Prior of Sept Fons. Detained on the ship *Les Deux Associes*, he died at the age of fifty-one, esteemed and loved by his companions in captivity, he was buried on the island called *Madame*. The third beatified martyr was Dom Gervais Brunel, Superior of La Trappe, who died at the age fifty in a provisional hospital on the island *Madame*. Stricken with typhoid fever, he arrived there on the point of dying, dying on the very day of the disembarkment.

One of them made a statement that can be applied to all these beatified religious and to many others condemned to die on the prison ships: "If we are the most unhappy of men, we are also the happiest of Christians".

WEDS 07.17.2019

JOSHUA AS A PROPHET AND FIGURE OF JESUS, from a Book by Damasus Winzen ²

The Book of Joshua is not only an end, the fulfillment of God's promise to give his people a home, but also a beginning: it is the first of the books of the Old Testament that describe the political development of the Israelitic nation, and show how the people lived up to their part of the covenant with God by keeping the law. Joshua is a "beginning" in the sense this word always has in sacred history, whose author is the "I am who I am." It is comprehensive and universal, containing the entire future development and foreshadowing the end. We do not find in Joshua a mechanical registering of events exactly as they took place during the first period of infiltration of the Israelitic tribes into Canaan. It selects and sees the events which it relates in the light of the purpose, the "end" of the history of the chosen people. This history is essentially "prophetic."

It is different from the history of the gentile nations, because it has as its objective the establishment of God's kingdom among peoples. The history of the gentile nations is one continuous effort to obtain prosperity and glory for themselves. Consequently they are not being guided by the light of divine wisdom. Their history is, in their own eyes, a matter of chance and luck and fate. They trust in soothsayers and diviners to guide them, blindly led by the blind. Divine wisdom, on the contrary, chooses the prophets to make God's will known to his people. "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren--him you should heed." (Deut 18:15) Our Lord's contemporaries see this famous prophecy of Moses' fulfilled in Christ, calling him "the Prophet" (Jn 6:14). Jewish scholars refer it to the prophets who in every period of Jewish history are the successors of Moses, beginning with Joshua, and continuing with Samuel, David, Elijah, etc...

²PATHWAYS IN SCRIPTURE by Damasus Winzen OSB (Word of Life, Ann Arbor MI 1976) pp.88-89.

Joshua is, therefore, the first of the prophets, and as such he immediately points to the last: Jesus. They have, in fact, the same name, because Jesus is the Hebrew form of Joshua. It is the first name in the Old Testament formed with the name of God--Yahweh--and it means "God will liberate" or "God will give room." The name is, therefore, in itself a prophecy. It indicates that the conquest of the promised land under Joshua is more than a political event, that it foreshadows a spiritual liberation, the true nature of which is revealed when the same name is given to our Lord. The angel announced to Joseph: "She [Mary] shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin" (Mt 1:21). Jesus fulfills what Joshua has prefigured. In the beginning of his public life as saviour he goes to the banks of the Jordan, and at the spot where the ark of the covenant stood when Joshua together with his people passed through the river, he receives from St John the baptism of penance. Instead of standing on dry ground, as Joshua had done, he is immersed in the water to typify his death. Jesus opens the passage into the land of liberty from sin by dying for the sins of the people. He is the Lamb which takes away the sins of the world. Joshua's courage is fulfilled in Christ's charity.

THUR

07.18.2019

A Reading about St Camillus de Lellis from Butler=s Lives of Saints [1](#)

Camillus de Lellis was born in 1550 at Bocchianico in the Abruzzi. When he was seventeen he went off with his father to fight with the Venetians against the Turks. But soon he contracted a painful and repulsive disease in his leg that was to afflict him for the rest of his life. In 1571 he was admitted to the San Giacomo hospital for incurables at Rome, as a patient and servant. After nine months he was dismissed, for his quarrelsomeness among other things. He returned to active service in the Turkish war. Though Camillus habitually referred to himself as a great sinner, his worst disorder was an addiction to gambling that continually reduced him to want and shame. In the autumn of 1574 he gambled away his savings, his arms, everything down to his shirt, which was stripped off his back in the streets of Naples.

The indigence to which he had reduced himself, and the memory of a vow he had made in a fit of remorse to join the Franciscans, caused him to accept work as a laborer in the new Capuchin buildings at Manfredonia, and there a moving exhortation which the guardian of the friars gave him one day, completed his conversion. Pondering on it as he rode on his business, he at length fell on his knees, and with tears deplored his past life, and cried to Heaven for mercy. This happened on Candlemas day in 1575, the 25th of his age. From that time he never departed from his penitential course. He entered the novitiate of the Capuchins, but could not make profession because of the disease in his leg. He therefore returned to the hospital of San Giacomo and devoted himself to the service of the sick. The administrators of the hospital witnessed his charity and ability, and later appointed him superintendent of the hospital.

In those days the spiritual and physical conditions in the hospital were very deplorable, due to the necessity of employing any staff that could be obtained, even criminals. Camillus, grieving to see the slackness of the hired help in attending the sick, formed a project of forming a group of attendants who desired to devote themselves to this care out of a motive of charity. He found several persons so disposed, but met with great obstacles in carrying out his plan, particularly from the jealousy and suspicion that reformers frequently meet. To make himself more useful in spiritually assisting the sick, he proceeded, with the approval of his confessor, St. Philip Neri, to receive Holy Orders. Camillus decided to sever connections with San Giacomo and to start on his own. With two companions he laid the foundations of his congregation. They went every day to the hospital of the Holy Ghost, where they served the sick with such affection and diligence that it was obvious to all who saw them that they considered Christ Himself as lying sick or wounded in His members. Eventually he determined that the members of his congregation should bind themselves to serve persons infected with the plague, prisoners and those who lay dying in private houses. Later, in 1595 and 1601, some of his religious were sent with the troops fighting in Hungary and Croatia, thus forming the first recorded Amilitary field ambulances.

In 1588 Camillus was invited to Naples, and with twelve companions founded there a new house. They took the name of the Ministers of the Sick. Certain galleys having the plague were forbidden to enter the harbor, so the Ministers went on board and attended them. St. Camillus showed a similar charity in Rome when a pestilential fever swept off great numbers, and again when that city was visited by a violent famine. In 1591 Pope Gregory XIV erected this congregation into a religious order for perpetually serving the sick.

Camillus was afflicted by many illnesses himself: the disease in his leg for forty-six years, a rupture for thirty-eight years, two sores in the sole of his foot, which gave him great pain. Yet under these infirmities, he would not allow anyone to wait on him, but sent all his brethren to serve others. When he was not able to stand, he would creep out of his bed, even at night, and crawl from one patient to another to see if they wanted anything.

Camillus saw the foundation of fifteen houses of his brothers and eight hospitals. He laid down the canonical leadership of his order in 1607. But he assisted at the general chapter in Rome in 1613, and after it, with the new superior general, visited the houses, giving them his last exhortations. At Genoa he was extremely ill, but he recovered so as to be able to finish the visitation of his hospitals. He expired on July 14, 1614, being sixty-four years old. St Camillus de Lellis was canonized in 1746, and was, with St. John of God, declared patron of the sick by Pope Leo XIII, and of nurses and nursing associations by Pope Pius XI.

¹Butler=s Lives of Saints, vol. 3, pg. 134, P.J. Kennedy & Sons, New York, 1956

THE WAR OF JOSHUA, from a Book by Damasus Winzen³

After the defilement brought on the Israelites by Achan has been removed, Joshua is able to conquer Ai, the second town in Canaan to fall to the Israelites. The inhabitants are put to the sword and the king is "hanged on a tree (i.e. crucified) and left until evening, but at sunset Joshua ordered his body to be taken down from the tree." (8:29) In the attack on Ai the Israelites use violence for the first time in their campaign to conquer Canaan. The battle against the five kings follows, and the defeat of the "kings of the north"; "and Joshua took and put to the sword and destroyed all the cities round about, and their kings"(11:12).

This war of extermination had nothing in common with the colonial wars which the white race fought during the last three centuries against practically all the rest of humanity. During the white conquest of colonial empires whole nations were sacrificed to the white race's skill in exploiting nature. The war of Joshua was directed against idolatry and sin. Recent excavations have proved the Canaanite culture at the time of the Hebrew invasion had reached its lowest level and found itself in a state of complete moral corruption. One should not forget that temple-prostitution, child-sacrifices, and such were public institutions in these little city-states. Their extermination through Joshua is the demonstration of the absolute opposition between the holiness of God and human sin. The wages of sin is death, because the living God is holy, and he hates sin. It is the plant which the heavenly Father has not planted and which, therefore, shall be rooted up (Mt 15:13).

There is no essential difference between Joshua and the messiah of whom David speaks:"the Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make of your enemies your footstool. The Lord at your right hand has broken kings in the day of his wrath; he shall fill ruins, he shall crush heads in the land of the many" (Ps.110:1,5-6). But the messiah Jesus has revealed a spiritual principle, here expressed in terms of war to be carried on by everyone in his own heart, when he said: "He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world, keeps it unto life eternal" (Jn 12:25). True to his teaching, he has fulfilled Joshua by carrying the burden of our sins in his own body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live in justice. The difference between the book of Joshua and the New Testament is not that the former belongs to a more primitive stage of the ethical development of the human race, in which violence is still considered a legitimate means of spreading religion, while the latter is pacificistic, but that Joshua hangs the evil kings on the tree, while Jesus takes on the likeness of sin and takes upon himself the death of the kings of Canaan. The difference between Joshua and Jesus is, therefore, that in Jesus charity has fulfilled justice, and death has been swallowed up in life.

³PATHWAYS IN SCRIPTURE, by Dom Damasus Winzen (Word of Life, Ann Arbor MI, 1976) pp. 93-94.

SAT 07.20.19

From a Letter by St. Athanasius, Bishop⁴

The Apostle tells us: the Word took to himself the children of Abraham, and so had to be like his brothers and sisters in all things. He had then taken a body like ours. This explains the fact of Mary's presence: she is to provide him with a body of his own, to be offered for our sake. Scripture records her giving birth, and says: **She wrapped him in swaddling clothes.** Her breasts, which fed him, were called blessed. Sacrifice was offered because the child was her firstborn. Gabriel used careful and prudent language when he announced his birth. He did not speak of "what will be born **in you**" to avoid the impression that a body would be introduced into her womb from outside; he spoke of "what will be born **from you**," so that we might know by faith that her child originated within her and from her.

By taking our nature and offering it in sacrifice, the Word was to destroy it completely and then to invest it with his own nature, and so prompt the Apostle to say: **This corruptible body must put on incorruption; this mortal body must put on immortality.**

This was not done in outward show only, as some have imagined. This is not so. Our Savior truly became human, and from this has followed the salvation of humanity as a whole. Our salvation is in no way fictitious, nor does it apply only to the body. The salvation of the whole person, that is, of soul and body, has really been achieved in the Word himself.

What was born of Mary was therefore human by nature, in accordance with the inspired Scriptures, and the body of the Lord was a true body: It was a true body because it was the same as ours. Mary, you see, is our sister, for we are all born from Adam.

The words of St. John: **The Word was made flesh**, bear the same meaning, as we can see from a similar phrase in Saint Paul: **Christ was made a curse for our sake.** The human body has acquired something great through its communion and union

⁴Liturgy of the Hours I, St. Athanasius, Catholic Book Publ., 1975,p484

with the Word. From being mortal it has been made immortal; though it was a living body, it has become a spiritual one; though it was made from the earth it has passed through the gates of heaven.

Even when the Word takes a body from Mary, the Trinity remains a Trinity, with neither increase nor decrease. It is forever perfect. In the Trinity we acknowledge one Godhead, and thus one God, the Father of the Word, is proclaimed in the Church.